



**FROM:** MSA (Mine Safety Appliances Company)  
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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## **MSA Enters Market for Ballistic Body Armor**

*Company to Unveil New Line of Ballistic Vests at Police Chiefs Conference in Miami*

PITTSBURGH, September 23, 2005 – MSA (NYSE: MSA), the world’s leading manufacturer of sophisticated safety products, today announced it will unveil this weekend a new line of advanced ballistic body armor, marking the company’s entrée into the estimated \$140 million market for law enforcement ballistic protection. The new line of ballistic vests, which will be marketed and sold under the brand name ForceField™, will be showcased at the annual conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which begins Sunday in Miami, Fla.

“The development of a high-quality and dependable line of ballistic body armor supports our organic growth strategy and accelerates MSA’s presence and product line in the law enforcement market,” said Ron Herring, vice president and general manager of MSA’s Safety Products Division. “Over the past several months, there has been significant turmoil in this segment marked by product recalls, Chapter 11 filings and class-action lawsuits. The mission of MSA is to protect people when life is on the line. With our ForceField line, backed by the MSA name, we see an opportunity to restore stability to this segment and increase the level of confidence law enforcement officers have in their protective equipment.”

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The ForceField Body Armor line will feature two concealable ballistic vests and one over-the-uniform tactical vest designed for SWAT applications. Mr. Herring noted that all MSA vests exclude the use of Zylon® fiber, the ballistic material that has been the subject of scrutiny and numerous lawsuits throughout the law enforcement community. In August, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which tests and certifies ballistic body armor, removed all certifications for ballistic vests containing Zylon. This decision was made following tests the NIJ conducted on more than 100 used vests containing Zylon, which exhibited a failure rate of 58 percent.

The MSA line will feature vests made of DuPont Kevlar and Honeywell GoldFlex aramid products, two proven and highly reliable ballistic materials. Other differentiating features include an innovative concealable carrier design that enhances user comfort and stability, a Tri-T™ Comfort System that pulls moisture away from the body to improve comfort, and a patent-pending Armor-Latch™ Closure that provides reliable front-to-back overlap while allowing one-handed adjustment.

MSA's expertise in ballistic protection has gained recent recognition because of several ballistic helmet contracts secured with the U.S. Army. The company's Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH) is now the standard of issue for the Army and has been credited with saving several lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. The company is deploying the same resources for its ballistic body armor as it does for the ACH, which includes three ballistic testing labs, a staff of PhDs specializing in materials science and dozens of engineers dedicated to safety.

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“Our materials science and engineering capabilities are differentiating assets for MSA in this market,” Mr. Herring said. “With these resources MSA has the opportunity to improve product testing processes in ways that ensure compliance with NIJ standards and ultimately provide police officers with a higher degree of confidence in the product they’re wearing.”

The ForceField line of ballistic body armor complements MSA’s already broad range of products geared for law enforcement applications. In addition to ballistic vests, MSA offers a law enforcement version of the Advanced Combat Helmet, thermal imaging cameras, hand-held and transportable hazard detection instruments and a broad range of respiratory protective equipment – including the first gas mask to receive government approval for protection against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents.

“Our goal is to protect the protectors from head to toe, with helmets, body armor, instrumentation and respiratory protective devices that deliver superior performance and reliability,” Mr. Herring said. “We look forward to meeting the future body armor needs of police departments in the U.S. and around the world.”

*Established in 1914, MSA is a global leader in the development, manufacture and supply of sophisticated safety products that protect people's health and safety. Sophisticated safety products typically integrate any combination of electronics, mechanical systems and advanced materials to protect users against hazardous or life-threatening situations. The company's comprehensive line of products is used by workers around the world in the fire service, homeland security, construction and other industries, as well as the military. Principal products include self-contained breathing apparatus, gas masks, gas detection instruments, head protection, respirators and thermal imaging cameras. The company also provides a broad range of consumer and contractor safety products through retail channels. These products are marketed and sold under the MSA Safety Works brand. MSA has annual sales of more than \$850 million, manufacturing operations throughout the United States and Europe, and more than 30 international locations. Additional information is available on the company's Web site at [www.msanet.com](http://www.msanet.com).*