



## Minimum Size Requirement for Limited Coverage Armor

### Background

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Compliance Testing Program (CTP) published Administrative Clarification CTP 2013:03 to address the needs expressed by those in the law enforcement community who required armor shapes with a “*significantly reduced perimeter to allow for additional concealability in covert operations or in situations where personnel (i.e. first responders, EMT’s firefighters, etc.) may not routinely wear armor or risk is low.*” The clarification details the requirements that participants of the NIJ CTP that offer a “limited coverage” shape must meet to maintain NIJ compliance for the specific armor model and to continue to be authorized to place the NIJ Mark on Limited Coverage Armor for that armor model.

As stated in the Administrative Clarification CTP 2013:03, the NIJ CTP considers full torso coverage to be, at a minimum, protection for the front, back and sides of the upper torso. Limited Coverage Armor shapes approved by the NIJ CTP that display the NIJ Mark shall continue to offer torso protection to the end user, but with a reduced outer perimeter. A key requirement identified in Administrative Clarification CTP 2013:03 is that the ballistic panels must be constructed identically to the samples supplied for initial type testing, regardless of the outside perimeter shape.

### Clarification

With this Administrative Clarification, the NIJ CTP is establishing a minimum size for the Limited Coverage Armor shapes for participants of the program that have models listed on the NIJ CPL that were tested to the requirements of the C1 – C5 armor template size ranges identified in NIJ Standard 0101.06. If an Applicant produces a Limited Coverage Armor shape smaller than the area of the C1 template identified in NIJ Standard 0101.06 Appendix C, Table 13, then the smallest production-sized Limited Coverage Armor shape that will be authorized by the NIJ CTP is 7 inches x 9 inches or an area of 63 square inches (Figure A). The NIJ CTP is establishing this minimum size to provide additional confidence that Limited Coverage Armor shapes smaller than the C1 template size provide ballistic performance comparable to the full torso version of the armor model on which the Limited Coverage Armor is based.

Even with smaller protective panels, it is important to note that the intent of Limited Coverage Armor remains the same as previously stated. Limited Coverage Armor that displays the NIJ Mark is intended to be worn on the torso but with a reduced outer perimeter in order to offer better concealability in covert situations. Panels that are designed to protect the end user’s extremities or to provide additional protection to existing torso worn

armor are considered accessories and are outside the scope of the NIJ CTP. *These types of accessories are not authorized to display the NIJ Mark.*

Additionally, limited coverage panels used as a component of an in-conjunction with system (ICW) (plates combined with limited coverage armor panels) are not considered to meet this requirement given the need to retain concealability. ICW plates should be paired with full torso coverage armor panels.

## **FIT Requirements**

With the publication of this Administrative Clarification, all Limited Coverage Armor shapes for individual NIJ CPL-listed models are eligible for Follow-up Inspection and Testing (FIT). Limited Coverage Armor shapes that meet the production area requirements for the C1 template production size will be subject to the same requirements identified in the FIT scheme document for the appropriate threat level.

For Limited Coverage Armor shapes smaller than the C1 template size, a reduced number of shots (for each threat level) will be placed on the panel in order to maintain the shot-to-shot and shot-to-edge requirements identified in NIJ Standard 0101.06. However, the number of armors required for FIT will remain the same (four panels). A minimum of two shots will be placed on the 7"x 9" (or equivalent production area) sized Limited Coverage Armor shape.

Limited Coverage Armor shapes that are larger than the minimum size (or production area), but are still smaller than the C1 template production area size will be subject to additional shots, depending on the shot-to-shot and shot-to-edge distance the panel offers. The remainder of the requirements identified in the FIT Scheme document will remain unchanged with the exception of the number of shots taken for the Limited Coverage armor shapes as mentioned above.

Furthermore, all Limited Coverage Armor shapes smaller than the C1 template size armor panel are required to complete an Initial Product Inspection (IPI) as a participant in the FIT program. This is in addition to the full torso counterpart of this armor model's being required to have an IPI. Once the IPI has been completed successfully, the Limited Coverage Armor shape is eligible for FIT as long as the armor is listed on the NIJ CPL and the Limited Coverage Armor shape is a part of the production of that model.

## **Existing CPL Listed Armor Models**

Existing ballistic-resistant armor models listed on the NIJ CPL that have Limited Coverage Armor shapes associated with them smaller than the C1 template production size will be required to complete a FIT for that armor shape within 90 days. If you are an Applicant of the program and currently offer a Limited Coverage Armor shape, please contact the NIJ CTP ([bactp@justnet.org](mailto:bactp@justnet.org)) to schedule this FIT.

## **FIT Template for Limited Coverage Armor**

Figure A below is a recommended shot pattern for the minimum size Limited Coverage Armor panel during FIT. The NIJ CTP recognizes that not all Limited Coverage Armor shapes will be shaped in the same way, but

Figure A provides guidance to the participants of the program for ballistic testing during FIT. It is anticipated that the shot pattern may be altered if the shape of the armor panel dictates it.

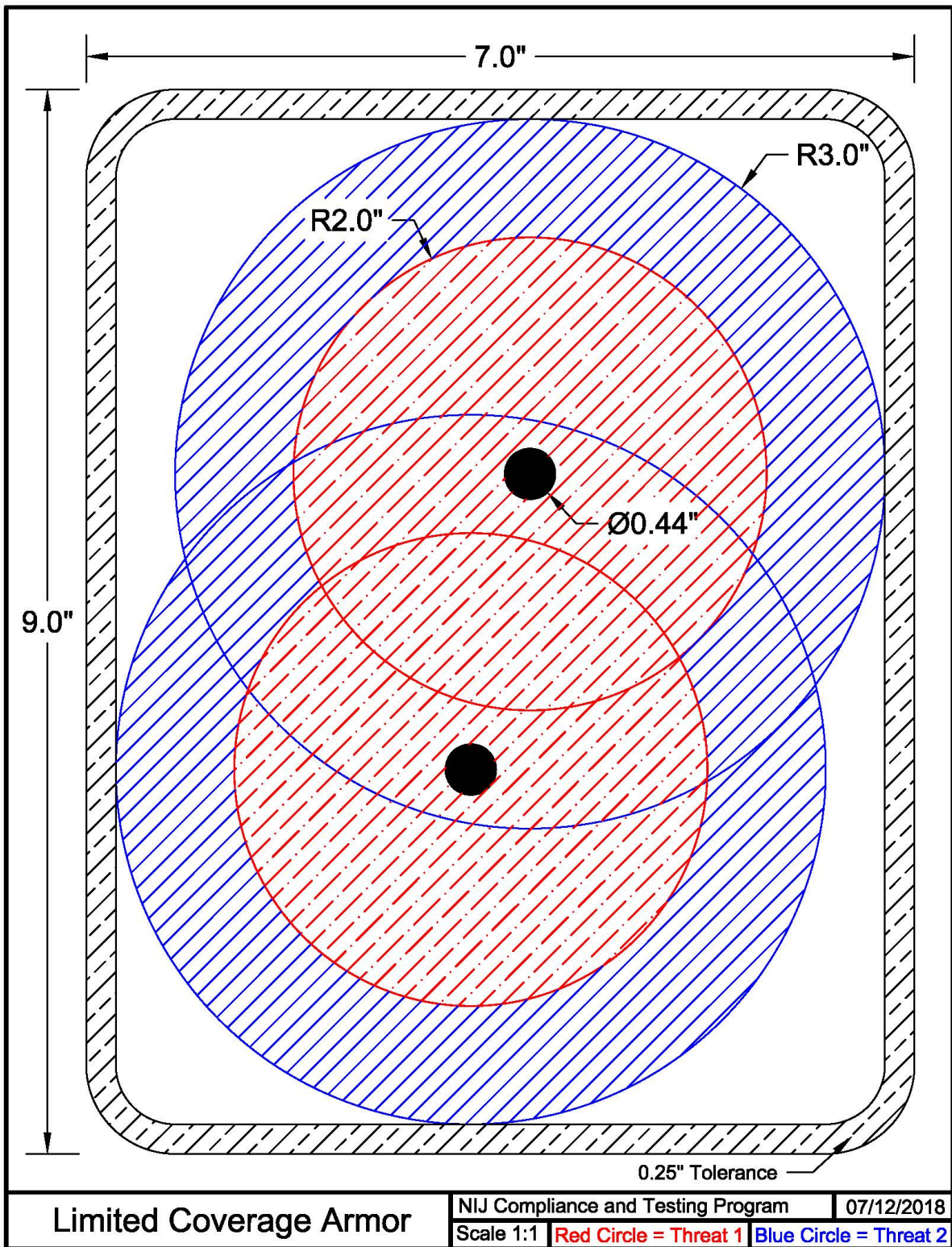


Figure A