

The Benefits of Body Armor for Security Personnel

Security Personnel are called on to provide a wide range of services for a wide range of clients. Anyone involved in Security of any kind will emphasise one thing as vital to doing the job properly; preparation. It is crucial that you are prepared for the situations you will face, the threats you will come up against, and this is just as true in your selection of the correct body armor. How else can a security operative ensure the safety of their client if they can't guarantee their own protection? Body armor can mean the difference between life and death. But what body armor is right for a Security Operative? This is why preparation is key. There are a number of vests available to counter a number of threats, and in numerous different styles.

The Different Threats Facing Security Personnel

The majority of clients require Close Protection Security, or put simply, a bodyguard. It is the job of the bodyguard to remain with client and provide protection up close. However, this can mean very different things. Protecting an unpopular CEO from potential assassinations or kidnappings is much different to keeping mobs of fans away from famous celebrities. Both situations have different threats, but can be equally serious. In both situations you may need to protect against firearms.

Bulletproof vests come in different Levels according to [the National Institute of Justice's](#) (NIJ) world – leading ballistics testing. If you're faced with a mob of people, a crowded room or a dangerous neighbourhood, a handgun can be easily concealed and very deadly. A Level II vest offers protection against 9mm and .357 rounds, but for increased threats perhaps a Level IIIa vest is needed, which can also stop a .44 Magnum bullet. Vests at these levels and below are known as 'soft armors', as they use soft fabrics like Kevlar.

But perhaps a gun isn't likely to be pulled on your client. Knives and needles provide just as serious a threat, and are just as easily concealed if not more so in areas where guns cannot be taken. Stab and Spike proof vests are available that offer protection against these threats, graded by the [UK Home Office Scientific Development Branch \(HOSDB\)](#) as KR1 or KR2 (Knife-resistant), and SP1 or SP2 (Spike proof). It is also possible to get armor that can protect against multiple threats, which is helpful particularly in close quarters situations where you don't know whether you will face a knife or a gun.

All of these vests are available in covert styles, designed to be worn underneath clothing so you can remain discreet and blend in. This has the benefit of disguising your nature as a Security Operative, and also giving you free range of movement and breathability, as some manufacturers use breathable materials in their carriers. This means that vests can be worn comfortably for extended periods without impacting on performance.

Extreme Threats and High Risk Situations

Even the higher levels of armor are available in covert styles, meaning that extreme threats can be protected against in a discreet style. The modern Security Personnel have to fill multiple roles, and may find themselves in a higher risk situation. While protecting against extreme threats can be achieved with [covert armor](#), there are times when a show of strength is preferred to discretion, and choosing overt armor worn over the clothes will signal to potential attackers that you are prepared and willing to engage threats.

Higher grade armors are most often worn in overt styles, due to the extra weight and bulk that sometimes comes with the hard plates used. These are called 'hard armors' for this very reason, and are capable of protecting against even armor-piercing ammunition. Level III armors protect against 7.62mm rifle rounds, and Level IV can stop .30 caliber armor piercing (AP) ammunition. These 'hard armors' are significantly bigger and will restrict movement, and yet are vital in the many high risk situations a Security Operative will find themselves in. These also offer the added benefit of protecting against high temperatures, explosives and fragmentation.

Preparation is key to Security, and this is just as true in choosing the correct body armor. Soft armors can be comfortably worn under clothes, allowing Security Personnel to remain discreet and still protect against most handguns and edged weapons. The carriers for these armors also offer the option of adding harder plates, increasing protection without having to sacrifice discretion. For high risk Close Protection, this is vital. However, for those more dangerous scenarios hard armor is essential. Whatever the situation, making sure you choose the correct armor can allow you to be secure in your own protection and confident in your ability to do your job properly.