

Statements on Protection from and against Ballistics from the International Window Film Association

The International Window Film Association (IWFA) has the utmost concern about any written specification or recommendation that would call for the use of any type of window film, such as a safety or security film, as a primary component of a “bullet-resistant glazing”. Safety/security films are being used *in conjunction with* various designed and tested bullet resistance glazings, but primarily as a “spall shield” to reduce the “spalling” off of small fragments of the glazings on the interior side in the event of being penetrated by ballistics.

Our industry believes there are adequate and acceptable standards and methods for testing of products as protection against ballistics. Since window films are an addition to a glazing and not intended for use as the glazing itself, we firmly believe that an individual glazing should be tested both with and without film installed on it for any comparison of improvement in total performance. In some cases, we have seen demonstrations or claims that the use of film imparted some bullet resistant value when, in fact, the glazing itself without film had almost those same bullet resistant qualities. Extreme caution should be taken, however, to make sure that any claims about performance due to the addition of a film layer clearly state the specifics of the glazing itself as supplied by the glazing manufacturer, the specifics of the film itself as supplied by the film manufacturer, and all relevant specifics of the ballistics used and the conditions of the test. Any attempt to imply performance due to the application of the film under any other conditions (different manufacturer, different glazing, different ballistics, different conditions), we believe, would be irresponsible as the margin for error could be one of life safety.

Recently, the National Glass Association working with ASTM helped develop a new test standard, known as ASTM F3561-22, for evaluation of forced-entry-resistance of fenestration systems after a simulated ballistic attack. This standard tests full OEM assemblies for windows and doors. The ASTM F3561-22 test method was not designed to evaluate retrofit building window film that would be applied to existing door/entry or window glass. The differences in glass type, thickness, framing, locking mechanisms, and structural components makes this standard not applicable for retrofit solutions. Using this standard in a bid specification or submittal is not appropriate and likely misleading.

Darrell Smith
Executive Director