

BODY ARMOR

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NIJ's Role in the Body Armor Safety Initiative

In November 2003, the U.S. Department of Justice announced its [Body Armor Safety Initiative](#) in response to concerns from the law enforcement community about the effectiveness of body armor then in use. These concerns followed the failure of a relatively new Zylon®-based [\[1\]](#) body armor vest worn by a Forest Hills, Pennsylvania, police officer.

The officer survived the shooting, but sustained severe injuries. The Forest Hills shooting was the first case ever reported to NIJ in which body armor compliant with the NIJ standard failed to prevent penetration from a bullet it was designed to defeat.

As part of this Initiative, NIJ examined both new and used Zylon®-based bullet-resistant armor, analyzed upgrade kits provided by manufacturers that retrofit Zylon®-based bullet-resistant armors, and reviewed the existing program that tests bullet-resistant armor to determine whether the process needed modification.

> [See Body Armor Research and Evaluation Results.](#)

Advisory Notices

NIJ may issue Body Armor Standard Advisory Notices to identify body armor materials that, based on NIJ review, appear to hold a risk of death or serious injury as a result of degraded ballistic performance. Any body armor model that contains material listed in an advisory notice will be deemed no longer NIJ compliant unless and until the manufacturer satisfies NIJ that the model will maintain its ballistic performance over its declared warranty period. In August 2005, NIJ released the first such advisory notice, [Body Armor Standard Advisory Notice #01-2005 \(doc, 1 page\)](#), on body armor containing poly-*p*-phenylene benzobisoxazole (commonly known as PBO or Zylon®).

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BODY ARMOR SAFETY INITIATIVE:

- [Body Armor Safety Initiative Web site.](#)
- [Body Armor Safety Initiative: To Protect and Serve...Better](#), *NIJ Journal* 254, July 2006, JR 000254.
- [Third Status Report to the Attorney General on Body Armor Safety Initiative and Testing and Activities \(pdf, 47 pages\)](#), August 2005, NCJ 210418.

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NOTES

[1] Zylon® (poly-*p*-phenylene benzobisoxazole or PBO fiber) is a high-strength organic fiber produced by Toyobo Co., Ltd. Zylon® is a registered trademark of Toyobo Co., Ltd. [Back to text.](#)

Date Modified: July 21, 2008

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 - [Standard-0101.06](#) [Exit Notice](#)
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FUNDING FOR...

[The Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program](#), administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, can provide funding to purchase vests.

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Pinnacle Armor, Inc. v. U.S., No. 08-16209 archived on June 16, 2011