

## Police Product Test: Bullet Blocker Gabriel Ballistic Base Layer

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I don't know many cops these days who would consider hitting the streets without their body armor. The latest generation of body armor is much lighter and certainly more comfortable than the bulky vests of 20 years ago. That doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement or there aren't situations that call for something other than a traditional concealable vest. Bullet Blocker is a relatively new company that aims to make a big difference in both areas with its Gabriel "Ballistic Base Layer."

When the average cop thinks of body armor, we picture a couple of panels attached to each other with Velcro straps and worn under our uniform shirts. Most of us wear a synthetic, moisturewicking T-shirt under the armor to help keep us dry. This is the standard set-up and it works just fine. Bullet Blocker decided to combine the two and create what is essentially a performance T-shirt with NIJ-certified IIIA ballistic panels added to it. This eliminates the need for a vest carrier and the several additional layers of material that go

with it. It's pretty simple; less material means less heat retention. That's not the only benefit to the Gabriel design.

With a traditional vest, there's nothing holding the armor to the wearer's torso so the vest is free to move around independent of the officer's body. We all know how uncomfortable armor can be when you sit down and the panels end up in your throat. The Gabriel aims to eliminate that problem completely. As an added bonus, this design also gives the Gabriel a very low profile, making it ideal for undercover applications.

Each Gabriel is custom sized by a factory rep. Like for any other vest, they take your measurements and create a vest that is unique to your body for optimum fit. Mine arrived within a couple weeks and it fit like a glove. I opted for the black compression shirt, but the company offers white and tan as options as well. The carrier (or compression shirt?) is well made of very flexible moisture-wicking fabric and the seams are double stitched for durability. Each panel is removable for easy cleaning and the whole set-up weighs less than 5 pounds.

Similar to a traditional vest, the Gabriel is secured at each side with a heavy-duty zipper. Simply toss it over your head and zip up the sides. When Bullet Blocker says this is a compression shirt, they weren't joking. When zipped up, my vest was very snug and did take a bit to get used to. As I am no longer in a uniformed assignment, I wore my Gabriel for a few days under my normal work T-shirt and it was almost invisible. Bullet Blocker's claims of heat dissipation and a more secure fit both rang true and I can certainly appreciate the benefits of the Gabriel design in any law enforcement setting.

Like any body armor, the Gabriel is a life investment and priced accordingly. Bullet Blocker has set the retail price at just shy of \$1,000, which is actually on par with most other top-tier concealable vests out there today. If you're due for a new vest and want to shed some of the problems of traditional body armor, check out the Gabriel Ballistic Base Layer from Bullet Blocker at [www.bulletblocker.com](http://www.bulletblocker.com).

### **Bullet Blocker Gabriel Ballistic Base Layer**

- Extremely concealable, nearly invisible footprint.
- Tested to NIJ-STD-0101.06 IIIA standards
- Smart Fabric High Performance technology is anti-microbial to keep you cool, dry and comfortable.
- Anti-abrasion properties reduce impact acceleration to lessen the risk of injury
- Adjustment-free for more mobility
- No underarm cutting, shoulder bulk/pain, or irritation points • Velcro-free to ensure comfort and to prevent vest movement.
- Weight: approximately 4.5 to 5 pounds
- Colors: Black, white, nude, and custom colors available by request.
- Price: \$799 (Call for law enforcement pricing)
- [www.bulletblocker.com](http://www.bulletblocker.com)

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