



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2012

Office of Justice Programs (OJP)
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www.ojp.gov

National Institute of Justice Statement on Body Armor

The Justice Department's National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is aware, through recent media reports, that a used Custom Armor Technologies (CAT) model QVA-3A-1 ballistic vest was recently independently tested and was reportedly penetrated by a .44 caliber round that model of vest was designed to stop. NIJ is also aware the same model ballistic vest was worn during an officer involved shooting in November 2011. The round fired by the suspect in that incident passed through the officer's vest at a point within one inch from the edge of the front ballistic panel, where the CAT model QVA-3A-1 vest is not expected to afford ballistic protection. The CAT model QVA-3A-1 ballistic vest, when new, was demonstrated to have met the former NIJ0101.04 Body Armor Standard in 2004.

NIJ does not have information at this time that demonstrates CAT model QVA-3A-1 ballistic vests do not perform to the expected level of protection. NIJ is working to obtain information regarding the independent test to determine why it appears the vest may have failed. Once NIJ has determined the facts of the matter, information will be shared with the law enforcement community.

The Justice Department is committed to the health and safety of all law enforcement officers and urges all officers to continue wearing their protective vests. DOJ also encourages public safety officers to follow body armor manufacturer "wear and care" instructions, and to refrain from storing armor in environments in which it may be exposed to extreme heat or cold. Age alone does not cause body armor's ballistic resistance to deteriorate-the care and maintenance of vests are vital. Officers should inspect their body armor on a regular basis. Armor showing excessive wear or damage should be replaced.

View the list of body armor models tested against the current NIJ Body Armor Standard NIJ0101.06 and found to be compliant: https://www.justnet.org/other/ballistic_cpl.html.

Learn more about body armor at: www.nij.gov/topics/technology/body-armor/welcome.htm

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