

**Las Cruces Police Department**  
**GENERAL ORDERS**  
**EMERGENCY OPERATIONS VOLUME 4**  
**GO-403 WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (Daily)**  
**Revised 05/13/2005**

**403 WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

**DISCUSSION**

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) pose a great threat to first responders and require a unique and extraordinary police response. Often times, officers may not know that they are responding to such an incident when dispatched. Officers should be aware of signs and symptoms of any victims and should be mindful that any emergency could involve a weapon of mass destruction, particularly unknown trouble, explosions or medical emergencies. It is imperative that the responding officer/supervisor solicit as much information as possible from MVRDA, victims and witnesses in order to properly ascertain whether the call may involve WMD material.

**403.01 DEFINITIONS**

**Weapons of Mass Destruction** – Any destructive item/device that incorporates explosives, toxic chemicals, biological materials, radiological materials, or nuclear materials, and is designed to inflict mass casualties and destruction of human life and/or property.

**Biological Weapons** – Items or devices containing disease causing microorganisms or toxins derived from or produced by living organisms.

**Chemical Weapons** – Items or devices containing toxic chemicals designed to kill victims by attacking systems of the human body. Chemical agents include: Nerve Agents, Blood Agents, Choking Agents, and Blister Agents.

**Explosive/Incendiary Weapons** – Items or devices that contain explosive or incendiary material and are designed to inflict injury and property damage.

**Radiological Weapons** – Items or devices that contain and emit radiation, causing immediate and long-term human tissue damage and health effects.

**Nuclear Weapons** – Items or devices containing radioactive nuclear material with the ability to cause widespread catastrophic explosive damage and wide release of radioactive material.

**WMD Incident** – When a weapon of mass destruction has been used and/or a known chemical, biological, or radiological substance is present.



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**WMD Threat** – Any threat received whether verbal, nonverbal, or written that indicates the potential use of chemical, biological, radiological, explosive/incendiary or nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

**Suspicious Package/Device** – Any package or device that is reported to be unusual in nature due to any of the following factors: location, size, shape, odor, wrapping, markings, no known origin, etc.

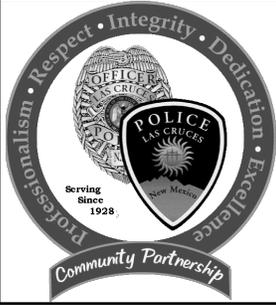
**Suspicious Substance** – Any substance that is emitted from or contained within a suspicious package. These substances may be liquid, solid or gas in nature.

**403.02 INITIAL RESPONSE TO WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

A. Responsibilities of the first responding officer:

B. If an officer responds to an incident which involves chemical, biological, radiological, explosive/incendiary, or nuclear materials he/she should do the following:

1. Notify MVRDA immediately that you suspect WMD materials and the type of material you suspect may be present.
2. Relay signs and symptoms of victims to MVRDA.
3. Be alert for visual signs of clouds of dust, liquid or gaseous materials in the area.
4. Do not enter an area you believe to be contaminated.
5. Take appropriate self-protection measures. Police Vehicle windows and air vents should be closed prior to responding to a suspected WMD incident. The vehicles PA system when possible should be used to direct victims fleeing the incident to decontamination location or areas where initial triage can safely occur outside the hot zone(s).
6. Be aware of secondary devices that may be designed to kill/incapacitate first responders.
7. Isolate area if possible.
8. Stay upwind and uphill if possible.



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9. Do not perform first-aid on person who you believe may have been exposed to chemical or radiological materials because you may become a victim yourself.
10. Solicit as much information as possible from victims and/or witnesses.
11. Take note of your surroundings and any suspicious persons, vehicles, aircraft, or incidents that may be present or occurring.

**403.03 NOTIFY MVRDA AND REQUEST ADDITIONAL RESPONDERS**

A. The first responding officer should ensure that Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority requests (the appropriate additional responders):

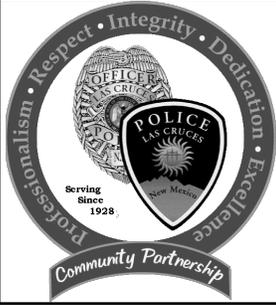
1. The Las Cruces Fire Department
2. Dona Ana County Sheriff's Department Bomb Squad
3. Fort Bliss Disposal Unit
4. State Police
5. FBI
6. Shift Lieutenant

B. The following information should be relayed to MVRDA as soon as it becomes available:

1. Location of the incident
2. Command post location
3. Victim signs/symptoms if known
4. Type of material suspected (i.e. chemical, biological, radiological, etc.)

**403.04 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. Generally, there will be a unified command of WMD incidents until the scene is stabilized and victims are removed and/or decontaminated. The first responding



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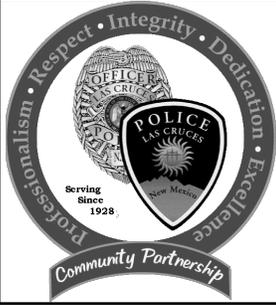
supervisor will be responsible for managing police resources until relieved by a higher ranking supervisor. The primary responsibility of the Department is response to a WMD incident is to establish and maintain a perimeter outside the contaminated area in order to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Prevent other persons from entering the contaminated area.
  2. Prevent contaminated or potentially contaminated persons from leaving the area.
  3. Maintain crowd and traffic control outside the contaminated area.
  4. Preserve and protect the crime scene as best as possible.
- B. Departmental supervisors will work with other agencies incident commanders to establish the following:
1. Location of command post.
  2. Location of perimeter and hot, warm, and cold zones.
  3. Location of decontamination area and decontamination procedures.
  4. Location and availability of first aid.
  5. Necessary safety precautions for responding police officers such as personal protective equipment and the potential for secondary devices. Position personnel and vehicles appropriately.

NOTE: Although the FBI is charged with crises management for a WMD incident, they will rely on local first responders for initial management and response. The Department will work with the FBI on additional consideration as necessary.

**403.05 DECONTAMINATION PROCEDURES**

- A. If an officer believes that he/she may have been contaminated and/or is exhibiting symptoms of chemical or radiological material, he/she should notify MVRDA or other first responders in the area if possible, and should proceed to the safe decontamination area if possible. Normal decontamination procedures include:
1. Removal of all clothing.



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2. Showering with large amounts of water.
3. Administrations of prophylactics and/or drugs which can counter act the effects of chemical agents.

**403.06 WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION - THREATS**

- A. An officer may be dispatched to an incident in which use of a weapon of mass destruction has been threatened; however, no known event has occurred and there are not known casualties. If a suspicious substance or device is present and threat has been received, officers should follow the guidelines listed below when responding to such incidents:
1. Isolate the area and do not enter an area where a suspicious substance / device may be present.
  2. Notify MVRDA and request that a supervisor and other appropriate responders (bomb squad, fire department, etc.)
  3. LCFD HAZ MAT should be requested if necessary.
  4. Keep those who have been potentially exposed to a suspicious substance isolated at the scene until medical personnel have evaluated them or the incident has been deemed safe.
  5. If possible, those exposed should wash exposed areas with soap and water.
  6. Solicit as much information from witnesses about the threat and suspicious substance as possible (i.e., suspect actions, substance color, odor, and form such as liquid, gas solid, powder).
  7. If there is no suspicious package or device present but a threat of a WMD incident has been received, the officer shall notify his/her supervisor and MVRDA. MVRDA shall notify the Shift Lieutenant. An offense report shall be completed for further investigative action.