



# CHATHAM COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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**SOP # OPS-034:**

**EFFECTIVE: 02/01/18**

**PRISONER TRANSPORT & SAFETY**

**REVISION: 09/23/20**

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this order is to provide guidelines for the safe transportation of prisoners and the safety of officers.

### **POLICY**

As officers perform prisoner transport, they should be prepared to provide adequately for the safety and security of the prisoner, the transporting officers, and the public. It is the policy of the Chatham County Police Department for transporting officers to take all necessary precautions and utilize procedures that provide for the safety of all those involved during prisoner transportation and processing.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **I. TRANSPORT OPERATIONS**

- A. Prior to transport, each prisoner shall be searched for weapons, contraband, and tools of escape by transporting officer.
  - 1. If practical, the protective search should be conducted by an officer of the same sex as the prisoner.
  - 2. Each time a prisoner is transferred to another officer for custody or transport, the receiving officer shall search the prisoner again in the presence of the releasing officer.
- B. All vehicles used for transporting prisoners shall be searched at the beginning of each shift to ensure it is free of weapons and contraband. Also, such vehicles should be inspected to ensure that:
  - 1. The safety screen is securely in place and undamaged.
  - 2. All windows are intact, and the outer door latches are in proper working order.
  - 3. The rear seat door handles, and window controls are deactivated.
- C. All transport vehicles shall be searched prior to and after transporting prisoners to ensure that no weapons or contraband are present.
- D. When transporting prisoners in patrol vehicles with protective cages:
  - 1. The transporting officer(s) should be seated in the front seat(s) of the vehicle, and the prisoner(s) should be placed in the rear seat, behind the protective cage.

2. One transporting officer shall not transport more than two prisoners at any one time without a supervisor's authorization.
  3. All prisoners shall be secured in the vehicle by proper use of a seatbelt.
- F. Transporting prisoners in a vehicle without a protective cage is *prohibited*, unless the transport is necessary for the safety of the officer(s), the prisoner(s), or the public, such as the development of a mob or riotous crowd.
- G. Transporting officers shall proceed directly to their destination, but may stop to render assistance in an emergency only if the risk to the endangered individual is grave, and the risk to the prisoner being transported is minimal.
1. In such cases, the transporting officer shall notify the Communications Center of the emergency requiring their immediate action and the location.
  2. A second unit shall be requested to assist.
- H. Safety aspects of the transport function require that the prisoner's right to communicate with attorneys and others will not normally be exercised during the period that the prisoner is being transported.
1. The transporting officer may, in their discretion, permit the prisoner to speak briefly with a family member or friend, but only in the presence of the transporting officer and without compromising officer safety.
- I. Officers transporting prisoners to a receiving facility shall follow the rules at the receiving facility in regards to the storage of firearms and the receiving of prisoners. In all cases, officers shall:
1. Place their firearm, ammunition, OC spray, ASP baton, Taser, knife, and any other weapon in a secure area for safekeeping prior to entering a holding cell, detention facility, or prison or before booking the prisoner.
  2. The transporting officer shall remove restraining devices only when directed to do so by the agency receiving the prisoner or prior to placing the prisoner in a cell.
  3. The transporting officer will make sure the necessary documents are delivered to the receiving officer, and a signature for the delivery of the prisoner is obtained.
  4. Advise receiving agency personnel of any use of force incident, potential medical or security hazards.
- J. Should a CCPD prisoner escape, the transporting officer shall immediately notify the Communications Center and the Precinct Supervisor.
1. An Incident Report stating the circumstances surrounding the escape shall be submitted to the Patrol Division Commander within 24 hours of the incident.
  2. Further actions to be taken after an escape may include, but are not limited to:
    - a. Notifying the Criminal Investigations Division.
    - b. Establishing a perimeter, if applicable.
    - c. Ensuring that a BOLO is broadcasted as soon as practical.
    - d. Requesting additional assistance, i.e., helicopter, canine, additional Patrol units, etc.

- e. Canceling the alert after the prisoner is returned to custody.
- 3. Outside agency support shall only be requested upon the authorization of the on-duty Lieutenant.
- 4. If an escape occurs in another jurisdiction, the transporting officer shall immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement agency of the escape.
- K. When a prisoner is an unusual security risk, the presiding judge or receiving agency shall be notified prior to taking the prisoner into a courtroom or other facility.

## **II. RESTRAINING DEVICES**

- A. Handcuffs are a protective device to be used for restraint purposes.
- B. Only the department issued or approved handcuffs are authorized to be carried and used by CCPD officers.
- C. The use of hinged handcuffs and thumb cuffs are prohibited.
- D. All prisoners shall be handcuffed and double-locked when in the custody or control of a CCPD officer, except when inside the jail or other detention compounds.
- E. Prisoners shall be handcuffed with their hands behind their back.
  - 1. Prisoners may be handcuffed in the front while being interviewed in an interview room.
  - 2. Officers will periodically inspect handcuffs to ensure adequate functionality.
- F. Prisoners shall not be handcuffed to any stationary object or any part of the vehicle during transport.
- G. Restraining devices, such as handcuffs, will not be used on obviously physically disabled prisoners, sick or injured prisoners; unless there is a possibility of escape or violent behavior and then only in a way that will not interfere with the handicap or illness.
- H. Prisoners who continue to exhibit violent behavior may have their legs restrained to prevent injury to themselves or others.
  - 1. Officers are allowed to use leg restraints, medical restraints, or leg irons/shackles to secure a prisoner's legs to prevent kicking if the officer has been trained in the use of these devices.
  - 2. All prisoners shall be placed in an upright position or on their side during transport.
  - 3. A prisoner shall never be placed completely face down or allowed to lie face down during transport.
- I. Procedures such as "hog-tying" have been found to cause death (positional asphyxia) or serious physical injury and are prohibited.
- J. Flex-cuffs may be used in special operation exercises and in events of multiple arrests under controlled circumstances or when the custody of a prisoner may change multiple times prior to incarceration.
- K. Flex cuffs will not be carried in place of issued metal handcuffs.

- L. Flex-cuffs will not be used without having a “safe cutter” that is explicitly designed to remove the cuffs safely. Pocket knives **shall not** be used.
- M. Flex-cuffs will be fastened tight enough to restrict the prisoner's ability to use their hands defensively, but not so as to injure the person. Officers will check periodically to ensure the Flex-cuffs are not causing injury to the hands or wrists of the arrested person.

### **III. PROTECTIVE HOOD (SPIT HOOD)**

#### **A. General Information**

- 1. The department issued spit hoods will only be used in situations when an individual is spitting and/or biting or is in the process of spitting and/or biting.
  - (a) Spit hoods will not be used as a standard procedure.
- 2. Spit hoods will not be used on individuals that are bleeding profusely from the mouth and/or nose, have vomited or are vomiting, or are in respiratory distress.
- 3. The use of the spit hood will be discontinued immediately if a medical condition arises (e.g., bleeding profusely from the mouth and/or nose, vomiting, respiratory distress, excited delirium, etc.) or when the individual's spitting and/or biting behavior ceases.
- 4. Officers are prohibited from using any other device or item to manage spitting and/or biting behavior. At no time can anything (i.e., a hand, towel, or clothing) be placed over an individual's mouth.

#### **B. Application, Documentation, and Disposal of Protective Hood**

- 1. The spit hood will be slipped over the individual's head, and the elastic on the hood will circle their neck.
- 2. The spit hood will not be tightened or held against the individual's face but should have adequate ventilation so the restrained person can breathe normally.
- 3. The individual will be checked by medical personnel if a medical condition arises during or after application.
- 4. Individuals who have been sprayed with oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray should be thoroughly decontaminated, including hair, head, and clothing, prior to the application of a spit hood.
- 5. Officers shall provide assistance during the movement of individuals with spit hoods due to the potential for impaired or distorted vision on the part of the individual.
- 6. Individuals with a spit hood shall be continually monitored, with documentation until the spit hood is removed.
- 7. Once removed, the spit hood will be discarded in a trash container, and a replacement will be obtained as soon as feasible.
- 8. The use of the spit hood shall be documented in an incident or supplemental report and on the use of force report (when applicable).

### **IV. SPECIAL TRANSPORT SITUATIONS**

#### **A. Sick, Injured, Pregnant, or Disabled Prisoners**

1. If a prisoner is sick or injured incidental to arrest, or prior to arrest, and requires medical attention, it is the transporting officer's responsibility to take the prisoner to a medical facility or to request emergency medical assistance at the scene.
  - a. If a prisoner is transported to a medical facility, a supervisor should be notified as soon as practical.
2. Officers will not use handcuffs or restraints of any kind on a pregnant woman who is in the second or third trimester of pregnancy, in labor, or in delivery, or on a woman in the immediate postpartum period (which means the six-week period following childbirth unless extended by a physician due to complications). [O.C.G.A. 42-1-11.3]
  - a. An exception will be if the arrestee is violent or potentially dangerous. [O.C.G.A. 42-5-58]
    - (1) If you must handcuff, extreme care will be used.
  - b. Officers will inquire of all female arrestees of childbearing age if they are pregnant or recently had a newborn child to determine if they meet the above criteria.
    - (1) Officers will be tactful and respectful when inquiring.
  - c. The Chatham County Detention Center will not accept handcuffed pregnant or postpartum women who meet the above criteria.
3. When the transporting officer determines how long the suspect will be required to stay in the hospital, the transporting officer shall immediately notify his supervisor.
  - a. The supervisor shall then notify the Precinct Commander or the on-duty Lieutenant. The Lieutenant is responsible for arranging for an officer to guard the prisoner for each shift.
  - b. Each precinct will assign an officer on a rotating basis in a numerical sequence.
4. The Lieutenant supervising the hospitalization of the prisoner will ensure that Sergeants visit the hospital to ensure the following rules are adhered to: Only authorized persons are allowed to visit the prisoner and only one visitor at any given time.
  - a. Visitors may include the prisoner's attorney, authorized members of the clergy, and immediate family to include; husband, wife, mother, and father.
  - b. An attorney is the only person who may visit a hospitalized suspect alone, outside the presence of a law enforcement officer.
  - c. CCPD officers shall not sleep, leave the room, or allow prisoners to leave the hospital until released and placed in custodial care.
  - d. CCPD officers shall be observant of the prisoner and the total environment (visitors included) to ensure that the situation is under control.
  - e. When the suspect is released from the hospital, the officer providing security shall ensure the suspect is searched, restrained, and transported to the local jail or appropriate facility.
  - f. All appropriate arrest forms shall be maintained at the precinct until the prisoner is released from the hospital.

4. Physically disabled prisoners may be transported in a patrol car with a cage. The prisoner's wheelchair, crutches, or prosthetic appliance will be secured by the transporting officer and taken with the prisoner to the holding facility.
5. Mentally disabled prisoners shall be transported in the back seat of a screened patrol vehicle and shall be handcuffed with their arms behind them.

**B. Transport of Opposite Sex and Juvenile Prisoners**

1. When transporting prisoners of the opposite sex or juvenile prisoners, the transporting officer shall notify the Communications Center of their present location and starting mileage.
2. Upon arrival at the destination, the officer shall broadcast that they have arrived and shall provide the ending mileage.
3. The Communications Center shall respond, in both cases, with the time.
4. If transportation is to another jurisdiction, a female officer should be used in the transport of female prisoners, if practical.
5. Female prisoners shall be kept separated from male prisoners.
6. In those cases, when an officer **must** transport a prisoner of the opposite sex, the officer must exercise proper discretion during the search and restraint of the prisoner.
7. Marked units with safety screens will be used to transport juveniles.
8. No juvenile may be transported to a juvenile detention facility in a police vehicle, which also contains an adult under arrest.

**V. TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT**

- A. All marked patrol vehicles ordinarily used for the transportation of prisoners are equipped with protective cages that separate the driver (transporting officer) from the prisoner.
- B. The rear inside door handles and window controls of the caged patrol vehicles shall be disabled so that they cannot be opened from the inside.

**VI. PRISONER TRANSPORT FROM A DETENTION FACILITY**

- A. Prisoners shall only be transported from a detention facility by CCPD officers for investigative purposes such as interviews and interrogations.
- B. Officers shall provide booking personnel of the Chatham County Detention Center (Jail), a division of the Chatham County Sheriff's Department, with the prisoner's name and date of birth when requesting a prisoner for investigative transport.
  1. The Chatham County Detention Center shall confirm the correct prisoner is released and shall require the receiving officer to sign an Inmate Transport Form.
  2. The Inmate Transport Form shall be returned to the Chatham County Detention Center, with any additional charges, when the inmate is returned to the custody of the Chatham County Detention Center.
  3. Inmate Transport Forms are filed and maintained by the Chatham County Detention Center.

- C. When transporting prisoners from other detention facilities for investigative purposes, Officers shall comply with the procedures required by the respective facility.
- D. The transporting officer shall inquire as to any potential security problems that the prisoner may present during transport, such as escape, suicidal tendencies, or unusual illnesses, and shall request personnel of the Chatham County Detention Center to document this information on the Inmate Transport Form.

## **VII. TRANSPORTING A PRISONER FOR PROCESSING OR TESTING**

- A. When it becomes necessary to transport a prisoner to a facility for DUI testing or fingerprinting, or other matters, the following procedures will be followed.
  - 1. The prisoner will remain under constant supervision of a sworn officer and will never be left out of sight.
  - 2. Officers should search the prisoner prior to entering any facility for testing purposes.
  - 3. Because of the need to be in close proximity to a prisoner, the officer conducting fingerprinting will secure his or her firearm during the process.
    - a. A second officer will observe the processing and serve as a backup officer.
  - 4. Officers will keep their portable radios available for access to the distress alarm during processing.
  - 5. Officers will observe and maintain all security precautions designed to prevent escapes or attacks on others.
  - 6. Handcuffs will not be removed without two officers present.

BY ORDER OF:

Electronically Signed in PowerDMS on 09/23/2020

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Jeffrey M. Hadley  
Chief of Police