

TACTICAL BLANKET SYSTEMS

Frequently Asked Questions about the Tactical Blanket Systems

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Why is called a Tactical Blanket and where did the name come from?

Start with where the name came from... on February 28, 1997, there occurred what has become known as the "North Hollywood Shoot-out". Officers drove into the line of fire to rescue a wounded officer. The inventor of the Tactical Blanket watched news coverage of this event as it unfolded and decided that a large, easily deployable, ballistic shield, large enough to "blanket" a cruiser would have made the rescue safer for the rescuing officers. That's when he began developing the Tactical Blanket. The product was originally referred to as "Instant Armor - A Field Deployed Armored Blanket" because of how quickly it could be deployed. The name eventually evolved into the Tactical Blanket Systems. The company name remains Instant Armor, Inc.

What is the difference in size between the two versions?

A fully deployed 8-panel 1st Responder is 51" tall by 9' wide. A 5-panel assembled TAC III+ is 48" tall by 8' wide. A single 1st Responder panel is 51" tall by 14" wide. A single TAC III+ panel is 48" tall by 20" wide.

What is the difference in weight between the two versions?

The 8-panel 1st Responder weighs ± 56 pounds. A 5-panel TAC III+ weighs ± 124 pounds. A single 1st Responder panel weighs ± 6 pounds. A single TAC III+ panel weighs ± 25 pounds.

What is the difference in deployment method?

The 1st Responder is fully assembled as it's stored in the Softcase. The TAC III+ must be assembled when removed from the case.

How long does it take to deploy a Tactical Blanket?

Because the 1st Responder is assembled in the Softcase, it can be deployed on either a vehicle or ready for team use in under 2 minutes. The TAC III+ needs to be assembled into the blanket configuration. It takes approximately 4 minutes for a single officer to assemble a 5-panel TAC III+ blanket.

Is the TAC III+ better than the 1st Responder?

Aside from the ballistic difference, the main difference is in availability. One is not necessarily better than the other. The 1st Responder is a "First Responder - Critical Incident" tool. It is specifically designed to fit easily in the trunk of a cruiser. It is intended to be stored in a Supervisor's vehicle, out on patrol. If a situation requires it, the Supervisor, and the 1st Responder can be on-scene within minutes.

Conversely, the TAC III+ is larger and heavier. It is designed for more of a "planned" operation, where your threat is anticipated ahead of time. The TAC III+ system is usually stored with other SWAT gear or in a specific Tactical Response vehicle.

Can either system be used as individual shields?

Yes. An individual 1st Responder panel, at 14" wide, is ideal for fitting into tight spaces like the narrow aisle of a bus or airplane, or hallway. Each 1st Responder panel has two handholds for single panel deployment. You can also use 2 or 3 (or more) panels as an individual shield.

The TAC III+ is really designed as a stand-alone shield that is part of a larger unit. Each TAC III+ panel includes the "Gladiator Grip™". This gripping design allows the user full, positive control of the panel with one hand. You can literally turn the panel 90° horizontal or hold it overhead. The major advantage here is that your other hand is free to use a weapon, flashlight, drag a victim, etc.

How are the individual panels attached together?

The panels of the 1st Responder are attached together with a full length, vertical Velcro hinge. Additionally, each panel is secured to the next with two horizontal securing straps.

The TAC III+ panels are attached together by means of three 5/16" machine bolts. These bolts are threaded on the ends only for quick insertion and extraction.

Can a bullet penetrate the Tactical Blanket where the panels are joined?

Unlikely, but always a possibility. The 1st Responder panels ballistically overlap each other 1". The TAC III+ panels ballistically overlap each other 2½". The respective panels have been tested by an independent laboratory to meet or exceed their stated NIJ standard.

Looking at the 1st Responder, if a bullet hits right on the edge of the underside of the overlap at an angle greater than 25°, it is possible for the round to penetrate the blanket. If a bullet hits the topside of the overlap at any angle, there would be no penetration. If this penetration did occur, the rounds velocity would be lessened and the trajectory would be altered.

Looking now at the TAC III+, the thickness, rigidity, and the method of attachment of the panels make for a very low probability of any penetration.

Two other concepts to keep in mind. First, all ballistic ratings are based on a specific bullet type, with a specific weight, traveling at a specific velocity. Any increasing variation in these specifications and the round no longer falls within the specified category. Second, the ballistic material we use in the Tactical Blanket Systems tend to absorb the energy as well as the projectile itself. We use no ceramic in our armor and, therefore, the risk of ricochet is almost non-existent.

What kind of ballistic material is in the Tactical Blankets?

In the 1st Responder, we use 100% Spectra Shield ballistic fabric manufactured by Honeywell. For the TAC III+ we use a highly effective, proprietary armor called Lexcel, manufactured by Armacel Armor Corporation.

Are the panels soft or rigid?

The armor panels for both versions of the Tactical Blanket are very rigid. In both cases, the individual layers are cut, stacked, and fused in a 900 ton, heated press.

Do I need the Pole set in order to keep the Tactical Blanket rigid?

The use of the Extension Pole set will help keep the deployed blanket in-line, straight and rigid. On the 1st Responder it also assists in maintaining the ballistic overlap of the panels.

Is there any other product like the Tactical Blanket System?

In a word...NO. The concept of the multi-panels Tactical Blanket is unique and protected by United States Patent.. No other product on the market comes close to the design concept or versatility of the tactical Blanket Systems.

Is the Tactical Blanket System available through distributors?

In the U.S. the Tactical Blanket Systems are available exclusively through the manufacturer. We have many Manufacturer's Reps around the country available to give demonstrations and answer your questions. All price quotes, orders, invoicing, production, and product shipping are handled from our main office in Simi Valley, California.

We do have a number of Foreign Distributors in countries around the world. You can find a current listing of our Manufacturer's Representatives and Foreign Distributors on our website at www.instantarmor.com.

What if I have a question you didn't answer here?

Call us... we'll answer it.

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