

## Personal Body Armor

When considering the purchase of body armor, the **NIJ Standard–0101.04, “Ballistic Resistance of Personal Body Armor”**, an equipment standard developed by the Office of Law Enforcement Standards (OLES) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), is an excellent resource. The following is a summary. The complete standard should be referenced for full information.

As of 2000, ballistic resistant body armor suitable for full time wear throughout an entire shift of duty is available in classification Types I, IIA, II, and IIIA, which provide increasing levels of protection from handgun threats.

**Type I (22 LR; 380 ACP)** Type I body armor, which was first issued during the NIJ demonstration project in 1975, is the minimum level of protection that any officer should have.

**Type IIA (9 mm; 40 S&W)** Officers seeking protection from lower velocity 9 mm and 40 S&W ammunition typically wear Type IIA body armor.

**Type II (9 mm; 357 Magnum)** For protection against high velocity 357 Magnum and higher velocity 9 mm ammunition, officers traditionally select Type II body armor.

**Type IIIA (High Velocity 9 mm; 44 Magnum)** Type IIIA body armor provides the highest level of protection available in concealable body armor and provides protection from high velocity 9 mm and 44 Magnum ammunition. Type IIIA armor is suitable for routine wear in many situations; however, in hot, humid climates departments may need to carefully evaluate the use of Type IIIA body armor for their officers.

**Type III (Rifles)** Type III armor, which protects against high powered rifle rounds, is clearly intended for use only in tactical situations when the threat warrants such protection.

### What This Means For Counties

Determining the types of armor to purchase lies in the overall financial capabilities of the department and the firepower of the citizenry. The sheriff should create a policy, if one does not already exist, and budget to provide body armor for all deputies that face the risk of being fired upon in the course of their job duties. The body armor should be considered necessary safety equipment and its use mandatory as a condition of employment.

For more information, contact CTSI at 303-861-0507.