



Lake Worth Police Department

Policy 7.10 – Prisoner Restraints

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Approved By: _____

J.T. Manoushagian
Chief of Police

I. POLICY

The officer's responsibility for the safe custody of prisoners permits some discretion in the use of handcuffs and other restraining devices. The department requires officers to observe their own safety and that of the people they transport by carefully utilizing restraints on prisoners (except children) who must be taken to a jail or some other location. See also Policy 7.11, Transporting Prisoners.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of handcuffs and other restraining devices.

III. PROCEDURES - Arrested Persons

A. General

1. Officers shall handcuff all arrested adults unless the application of handcuffs will aggravate or cause injury due to age, infirmity, physical condition or prior injury.
2. Officers must be able to justify any exception they make to the policy that all arrested adults must be handcuffed, with particular attention to safety issues.
3. A prisoner who is not handcuffed shall be transported in a vehicle with a prisoner cage, and two officers shall conduct the transport.
4. Juveniles should not be handcuffed unless they have been taken into custody for a violent offense, pose an escape risk, or where the officer reasonably believes handcuffing is necessary for the safety of the juvenile or the officer.

B. Handcuffs

1. In most circumstances safety concerns mandate that arrested subjects should be handcuffed. Officers must be able to justify exceptions with particular attention to the risks involved when no handcuffs are used. Listed below are some possible exceptions:

- a. Children under 10 years of age
- b. Pregnant females
- c. Handicapped or disabled suspects
- d. Elderly suspects

2. Normally, officers shall handcuff a subject with the hands in back, but they may choose to handcuff hands in front if the suspect is handicapped or disabled. If the suspect is handcuffed in front, officers should secure the handcuffs to the body by use of a belt if possible.

3. Officers shall double lock the handcuffs. This will help ensure prisoner and officer safety. Double locking reduces the chance of having the lock picked or that the handcuff will accidentally tighten, which could restrict circulation.

4. Officers shall apply the handcuffs without utilizing hard strikes to the wrist and no over tightening of the handcuffs.

5. Individuals will not be handcuffed to any portion of a police vehicle during transport.

C. Body Belt: The body belt allows the officer to handcuff the prisoner in front while still restricting the movement of the prisoner's arms and hands. The body belt will be used when the officer deems it appropriate.

D. Ankle Shackles: Ankle shackles shall be used by officers when transporting any prisoner who they believe might be an escape risk or when circumstances deem it appropriate in accordance with training.

E. Plastic Handcuffs: Plastic handcuffs shall be used when officers take several prisoners into custody, or when a prisoner requires multiple restraints. Officers must understand that, once applied, plastic handcuffs can be removed only with a knife, scissors, or other cutting instrument.

F. Hobble Technique

1. The hobble technique refers to the use of a hobble device to secure a prisoner's feet while in transport in a police car. It involves looping a rope around the prisoner's ankles and then extending the other end of the device onto the door jam and then shutting the door, thus holding the prisoner's feet in place.
2. The hobble device should be applied only to a prisoner's legs when the officer feels that the prisoner poses an imminent threat of physical harm to himself/herself or another with the use of his/her feet or legs, or when the prisoner attempts to damage the inside of the patrol car during transport.
3. Two officers are required to transport a prisoner restrained by the hobble device. One officer monitors the status of the prisoner while in transport to prevent the prisoner from harming himself/herself, for example, by head strikes against window.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. If officers have a reasonable suspicion that an individual has been involved in a violent offense, handcuffs may be applied to such individuals while officers investigate the incident. This restraint is only lawful for safety reasons, and the officers shall articulate the reasons for their safety concern.

B. Persons not arrested, but who are subject to detention, may be restrained under the following circumstances:

1. Suspects shall be handcuffed only as long as necessary.
2. Handcuffing of suspects shall be accomplished with minimal discomfort to the suspect.
3. Officers shall limit the number and type of restraints used on the suspect to what is reasonably necessary.
4. If an individual is handcuffed or otherwise restrained for officer safety reasons during an investigation and later released, officers shall document their actions in an offense or incident report and include the reasons officers handcuffed the individual, the approximate length of time of the restraint, and the results of the investigation.

V. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- A. Officers shall not place subjects in a prone position with the hands and ankles bound behind with handcuffs, belts, or other devices.
- B. As soon as any suspect who is lying on his or her stomach has been handcuffed, officers shall roll the suspect onto his or her side or place the suspect in a sitting position.
- C. Suspects shall never be transported in a prone, face-down position.
- D. All suspects will be monitored during custody and transport for indications of medical problems, and medical treatment will be obtained if the officer believes it is needed.
- E. Officers should be aware that intoxication, recent use of drugs or alcohol, the presence of a head injury, obesity, physical disability, and recent exertion are all circumstances that can increase difficulty breathing when a person is restrained.