




Clayton County Police Department PROCEDURES

Subject HANDCUFFING & RESTRAINTS			Procedure # D26
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the use of handcuffs and other restraints during detentions and arrests.

II. POLICY

The Clayton County Police Department (CCPD) authorizes the use of restraint devices in accordance with this policy, CCPD SOP: *A5: Use of Force*, and Department-training. Restraint devices shall not be used to demean, embarrass, punish, to display authority or as a show of force.

III. DEFINITIONS

Detainee: A prisoner, inmate, criminal suspect, immigration detainee, or other person held, incarcerated, or detained in a jail, whether or not such person is inside or outside of the jail.

Disability: Any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

Handicap: A disadvantage for a given individual that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal.

“Hog-tying”: Instances when the arms and legs of a person in custody are bound, both tied behind the person and then connecting the hands and feet.

Impairment: Any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.

Positional asphyxia: Also known as postural asphyxia, is a form of asphyxia which occurs when someone's position prevents them from breathing adequately. Restraining a person in a face-down position is likely to cause greater restriction of breathing than restraining a person in a face-up position.

Restraining devices: Equipment used to restrain the movement of the detainee, such as handcuffs, flex-cuffs, waist chains, leg irons, restraining straps, straitjackets, or tie down stretchers.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. General Regulations

1. Officers shall approach every arrest situation with the knowledge that any arrest, regardless of the offense involved, may present an element of danger. Therefore, officers making arrests shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety. See also CCPD SOP: *A8: Criminal Process & Arrest Procedures*.

2. In most situations, handcuffs should be applied with the person's hands behind the back, thumbs facing upward, and palms facing outward, unless a medical condition or other reason exists. The handcuffs should be double-locked prior to searching for weapons and contraband.
3. Officers may handcuff the detainee with their hands in front, or use other appropriate and approved restraining device(s) where the detainee:
 - a. Is in an obvious state of pregnancy;
 - b. Has a physical handicap;
 - c. Displays behaviors consistent with mental illness or an intellectual/developmental disability;
 - d. Has injuries that could be aggravated by standard handcuffing procedures; or
 - e. When other extenuating circumstances exist.
4. In situations where one (1) pair of handcuffs does not appear sufficient to restrain the detainee, or may cause unreasonable discomfort due to the detainee's size, officers should consider alternatives, such as using an additional set of handcuffs or multiple sets of handcuffs.
5. Officers are responsible for the detainee's welfare once a restraint device has been applied. Officers shall safeguard the detainee by:
 - a. Maintaining physical control;
 - b. Maintaining visual contact;
 - c. Relocating the detainee away from hazards; and
 - d. Prohibiting the detainee from walking around unescorted.
6. Officers shall not attempt to apply any restraint device or technique that is not authorized by this Department. Officers may assist medical personnel in restraining patients being treated by EMS or in hospital care, based on an EMT's, physician's or nurse's order, but shall not attempt to apply medical restraint devices, e.g., restraining straps, straitjackets, tie down stretchers, etc.
7. Officers engaged in the application or use of restraining devices are reminded of the dangers of positional asphyxia. Under no circumstances will a detainee being restrained, have their arms and legs secured together in a fashion commonly known as "hog-tying."
8. Officers must maintain visual contact with all restrained detainees to ensure that no condition exists that may result in positional asphyxia, or other hazard.

To avoid positional asphyxiation, once a detainee is restrained, an officer will make attempts to limit additional body weight being placed on a detainee while lying face down (prone position) whereas the detainee's chest cavity cannot expand to support adequate breathing or blood flow. As soon as the detainee is handcuffed and controlled, the officer should quickly position the restrained detainee in a manner that will assist breathing, e.g., side-lying position, or positioned upright in a sitting, kneeling, or standing position. If a restrained detainee has a suspected head or neck injury, they should not be moved unless absolutely necessary; officers will monitor the consciousness and breathing of the detainee and request medical assistance immediately.
9. Physical force shall not be used against detainees in restraints, except as objectively reasonable to prevent escape or prevent imminent bodily injury to the detainee, the officer, or another person. In these situations, only the minimal amount of force necessary to control the situations shall be used. Refer to CCPD SOP: *A5: Use of Force*, for further information on authorized use of force and reporting.
10. Medical assistance/evaluation shall be sought immediately for any detainee who is injured, as a result of being restrained or complaints of injury.

B. Authorized Restraints

1. Only Department-authorized restraint devices may be used by officers trained in the specific device. The following is a list of restraint devices authorized for use by officers of the CCPD:
 - a. Metal handcuffs (chain or hinged);
 - b. Leg restraints; and
 - c. Flex-cuffs.
2. The Department realizes that exigent and/or other unforeseeable circumstances may dictate the use of other materials or devices available at the time for the temporary detention of individuals to enable officers to perform necessary law enforcement functions. In such instances the temporary unauthorized restraints should be replaced with authorized devices as soon as practicable and safe to do so.

C. Use of Restraints

1. Only officers who have successfully completed Department-approved training on the use of restraint devices described in this policy are authorized to use these devices.
2. When deciding whether to use any restraint, officers should carefully weigh officer safety concerns with factors that include, but are not limited to:
 - a. The circumstances of the crime leading to the arrest;
 - b. The demeanor and behavior of the person;
 - c. The age and health of the person;
 - d. Whether the person is known to be pregnant;
 - e. Whether the person has a hearing or speaking disability. In such cases, thought should be given, safety permitting, to handcuffing to the front in order to allow the person to sign or write notes; and
 - f. Whether the person has any other apparent disability and/or obvious sign of an injury that would factor into restraining decisions.

D. Restraint of Detainees

1. Situations may arise where it may be reasonable to restrain an individual who may, after brief investigation, be released without arrest. The use of restraints on detainees should continue only for as long as is reasonably necessary to ensure the safety of officers, others and any articulable flight risk and/or severity of the crime investigated.
2. When deciding whether to remove restraints from a detainee, officers should continuously weigh the safety interests at hand against the continuing intrusion upon the detainee.

E. Restraint of Pregnant Detainees

1. Detainees who are known to be pregnant should be restrained in the least restrictive manner that is effective for officer safety. Care and discretion will be taken if a detainee is obviously pregnant or indicates that she is pregnant.
2. No detainee who is in labor, delivery, or recovery after delivery shall be handcuffed or restrained except in extraordinary circumstances and only when a supervisor makes an individualized determination that such restraints are necessary for the safety of the detainee, officer, or others.
3. Handcuffs behind the body should not be used unless the officer has a reasonable suspicion that the detainee may resist, or attempt escape, injure self or others, or damage property.
4. If a detainee is visibly pregnant or advises that they are more than twelve (12) weeks pregnant, the arresting officer, if safe to do so, will handcuff the detainee in front of the body.

In the event the detainee is resisting arrest, or attempting to escape, or proving to be a harm to themselves, their unborn child or others, the detainee should be secured with their hands behind the back using a minimum of two (2) sets of handcuffs.

If the pregnant detainee is handcuffed behind the back, an officer must maintain physical contact for continuous active control to prevent falling.

F. Restraint of Juvenile Detainees

1. Juveniles arrested for delinquent offenses are subject to the same security requirements as adults and may be handcuffed, or otherwise restrained as necessary, during transport and processing.
2. If a juvenile is charged with a status offense, the officer will have the option of handcuffing. A status offense involves conduct that would not be a crime if it were committed by an adult, such as truancy, running away from home, violation of curfew, etc.
3. For additional information regarding the temporary custody of juveniles refer to CCPD SOP: *A10: Juvenile Procedures*.

G. Restraint of Impaired, Disabled or Handicapped Detainee

1. The words "impairment", "disability", and "handicap" are often used interchangeably even though they have different meanings. As traditionally used, impairment refers to a problem with a structure or organ of the body; disability is a functional limitation with regard to a particular activity; and handicap refers to a disadvantage in filling a role in life relative to a peer group.
2. When it is feasible, impaired, disabled or handicapped detainees shall be handcuffed with arms behind back. However, it is recognized that certain impairments may make this difficult or impossible. When handling an impaired, disabled or handicapped detainee, extra care must be exercised by the arresting officer. Each situation will be unique and decisions should be based on reasonable articulable circumstances with consideration for the safety of all involved.

H. Restraint of Combative/Resisting Detainees

1. When a detainee is combative or is actively resisting being detained, officers need to be mindful and watch for signs of distress from the detainee. Positional restraint asphyxia and excited delirium may contribute to serious physical injury or death of a detainee. Chances for these conditions increase when the detainee's normal breathing is affected, such as:
 - a. When the detainee is restrained face-up or face down with pressure on the back or chest;
 - b. The restrained detainee violently struggles against restraint attempts;
 - c. The detainee is intoxicated; and
 - d. Chemical agents are deployed and affect normal breathing.

For the aforementioned reasons, officers shall not allow a detainee to remain in a prone, face down position. As soon as the detainee is handcuffed, and it is safe to do so based on the totality of the circumstances, the detainee should be quickly moved to a side-lying position, or positioned upright in a sitting, kneeling, or standing position. If the restrained detainee has a suspected head or neck injury, they should not be moved unless absolutely necessary.

2. Medical assistance/evaluation shall be sought immediately for any detainee who violently resisted being restrained, continued resistance once in restraints, shows signs of physical distress, labored breathing, sustained or complains of injury.
3. The detainee should be continually monitored by an officer to ensure that the detainee does not roll onto and remain on their stomach.

I. Sick or Injured Detainee

1. Restraints should be used on any sick or injured detainee if the officer feels such restraints are necessary for the safety of the detainee, officers, or others.
2. When it is practical, sick or injured detainees will be handcuffed with arms behind back. However, it is recognized that certain illnesses or injuries may make this difficult or impossible. When handling a sick or injured detainee, extra care must be exercised by the arresting officer. Each situation will be unique and decisions should be based on reasonable articulable circumstances with consideration for the safety of all involved.

J. Handcuffing to Fixed Object

1. Generally, officers should not handcuff a detainee to a fixed object unless exigent circumstances exist making the action reasonably necessary to prevent serious physical injury to the officer, another or prevent the detainee from causing property damage.
2. Officers may handcuff a person to a restraint ring in an interview room whenever the person is lawfully in police custody.

K. Restraint of Detainee for Extended Duration

1. For situations where the detainment of an individual is expected to be of an extended duration, and the situation reasonably allows for a lower level of restraint, the use of leg restraints and handcuffing to the front may be considered for detainee comfort.
2. The officer shall consult with their immediate supervisor for approval, before lowering the level of restraint.

L. Transportation of Detainee

Refer to CCPD SOP: *D24: Transportation of Detainees.*

M. Handcuffs

1. Handcuffs are restraint devices designed to secure an individual's wrists in proximity to each other.
2. Handcuffs, may be used only to restrain a person's hands to ensure officer safety.
3. Only Department-issued and/or approved double locking metal handcuffs (hinged or chain) are authorized; handcuffs must accept a standard universal handcuff key and be equipped with a double locking mechanism.
4. Handcuffs shall be applied correctly with caution to prevent accidental or incidental injury to the detainee being restrained.
 - a. If they are placed on the detainee too loosely, the detainee may be able to free their hand(s) and become a threat to the officer and/or escape from the officer.
 - b. If they are applied too tight, they may cause injury to the detainee and be difficult to remove. The tight application of handcuffs can cause damage to the bones or wrist.
5. In most situations, handcuffs should be applied with the detainee's hands behind the back, thumbs facing upward, and palms facing outward, unless a medical condition and/or other reason(s) exist.
6. All handcuffs will be double-locked to prevent tightening, which may cause undue discomfort or injury to the hands or wrists. The officer applying handcuffs should be able to place the tip of their finger between the handcuff and the detainee's wrist in order to assure appropriate fit.
7. If a detainee complains that the handcuffs have been applied incorrectly or too tight, the handcuffs should be checked for proper fit and application as soon as is practicable. If the handcuffs are too tight, the officer shall readjust them for proper fit.

8. Handcuffs should not be removed from any detainee who poses a threat of violence. If the removal of the handcuffs becomes necessary due to vital human needs of the detainee, adequate personnel should be on hand to control the detainee, if necessary.
9. Handcuffs should be removed as soon as it is reasonable or after the person has been accepted for processing/custody by jail intake personnel and is safely confined within a detention facility.

N. Flex-cuffs

1. Flex-cuffs are a form of physical restraint for the hands, using plastic or nylon straps; flex-cuffs are also called plastic handcuffs, plasti-cuffs, flexi-cuffs, zip cuffs, zip ties or double cuffs.
2. Flex-cuffs, may be used only to temporarily restrain a person's hands to ensure officer safety.
3. Only Department-issued and/or approved flex-cuffs, which have a "double-locking" feature is allowed for use.
4. Flex-cuffs may only be used to temporarily restrain a detainee's hands for the following:
 - a. When traditional handcuffs cannot be used and/or unavailable;
 - b. When there is a large group of detainees to be cuffed such as in cases of civil disturbances where mass arrest may be necessary and the use of metal handcuffs is not practical;
 - c. SWAT execution of a search warrant; and
 - d. When exigent and/or other unforeseeable circumstances exist.
5. Some of the tactics used in standard handcuffing will not apply due to the nature and characteristics of the flex cuffs.
6. Flex-cuffs shall not be applied, if the arresting officer and/or any other officer on-scene does not have the means to properly remove them.
7. Flex-cuffs shall be applied correctly with caution to prevent accidental or incidental injury to the detainee being restrained.
 - a. If they are placed on the detainee too loosely, the detainee may be able to free their hand(s) and become a threat to the officer and/or escape from the officer.
 - b. If they are applied too tight, they may cause injury to the detainee and be difficult to remove. The tight application of flex-cuffs can cause lacerations, reduce circulation, or nerve damage.
8. In most situations, flex-cuffs should be applied with the detainee's hands behind their back and palms facing outward, unless some medical condition and/or other reason(s) exist.
9. All flex-cuffs will be double locked to prevent tightening, which may cause undue discomfort or injury to the hands or wrists. The officer applying flex-cuffs should be able to place the tip of their finger between the flex-cuff and the detainee's wrist in order to assure appropriate fit.
10. When flex cuffs have been placed on a detainee, the officer is responsible for checking the flex cuffs at least every fifteen (15) minutes, to make sure the detainee's hands are alright and that the flex-cuffs are positioned correctly.
11. If a detainee complains that the flex-cuffs have been applied incorrectly or too tight, the flex-cuffs should be checked for proper fit and application as soon as practicable. If flex-cuffs appear too tight, they shall be removed immediately.
12. The removal of flex-cuffs presents a hazard of cutting the detainee; therefore, flex-cuff restraints will be removed only with the approved cutting tools (e.g., flex-cuff cutter, diagonal cutters/pliers, snipper, or other approved tool). Due to the potential of losing control of the

cutting device and injuring the detainee, open blades, such as a knife, will not be used to remove flex-cuffs.

13. Flex-cuffs shall be used for only short periods of time. No detainee restrained with flex-cuffs shall be placed in the rear seat of a patrol unit and/or transported unless exigent and/or other unforeseeable circumstances exist.
14. Flex-cuffs should be replaced with handcuffs as soon as practicable.

O. Leg Irons

1. Leg irons are physical restraints used on the ankles of a detainee to allow walking with a restricted stride and to prevent running and effective physical resistance; leg irons are also called leg cuffs, (leg/ankle) shackles, foot cuffs, and fetters.
2. Only Department-issued and/or approved double locking metal leg irons are authorized.
3. Leg irons may be used to restrain the legs of a violent or potentially violent and/or escape risk detainee, when it is reasonable to do so during the course of detention, arrest, or transportation.
4. Leg irons shall be applied correctly with caution to prevent accidental or incidental injury to the detainee being restrained. If they are applied too tight, they may cause injury to the detainee and be difficult to remove. The tight application of leg irons can cause soft tissue and/or nerve damage.
5. All leg irons will be double locked to prevent tightening, which may cause undue discomfort or injury to the ankles and feet.
6. Leg irons shall only be used after a detainee has been handcuffed.
7. In determining whether to use leg irons, officers should consider:
 - a. The potential for injury to the public, officers and detainee that can be caused as a result of the detainee's violent behavior;
 - b. Whether it is reasonably necessary to protect the detainee from their own actions (e.g., hitting their head against the interior of the patrol vehicle, running away from the arresting officer while handcuffed, kicking at objects or officers); and
 - c. Whether it is reasonably necessary to avoid damage to property (e.g., kicking at windows of the patrol vehicle).
8. When applying leg irons, officers shall use the following guidelines:
 - a. If practicable, officers should notify a supervisor of the intent to apply leg irons. In all cases, a supervisor shall be notified as soon as possible, after the application of leg irons.
 - b. Once secured, the detainee should not be placed on their stomach for an extended period as this may potentially reduce the detainee's ability to breathe. The detainee should be placed in a seated position in a police unit and secured with a seat belt.
 - c. The restrained detainee should be continually monitored by an officer while in the leg restraint. The monitoring officer should ensure the detainee does not roll onto and remain on their stomach.
 - d. The officer should look for signs of labored breathing and take appropriate steps to relieve and minimize any obvious factors contributing to this condition.
 - e. Ask the detainee if the circulation is adequate and adjust, if necessary, the tension to the extent necessary for adequate circulation to be maintained.
 - f. Visually inspect the detainee's legs, ankles, and/or feet for swelling, discoloration, or any other indication of inhibited circulation.
 - g. If a detainee complains that the restraint has been applied incorrectly or too tight, the leg irons should be checked for proper fit and application as soon as is practicable.

- h. When transported, the detainee should be maintained in an upright position using the vehicle's seat belt restraint system.
- i. Once applied, absent a medical or other emergency, leg irons should remain in place until the officer arrives at the jail or medical facility, or the detainee no longer reasonably appears to pose a threat.

P. Supervisor Notification

1. Officers will notify a supervisor whenever they have a detainee, whose hands are not secured with handcuffs behind their back. This notification should include information regarding any other circumstances where an officer reasonably believes there is a potential safety concerns or medical risk to the detainee (e.g., prolonged struggle, extreme agitation, impaired respiration, etc.) or others.
2. When the incident involved a use of force and/or any complaints of pain or injury from an individual who was handcuffed.
3. Whenever an officer needs guidance or assistance related to the proper restraint of a detainee.

Q. Required Documentation

1. If a person is restrained and released without an arrest, the officer shall document the details of the detention and the need for handcuffs or other restraints in the *Incident Report*.
2. If a person is arrested, the use of handcuffs or other restraints shall be documented in the *Incident Report*.
3. Officers should document the following information in the *Incident Report*, as appropriate, when restraints other than handcuffs are used on a person.
 - a. The factors that led to the decision to use restraints;
 - b. Supervisor notification and approval of restraint use;
 - c. The type(s) of restraint(s) used;
 - d. The amount of time the person was restrained;
 - e. How the person was transported and the position of the person during transport;
 - f. Observations of the person's behavior and any signs of physiological problems;
 - g. Any known or suspected drug use or other medical problems; and
 - h. Any other relevant information.

R. Training

The Department's Training Unit, will ensure that officers receive training on the proper use of handcuffs and other restraints, including:

1. Proper placement and fit of handcuffs and other restraint devices approved for use by the Department.
2. Options for restraining those who may be pregnant without the use of leg irons, waist chains, or handcuffs behind the body.
3. Options for restraining amputees or those with medical conditions or other physical conditions that may be aggravated by being restrained.
4. Response to complaints of pain by restrained persons.

V. CANCELLATION

This procedure amends and supersedes the following standard operating procedure: *D26: Handcuffing and Restraints*, dated October 13, 2021.