

HANDCUFFS AND RESTRAINTS

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Omaha Police Department (OPD) that officers will properly restrain and search all persons arrested and taken into custody, and will exercise reasonable care in the use of restraining devices.

DEFINITIONS:

Hobbles: Soft leg restraints used to immobilize the legs of combative subjects. These may include flexible handcuffs, commercial leg restraint devices, or lengths of approximately half-inch diameter cotton or nylon rope with a fixed loop on the end.

Hog Tying: Placing a subject face down with their hands handcuffed or otherwise restrained behind their back and their legs secured to the handcuffs or hand restraints.

Positional Asphyxia: A form of mechanical asphyxia that occurs when a person is immobilized in a position which impairs adequate pulmonary ventilation and results in respiratory failure.

Prone Position: A body position in which the person lies flat with the chest and stomach down, and the back facing up. Persons restrained in this position, or placed in this position while handcuffed, are at higher risk to suffer from adverse medical conditions, which may include (but are not limited to) positional asphyxia, asthma-related problems, or cardiac events related to heart disease.

Reasonable Suspicion: Specific, reasonable inferences which the officer is entitled to draw from the facts in light of their experience. Reasonable suspicion is something less than the probable cause standard and will not support an arrest. Reasonable Suspicion is established by three building blocks: 1) Specific articulated facts, 2) Rational inferences, and 3) Plausible conclusions.

Restraint/Restraining Device: A tool used to restrain the movement of a detainee, such as handcuffs or restraining straps.

PROCEDURE:

I. Detaining Persons

- A. When placing a suspect in custody, officers will make a thorough and complete search of the person prior to transporting that person.
- B. Subjects who are detained for investigative purposes, for the issuance of a traffic citation, or an identification check will not be handcuffed or restrained unless officers are able to justify a reasonable suspicion that the person or circumstances pose a danger to the officer or the public.
- C. Officers issuing a citation for Driving Under Suspension shall use good judgment and discretion when deciding whether or not to place the subject in handcuffs.
- D. Officers detaining subject for a short period of time for a vehicle search will adhere to the current policies and procedures as described in "[Searches – Vehicles](#)" policy.

II. Use of Handcuffs

- A. Subjects who are arrested and taken into custody will be handcuffed unless they fall into one of the following exceptions, in which case handcuffing will be at the officer's discretion:

1. Elderly, disabled, ill, or injured subjects who do not represent an apparent risk to others and are incapacitated.

NOTE: Officers are reminded, that persons confined to a wheelchair may have tremendous upper body strength and caution should be exercised.

2. Juveniles under the age of 16 who do not represent an apparent risk to others, or risk of escape.

B. Whenever possible, handcuffs will be applied behind the back and double-locked.

III. Use of Other Restraints

- A. Temporary devices, such as flex-cuffs or cord-cuffs, may be used when conventional handcuffs are unavailable or impractical.
- B. A restraint cord may be used as a waist belt to secure handcuffs.
- C. Officers may immobilize the legs of combative subjects with soft leg restraints, commonly known as “hobbles.”
 1. Officers shall complete arrest and control training in proper leg restraint procedures before attempting to immobilize the legs of subjects.
- D. When leg restraints are used, the officer shall state in the PortalOne Booking/Arrest Report ([OPD Form 277](#)) that “the subject’s legs had to be immobilized with leg restraints” and articulate why.

IV. Restraint Guidelines

- A. Officers assume the responsibility for the safety and security of the subject taken into custody and their personal property.
- B. Officers who have custody of a handcuffed subject will check the handcuffs after the application and make necessary adjustments.
- C. If a restrained subject is transported by ambulance, an officer shall ride in the ambulance with the subject.
- D. Absent exigent circumstances, subjects in restraints will not be left unsupervised, including those who are placed in the back seat of a cruiser with a cage.
 1. Restraints will not be attached to vehicles, or immovable objects.
- E. Subjects who are controlled and handcuffed shall not be placed on the ground or in a cruiser in the prone position due to the risk of adverse medical conditions. These conditions may include (but are not limited to) positional asphyxia, asthma-related problems, or cardiac events related to heart disease.

NOTE: There are times when an officer may briefly place a handcuffed subject on the ground in the prone position to prevent fleeing or fighting until more officers arrive to assist. In these instances, the subject will be removed from the prone position as soon as safely possible.

- F. No person shall be transported in a prone position or in any other position that may restrict their breathing.

NOTE: The restraint position known as “hog tying” is strictly prohibited.

- G. When transporting subjects in leg restraints, the trailing end of the restraint shall be anchored (pinched) in the passenger door of the vehicle so as not to catch on anything while the vehicle is motion.
- H. Officers will assist subjects when walking up and down stairs and on questionable footing.

V. Requesting Assistance

- A. Officers working alone will request assistance to initiate an arrest.
- B. Prior to initiating an arrest, officers working alone will request assistance when there is more than one subject taken into custody or when the subject is presumed dangerous.

REFERENCES:

I. Previous OPD Orders

- A. Previous General Orders: #34-74, 73-85, 15-92, 45-97, 25-05, 6-10, 30-16, 33-20, 67-23, and 5-24.

II. Accreditation Standards

- A. Relevant CALEA Accreditation Standards: 70.2.1 and 71.3.2.

III. Other

- A. PPM Monthly Updates: #3-2020.