



## VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

*Jason Salazar, Chief of Police*

Elizabeth Jones, P.I.O./Media and Communications Manager  
(559) 713-4370 (office) / (559) 713-4807 (fax)  
elizabeth.jones@visalia.city

\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\*

November 21, 2025

### **Loaded Guns and Drugs Recovered After Driver Fails to Yield and Crashes in Visalia**

At around 8:45 p.m. tonight, a Visalia Police Officer attempted to stop a vehicle near Court Street and Shannon Parkway for expired registration. The driver did not yield and continued for roughly two blocks before entering a closed construction zone, where the vehicle crashed into a small ditch near Shannon Parkway and Santa Fe.

The driver, identified as 36-year-old Refugio Ortega, ran from the scene. Officers chased him and took him into custody a short distance away. While running away, Ortega discarded two loaded firearms and methamphetamine, which officers recovered.

Ortega was found to have five outstanding warrants and was driving under the influence of alcohol. A large quantity of marijuana was also located inside the vehicle.

Two 36-year-old female passengers in the car suffered minor injuries and received medical treatment.

Ortega is being medically cleared prior to being booked on charges including possession of burglary tools, felon in possession of a firearm, prohibited person in possession of ammunition, resisting arrest, providing false identification, DUI causing injury, possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia, driving on a suspended license, possession of marijuana for sale, possession of a firearm with altered serial numbers, hit-and-run causing injury, and failing to yield to an officer.

