

CITY OF OAK POINT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY POLICE OPERATIONAL POLICIES and PROCEDURES

POLICY: 7.20 PRISONER RESTRAINTS

REVISED DATE: 11.19.13

I. POLICY

The officer's responsibility for the safe custody of prisoners permits some discretion in the use of handcuffs and restraining devices. The department requires officers to observe their own safety and that of the people they transport by carefully utilizing restraints on prisoners (except children) who must be taken to a jail or other location. See also Policy 7.19, Transporting Prisoners.

II. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the use of handcuffs and other restraining devices.

III. PROCEDURES - Arrested Persons

A. General

1. Officers shall handcuff all arrested adults unless the application of handcuffs will aggravate or cause injury due to age, infirmity, physical condition or prior injury. If a prisoner is not handcuffed, they shall be transported in a vehicle with a prisoner cage and have had the rear locks disabled. Officers must be able to justify exceptions without unduly risking safety.
2. Juveniles generally should not be handcuffed unless they have been taken into custody for a violent offense, pose an escape risk, or where the officer reasonably believes handcuffing is necessary for the safety of the juvenile or officer.

B. Handcuffs

1. In most circumstances safety concerns mandate that arrested subjects should be handcuffed. Officers must be able to justify exceptions without unduly risking safety. Some possible exceptions are:

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- a. Children under 10 years of age;
 - b. Pregnant females;
 - c. Handicapped or disabled suspects; or
 - d. Elderly suspects.
2. Normally, officers shall handcuff a subject with the hands in back, but he may choose to handcuff hands in front due to the suspect's handicap or disability. If handcuffed in the front, officers should attempt to secure the handcuffs to the body by use of a belt or plastic tie if possible.
 3. When a suspect is handcuffed, officers must double lock the handcuffs. This will help ensure prisoner and officer safety. Double locking reduces the chance of picking the lock or of the handcuff accidentally tightening, further restricting circulation.
 4. Officers shall apply the handcuffs according to recognized professional standards, always striving to avoid hard strikes to wrists with handcuffs and over-tightening of handcuffs.
 5. Individuals will not be handcuffed to any portion of a police vehicle during transport.

C. Body Belt

The body belt allows the officer to handcuff the prisoner in front, yet restricts the movement of the prisoner's arms and hands. The body belt will be used when the officer deems it appropriate.

D. Ankle Shackles

Ankle shackles shall be used by officers when transporting any prisoner they have reason to believe might be an escape risk or when circumstances deem it appropriate.

E. Plastic Handcuffs

Plastic handcuffs shall be used when officers take several prisoners into custody, or when a prisoner requires multiple

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restraints. Officers must understand that, once applied, plastic handcuffs can only be removed with a knife, scissors, or other cutting instrument.

F. Hobble Technique

1. The hobble technique refers to the use of a hobble device to secure a prisoner's feet while in transport in a police car. It involves looping a rope around the prisoner's ankles and then extending the other end of the device onto the door jam and then shutting the door, thus holding the prisoner's feet in place.
2. The hobble device should only be applied to a prisoners legs when the officer feels that the prisoner poses an imminent threat of physical harm to himself or another with the use of his feet or legs, or when the prisoner attempts to damage the inside of the patrol car during transport.
3. A prisoner that requires the hobble device requires a two officer transport so that one officer can monitor the status of the prisoner while in transport, e.g. prevent prisoner head strikes against window etc.

IV. PROCEDURES - Persons not arrested

- A. If officers have a reasonable suspicion that an individual has been involved in a violent offense, handcuffs may be applied to potential suspects while officers investigate an incident. Officers should be able to articulate the reasons for their safety concern. Persons not arrested but who are subject to investigative detention may be restrained under the following circumstances.
 1. Suspects shall be handcuffed only as long as necessary to accomplish the investigative goal.
 2. Handcuffing of suspects shall be accomplished with minimal discomfort to the suspect.

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3. Officers shall limit the number and type of restraints used on the suspect to what is reasonably necessary to accomplish the investigation.
- B. If an individual is handcuffed or otherwise restrained for officer safety reasons during an investigation and later released, officers shall document their actions in an offense or incident report and include the reasons officers handcuffed the individual, the approximate length of time of the restraint, and the results of the investigation.

V. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

A. Restraint prohibitions

1. Officers shall not place subjects in a prone position with the hands and ankles bound from behind with handcuffs, belts, or other devices.
2. As soon as any suspect who is lying on his or her stomach has been handcuffed, officers shall roll the suspect onto his or her side, or place the suspect in a sitting position. Suspects shall never be transported in a prone, face down position or crunched over.
3. Intoxication, recent use of drugs or alcohol, the presence of a head injury, obesity, physical disability, and recent exertion are all circumstances that can increase difficulty breathing when restrained. All suspects will be monitored during custody and transport for indications of medical problems and medical treatment obtained if required.

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Adopted: 10.01.2013

Revised: 11.19.2013 Format