



**Las Cruces Police Department  
GENERAL ORDERS  
ADMINISTRATION VOLUME 1  
GO-110 BALLISTIC VESTS (Daily)  
Revised 04/19/2011**

**110 BALLISTIC VESTS**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide uniformed members of the Las Cruces Police Department with guidelines for the proper use and care of ballistic vests.

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Las Cruces Police Department to maximize officer safety through the use of the ballistic vest in combination with prescribed safety procedures. While ballistic vests provide a significant level of protection, it is not a substitute for the observance of officer safety procedures.

**APPLICABILITY**

This General Order applies to all employees of the Las Cruces Police Department authorized to wear a ballistic vest. This General Order supersedes all prior versions.

**110.01 DEFINITIONS**

**Ballistic Vest** - An article of protective clothing composed of individual layers of material designed to catch the bullet and spread its momentum over a larger portion of the body to minimize injury from being hit by a fired bullet. Some types of vests may be augmented with metal (steel or titanium), ceramic or polyethylene plates that provide extra protection to vital areas.

**110.02 CARE AND MAINTENANCE**

- A. It shall be the responsibility of each officer to properly maintain and care for his / her ballistic vest. Departmental employees will care for their ballistic vest as prescribed by the manufacturer's instructions.
- B. When worn as an undergarment, the ballistic vest tends to accumulate mildew, fungus, body oils, body odor and becomes unsanitary. Although Kevlar is very durable, heavy use and marginal care could result in unexpected rapid decay, diminishing the protection capacity of the vest. Each officer is responsible for periodically inspecting, cleaning, and maintaining his / her ballistic vest. The ballistic vest should be cleaned with mild detergent on a bi-weekly basis.



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- C. Officers are responsible for reporting damage or excessive wear to the ballistic panels or cover to their immediate supervisor.

**110.03 DEPARTMENT ISSUED VEST**

- A. Officers will be issued one department-approved ballistic vest, unless an additional ballistic vest is approved by the Chief of Police or his designee. Ballistic vests will be fitted to each officer by a designated department employee. Officers may, at their own expense, purchase and wear ballistic vests meeting or exceeding department standards with the approval of the Chief of Police.
- B. When a new ballistic vest is issued, the old vest must be turned in to the Evidence Unit.

**110.04 MANDATORY WEARING OF BALLISTIC VEST**

- A. Uniformed personnel shall wear their ballistic vest at all times while routinely engaged in field duties and on the pistol range.
- B. Non-uniformed commissioned personnel will have the option of wearing the ballistic vest, except in the following cases:
  - 1. In a raid or search warrant situation (any pre-planned high- risk duty).
  - 2. In a hostage, barricaded suspect or sniper situation.
  - 3. On the shooting range.
  - 4. Any other instance when wearing of the vest may be needed for protection.
  - 5. When directed by a supervisor.
- C. An officer may be exempt from wearing a ballistic vest when the officer is engaged in undercover or plain-clothes work that his/her supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing of the ballistic vest. Officers choosing not to wear their ballistic vest while undercover or plain-clothes work shall have their ballistic vest readily available in the officer's assigned vehicle when practicable.
- D. Use of a ballistic vest off-duty is at the discretion of the off-duty officer.