



# A fitting occasion

CPD officers line up to get new body armor

■ PHOTOS BY JAMES PINTO



When the forward thinkers at the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation initiated the “Get Behind The Vest” campaign to provide more than 5,000 officers with new vests, they might not have imagined what took place at the Ninth District on June 9.

Or they might have imagined exactly what happened on this day when Point Blank Body Armor and Pro Tech Sales set up to measure CPD officers for new vests.

When the first three-hour fitting session began, a line of nearly 50 officers stretched out the door and around the corner. And the line continued to flow all morning with cops taking advantage of the opportunity to get the latest, greatest and safest in body armor - gear that costs up to \$1,000 - for free, or a nominal cost.

“With everything happening on the street, I wanted a new vest,” said Officer John Bounardj, a 23-year veteran. “I’m getting a new vest for \$100 that probably cost more than \$1,000. This is for safety. You can’t put a price on that.”

The Chicago Police Memorial Foundation is working to raise \$4 million to ensure that up to 8,000 Chicago Police Officers who are in need of replacement vests receive them. Pro Tech Sales, a distributor of Point Blank Body Armor, has been administering vest fittings in CPD Districts throughout the city for the past several months that have been set up to accommodate officers on all shifts.

The fitting begins with officers consulting with a Point Blank representative and getting measured. Then, they have an opportunity to choose different types of vests based on levels of protection, maneuverability and additional features. Varieties of body armor include one with an extra curve for female officers.

Area Central Detective Laura Conley stood in line to get her first new vest in 19 years.

“It’s important to take advantage of this opportunity because it can improve my performance in the field,” she explained. “I’m grateful to get this opportunity. I’ve never seen us get a chance like this before.” ♥