

## Rip-Curl S-Bomb – Review

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### \$399 POWER HEATED VEST

RIP CURL has added a new dimension to their mountain-wear range with an electronically heated soft shell vest called the **S-Bomb**.



RIP CURL has been making mountain-wear since the mid-'80s, often transferring technology and ideas from their world-leading wetsuit range. The idea for the S-Bomb came from the research involved in the development of the **H-Bomb** wetsuit, the world's first heated wetsuit, which RIP CURL launched last year.

However, unlike the H-Bomb wetsuit, there are no coils or wiring involved in the S-Bomb technology. The exo<sup>2</sup> powered heating system is based on a material called FabRoc™, which is used in the aerospace industry and is extremely efficient in generating heat from a low voltage source.

FabRoc™ panels are sown into the S-Bomb vest to provide direct heat to your body in certain key areas and also to transfer warmth through your body via the bloodstream. The heat panels are pre-set to a maximum surface temperature of 113°F. It is not possible to overheat FabRoc™ as it automatically uses less power as it reaches its operating temperature.

The S-Bomb vest material is a bonded fleece soft shell, which maintains thermal warmth, is windproof and water-resistant. The power comes from a re-chargeable battery pack that sits in a front pocket of the vest. It provides three hours of continuous uses at full power or six hours on half power.

When we used the S-Bomb vest last winter we found the best results were from switching the battery off and on. The switch is located on the collar of the vest, allowing easy access to control the temperature. You press and hold the switch for three seconds to change the power setting or to turn it on or off. The switch glows red on full power and flashes when on half power. We used the vest in Thredbo during a blizzard with a wind-chill of 5°F, turning it on while riding the T-bar, turning it off while skiing. It worked perfectly, maintaining warmth and comfort, the whole afternoon.

It was also used during a night competition where there was a lot of standing around at 19°F. We'd turn it on for 15 minutes, and then turn it off for another 20 minutes before turning on again.

The vest is light and is best worn over a base layer and under a quality shell or lightweight jacket. It has plenty of applications for a number of outdoor activities, but is a winner for skiers and snowboarders. It will also be a hit for racers, coaches, snowmakers and anyone else who has to spend time working on the mountain.

The S-Bomb retails at \$400, but when you compare it to paying the same for a bulky puffer vest, buying the S-Bomb is a no brainer.