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Body Armor Performance Standards and Compliance Testing

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Buying armor?

Removal of Ballistic Resistant Body Armor Models from Compliant Testing List and Program

August 14, 2026

NIJ has been setting voluntary body armor standards since 1972. The NIJ standard is the only nationally accepted standard for the body armor worn by law enforcement and corrections officers. NIJ also administers a program to test commercially available armor for compliance with the standards to determine whether the vests meet NIJ's minimum performance standards.

NIJ Standards

Ballistic Resistance, NIJ Standard-0101.07

- Find compliant armor

The NIJ ballistic resistance standard classifies body armor by levels of ballistic performance. For any performance level, NIJ's test protocol requires that the bullet does not perforate the vest and that the vest protects against blunt trauma.

Note that NIJ has never tested nor certified ballistic items, such as backpacks, blankets, or briefcases, other than body armor for law enforcement. See DOJ Statement on Claims of NIJ Certification of Ballistic Backpacks.

Stab Resistance, NIJ Standard-0115.00

- Find compliant armor

See Advisory Notices

NIJ's stab resistance body armor standard specifies the minimum performance requirements for body armor to protect the torso against slashes and stabs from knives and spikes; it also describes the associated testing procedures. The standard includes three performance levels, which are based on the armor's ability to prevent a perforation deep enough to injure an officer's internal organs at different strike force speeds. The standard also includes two protection classes: one for high-quality, commercially produced knives and another for lower-quality knife blades and improvised spikes that are likely to be present in a corrections environment.

On this page find:

- Overview of Compliance Testing
- Manufacturers' Role in Compliance Testing
- Testing at Approved Laboratories

Overview of Compliance Testing

NIJ administers a program to test commercially available armor for compliance with the standards to determine whether the vests will perform as expected.

In addition to being tested for NIJ compliance, body armor models must meet workmanship and labeling requirements.

NIJ also has a follow-up inspection and testing requirement to ensure that the body armor worn by officers is safe and reliable. Each body armor manufacturer with a model that meets the standard is subject to six follow-up inspections and testing over a five-year

period, consisting of:

- Inspections of recently manufactured vests to determine whether they are constructed in the same way as the original samples.
- Follow-up ballistic testing. Learn about follow-up inspections of body armor.

NIJ's Criminal Justice Testing & Evaluation Consortium manages the compliance testing program.

Administrative Documents

The NIJ CTP documents rules that it applies for carrying out product certification activities in the NIJ CTP Product Conformity Assessment System. This system contains general requirements that apply to all products in a top-level document (100-1) and detailed requirements for specific product categories in subordinate scheme documents.

NIJ CTP Stakeholders (prospective Applicants/Participants, NIJ-approved test laboratories, and Inspection Bodies) are required to completely review Document 100-1 and any applicable subordinate scheme document in the scope of their participation. Questions regarding the Product Conformity Assessment System Documents may be directed to the NIJ CTP by email at bactp@nijctp.org.

General Requirements (apply to all NIJ CTP's):

- 100-1, NIJ CTP Product Conformity Assessment System—General Requirements, Version 1.0 (PDF)

Ballistic Body Armor:

- 101-07, NIJ CTP Product Conformity Assessment System—Ballistic Body Armor (NIJ Standard 0101.07), Version 1.0 (PDF)
- 101-06-FIT (formerly 606.2.2), NIJ CTP Product Conformity Assessment System—Ballistic Body Armor Follow-up Inspection and Testing (FIT) Scheme (NIJ Standard 0101.06), Version 2.0 (PDF)

Manufacturers' Role in Compliance Testing

During compliance testing, manufacturers:

1. Register with the program.
2. Submit body armor application documents.
3. Send armor model samples to an NIJ-approved laboratory. See our list of approved testing laboratories.
4. Agree to follow-up inspection and testing. Learn about follow-up inspections.
5. Declare a period of ballistic warranty.

Manufacturers: Get Your Armor Tested

Ballistic manufacturers

Stab manufacturers

Testing at Approved Laboratories

NIJ requires that body armor models being tested for NIJ compliance must be tested at an approved laboratory. To be approved, a lab must:

- Be accredited by the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program of the National Institute of Standards and Technology as meeting general international standards for laboratory technical competence and quality management, as well as meeting specific technical requirements to perform the body armor tests included in the NIJ standards. Learn more about the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program.
- Be an independent, third-party laboratory and conduct all body armor compliance testing within the United States.
- Demonstrate freedom from potential conflicts of interest and maintain independent decisional relationships from its clients, affiliates, contractors and other organizations.

Learn how your lab can participate.

NIJ Approved Independent Testing Laboratories			
Laboratory	**Autoloading Pistol Laboratories (NIJ Standard-0112.03**	**Ballistic-Resistant Armor Laboratories (NIJ Standard-0101.06**	**Stab Arm Labo (NIJ Stan**

	Rev A)	**/.07)**	
Element U.S. Space & Defense (Belcamp) 4603B Compass Point Road Belcamp, MD 21017 Phone: 410.297.8154 Fax: 410.297.8160 Contact: Matt Skrocki Website: https://www.elementdefense.com Email: matt.skrocki@elementdefense.com	Yes	Yes	Yes
Element Materials Technology Wichita 7447 W. 33rd Street North Wichita, KS 67205 Phone: 316.832.1600 Fax: 316.832.1602 Contact: Nick Zerger – General Manager Website: https://www.element.com/locations/the-americas/wichita Email: nick.zerger@element.com	No	Yes	Yes
Energetic Test Labs, LLC 5055 S. 33rd Street Phoenix, AZ Phone: 602.390.4447 Fax: n/a Contact: Andrew Gibson – General Manager Website: www.energetictestlabs.com Email: test@energetictestlabs.com	No	Yes	No
Oregon Ballistic Laboratories, LLC 2873 22nd Street, S.E. Salem, OR 97302 Phone: 503.540.8114 Fax: 503.362.5597 Contact: Thomas Ohnstad, Managing Partner Website: www.oregonbl.com Email: info@oregonbl.com	No	Yes	Yes
SMS Testing 201 McNamee Lane Rising Sun, MD 21911 Phone: 443.907.2794	No	Yes	No

Fax: n/a Contact: Mike Murray Website: https://shotsmstuff.com Email: mike.murray@shotsmstuff.com			
Susquehanna Labs, LLC 3114 Scarboro Road Street, MD 21154 Phone: 443.347.6025 Fax: n/a Contact: Mike Hinder Website: https://www.susqlabs.com Email: info@susqlabs.com	No	Yes	No

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