

How to Choose a Good Body Armor

With rioting, looting, and the general break down of law and order, body armor will be a life saver.

For that reason, in the time before a major crisis, I would recommend purchasing body armor for yourself and your family.

Choosing body armor can be complicated if you don't know what to look for, or what characteristics it should have. Here are some guidelines you can follow.

Types of Body Armor

Hard body armor is designed to primarily stop rifle bullets (Threat level III and IV), and is most often used by military or police tactical units. This type of armor is usually made from steel, titanium, ceramic or polyethylene composites.

Even though it is very heavy, it will stop all pistol or rifle rounds that are in the body armor's level of protection.

Soft body armor is made up of many layers of material such as Kevlar or Spectra that are placed in a sealed air and water proof pouch. This type of armor loses strength as soon as it gets wet, thus bullets can penetrate deeper or pass through the pad.

In addition, soft body armor does not work against military rifle rounds, and may only give minimal protection from knives, ice picks, or arrows. It will work on pistol or shotgun rounds that are in the body armor's level of protection.

Important Point: When getting soft body armor make sure that it has a bullet protection level and stab level. Even though

stab protection makes the body armor a little heavier, it is well worth it. There are 2 stab levels – level 1 and level 2, where level 2 gives the wearer more protection than level 1.

Parts of the Ballistic Vest

Carrier

The visible part of the body armor that holds all of the ballistic soft panels and the steel, ceramic or polyethylene small plates. There are 2 types of carriers for soft body armor:



Second Chance by Safari

safariiland.com

- The Front and Back Panel only Concealable Design (obsolete) – This armor only covers the wearer's chest and back, leaving the sides open without ballistic protection.
- Rap-A-Round Concealable Carrier – Gives protection not only to the wearer's chest and back, but also to the person's sides. These carriers are usually worn over a T-shirt or body armor shirt, but under the outer shirt. Concealable carriers should be custom fit to each person, male or female to insure a good tight fit.

Armor Slips (Pouches for the Ballistic Material)

This is a sealed air and water proof pouch that keeps the ballistic mats dry from the wear's perspiration or other forms of moisture.

Mats

These are made from layers of ballistic material that are stacked on top of each other.

Stopping Power Rating System (Threat Level of Protection)

All types of body armor are rated by the National Institute of Justice Standards (0101.06) for protection levels of safety (ie. which caliber bullets will be safely stopped without penetrating the body armor).

Let's see the body armor protection level guide for the most common soft body armors:

- Level 2A will stop (9MM FMJ), 40 S&W, and 45ACP.
- Level 2 will stop all pistol rounds through .357 Magnum.
- Level 3A will stop .357 Sig., 44 Magnum, 9MM sub machine gun, and double aught Buck Shot.

How Does Soft Body Armor Work?



Scorpis Tactic 3A
scorpiustactical.com

Body armor catches the bullet and causes it to flatten out or deform. As the bullet's surface increases, its energy is absorbed by the body armor; which stops it from reaching the flesh beneath.

The bullet energy is still transferred to the wearer's body. Even though the bullet may not penetrate the armor, blunt trauma force can still do internal damage to the wearer of the body armor. Under the impact site there usually is severe swelling and bruising.

Soft body armor can be upgraded with protective plates made from metal, ceramic, or polyethylene, and placed in pouches in the front and back of the body armor.

How Long Will Body Armor Last?

If the wearer takes good care of their body armor it can last 6 to 8 years of medium to heavy use or longer. The carrier needs to be kept clean and odor free. If the carrier gets torn or frayed replace it with a new one.

When I was an active police officer, I had 2 carriers and would change the carrier about every week to ten days depending on the weather; and then inspect monthly looking for weakness in the system. If I found a weak or worn out part it would be replaced immediately.

How Many Bullets Hits Can the Soft Body Armor Take Before Failing?

Soft body armor can take many direct hits, but the following factors must be considered:

- What was the caliber and weight of the bullets that hit the body armor?
- How many bullets hit the armor?
- What kind of group did the bullets make when they hit the armor? If the bullets were in a tight group, there could be a greater chance that one or more bullets will penetrate the armor.

Laws Surrounding Personal Ownership of Body Armor in the United States

According to US Federal Law 18 U.S.C. Sec. 931, there is a prohibition on the purchase, ownership, or possession of body armor by violent felons. Also 42 U.S.C. Sec. 379611-3, provides criminal sentence enhancement if body armor is used in the commission of a Federal Violent Crime or a Drug Trafficking Crime.



Survival Armor Performance 6
survivalarmor.com

Some states will allow law abiding citizens to buy soft body armor and others will not. Please check with your individual state laws and get a copy of the law dealing with personal ownership of body armor and keep it with your records. Some states will add extra charges if a person is wearing body armor and is armed while committing a crime.

What Body Armor to Choose?

We put up a list of soft body armor that will do the job and keep you alive.

Survival Armor Performance 6

- Level 2 retails for \$910.
- Level 3A retails for \$1050.

Second Chance by Safari land

- Level 2 retails for \$600.
- Level 2 with ballistic and stab resistance up grade retails for \$1150.

Scorpius Tactical

- Level 3A soft armor with side panels retails for \$465.

As you can see, soft body armor comes in many price ranges, so do some research to find out what you want and how to fit it into your budget.

In some states, non-law enforcement individuals can buy body armor on the internet, but you do not know what you are getting until it arrives. In some other states, it is required that you buy the body armor face to face at the retailer with proper Id.

In the time during and after a major crisis having and using soft body armor could be a life saver. With its added protection a shooting that could have been fatal is not. The body armor wearer may be very sore, bruised, swollen, and feels like he was hit in the chest with a 60 mph brick, but still alive and able to go forward in life.

The 3 fatal mistakes you must absolutely avoid in a crisis **WATCH VIDEO** 

*This article has been written by **Fred Tyrell** for [Survivopedia](#).*

Sources:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2012-title18/pdf/USCODE-2012-title18-partI-chap44-sec931.pdf>

<http://www.nij.gov/topics/technology/body-armor/Pages/welcome.aspx>