



# Charleston County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures Manual

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**Sheriff Carl Ritchie**

## 7-10 Emergency Restraint Chair

- ☐ NEW
- ☒ REVISED
- ☒ REVIEWED

ACA Standards Reference: 5-ALDF-2B-02; 07; 11; 4D-21  
CALEA Standards Reference:  
NCCHC Standards Reference:  
SCLEA Standards Reference:  
SC Minimum Standards: 1067; 1067c

*This policy dated 1/28/2025 replaces prior policies cited above and supersedes all previously issued directives.*

I. Purpose:

To provide Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center (SACDC) personnel with guidance regarding the use of the Emergency Restraint Chair.

II. Policy:

The Emergency Restraint Chair (ERC) will be used in situations where an inmate is exhibiting uncontrollable or violent behavior, and when all other approved techniques of control have failed. The Housing/Processing Lieutenant, or a duty supervisor, must authorize the use of this device. Inmates will not be restrained any longer than required to ensure the safety of the inmate, or others. Under no circumstances will the ERC be used as punishment.

(Ref: SC Min. 1067, 5-ALDF-2B-02, 07)

III. Definitions:

- A. For purposes of this procedure, the word "deputy" applies to all agency employees with a certification classification of Class I, Class II, Class III, or Reserve Deputy, as defined by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

The following terms are used interchangeably; however, they carry guidance to specific employees based on usage of the term:

1. Deputy, deputy sheriff, detention deputy, sworn employee, uniformed sworn employee, sworn administrative employee, and
2. civilian, non-sworn employee.

- B. *Employee*: When used without further clarification, the term employee is inclusive of all agency members (sworn and non-sworn).

IV. Procedure:

- A. The ERC is a restraint device intended to assist in the control of combative, self-destructive, or potentially violent inmates.
- B. All incidents involving the ERC must be video recorded.
- C. The ERC in and of itself is not considered a use of force. The force technique applied to place the inmate in the ERC is the force.

Note: Detention deputies who have completed the hands-on training class upon initial hire and annually thereafter are authorized to place an inmate in the ERC under the guidance of this policy.

- D. All incidents requiring the use of the ERC longer than four hours will be reported to the Command Duty Officer (CDO).
- E. The use of the ERC is to prevent escape, assault, or the commission of some other offense by violent or disruptive inmates; to protect staff and inmates; to protect the inmate from self-destructive acts; and under special circumstances when approved by the Detention Director.

(Ref: SC Min. 1067)

- F. Inmates can be placed in the ERC upon refusal to submit to a strip search when all attempts to have the inmate comply have been exhausted. This is to protect staff and other inmates from potential contraband that may be hidden on their person or in their body cavities.

Note: The ERC may be used for security/behavior modification purposes if a supervisor believes it is necessary to control an assaultive, violent, or destructive inmate. In this case, the supervisor will follow all procedures for the use of force and restraint. The supervisor will notify the Housing/Processing Lieutenant.

- G. The emergency restraint chairs are located in processing, medical, and disciplinary unit areas.
- H. The ERC will be inspected at the beginning of every shift. The inspection will be documented using the *ERC Inspection Log (SACDC form-415)*. It is the responsibility of the supervisor assigned to the area where the ERC is located to ensure the inspection is completed.
- I. Staff must complete a *Use of Force Report (SACDC form-352)* when placing a noncompliant inmate in the ERC by utilizing a force technique. An *Incident Report* must be completed anytime an inmate is placed in the ERC; the Use of Force Report is only when applicable. All decisions and actions as to why the inmate was placed in the ERC will be included. A supervisor will review the report, the video of the incident, along with any supplemental reports.

(Ref: 5-ALDF-2B-11)

- J. The following guidelines are to be used when placing an inmate into the ERC:
  - 1. If it can be accomplished safely, prior to removing the arresting officer's handcuffs from a newly admitted inmate, a set of SACDC

handcuffs will be applied to the inmate's wrists below the officer's set. Special attention must be given to ensure that the keyholes are facing in opposite directions from the arresting officer's handcuffs.

2. If it can be accomplished safely, the inmate's personal property should be removed, to include jewelry, eyeglasses, shoes, socks, coat, hat, and belt. The inmate will be clothed.
3. The supervisor on scene will:
  - a. immediately notify the Housing/Processing Lieutenant and health care staff to assess the inmate's medical/mental health condition;
  - b. notify health care staff so they may advise, on the basis of serious danger to self or others, whether the inmate should be placed in a medical/mental health unit for emergency involuntary treatment;  
(Ref: SC Min. 1067; 5-ALDF-2B-07, 5-ALDF-4D-21)
  - c. observe the placement of the inmate in the ERC and contact central control to record the entire restraining process;

Note: When an inmate is acting out in an aggressive, suicidal, or other disruptive manner as a result of a mental illness and the ERC is needed, ensure the member of staff completes a *Mental Health Referral (SACDC form-348)*. This must be accomplished even if the inmate is currently in disciplinary segregation or in the Medical Unit at the time of placement.

- d. ensure the inmate is properly restrained prior to placement in the ERC by checking restraints and straps to prevent injury to staff;
- e. assign detention deputies to points of control and give directions to detention deputies placing the inmate in the ERC. A minimum of two detention deputies are required to safely place an inmate in the ERC;
- f. ensure that the inmate is notified of the reason for placement in the ERC and what the inmate will need to do in order to be released from the ERC (this notification will be documented in the *Incident Report*); and

- g. ensure the *Observation Log (SACDC form-339)* is initiated for the inmate being placed in the ERC.
- 4. If an inmate is actively spitting or threatening to do so, the supervisor will direct the placement of a "spit mask" on an inmate, with the cloth portion under the inmate's nose. Note: The "spit mask" in and of itself is not considered a use of force. The force technique applied, if necessary, to place the "spit mask" on the inmate is the force.
- 5. The inmate is seated in the chair and secured by placing the lap belt free end in the lap belt clevis and pulling the handle until snug.
- 6. Place the chain of the leg irons behind the chain retainer (this is for temporary security, until the leg straps are secured).
- 7. The inmate's handcuffs will then be attached to the handcuff tether strap.
- 8. One hand is released from the handcuffs and placed on the armrest of the ERC. The arm is secured with the wrist strap (strap should be on bare skin, not on clothing). The other wrist is secured using the same procedure.
- 9. Re-check the lap strap to ensure that inmate is sitting upright, with their buttocks to the rear of the seat. It may be necessary to adjust the lap strap.
- 10. The shoulder strap is then fastened by passing the free ends over the shoulders, under the armpits, and securing each end of the shoulder strap to the shoulder strap clevis located on the back of the chair.
- 11. Tighten the straps by pulling down on the shoulder strap handles.
- 12. Secure the ankle strap by passing the free end around the front of the ankle and securing it to the ankle strap clevis. Then pull the ankle strap handle snug. Do not over tighten while pulling the straps.
- 13. The leg irons will be removed when legs are secured in the leg straps.
- 14. The straps will be checked by health care staff to ensure that they are not too tight. (Ref: 5-ALDF-2B-07)

K. While an inmate is in the ERC, the following procedures will apply:

1. The supervisor will:
  - a. ensure the *Observation Log* is correctly completed;
  - b. tour the area at least once every two hours;
  - c. ensure that a member of staff completes an *Incident Report* for placement in the ERC and *Use of Force Report* if a force technique was utilized describing the inmate's behavior that necessitated the use of the ERC; and (Ref: 5-ALDF-2B-11)
  - d. review the logs and gather information from staff to determine when the inmate shall be released from the ERC.

Note: The goal is to remove the inmate from the ERC as soon as possible. This will be done when the inmate shows/informs the staff of their willingness to cooperate.

2. Violent behavior may mask dangerous medical conditions. Inmates must be monitored continuously and provided medical treatment, if needed. An *Observation Log* will be started immediately upon placement of the inmate into the ERC.
3. The detention deputy will check the inmate's physical condition at random intervals, but not exceeding every fifteen minutes, to ensure inmate safety and to record the inmate's behavior. The observations are recorded on the *Observation Log*. During this time, the Health Services Administrator or designee will review the inmate's medical file, check the ERC straps to verify that they are not impacting circulation and assess the inmate.  
(Ref: SC Min. 1067(c), 5-ALDF-2B-07)
4. Physical needs should be met promptly. Absent imminent danger to the inmate and/or staff, an inmate will not be allowed to lie or sit in their own vomit or bodily waste.
5. Inmates will be released from the restraint chair every two hours and given the opportunity to stretch. Detention deputies will inform the inmate they are being afforded the opportunity to stand to ensure their health and welfare is being taken into consideration. The release from the restraint chair will be audio/video recorded to ensure safety

and security for all involved.

- a. If the inmate is cooperative and able, they will be released from the ERC to stand up and stretch unrestrained. If the inmate refuses to stand and stretch, staff will defer to releasing one limb at a time.
  - b. Inmates who have refused to comply with the strip search will be placed in handcuffs prior to being released from the ERC to stretch. If the inmate refuses to stand and stretch, staff will defer to releasing one limb at a time.
  - c. Inmates who are combative, defensive resistant, or inebriated will be released one limb at a time in lieu of releasing the inmate completely from the ERC unless that inmate needs to use the bathroom.
  - d. Inmates who are unwilling to comply with stretching within six hours of being placed in the ERC will be relocated to another ERC to ensure movement. A nurse will be on scene to ensure the straps are not impacting circulation once the move has been accomplished. The detention deputy or deputies involved will only have to complete a use-of-force report if force techniques were required for the relocation to the other ERC.
6. The precautions listed will be followed to protect the safety of others.
  7. Medical staff should be on scene each time an inmate is returned to the ERC, they will check the straps to verify that they are not affecting circulation.
  8. The ERC can be used to transport an inmate from one location to another. The inmate must be fully secured in the ERC prior to moving. Safety precautions should be utilized when tilting the chair backwards. (Ref: SC Min. 1067)
  9. The CDO must approve the decision if it is necessary for an inmate to remain in the ERC for a period of time exceeding four continuous hours and every two hours thereafter. This review will be documented on the *Observation Log*. Inmates can remain restrained in the ERC through shift changes. However, a supervisor may remove an inmate from the ERC at any time when they believe the inmate has ceased to be a security problem or behavior modification has been

accomplished.

- L. The following guidelines are to be used for removing an inmate from the ERC:
1. The inmate will not be released from the ERC until it has been determined by a shift supervisor and health care staff that the inmate is no longer a threat to themselves or others, and the inmate can be reasonably controlled by staff.
  2. Once an inmate is removed from the ERC, the completed *Observation Log* will be given to the Housing Lieutenant to be forwarded to the Housing Administrative Assistant for retention.
  3. The ERC must be cleaned with a disinfectant solution after each use. This will be documented in the JMS Log, with reference to the chair number (located on the back of each chair).
  4. All straps must be returned to their proper position. This will ensure the chair is ready for future use.