



**Las Cruces Police Department**  
**GENERAL ORDERS**  
**FIELD OPERATIONS VOLUME 2**  
**GO-260 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE (MOST CRITICAL)**  
**Revised 1/7/2013**

**260 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to outline procedures and guidelines for employees responding to hazardous materials incidents.

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Las Cruces Police Department (LCPD) to provide immediate response for emergencies involving the release of hazardous materials whether intentional or accidental.

**APPLICABILITY**

This General Orders applies to all employees who may respond to a hazardous material incident. This General Order supersedes all previous versions.

**REFERENCES**

- CALEA N/A
- NMML N/A
- NMSA 1978 Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Act, 12-12-17 thru 12-12-30
- Department of Transportation Emergency Response Book (Current Edition)  
<http://phmsa.dot.gov/staticfiles/PHMSA/DownloadableFiles/Files/Hazmat/ERG2012.pdf>

**DEFINITIONS**

**Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)** - Any waste, substance or other material, alone, mixed with, or in combination with other wastes or materials, which because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics: 1) Causes, or significantly contributes to, an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or 2) Poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of or otherwise improperly managed. Hazardous Material also means any waste, substance, or other material defined as a hazardous waste in the rules and regulations proclaimed pursuant to the federal "Solid Waste Disposal Act" (42 United States Code 3251), or as otherwise specified in Colorado Revised Statutes under Title 18, Article 13.



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**260.01 GENERAL PROCEDURES**

- A. Primary officer duties upon being dispatched and/or locating a HAZMAT incident includes, but is not limited to:
1. The primary officer assigned to the call shall respond to the scene using proper response procedures to ensure his/her own personal safety. Officers shall avoid entering the effected area without protective equipment. (The rule of thumb for hazardous materials response is to approach from upwind and uphill.)
  2. Upon arrival, the officer shall size up the incident and attempt to determine the nature and extent of the incident. Information about the hazardous material such as liquid, vapor, gas should be relayed as well as any placard information. Officers should carry the most current edition of the Department of Transportation Emergency Responders Guide in their vehicles at all times.
  3. Request additional resources such as the Las Cruces Fire Department (LCFD) HAZMAT Team, and EMS based upon an initial size up of the situation.
  4. Notify the on-duty supervisor of the potential HAZMAT incident and request that the New Mexico State Police (NMSP) be informed of the HAZMAT incident and dispatch an officer to coordinate the HAZMAT response plan.
  5. Inform additional responding units and agencies of the temporary command post and staging area as well as a safe route of entry, wind direction, and any other pertinent safety information available.
  6. The primary officer shall abide by the following safety protocols:
    - a. Approach and take a position upwind, upstream, and uphill from the incident. **Do not** approach the immediate hazard, handle, or touch any items or victims.
    - b. Observe the scene from a safe distance and remain cognizant of any visible clouds, leaks, spills, odors, vapors, or gases seen or perceived.
    - c. From a safe distance observe the locations and conditions of possible victims.
    - d. Watch for clues to include, but not limited to: conditions of vehicles, buildings, or people in the area and/or containers, shape, size, condition, color, markings, placards or labels and/or, condition of animals and foliage.



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- e. Consider the possibility of secondary devices or hazards.
  - f. Notify the dispatch and responding units of known and possible hazards identified.
  - g. Determine exact location of incident and secure a radio channel for communications.
  - h. Communicate information gathered regarding the incident to the on-duty supervisor.
  - i. Establish incident command and assume command of the scene until the arrival of a supervisor.
  - j. Establish a perimeter and evaluate need to evacuate nearby people or structures.
  - k. Protect the scene, restricting access only to essential / qualified personnel inside the perimeter.
  - l. Identify locations of known victims, if possible.
  - m. Establish a central triage area for victims and advise incoming medical units of the location.
  - n. Establish a holding area for contaminated victims and witnesses. Do not attempt to rescue victims within a contaminated area without proper personal protective equipment (PPE). Verbal instructions may be used to direct ambulatory victims out of the contaminated area into the appropriate holding area.
  - o. Identify victims and witnesses and secure them.
  - p. Maintain command of the scene until the arrival of a supervisor.
  - q. Transfer command through a complete face to face situation briefing to the supervisor. Notify dispatch and all personnel on scene when command has been transferred.
- B. Secondary officers shall assist the primary officer as directed following the safety procedures outline above.



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- C. The first supervisor on scene shall act as Incident Commander (IC) or represent the department as part of a unified command and control the scene until incident is turned to LCFD. In all cases, transfer of incident command shall be through a thorough face to face situation briefing. Dispatch and all personnel on scene shall be notified when command has been transferred. The command transfer briefing should include:
1. A summary of all actions taken by the initial responders, resources on scene, and the Incident Commander.
  2. A list of identified hazards and potential hazards as well as information pertaining to possible contamination, victims, suspects and witnesses.
  3. Evaluation of actions initiated during the response.
  4. A list of personnel and assets on scene as well as their assignments.
  5. The identification and location of operational areas already established i.e.: staging, triage, holding areas, evacuation centers and perimeters.
  6. Information regarding any evacuations already completed as well as anticipated evacuations.
  7. Availability of additional resources including those enroute or in staging.
- D. Upon transfer of command, the Incident Commander shall continuously evaluate the ongoing operations and evaluate the need for additional manpower and/or activation of additional ICS positions to maintain an effective span of control.
- E. Ensure establishment of an Incident Command Post to include unified or area command as needed.
- F. Establish a temporary evacuation site in coordination with LCFD. Further long-term arrangements can be coordinated with the Office of Emergency Management and the Red Cross.
- G. Coordinate with other responding emergency personnel.
- H. Notify and/or update the on-duty supervisors, shift Lieutenant, Deputy Chief, and LCFD, as necessary.



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- I. Establish manpower needs and duty rotation for the incident.
- J. Notify the Public Information Officer (PIO).
- K. Establish a media area.
- L. Maintain command of scene until relieved by the LCFD Hazmat Team or another appropriate responder.
- M. In the event contaminated individuals are transported from the scene the Incident Commander shall be notified and the dispatch center should notify area hospitals and medical facilities immediately.

**260.02 DECONTAMINATION OF LCPD EMPLOYEES**

- A. In the event an LCPD employee becomes contaminated or is suspected to have been contaminated during a Hazmat incident, no attempt to decontaminate the employee shall be initiated by untrained personnel.
- B. The Incident Commander, Hazmat Team leader, and Emergency Medical personnel shall be notified immediately.
- C. Decontamination operations will be performed by properly trained personnel using appropriate PPE.
- D. Employees who have not been decontaminated will not be transported from the scene.

**260.03 TRANSPORTATION OR ACCEPTANCE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND LIMITATIONS**

- A. The disposal of hazardous waste or hazardous materials is normally the financial and legal responsibility of the owner of the land upon which the material is located, and/or the person in possession or control of the material.
- B. Employees shall not take possession of hazardous materials for disposal with the following exceptions:
  - 1. Small arms ammunition and fireworks as evidence
  - 2. Typical household chemicals, when properly sealed in their containers, when needed as evidence in a crime



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- C. Employees shall not transport unknown and unclassified chemicals. When unknown or hazardous materials are encountered, the LCFD shall be contacted for assistance.
- D. When employees come in contact with hazardous waste material (e.g., chemicals and solvents) that do not pose an immediate health hazard, the officer will be instructed to contact the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) Small Business Ombudsman hot line at 1-800-368-5888 as provided for in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

**260.04 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL IDENTIFIED AS AN EXPLOSIVE**

If the hazardous material is an explosive or an explosive device, the Dona Ana County Sheriff's Department Bomb Squad or other area bomb squad shall be notified.

**260.05 RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES**

- A. Upon notification of suspicious package, the responding officer shall conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if the minimum criteria for a credible threat exist.
- B. Minimum criteria for credible threat:
  - 1. Letter or package with suspicious material present (opened or unopened)
    - a. Excessive tape or string
    - b. Lopsided or uneven shape
    - c. Possibly mailed from a foreign country.
  - 2. Powder spilling, substance leaking or staining
    - a. Oily stains, discoloration or crystallization on wrappers
    - b. Strange odor
    - c. Protruding wires
  - 3. Letter or package with an articulated threat (opened or unopened). A substance or device need not be present.



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C. Responding officers shall:

1. Verify that minimum criteria exist to support a credible threat / potential incident.
2. Take every precaution to reduce the possibility of exposure to personnel and civilians.
3. Initiate the Incident Command System and notify the Chain of Command.
4. Confer with appropriate LCFD personnel with regard to establishing a safe perimeter.
5. Develop an evacuation plan, if necessary.
6. Establish a safe outer perimeter.

D. If the minimum criteria for a credible threat are not present, the responding officer shall take reasonable efforts to properly dispose of the package and make a report regarding the incident.

E. In the event of an exposure, personnel shall decontaminate as necessary and follow reporting procedures set forth by Risk Management.

**260.06 EXPOSURE TO BIOLOGICAL AGENTS**

A. Employees exposed to a biological agent while on duty shall:

1. Immediately seek medical treatment.
2. Notify their supervisor as soon as practical.
3. Advise dispatch to contact the LCFD Hazardous Materials Response Team.
4. If the LCFD Hazardous Materials Response Team is present, employees shall follow all decontamination procedures as determined by LCFD personnel.
5. The contaminated area shall be secured.

B. Personnel who suspect exposure to a biological agent shall decontaminate as necessary and follow reporting procedures set forth by Risk Management.



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**260.07 ANIMALS IN SUSPECTED CONTAMINATED AREAS**

Animals in contaminated areas shall be allowed to evacuate with their owners. When owners are not present, the animals shall be kept in place. Animal control officers (ACO) are not trained or equipped for entering a suspected hazardous material contaminated area. ACO shall not be directed to enter any suspected hazardous area prior to their supervisor, in consultation with LCFD, assessing the potential risk. If there is danger of contamination or risk of injury the ACO shall not enter.