

GENERAL ORDER



Title	Transportation of Prisoners	
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General Order 502.1 (Processing Prisoners)		

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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I. Background

The majority of successful escapes from police custody occur during the time of transport. Examination of previous escapes and attempted escapes reveal that prisoners take advantage of the member's failure to adhere to the regulations related to prisoner transportation and handling. Members in those circumstances may have also relied too heavily on the security of restraining devices. Adherence to a clear set of procedures will greatly reduce the attempt or successful escape of a prisoner from custody.

II. Policy

The policy of the Metropolitan Police Department is that members shall take the necessary precautions while transporting prisoners or those persons otherwise in police custody, in a manner that ensures their safety and that of the member of the community and the person in custody.

III. Definitions

- A. Official** - any member of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) the rank of Sergeant or above.
- B. Members** - sworn police officers of the Metropolitan Police Department.
- C. Transport Vehicle** - the vehicle used for transporting a prisoner from one point to another. The transport vehicle is a patrol car equipped with a barrier, or a specially designed prisoner transport vehicle, such as a bus or van.
- D. Field Search** – the removal of coats, jackets or outer clothing to facilitate the search of these garments and those clothes the prisoner is wearing such as

patting down the prisoner and reaching into and squeezing their pockets and any items within their possession such as handbags, pocket books, book bags, etc.

- E. Strip Search** - having a prisoner remove or arrange his/her clothing to allow a visual inspection of the genitals, buttocks, anus, breasts and undergarments.
- F. Squat Search** - having a prisoner crouch or squat while their undergarments and other clothing are removed, exposing the genital and anal area. This type of search permits contraband or other material concealed in the genital area to become visible or dislodged.
- G. Body Cavity Search** - the searching of a prisoner's genital and/or anal cavities to retrieve contraband, weapons or evidence of a crime that may be concealed within these areas.
- H. Restraining Devices** - equipment used to restrain the movement of a subject, such as handcuffs, flex-cuffs, ankle chains or restraining straps.
- I. Prisoner** - any person who has been arrested and is in the custody of the MPD.
- J. Disabled Prisoner** - a prisoner who has a physical condition that restricts their movement or mental condition, which hinders their ability to comprehend.
- K. Security Risk Prisoners** - prisoners who have a history of attempting suicide, escaping from police custody, under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, as well as those who are violent and self-destructive and in apparent need of mental observation.

IV. RULES

- A. Members will use the minimum amount of force necessary to restrain a prisoner.
- B. Members who have custody of a prisoner and observe any visible injuries and/or life-threatening condition will contact an official and immediately arrange for medical treatment. (See General Order 502.7 Medical Treatment and Hospitalization of Prisoners)

V. REGULATIONS

- A. Prisoners shall be treated in a humane manner. Members shall not use harsh, violent, or obscene language toward prisoners.
- B. Members shall keep the prisoner under continuous observation and stay within a reasonable distance to maintain constant control when moving the prisoner from one location to another, until the prisoner has been placed in a cell.
- C. Members shall use restraints, such as handcuffs, to prevent a prisoner from injuring anyone and escaping. Also, leg restraints and flex cuffs may be used to secure a prisoner who violently resists arrest.

- D. Members transporting a prisoner shall conduct a field of search on the scene for their own safety and the safety of others at the time of arrest, unless the situation warrants immediate transport for the safety of the officer or prisoner. Any weapons, evidence or contraband recovered can be used as evidence. (CALEA 71.1.1)
- E. Transporting Prisoners.
1. Members shall thoroughly search the vehicle they are assigned at the beginning and at the end of their tour of duty. In addition, transport vehicles shall be searched prior to and after each transport assignment. Members finding property and/or contraband will immediately secure it and notify an official. (CALEA 71.1.2)
 2. Members shall use caution when transporting suspected mentally ill persons due to the potential threat of destructive and/or dangerous behavior to themselves and/or the transporting members. The transporting member will be responsible for taking additional safeguards to ensure a safe transition and notify the receiving agency of any medical problems and potential security hazards the prisoner presents. (CALEA 71.1.6-E) (See General Order OPS 308.4 on Handling of the Mentally Ill)
 3. If the suspected mentally ill person is violent, but not under arrest members shall use discretion in transporting the person in a transport vehicle. The member should request a transport wagon if the mentally ill person's violent behavior has escalated.

VI. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- A. Handcuffing a Prisoner. (CALEA 71.2.1)
1. Every person arrested and prisoners, including juveniles, handled by members of this Department shall be handcuffed. However, for suspected mentally ill person not under arrest, members shall use the minimal restraint necessary to avoid further aggravation or unnecessary injury of the person. As a general rule curfew violators and truants shall not be handcuffed, members may use restraints to control juveniles who become unruly or violent.
 2. When handcuffing a prisoner, transport members shall restrain the prisoner's arms by handcuffing them behind his or her back. (The only exception is if the prisoner suffers from a deformity or other disability or if it is apparent that a prisoner has a serious injury, i.e. broken arm or burns to the arm. In such case, a member may use discretion whether to handcuff the prisoner from the front so as not to exacerbate their apparent condition.)
 3. Members shall apply the handcuffs with the prisoner's palms facing outward and re-check the handcuffs to ensure that the prisoner is secured.

4. Members shall, if practical, double lock the handcuffs. If it is not practical at the time the prisoner is handcuffed, the handcuffs should be double locked as soon as possible to prevent the handcuffs from tightening on the prisoner and causing potential injury.
5. Members shall not remove the handcuffs until the prisoner is in a secure area, prior to placing the prisoner in a cell. (CALEA 71.1.6-b)
6. Members shall not attach handcuffs to leg restraints in such a fashion that forces the legs and hands to be close to one another (i.e.- hog-tying), or place a person in a prone position, lying face down. These positions could be contributing factors that could cause a prisoner to suffocate, also referred to as positional asphyxia.
7. When processing a prisoner in the station, if necessary, members shall secure them to immovable objects designed for such use.

B. Searches of Prisoners.

1. When ever a members takes control of a subject whether for transporting or processing, he/she shall conduct a field search. It shall not be assumed that another member has searched the prisoner. (CALEA 71.1.1)
2. A "strip" or "squat" search shall be conducted only when the member has reason to suspect that weapons, contraband or evidence are concealed on the person or in the clothing in such a manner that employing a field search technique may not discover them. Suspicion may be formed on facts surrounding the crime or arrest, on the basis of information received about prisoner, or as a result of discoveries during the field search. These searches can be conducted only with the authorization of the Assistant District Commander and in a secure area. A sworn member of the same sex as the prisoner shall conduct the search in a private and secure area.
3. Under no circumstances shall members of this Department perform a "body cavity" search. When probable cause exists that a prisoner has weapons, contraband or evidence secreted in a body cavity, the Assistant District Commander can authorize this search. The search will be conducted at the D.C. General Hospital in a secure and private area, where only a physician can conduct the examination. A sworn member of the same sex as the prisoner shall be present to seize any evidence obtained.
4. The arresting officer shall be responsible for recording the details of strip, squat and/or body cavity searches of prisoners in a log that shall be maintained in the station. The information contained in the logbook shall include, date, time, justification, search type, items recovered, members involved in the search, members witnessing the search, the name of the Assistant District Commander who authorized the search and when applicable, the name of the person notified at the Central Cellblock. The Assistant District Commander shall review this information for its accuracy.

5. When a Body Cavity, Squat or Strip search has been conducted on a prisoner, the station clerk is responsible for notifying members of Central Cellblock that the prisoner was searched and what type of search was conducted. A notation shall be recorded in the district logbook.
6. An inventory list of the personal property recovered from a prisoner during a search shall be recorded on the Property Book, PD Form 82. (See General Order 601.1 Recording, Handling and Disposition of Property Coming Into Custody of the Department)

C. Transport Procedures

1. Once a prisoner has been placed in a transport vehicle he/she shall be transported directly to the station. No member shall respond “code one” while transporting a prisoner and when practical, the wagon shall be used to transport violent prisoners. All prisoners shall be secured by a seat belt before being transported, when available.
 - a. The prisoner shall be transported in vehicles equipped as transport units.
 - b. When a non-transport vehicle is used, two members will be present to transport the prisoner. The prisoner will be seated in the rear seat of the vehicle. The second member shall be seated in the rear seat, so that the gun holster is on the side away from the prisoner. (CALEA 71.1.3)
 - c. When a member transports a prisoner alone, he/she shall use a transport vehicle and get assistance from another officer, when placing or removing a prisoner from the vehicle. Also, the prisoner should be placed in the member's view on the passenger side of the rear seat.
 - d. A prisoner shall not be allowed to communicate with anyone other than department personnel while being transported. If the prisoner make any substantive comments regarding the case, the information shall be reported to the arresting officer. (CALEA 71.1.5)
 - e. Members will not stop or interrupt the transport, except for serious medical reasons or safety issues. (CALEA 71.1.4)
 - f. Upon arrival at a patrol district, the transporting member will contact the station personnel and advise them to open the van port doors. The van port doors shall be closed prior to removing the prisoner from the transport vehicle.
2. In the case of mass arrests, prisoners shall be transported as soon as the transport vehicle is filled to capacity provided it is safe to do so.
3. The transporting officer shall verify the identity of each prisoner and the arrest forms that accompany each prisoner with the station clerk or the arresting officer prior to taking custody of the prisoner. (CALEA 71.5.1-a, b)

4. All prisoners shall be monitored for the purpose of detecting medical difficulties. If a member observes or if a prisoner complains about being sick or injured, the member shall immediately contact the dispatcher and request medical assistance for the prisoner and to have a district official respond. (See GO - PCA - 502.07, Medical Treatment and Hospitalization for Prisoners) (CALEA 71.3.1)
5. Members shall take special precautions when transporting disabled prisoners. (CALEA 71.3.1):
 - a. Prisoners who have a prosthesis, wheelchair or crutches may be transported with the medical equipment, but it shall be in the possession of the member transporting the prisoner.
 - b. Restraining devices shall be used on disabled prisoners, unless it is apparent that their condition will not allow for the use of restraints.
 - c. The prisoners' hands may need to be restrained in the front. If the prisoner cannot be handcuffed, two members shall be responsible for the transport.
 - d. Any prisoner, including a suspected mentally disturbed person, who displays the potential for violence, he/she shall be transported in a wagon or a transport vehicle. At the transporting members' request, or upon a supervisor's direction, another member may assist the transporting member. (See General Order OPS - 308.4 on Handling of the Mentally Ill)
6. Whenever a member transports a prisoner of the opposite sex, she or he shall notify the dispatcher of the beginning mileage and location. At the conclusion of the transport, the member shall notify the dispatcher of the ending location and mileage. Any prolonged stops or delays during the transport will be voiced to the dispatcher.
7. When a member requests a transport for a juvenile held in police custody, he/she shall inform the dispatcher that the subject is a juvenile and request a transport vehicle rather than a patrol wagon, if available.
 - a. The member detaining the juvenile shall further ensure that:
 - (1) Male and female juveniles are not transported in the same compartment of a transport vehicle; and
 - (2) The juvenile is not transported with an adult prisoner.
 - b. Additional transport assistance shall be requested as necessary to avoid either of the above situations.
 - c. Members who transport a child under the age of thirteen (13) years of age or a child "at risk" to court, while court is in session, shall take the child to the "at risk" room at the Superior Court, where the child shall be turned over to a

Department of Human Services representative (any questions concerning the location of the "at risk" room shall be directed to the Youth Services/Youth Division officer processing the case).

- d. Transporting officers shall not remain with the child unless the child is violent and/or the court Social Services representative requests the member's continued presence.
 - e. When court is not in session, children under the age of 13 years and children "at risk" who are being referred to court and cannot be released to a parent or guardian shall be taken to the Receiving Home for Children.
 - f. Prior to the transport, the Youth Services/Youth Division officer processing the case shall notify the Receiving Home for Children and obtain the name of the person notified.
8. If a prisoner is retained in a transport vehicle in excess of 30 minutes, the transporting member(s) may open the rear doors of the transport vehicle or a single rear door of the wagon to allow fresh air into the vehicle provided that two members or more are in the area and the prisoner is secured to the seat by a seat belt and remains handcuffed.
 9. The members of the Fugitive Unit shall be responsible for coordinating the arrangements for the return of suspects, from outside jurisdictions to the District of Columbia, who are wanted on outstanding arrest warrants. (See G.O. PCA 502.08, Transport of Prisoners Aboard an Aircraft)

D. Handling of Transmittals and Arrest Forms

1. The transporting member shall ensure that a transmittal that lists the name of each prisoner and all appropriate arrest forms are provided to a member of the receiving unit. (CALEA 71.1.6-c)
2. Before leaving the facility, the transporting member shall obtain the signature from a member of the receiving unit on the transmittal and return the signed transmittal to the Desk Sergeant of his/her element. (CALEA 71.1.6-d)

E. Prisoner Escapes.

1. In the event of a prisoner escape from police custody, members shall be guided by the following procedures:
 - a. Immediately notify Communications Division by broadcasting a priority lookout and giving a complete description of the prisoner and method and route of escape.
 - b. Begin a canvass of the immediate area and notify other jurisdictions by teletype, if necessary.

- c. A district official from the member's district and district of occurrence shall be notified through a dispatcher to respond to the scene to supervise the search. (CALEA 71.1.7-a)
- d. The Assistant District Commander in the district of occurrence shall be notified by the supervisor on the scene and kept informed as to the progress of the search. (CALEA 71.1.7-a)
- e. If the prisoner is apprehended, the supervisor on the scene shall make the appropriate notifications and the prisoner shall be transported to the nearest holding facility where additional reports shall be prepared by the transporting officer concerning the escape. (CALEA 71.1.7-b)
- f. If the prisoner is not apprehended, the arresting member shall be notified, the supervising official shall ensure that the appropriate reports are completed and apply for an arrest warrant. (CALEA 71.1.7-b)
- g. The Assistant District Commander of the member, who is in control of the prisoner at the time of the escape, shall be responsible for investigating the incident, and recording the information regarding the escape shall be on the Tour of Duty Supervisor's Report P. D. Form 150. (CALEA 71.1.7-a, b & c)

F. Handling Security Risk Prisoners.

- 1. Prisoners who are suicidal or have any other medical problems shall be brought to the attention of transporting officer by the arresting officer. The security risk information, such as the prisoner's escape potential, shall be documented on the appropriate forms on all arrest paperwork in the prisoner's arrest package. (CALEA 71.5.1-c)
- 2. The transporting member will be responsible for taking additional safeguards for prisoners that present a security risk. Any time a prisoner is turned over to another facility, the transporting member shall provide the member of receiving agency with information regarding any medical problems and potential security hazards the prisoner presents to ensure a safe transition. (CALEA 71.1.6-e and 71.1.8)

G. Station Procedures.

- 1. All prisoners brought to a police facility shall immediately be presented to the station clerk to be booked.
- 2. All members who are involved with processing the prisoner, the arresting officer and station clerk, shall store their service weapons in a compartment specifically designated for securing weapons, before entering the prisoner's processing area. (CALEA 72.4.1 and 71.1.6-a)

H. Municipal Center/Court Transports

1. Members who have prisoners in custody shall not use the Indiana Avenue entrance. Unless impracticable to do so, they shall enter through the basement and use either the cellblock elevator or an express public elevator. Prisoners who must be transported between the Municipal Center and the various courts shall be moved in transport vehicle that shall enter and leave by way of the basement.
2. Building elevators shall be used to transport prisoners in the order of preference listed below:
 - a. Cell block elevator.
 - b. Regular building elevators on the east and west ends of the building when it is impracticable to utilize the cellblock elevator, between 0800 and 1700 hours, Monday through Friday.
 - c. Indiana Avenue elevators may be used between 1700 and 0800 hours, Monday through Friday and on weekends, when it is impracticable to use the cellblock elevator.
 - d. In all instances where an elevator other than the cell block elevator is used, only law enforcement officers and their passengers will be admitted to the elevator.
 - e. Prisoners who are moved about the headquarters building shall be handcuffed and under the actual physical control of at least one member.

I. Removal of Prisoners from the Superior Court Cellblock

1. Members who remove a prisoner from the D. C. Courthouse for investigative purposes shall first obtain the proper court order and present it to the U.S. Marshal's Office. Any request for escort of prisoners for attorneys shall be directed or referred to the Director of the Court Liaison Division or the Department's Office of the General Counsel.
2. Once the court order has been obtained, members shall take custody of the prisoner at the U.S. Marshal's Prisoner Loading Dock only. Removal from the premises shall be done by Department transport vehicle only, under no circumstances shall a prisoner be walked from the courthouse.
3. Members shall immediately return the prisoner upon completion of the business for which he was removed, in the same manner prescribed.
4. Members shall immediately notify the U.S. Marshal's Office should a prisoner become sick or injured while in his or her custody.
5. Should a member have reason to retain a prisoner after 2000 hours, he shall then notify the supervisor of the U.S. Marshals Office of the D.C. Superior Court Cell Block on (202) 616 - 8590.

VII. CROSS REFERENCES

A. Related Directives.

1. GO - SPT - 601.01, Recording, Handling, and Disposition of Property Coming into the Custody of the Department
2. GO - SPT - 602.01, Automobile Searches and Inventories
3. GO - PCA - 502.07, Medical Treatment and Hospitalization for Prisoners
4. GO - PCA - 502.08, Transportation of Prisoners Aboard Aircraft
5. Standard Operating Procedures for Holding Facilities

// SIGNED //
Charles H. Ramsey
Chief of Police

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