



**Chapter:** Arrests, Use of Force, Care of Prisoners  
**Subject:** 05-23 – Handcuffing  
**Effective:** April 19, 2022  
**Supersedes:** Official Order 14, Section 14.5.2, dated April 29, 2021  
**Distribution:** Department Members

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**PURPOSE:** This Order establishes department policy on handcuffing.

#### **05-23-1 HANDCUFFING**

- A. Enforcement members shall use sound discretion when deciding whether to handcuff individuals who are not under arrest at the scene of an investigation.
- B. Enforcement members may stop and frisk a subject when they are able to articulate a reasonable suspicion that the person may be involved in a crime and may be potentially dangerous. The courts have extended this authority to the limited use of handcuffs to control a subject if the enforcement member can articulate a sufficient and reasonable concern for their safety that would justify such an intrusion. The courts will look at whether the situation might give rise to “sudden violence and the need to minimize the risk of harm to both police and citizens.”
  - (1) Enforcement members should use the following factors to determine if the use of handcuffs is justified during a non-arrest encounter with a subject:
    - a. Does the subject’s behavior give rise to the reasonable possibility of danger to the enforcement member or flight?
    - b. Does the enforcement member have information that the subject is currently armed?
    - c. Did the stop closely follow a violent crime?
    - d. Does the enforcement member have specific information that a crime potentially involving violence is about to occur?
    - e. How many enforcement members and/or subjects are present?
  - (2) Although this list should not be considered complete, it does include the most recognized reasons for handcuffing in a non-arrest situation. However, handcuffing merely to show consistency or because the incident occurred in a “dangerous area” are not sufficient reasons to justify the use of handcuffs in a non-arrest situation.
  - (3) Enforcement members shall document situations in which a subject is placed in handcuffs but not placed under arrest. The following information shall be recorded:

last name, first name, middle initial, race/sex, date of birth, and reason(s) for the use of handcuffs.

- C. Arrested persons taken into physical custody shall be handcuffed.
- D. Prisoners being transported shall be handcuffed. See written directive related to transporting prisoners.
- E. Circumstances surrounding initial contact with the prisoner (e.g., an arrest made on the road, transporting a prisoner from a place of incarceration to and/or from court appearances) may require different handcuffing methods.
  - (1) Prisoners should be handcuffed with their hands behind them. If a prisoner is handcuffed in front, Flex-Cuffs should be used to hold the prisoner's hands close to the belt.
  - (2) Care shall be taken that the handcuffs are not applied too tightly to the prisoner's wrists.
  - (3) The handcuffs shall be double-locked.
  - (4) Nothing in this Order shall preclude an enforcement member from handcuffing individuals in an alternative manner if, in the enforcement member's best judgment, it is deemed necessary. Alternative handcuffing techniques may involve use of the issued Welsh Hitch, Flex-Cuffs, and/or Tuff-Ties.
  - (5) The practice commonly referred to as "hog tying" a prisoner is prohibited. In this context, "hog tying" refers to the practice of restraining a resistive suspect's hands and ankles and securing them together behind the suspect's back while placing the prisoner in a prone position. A modified technique of restraining the hands to the ankles behind the back, utilizing a sufficient length of the Welsh Hitch to allow the prisoner to be placed in a seated position, is acceptable. Prisoners, once secured, should be placed in an upright position to avoid positional asphyxia. See written directive related to transporting prisoners.
- F. Enforcement members shall document in their incident report the manner in which the individual was handcuffed, the name of member that applied the handcuffs, that the handcuff tension was checked, and the handcuffs were double-locked.
- G. If an individual complains that handcuffs are too tight, enforcement members should, at the earliest opportunity that it can be done safely, re-check the handcuffs once to ensure the handcuffs are double-locked and not applied too tightly. Any complaints from an individual regarding handcuffs being too tight and the steps taken to ensure the handcuffs are double-locked and sufficiently adjusted, or complaint of any injury or actual injury sustained from the application of handcuffs, shall be documented in an incident report.

DIRECTOR

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**Annual Review Responsibility:** Training Division

**Accreditation Standards:** CALEA 70.2.1