



Home Office

Body Armour Standard (2017)

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Summary

The Home Office has published test standards to assess the performance of body armour for over two decades dating back to 1993. In the intervening period, much has changed both operationally and from an engineering perspective in the ability to produce test methods that are more representative of the operational scenarios faced by end-users.

The Home Office Body Armour Standard (2017) outlines the minimum performance requirements and test methods for body armour intended for UK law enforcement agencies.

The requirements for this standard were derived from a series of consultations with stakeholders including the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), the Police Federation, end-users, manufacturers of body armour, accredited test facilities, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Physical Protection Group and other technical experts.

The key requirement for body armour is to reduce the risk of death or serious injury to the wearer from ballistic or stab attack to the torso in normal operational usage.

Key improvements from the *HOSDB¹ Body Armour Standards for UK Police 2007* include:

- **Formed armour testing:** anthropometrically derived test surrogates, more representative of the morphologies of the female torso, enabling enhanced assessment of female body armour.
- **Ballistic protection levels:** an updated set of ballistic protection levels with test rounds reflecting the current operational requirements of UK law enforcement.
- **Rifle testing:** anthropometrically derived male front and back torso surrogates for ballistic testing to provide enhanced assessment on the performance of rifle protection.
- **Production quality testing (PQT):** introduction of critical perforation analysis (CPA) as a quality assurance tool to provide increased confidence in the continued production quality of soft armour.
- **In-life monitoring (ILM):** periodical assessment of in-service body armour over a period of time to ensure performance is maintained.

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¹ Home Office Scientific Development Branch, which became Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST) in April 2011.

Supplementary to the standard is a guidance document entitled *Home Office Body Armour Standard (2017) – Guidance*. This document has been written to be used alongside the standard and provides information to enable informed decision making in the selection and procurement of body armour and inform elements of best practice associated with its use.