

CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

PAX 501

LeRoy Martin, *Superintendent of Police*



VOLUME 92

2 APRIL 1992

NUMBER 2

SOFT BODY ARMOR ARBITRATION

The grievance filed by the Fraternal Order of Police regarding the mandatory wearing of soft body armor has been resolved. The arbitrator has ruled that the Department, pursuant to a management right, may require members to wear soft body armor while performing field assignments. However, due to other provisions in the contract, wearing of soft body armor can be required of members appointed to the Department after 5 September 1988, but only required of other members if new soft body armor is provided to them at no cost.

I can understand why the arbitrator ruled as he did, just as I hope you can understand why I issued the first PAX 501 regarding the wearing of soft body armor. This ruling does not alter the fact that soft body armor saves lives, nor does it change my conviction that police officers performing field duties should wear their soft body armor. Unfortunately, the financial resources required to provide all of our members with additional soft body armor are simply not available. And, even if funds were available, I would not expect the taxpayers of the City of Chicago to bear the expense of another issue of soft body armor when they have already borne the initial cost of soft body armor for each of us through voluntary contributions and taxes.

In accordance with the arbitrator's decision, a new policy statement will soon be published. This statement will require police officers appointed to or reemployed by the Department after 5 September 1988 to wear soft body armor while performing field duties. For officers appointed or reinstated to the Department prior to that date, the wearing of soft body armor will remain optional.

As you recall, it was the senseless killing of two police officers that, in part, prompted me to mandate the wearing of soft body armor. I also realize that the circumstances and discussions surrounding this issue have prompted many of you to begin wearing soft body armor even though it was not required. I commend those of you who appreciate the protection that soft body armor provides to both you and your loved ones.

To those of you within our ranks who do not yet feel compelled to wear your soft body armor, I sincerely encourage you to reevaluate your reasons for not doing so. Whatever your reasons, they will not diminish the burden which will be placed on the Department, your fellow officers, and especially your loved ones in the event you become one of those who could have been saved.

LeRoy Martin
Superintendent of Police