



POLICY AND PROCEDURE NO. 703

Cell Room Handling Prisoners - Suicide Precaution

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Whenever a person is taken into custody and indicates possible suicidal tendencies, necessary precautions shall be taken to minimize the possibility that suicide does occur. Indications may include statements, handwritten notes, overt acts or information from reliable third parties. Any indications observed shall be noted on the booking sheet and posted on the Service Division electronic journal.

Pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 36A, whenever a person in police custody attempts or threatens suicide, the officer in charge shall cause, within 24 hours of such incident, the following information to be entered in the CJIS Suicide Candidate Screen (Q5):

- Prisoner's name
- Address
- Age
- Reason for detention
- Nature of attempt or threat
- Date of attempt or threat

Such information shall be made part of the criminal offender record information system (C.O.R.I.) and shall only be disseminated to those agencies authorized under Chapter 6, Section 172.

Pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 36A, whenever a person in police custody attempts or threatens suicide and that person is transferred to another lockup facility or court, the officer in charge shall notify in writing the receiving lockup facility or court of the exact nature of said attempt or threat and cause also this information to be posted to the Court Liaison's electronic journal forthwith. Notification to the court will be done through the Court Liaison Office. One copy of the written notice shall be forwarded to the Service Division Captain.

In the event of a suicide or an attempted suicide involving significant injury or hospitalization which is the result of said injury, the Detective Bureau will be notified to conduct an investigation and shall have primary responsibility for the investigation. Reports on the incident shall be made by Service Division personnel and shall be made a part of the Detective Bureau's investigation. The senior on-duty Service Division official shall report ALL attempts of suicide through their chain of command all well as posting an electronic journal item regarding the incident to all Divisions. The Service Division Lieutenant, Captain, and the respective Deputy Chief shall be notified immediately of any suicide that occurs.

Pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 36A, whenever a person in police custody commits suicide or dies or inflicts self-injury while in custody which subsequently results in his/her death, a report

of such incident, identifying the deceased and describing the circumstances of such death shall be sent, within seven days of such death, together with copies of any incident pertaining thereto to the medical examiner's office.

If a suicide attempt results in injuries to the prisoner requiring medical attention, the prisoner shall be taken to an appropriate medical facility pursuant to the "Handling of Prisoners" policy.

Whenever a person in custody presents a risk of committing or attempting suicide, the following methods of restraint shall be considered and implemented where appropriate under the circumstances: audio/visual monitoring, clothing removed handcuffs and/or helmet, and observation. Blankets shall be removed if their presence in the cell increases the risk of suicide. When all cells with visual monitoring capabilities are occupied, the on-duty Service Division official shall assess and prioritize all persons in custody who are classified as presenting a risk of committing suicide and are in need of visual/electronic observation. Priority will be given to acute and recent suicidal manifestations and under no conditions shall two suicidal prisoners be housed within the same cell.

Pursuant to departmental policy, "Handling of Prisoners", cells shall be checked every 15 minutes and recorded on the electronic system. On all such checks, the officer shall have in his possession the key to the cells in the event he/she has to quickly intervene in a suicide situation although the emergency button shall be activated prior to entering the cell unless the situation demands otherwise.

Whenever a suicide occurs, all electronic/digital data covering the occurrence shall be kept on file indefinitely with the investigative report.

Cells equipped with audio/visual monitoring devices shall be reserved for suicide-prone prisoners and other prisoners needing the additional attention (beyond the 15 minute checks).

Audio/visual monitors shall be kept in proper working order to the extent possible and visibility shall not be reduced or obstructed in any way.

Prisoners attempting suicide (overt acts) shall be taken to University of Massachusetts-Emergency Mental Health, for examination. In the event the prisoner is returned to Police Headquarters, any precautions recommended by Emergency Mental Health as a result of the examination shall be followed where feasible.

Inquiries from the media regarding any suicide or attempted suicide shall be handled in accordance with the department's media relations policy.

Per:

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