

Guideline Name: Ballistic Protection Vests Usage		Department: Orange County Emergency Services
Effective Date: 12/01/2024	Issued: 11/15/2024	Approval(s): Kim Woodward EMS Division Chief 

1. Scope

- 1.1. This procedure applies to all Orange County EMS provider assigned to units equipped with ballistic protection vests which consists of two ballistic plates and carrier.
- 1.2. This procedure is to be followed during responses where EMS provider are tasked with entering potentially hazardous environments or high-risk situations (e.g., active threat incidents) as part of a Rescue Task Force.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To establish guidelines for the maintenance, distribution, and use of ballistic protection vests assigned to all Orange County EMS vehicles for use by Emergency Medical Services provider during high-risk incidents.
- 2.2. To define minimal stock levels (Par) and sizes of ballistic protection equipment that must be maintained on EMS vehicles.
- 2.3. To provide operational instructions for the deployment of ballistic protection vests to EMS providers assigned to Rescue Task Force or other tactical operations.

3. EQUIPMENT

- 3.1. The ballistic protection vest purchased for Orange County Emergency Services, EMS Division is a Level III+ Lightweight Rated Body Armor by Armored Republic.
 - 3.1.1. The vest will have two (10x12) ballistic plates made of steel alloy **A2 body armor**. It has a genetically similar ballistic core to our standard Level III+ rated. This is a higher-rated than the National Institute of Justice's recommended vest for Fire and EMS Responders (Level IIIA) for Hot Zone or Inner perimeter operations.



3.2. Each designated EMS vehicle will carry a minimum Par level of Ballistic Protection Vests. This ensures sufficient equipment for a full Rescue Task Force team.

3.2.1. Ballistic Protection Vest Inventory:

- Type I ambulances shall carry three (3) ballistic protection vests that shall be stored in the main oxygen compartment.
- Type II (Van) ambulances will carry two (2) ballistic protection vests that shall be stored behind the front passenger seats.
- The EMS Battalion Chief shall carry two (2) ballistic protection vests.
- The PORT and Community Paramedic shall carry one (1) ballistic protection vest.

3.3. EMS Battalion Chiefs must ensure that all ballistic vests assigned to the area of EMS Operations are stored in a secure, designated location when not in use.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1. Providers may opt to wear the ballistic protection vest when they encounter any call that requires a premise history for staging or any potential violent trauma or domestic violence call for service. The Ballistic Protection Vest must be worn over the outer EMS uniform and have a visible “EMS” label across the front and rear of the vest.

4.2. Upon activation for an assignment requiring the use of ballistic protection vests, all Rescue Task Force providers will report to the predesignated staging area donned in their appropriate ballistic protective vests.

4.2.1. If assigned to a Rescue Task Force, each provider shall wear their department issued helmet and carry their SAS bag.

4.2.2. EMS providers assigned to a Rescue Task Force providers will notify the Medical Branch Director if the ballistic protective vests are not available.

4.3. EMS Providers operating within a Cold Zone, Outer Perimeter, Emergency Operations Center or Command Post are not required to don their Ballistic Protection Vests.

5. MAINTENANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 5.1. All ballistic protection vests must be inspected at the beginning of each shift to ensure it is in proper working condition. Any damage or issues must be immediately reported to the EMS Battalion Chief.
- 5.2. EMS Battalion Chiefs are responsible for maintaining inventory records of ballistic protection vests, ensuring minimum par levels are met, and that equipment is accounted for at all times.
- 5.3. EMS providers must document the number of vests and condition in Operative IQ at the beginning of each shift.
- 5.4. Ballistic protection vests that are damaged or worn must be removed from service and replaced immediately.
- 5.5. For cleaning the plate carrier, follow the instructions:
 - 5.5.1. Do **not** wash it in the washer machine.
 - 5.5.2. Do a light hand scrubbing with warm, soapy water and washcloth.
 - 5.5.3. For tougher stains, brush with some warm, soapy water.
 - 5.5.4. Hang to air dry. Approved agents that help eliminate odors may be utilized.
- 5.6. If soiled, ballistic protection vest plates shall be cleaned using the Stryker wipes and allowed to dry prior to insertion in the plate carrier.

6. TRAINING

- 6.1. All providers must undergo training on the proper use and care of ballistic protection vests Equipment. This training will include donning procedures, fit checks, and operational directives during high-risk assignments.

7. REFERENCES

- 7.1. Orange County EMS Tactical Operations Protocol (**Future Protocol**)
- 7.2. Orange County Emergency Services High-Risk Response Guidelines (**Future Protocol**)