

## **Preventing Body Armor Failure**

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December 2, 2006 (FPRC) -- Steve Russ, a retired police officer from the State of Michigan, has introduced a new safety innovation into the law enforcement, corrections and military community (LECM). A major problem within the LECM community has been the deterioration of body armor's ballistic-resistant capabilities due to improper care and maintenance.

According to a National Institute for Justice (NIJ) report on soft body armor, "Age alone does not cause body armor's ballistic resistance to deteriorate. The care and maintenance of a garment—or the lack thereof—have been shown to have a greater impact than age on the length of service life of a unit of body armor. Armor that is 10 years old and has never been issued may be perfectly acceptable for use, provided that the rated level of protection is still appropriate for the typical threats faced. Conversely, 2- or 3-year-old armor that has been worn regularly and improperly cared for may not be serviceable. Limited studies of the ballistic-resistant capabilities of armor used for extended periods of time were initiated in 1983 by DuPont, at which time some of the armor tested had been in service for more than 8 years."

The conclusions of the NIJ report are echoed by one manufacture, Second Chance Body Armor, who in a 1999 literature stated, "Keeping liquids/moisture away from the Body Armor panels will help the panels maintain their ballistic/stab resistant properties." The effects of improper storage of body armor have been long known. As an example, in 1973, researchers at the United States Army's Edgewood Arsenal, responsible for the body armor determined that "the penetration resistance of Kevlar was degraded when wet."

Steve Russ' innovation, the "Flak Vest Hanger" enhances body armor care thereby improving operational safety and helping to reduce injuries and the potential for the loss of life in the LECM Community. The Flak Vest Hanger allows anyone who wears body armor to properly dry and store it. As has been shown by previous research, improperly dried or stored body armor can reduce the ballistic-resistant capabilities of the armor and place the wearer at increased risk. Furthermore, improper care may also void the manufacture's warranty.

The Flak Vest Hanger was specifically engineered for the law enforcement, corrections and military community and has been field tested by police officers for over six years. It is made from foam-injected polymers and weighs 3.2 pounds. It is designed to fit inside any standard 12 inch locker and can be placed on the floor or at the bottom of the locker. The numerous ventilation ports allow the body armor to dry 50% faster than any other method today and help to stop the accumulation of body odors. As the flag ship product of Steve Russ' company it is backed by a 25 year warranty.

More information about the Flak Vest Hanger can be obtained from their website at [www.bodyarmorhangers.com](http://www.bodyarmorhangers.com). Article sponsored by criminal justice online and police and military personnel who have become writers.

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