



TOYOBO CO., LTD.

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Dear Valued Customers,

Five years ago, Zylon® was introduced to the American law enforcement community where it has been utilized extensively to provide remarkable ballistic protection at a low areal density or weight. Considered a breakthrough, Zylon is one of the highest performing fibers in the world and is almost universally acknowledged to be capable of producing the best bullet-resistant fabric in the world.

Ever since then, bullet-resistant vests have become significantly more wearable and the percentage of police officers wearing them has gone up.

The result: more lives saved!

Today, we are just as proud of Zylon as we were then. That is why we are continuing to produce Zylon. And, manufacturers are continuing to use it. Not only as a component in body armor, but as a component of more than 50 other products as well.

### **Zylon is Not a Defective Product**

In the past few weeks, however, one of the many manufacturers that use Zylon – Second Chance Body Armor, Inc. – raised questions about the effectiveness of the fiber. Specifically, it claimed that the Zylon in its own ballistic vests degraded more rapidly than it originally expected and acknowledged that its vests present an “officer safety issue.”

It is critical to note that no other body armor manufacturer has reported or experienced similar problems.

The fact is that like other fibers used for ballistic applications -- over time and under certain conditions -- Zylon’s tensile strength may experience degradation. Body armor manufacturers all know this and need to take it into account when developing the design of their vest, including weave pattern, the amount of fiber used, and the vest’s covering material.

We note that Second Chance manufactured and advertised its Ultima vest as the “lightest, thinnest . . . vest in the world.” We hope those who study the suitability of Zylon for ballistic applications -- including the National Institute of Justice -- will take into account the differences in individual vest design from the standpoint of performance over time.

Second Chance has characterized the failure of its products as a Zylon problem. We disagree. Indeed, Toyobo believes that Zylon itself is not a defective product.

### **Toyobo Tells All**

Toyobo has always advised manufacturers that all of Zylon’s characteristics should be taken into account when they design, engineer, produce and test their body armor products.

To assist them in this process, Toyobo conducts tests on the aging performance of the fiber itself and provides the results to the body armor industry, and has done so on a regular basis since at least

2001. We do not, however, test the ballistic performance of any individual Zylon-containing vest. That is up to the manufacturer to do.

For instance, soon after Toyobo completed the first round of its acceleration testing on Zylon, we shared the results of those tests with the body armor industry. In July 2001, Toyobo sent letters to manufacturers of body armor reporting that “the strength of Zylon fiber decreases under high temperature and humidity conditions.”

These results were also reviewed and discussed with various body armor manufacturers since July 2001. And, Toyobo reminded body armor manufacturers to bear these characteristics in mind when designing and testing their end products.

Using the information we provide about the fiber, individual body armor manufacturers determine whether Zylon is suitable for particular ballistic applications and how much Zylon must be incorporated in order to make the product safe for its ultimate use -- protection of the law enforcement community. And, the manufacturers determine how best to incorporate Zylon into their product, including such things as the number of plies used, the use, sequence and construction of various hybrid materials, the amount and location of stitching, the particular weave, and the composition and design of the ballistic panel covering.

### **Assisting the Justice Department**

In recent weeks, the U.S. Department of Justice announced that it would be conducting a review into the issue. We welcome that review.

In fact, we have submitted extensive testing data on Zylon fiber to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which is overseeing the efforts to maintain the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) body armor standards. We have provided the same materials for numerous attorneys general in an effort to ensure that these individual states have all the relevant material.

Toyobo is committed to full and open communication about Zylon, and we have encouraged all responsible body armor manufacturers to share their data and test results with the public as well. Moreover, we encourage all interested people and agencies to demand that where body armor manufacturers make claims that their Zylon-containing vests are unsafe, that those companies share all their test results as well. And, we look forward to the results of the government's testing effort.

### **Standing Behind Zylon**

Toyobo is proud of its dedication to safety. Moreover, Toyobo has always remained committed to fundamental principles of fairness and doing the right thing. That has not changed.

We know there are many people who literally stand behind our product. And, we want them to know that we stand behind it too.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Masakazu Saito', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Masakazu Saito  
General Manager, Zylon Department  
TOYOBO CO., LTD.