

## **Ballistic Panel and Ballistic Carrier Care**

We at ATEK Defense Systems desire to ensure that your ballistic vest is properly taken care of. The use and care of your body armor vest is essential to maintaining its life, and yours, throughout the warranted period of the vest.

### **VEST ASSEMBLY (SHADOW, PRO-SHIELD, GUARDIAN)**

Remember, it is CRITICAL that the wearer ensures the ballistic panels are inserted into the carrier with the STRIKE FACE facing away from your body (opposite of the sticker). This is important because our ballistic panels are manufactured using a hybrid design with each layer performing a very specific task in a specific order. Improper insertion of a ballistic panel can result in serious injury or death.

- 1) Once you've determined the proper orientation for inserting ballistic panels, identify the Velcro pocket located at the bottom of the front and back carrier pieces, comprised of a high-strength hook and loop piece. Unhook the Velcro all the way to the edges of the carrier to ensure a large enough opening for the ballistic panel to insert.
- 2) Roll the ballistic panel from the left and right side, inward, and insert into carrier opening.
  - a. Ensure the ballistic panel is all the way into the carrier before maneuvering the rolled sides into their proper place.
  - b. Ensure the Velcro is properly closed, and the ballistic panel is flat inside the carrier.

### **ADJUSTING YOUR VEST**

- 1) It is always best to have someone assist you the first time you adjust your vest, however, if you are adjusting your vest for the first time by yourself, start by laying the front and back of your vest on a flat surface and loosely adhere the shoulder straps. Your vest may come with more than one set of shoulder and waist straps. However, only one set is needed, and the other set should be used as replacements when necessary.
  - a. Select the length of shoulder straps that would provide you with the most comfort.
- 2) Begin by raising the vest over your head. The front panel should rest on your chest and the back panel on your back.
- 3) Select the length of waist straps that would provide you with the most comfort. Loosely adhere the waist straps and connect the back panel to the front panel.
- 4) It is important to adjust your vest in a seated position. Once seated, re-adjust the shoulder and waist straps for comfort. Remember, the vest will only protect what it covers. Therefore, it is important that you adjust the vest so that it is not too low or too high. A basic guideline is to wear the vest one inch below the clavicle notch. In addition, a vest that is too long may be subject to heavy impact on the duty belt which can cause set wrinkles or curling when in a seated position.



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- 5) Ensure you have an even amount of front panel over rear panel overlap on each side of your vest. Your overlap provides you side ballistic protection. If your overlap protection is uneven, re-adjust the vest and straps to provide an even amount of protection.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **Note:** Remember not to wear your vest too tight as it may limit your mobility and cause unnecessary wear and tear on the ballistic panels.

## CARRIER CARE CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS (SHADOW, PRO-SHIELD, GUARDIAN)

- 1) To clean the carrier, REMOVE the ballistic panels and carrier straps.
- 2) Do NOT wash carrier straps with carrier. REMOVE STRAPS and HAND WASH SEPARATELY.
  - a. Lay straps flat to dry.
- 3) Preferred method: Handwash OR Machine wash carrier in mild detergent using GENTLE cycle at COOL temperature.
- 4) Do NOT use bleach OR fabric softener.
- 5) Carrier may be air-dried, or machine dried at LOW HEAT setting.
- 6) Do NOT dry clean.
- 7) Do NOT iron.
- 8) DO NOT use deodorizing sprays such as Febreze or Lysol – these sprays can damage or compromise the carrier material.
- 9) Do NOT machine wash the ballistic panels. Follow instructions on ballistic panel labels.
- 10) Inspect the carrier regularly for tears, loose stitching and excessive wear.

## BALLISTIC PANEL CARE CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS (ELITE AND STANDARD)

- 1) Remove ballistic pads from carrier.
- 2) Wipe ballistic panels with DAMP, soapy CLOTH.
- 3) Wipe ballistic panels with DAMP, clean CLOTH.
- 4) Stand panels upright and air dry OR lay flat to dry.
- 5) Do NOT machine wash or machine dry.
- 6) Do NOT bleach, dry clean or iron.
- 7) Inspect panels regularly for loose stitching, seam integrity, and excessive wear.
  - a. Immediately cease use if panel cover is compromised in any way<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> **Note:** Although the Elite ballistic panels have water resistance (in comparison with normal woven aramid fibers) outside of the water proof protective casing, taking care of the Elite ballistic panels as if it does have normal woven aramid fibers will allow for longer lifespan and reduces serious injury or death. Improper cleaning or use of ballistic panels can result in serious injury or death.

## STORAGE

Proper storage and frequent inspection of your vest can help you maintain the life of your armor.

- 1) Place armor vests in Carry Bag so they are flat.
- 2) Lay flat in cool, dry place when not in use.
- 3) Avoid storage in extremely cold, hot or moist conditions.
- 4) Do NOT hang concealable carriers.
- 5) Do NOT allow the ballistic pads to fold when storing<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> **Note:** These steps help maintain vest protective properties and prolongs vest life by protecting from environmental factors such as sunlight, UV light, moisture, etc.



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## CAPABILITIES AND LIMITATIONS

Ballistic panels are tested and rated to specific rounds only, and as such do not protect against all threats. A ballistic carrier alone, without ballistic panels, does not provide protection from any rounds. Exposed areas while wearing a carrier and panels are just that, exposed areas without protection. Always remember the ballistic carrier with ballistically rated panels is only bullet resistant, NOT bulletproof.

## INSERTING SPECIAL THREAT PLATES

Now that your vest is adjusted to your comfort level, feel free to add any additional armor accessories such as soft trauma inserts or special threat plates. Special threat plates are a great way to upgrade protection to your soft armor ballistic vest. Depending on the type of carrier you have you will either place these plates in an interior or an exterior pocket.

- 1) For a carrier with an exterior top-loading plate pocket, simply unhook the Velcro tab on the front of the carrier and insert the plate.
- 2) For a carrier with an interior bottom-loading plate pocket, unhook the Velcro used for the soft ballistic panel and insert the plate in front of the soft ballistic panel.

