



# Colorado Springs Police Department

## Standard Operating Procedure

### DL-1501-04 Spit Protection Devices Section 1500 – Assigned Equipment

Effective Date: 11/10/2020

Supersedes Date: N/A

---

## .01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to give guidance on the use of the department approved spit protection device.

## .02 Cross Reference

[DL-705-02 Oleoresin Capsicum \(OC\)](#)

[GO 770 Prisoner Processing](#)

[GO 1500 Assigned Equipment](#)

## .03 Definitions

*Bodily Fluids:* For the purpose of this directive, bodily fluids refers to spit/saliva and blood.

*Biohazard:* Any biological substance that poses a threat to the health of people. This includes medical waste.

*Communicable Diseases:* Infectious diseases transmitted through contact with the bodily fluids of an infected individual.

*Oleoresin Capsicum (OC):* A chemical agent derived from cayenne pepper plants.

*Spit Protection Device:* Sometimes referred to as a “spit sock” or a “spit hood”, a spit protection device is a transparent mesh head covering that prevents a person from spitting on others. The device does not restrict a person’s breathing, allows the person to see/breathe freely, and allows the officer to fully observe the person’s face. For the purpose of this directive, the spit protection device refers to the only department approved device that is manufactured by *Stearns Wear*.

## **.04 Procedure**

### **Exposure to the Communicable Diseases**

Exposure to communicable diseases by way of another person's bodily fluid creates a unique risk to law enforcement officers. Given the health risks created by such an exposure, it is imperative to equip officers with a method of protection from those who threaten or attempt to expose them to bodily fluid. To achieve such a level of protection, officers have been supplied with a spit protection device.

### **Use of Spit Protection Devices**

Any sworn officer may apply the spit protection device, so long as its application is supported by objectively reasonable facts and the device is being used to protect others from the wearer's bodily fluids.

Objectively reasonable facts can include:

- The person's behavior (e.g., uncooperative behavior)
- The person's actions (e.g., actively spitting at or on another)
- Any threats made (e.g., a person threatening, either verbally or non-verbally, to spit on another)

### **Application**

The spit protection device will typically be applied at the time a person is placed in physical restraints (e.g., handcuffs, medical restraints), but the device can be applied anytime during the contact so long it is reasonable and is being used to protect others from the wearer's bodily fluid.

To ensure an officer's safety, two officers should be present when the device is placed on a person.

Given the close proximity of the officer's body to the person's mouth at the time of application, officers should position themselves in a manner that minimizes the possibility of the person biting them.

The spit protection device will be placed on the person's head by way of the self-securing elastic band opening. The device should be loose-fitting while on the person's head. The elastic bands sewn into the device will be the only means of securing it to the wearer. The device will **not** be tightened in any manner around the neck or otherwise attached directly to the wearer.

After application, the officer will visually inspect the wearer to ensure:

- The mouth/nose are not obstructed
- The device allows for adequate ventilation

An officer will maintain constant observation of the person while the device is in place to ensure the person can breathe, unimpeded. This monitoring will take place until the device is removed **or** the custody/care of the person is transferred to another qualified observer (e.g., medical professional, jail officials, etc.).

After the device is appropriately secured, officers will assist the wearer with further movement due to the devices' potential to impair/distort their vision.

The spit protection device will not be removed until the wearer demonstrates a level of cooperation that indicates its use is no longer reasonable nor necessary. Once cooperation/compliance is achieved, the spit protection device will be removed from the wearer.

## **Removal and Disposal**

When the spit protection device is removed, the officer will use protective gloves to prevent any potential for exposure from bodily fluids.

Each device will only be used one time and then disposed of. The device will be placed in a trash receptacle or, in situations involving a large amount of bodily fluid, in a hazardous materials receptacle.

## **General and Prohibited Uses**

The device will not be used on a person who has been exposed to Oleoresin Capsicum (OC).

Spit protection devices will **only** be applied to those in police custody, to include protective custody (e.g., M1 holds).

Officers are prohibited from using any other model of spit protection device not authorized by the department.

Spit protection devices will **not** be applied when it is not objectively reasonable **and** if there is not a need to protect others from the wearer's bodily fluid.

## **Special Considerations**

The device will not be applied to any person who is vomiting, complaining of or having difficulty breathing, or bleeding profusely from the nose/mouth/facial area. If a person vomits or develops difficulty breathing while wearing a device, it **must** be immediately removed. If necessary, officers will provide the person with first aid consistent with their level of training and department policy.

To avoid injury or escape, a person should not be removed from a secured passenger compartment for the sole purpose of deploying the spit protection device.

## **Reporting**

Any use of a spit protection device **must** be documented in a police report, to include reasonable and/or situational factors necessitating its use.

Officers exposed to a wearer's spit/saliva will report such an exposure to their chain of command and complete a [\*Preliminary Report of Injury Illness\*](#). The receiving supervisor will work with the involved officer and the city's occupational health clinic to determine the best course of treatment.