

Feb. 4, 2013

MEMORANDUM: From the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Compliance Testing Program (CTP)

SUBJECT: Microflex[®] Spike-Resistant Fabric Produced by Teijin Aramid

The CTP recently met with representatives from Teijin Aramid to discuss combination armor models (stab and ballistic) and the use of their material Microflex[®] in this type of armor. At this meeting, Teijin Aramid representatives provided the CTP with a letter they are providing to their clients that states, in part:

“Teijin Aramid has recently found evidence that, when vest manufacturers design a combination ballistic and spike protective vest using a Microflex and ballistic fabric construct, certain chemicals present in the spin finish of the ballistic yarns can migrate onto the Microflex corrections fabric. While the migration of the chemicals does not affect the physical structure of the yarns used for Microflex, at least with regard to certain combination vest designs, it appears to lead to a decrease in spike resistance of the Microflex combination vest construct over time.”

At this time, the NIJ CTP has identified all potentially affected combination armor models on the Compliant Product List for NIJ Standard 0115.00 and sent a request to each of the manufacturer's, asking them to:

1. Identify all combination armor currently listed on the NIJ Compliant Products List (CPL) for stab-resistant body armor. This includes combination armor tested in accordance with the previous version of the NIJ ballistic-resistant body armor standards.
2. Notify the NIJ CTP if they have manufactured any combination armor that could be impacted by this issue, and provide information as to:
 - How many models are affected.
 - How many fielded units are now in service for each model.
 - What course of action the manufacturer will take.

The CTP expects to have a response from all manufacturers of the affected armor in the next week. Please note that not all combination armor models are affected by the issue identified in the Teijin Aramid notice. Each manufacturer is responsible for evaluating their specific armor model(s) to determine if they are affected and to take appropriate action.

If an armor model has been determined to be affected by the issue identified by Teijin Aramid, NIJ will:

1. Remove the model's compliance status and withdraw it from all applicable NIJ CPLs.
2. Issue an NIJ Safety Notice for each model affected.

3. Require the manufacturer to notify the end users of all identified armor models of the safety concerns regarding that model.

Meanwhile, law enforcement and corrections officers are encouraged to continue to wear their armor, even if it is affected by this notice, until it is replaced.

If you have questions regarding this notice, please contact the CTP at (800) 248-2742 or email us at bactp@justnet.org.