



## **RMA SOFT ARMOR USE & CARE GUIDELINES**

### **Inspection and Care**

One of the most frequently asked questions about body armor is: “How long does body armor last?” This question has no easy or definitive answer. All body armor models on the NIJ CPL are warranted for their ballistic performance. However, the actual performance of an individual body armor may vary based on how it has been stored and maintained, environmental exposure and differences in use. Every piece of armor will eventually have to be replaced for any number of reasons, such as change in officer weight and shape, change in service weapons or ammunition threat, being struck by a bullet or edged weapon, or simply from normal wear and tear over time.

### **Inspection**

Visually inspect ballistic panel covers frequently. Check for cuts, tears, stitching separation, sealing problems and excessive wear, all of which could expose the ballistic materials to moisture and other potentially degrading factors. Carriers that rub the panel covers as a result of normal flexing can wear through the cover and expose the armor to moisture penetration.

Visually inspect hard armor plates before each use to ensure that no surface cracks or other signs of damage are present that could degrade ballistic performance. Although an appearance of good condition does not necessarily imply good performance, damage is a clear indicator that the armor panel or plate should be replaced. Periodically, also inspect the condition of the label on the armor panel. Once the label becomes illegible or shows signs of excessive wear, it should be replaced. It is important to be able to identify the model and protection level of an armor. The model identification is important in the event of a safety recall. When checking the label, note the issue date and compare it to the ballistic warranty also found on the label. If the armor has been in service beyond its declared warranty period, replace the item as soon as possible. Serviceable armor should never be removed from service until a replacement armor is available for immediate wear. An officer with no armor is at greater risk than an officer wearing older or worn/damaged armor.

The armor panel covers should not be opened for any reason. If the integrity of the panel cover is compromised in any way, contact Slate Solutions for repair options. Never attempt to repair armor panels under any circumstances.

## Break-In Procedures

RMA Armament vests are designed to mold to your unique shape for optimal results. Wear your vest slightly tighter than usual during the initial 2-4 weeks of use to allow your vest to conform to the distinct curve of your body. After this short break-in period, wear your vest to suit your own comfort zone. Do not wear the vest tight. Simply take the excess slack out of the adjustable straps.

## Care

Do not needlessly flex, bend, compress or crease soft armor panels when handling them, as this may contribute to degradation of the ballistic materials over time.

## Cleaning

Improper cleaning can damage an armor panel or a carrier. Damaged panels can cause the body armor to fail when struck by a projectile. Armor panels are not to be dry-cleaned, machine-washed or machine-dried, either in the home or commercially. Detergents, dry-cleaning solvents and laundry equipment can damage or degrade panels. Please refer to the armor labels for detailed cleaning instructions.

## Storage

Body Armor should be stored flat at room temperature in a dry, shaded place that minimizes exposure to direct light. Armor may be hung from a specially designed robust hanger made for body armor. Wire or some wooden hangers will break or buckle under the weight of the armor. Do not hang armor by the carrier straps, as this may cause the straps to stretch and lose their original shape and fit. Turn the body armor inside out or open and lay flat to allow moisture to evaporate. Air dry damp armor prior to storage. Armor should not be stored in a low airflow environment, such as the bottom of a locker, nor in a potentially extreme hot/cold environment, such as the trunk of a vehicle.