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OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY
POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

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SUBJECT
PRISONER PROCEDURES

CANCELLATION
G.O. 4-300 Dated 06/25/2008

V.L.E.P.S.C. STANDARD
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4-300.00 PURPOSE

This Order outlines the basic procedure for the transportation of prisoners and for the protection of the prisoner and the police officer during transportation.

4-300.01 PRISONER SEARCH

The arresting officer will thoroughly search the prisoner for weapons and/or contraband. The search of a prisoner should be conducted with a back-up officer present. The search shall be conducted as soon as possible after the arrest and before placing the prisoner in a transport vehicle. If the arresting officer is not the transporting officer, the transporting officer will search the prisoner again before transporting. Prisoners shall not be searched by officers of the opposite sex unless:

A. There is compelling evidence to suspect that the prisoner may have a weapon and the search is done to protect the officer involved.

B. There is no officer on duty of the same sex as the prisoner that is within a reasonable distance and waiting for such an officer would create an unreasonable delay or risk to the officer or prisoner.

C. When possible, a supervisor is present to observe the search.

4-300.02 RESTRAINTS

A. Handcuffs: Prisoners shall be handcuffed with their hands behind their back and the handcuffs double locked. Officers shall ensure that the handcuffs are not overly tightened on the wrist. One method of checking the tightness is to place the tip of the small finger between the cuff and the wrist.

   1. In the event that the subject complains of tightness, the officer should have a second officer check the tightness if a second officer is available.

   2. Handcuffs that are determined to be too tight shall be adjusted and checked again.

   3. Only in unusual circumstances (i.e., very young, very old, handicapped) will an officer be permitted to use his/her own judgment in the decision to handcuff a prisoner.

4. Disabled or handicapped prisoners may require special procedures. The application of restraint devices on a handicapped prisoner is governed by the subject's physical capabilities, seriousness of the charge and threat level of the prisoner, i.e. a prisoner with one arm may require that the officer attach one cuff to the available wrist and the other cuff attached a belt loop or hobble which is attached to the opposite leg and behind the back.

B. Flexcuffs: Officers may use flexcuffs in lieu of handcuffs when reasonable. Subjects should be flexcuffed in such a manner as to ensure the security of, and prevent injury to the subject. They may be used to secure a subject's arms and/or legs if necessary. Flexcuffs shall be removed carefully to ensure injury does not occur to the subject or the officer during the removal process.

   Officers should be aware that flexcuffs do not provide the same level of security as handcuffs. Flexcuffs can be cut using a sharp object or by friction, i.e., using a shoelace to rub against the plastic. Therefore, when an officer transports a prisoner secured with a flexcuff, a second officer will be sent to monitor the prisoner's actions.

C. Hobble: Subjects should be restrained in such a manner as to ensure security of, and prevent injury to, the subject.

   1. When a subject aggressively resists and this resistance creates an imminent danger to the subject or others, or other restraining tools have not been effective, officers may use hobble restraints.

   2. Once the individual is controlled, officers shall place the subject in a seated position. This is to reduce the propensity of a subject to suffer positional asphyxia. Subjects shall be monitored for signs of respiratory distress.

   3. If there is any doubt as to the subject's condition, officers should immediately call paramedics to the scene. Officers shall continue to closely monitor and assist the subject where possible until paramedics arrive.

D. The use of "hog tying" or other such techniques are prohibited.

E. Thumbcuffs are prohibited.

F. Leg Shackles and Waist belt/chain: Only members of the Investigation Services Section may use leg shackles and waist belts/chains. These restraints are intended for use during extraditions where the prisoner will be in-transit for long distances and it is deemed necessary for security reasons.

4-300.03 VEHICLE INSPECTION

Officers assigned to patrol units shall thoroughly inspect the interior of the vehicle, prior to entering into service; to ensure that the vehicle does not contain any unsecured items that could be used as a weapon or instrument to aid in escape should it become necessary to transport a prisoner during the officer's tour of duty.

Officers will inspect and search the rear seat area of the vehicle for contraband of any sort so that they might testify, if the need arises, that there was no contraband in the vehicle prior to the arrested person being placed in the vehicle.

After a prisoner has been transported, the rear seat will be searched again to ensure that the prisoner has not dropped or hidden any contraband or evidence.

4-300.04 PRISONER TRANSPORT VEHICLES

A. Whenever possible, prisoners shall be transported in caged units. When that is not possible or practical, the following procedures will be used:

1. Prisoners will be handcuffed and searched described in section 4-300.01 of this policy, and seat belted in the front passenger seat. If an additional officer is needed or required they should follow in a separate vehicle, while maintaining visual contact at all times. Once the arresting officer and prisoner are securely in the detention center, the secondary officer will return to regularly assigned patrol duties.

2. If the second officer rides in the same vehicle, due to a combative prisoner needing to be physically controlled, and has secured his service weapon out of reach of the prisoner, he/she will accompany the prisoner in the rear seat with the officer positioned directly behind the driver. All prisoners placed into a police vehicle will be secured with a seatbelt.

3. The Code of Virginia § 46.2-1094 exempts police officers transporting prisoners from the requirement to wear a seatbelt.

4-300.05 TRANSPORTATION OF PRISONERS GENERAL

A. All prisoners should be removed from the scene as soon as possible.

B. The most direct route from the point of arrest to the police station shall be employed.

C. In cases where an arrest is made for indecent exposure or similar offense and the prisoner is entirely or partially disrobed, officers will make every attempt to cover the unclothed area of the prisoner using whatever means available (i.e., raincoat, jacket, blanket).

D. Officers shall not divert to any other calls while transporting prisoners except for an extreme emergency involving the possibility of great bodily harm or death, unless receiving shift supervisor approval.

E. Officers using any restraint device shall take all necessary precautions to prevent positional asphyxia. Officers shall check to make sure that the subject maintains an open airway at all times.

F. If there are indications that injury or damage may result from transportation of a violent prisoner in a patrol car, the arresting officer will have the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC) contact the receiving county agency to request a patrol wagon for transportation.

4-300.06 PRISONERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A. When a prisoner is mentally ill, physically disabled, injured or sick, the officer will:

Notify his supervisor immediately.

1. The supervisor will determine if medical attention is necessary and if there is potential for liability.

2. If necessary, appropriate transportation to the nearest hospital for treatment will be arranged prior to transporting to the detention facility.

B. It may be necessary to transport the prisoner in an ambulance, depending on the severity of the injury or illness. In such cases, an officer will remain with the prisoner. The prisoner shall be searched before being placed in the ambulance and handcuffed as is stated in Sections 4-300.01

and 4-300.02, unless for medical reasons it is impractical. When a prisoner cannot be handcuffed behind his/her back, the officer will use other forms of restraint that will reasonably and safely restrict movement. The officer guarding the prisoner on the ambulance shall secure his/her sidearm in a "Life Jacket" gunlock supplied on the ambulance if available. The sidearm will be placed in a secured location out of the prisoner's reach before transporting to the medical facility. In the event of a combative prisoner, a second officer will follow the ambulance in a cruiser, maintaining constant observation of the rear compartment through the windows on the rear door.

C. Prisoners Transported to Medical Care Facilities:

1. If the prisoner is admitted to the hospital the Department will make arrangements for security as necessary. The guarding officer should keep the prisoner in sight, if possible.

2. When a prisoner requires hospitalization, they will be required to register themselves for treatment whenever possible.

3. Under no circumstances will employees say or sign anything that incurs financial responsibility to the Department without specific supervisory authorization.

4. The Watch Commander will monitor and arrange relief for officers guarding prisoners under these conditions.

5. When the prisoner is released, the transporting officer should obtain written instructions signed by the attending physician, which he will turn over to the detention personnel.

6. Before transport, the prisoner will be restrained, in accordance with this policy.

7. The nature of the injury/illness will be documented as required on appropriate paperwork.

8. Unconscious persons will not be transported or booked into the detention facility, but will be taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital for examination.

D. Contact with ill or infectious prisoners

See G.O. 4-301

E. Mentally ill persons:

See G.O. 4-302. Officers taking persons they believe are mentally ill into custody should do the following regarding restraining and transporting:

1. All mentally ill prisoners will be handcuffed or restrained and searched prior to transport in the same manner as any other prisoner. If the person is violent, the officer will contact the receiving county to request a patrol wagon, if available, for transport.

2. The officer will contact the detention staff, if the person is not being committed to a psychiatric facility, and advise them of the condition of the prisoner prior to bringing the person into the booking area.

4-300.07 TRANSPORTATION OF PRISONERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX

When practical, an officer of the same sex will transport, or accompany, a prisoner. When that is not practical, officers transporting prisoners of the opposite sex will notify the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC) before beginning the transport. The notification shall include the

point of origin and the odometer reading. At the destination, the PSCC will be contacted by radio or telephone (if not within radio range) and the time and odometer reading will be noted.

4-300.08 HOLDING CELLS

A. The holding cells will be searched for contraband prior to their use. Once the prisoner has been removed, a subsequent search of the cell will be conducted to determine if contraband was introduced by the prisoner while being held there.

B. Restrained prisoners will not be confined in a cell with other non-restrained prisoners.

C. Prisoners should be constantly monitored but will be visually checked at least once every ten minutes while in the holding cell.

4-300.09 PRISONER TRANSPORT DESTINATION PROCEDURES

Officers transporting prisoners shall follow the rules at the receiving facility in regards to storage of firearms and receiving of prisoners. In any case, officers shall:

A. Use the sally port to deliver prisoners to the detention facility or position their vehicles as close to the facility entrance as possible, to minimize possibility of escape when the sally port is not available.

B. Employees transporting prisoners, booking prisoners, or going into the detention facility, will secure their weapons prior to removing prisoners from their vehicle or entering the facility.

C. Everyone who enters or exits the detention facility is to manually check the door used to ensure that the lock properly engaged. If the door does not lock after an officer has entered or exited, they will notify a detention officer immediately.

D. The transporting officer shall remove restraining devices when directed to do so by the agency receiving the prisoner.

E. The transporting officer will make sure the necessary documents are delivered to the receiving officer.

F. Advise receiving agency personnel of any potential medical or security hazards.

4-300.10 ESCAPE PROCEDURES

A. PURSUIT OF ESCAPEE

In the event of an escape, a decision must be made whether to pursue the escapee or to remain with other prisoner(s), if any. That decision should be based on the seriousness of the charges upon the escapee and those upon the remaining prisoner(s). Also the probability of immediate capture of the prisoner should be considered.

1. Within the Department's jurisdiction the following actions shall be taken:

   a. The transporting officer shall notify the PSCC of the incident, the location, name of the subject, a physical description, method and direction of travel, means of escape, possible weapons possessed by the escapee, pending charges and request for any assistance needed.

   b. The PSCC shall issue a general broadcast relaying the information listed above.

   c. Search the area and try to recapture the escapee as soon as possible.

d. Preserve and collect any evidence related to the escape.

e. Obtain applicable warrants for the escapee in response to the escape.

2. While in another Jurisdiction, take the actions listed above as well as the following:

a. Have the PSCC immediately notify the law enforcement agency for that jurisdiction and request their assistance.

b. Following that notification, and as soon as possible, the transporting officer shall notify the Watch Commander, who will ensure appropriate notifications are made.

Note: Code of Virginia § 19.2-77 authorizes an officer to pursue and arrest the escaped prisoner anywhere in Virginia if in close pursuit.

3. Reporting Requirements

A full report of the escape shall be prepared by the transporting officer and forwarded through the chain-of-command to the Chief of Police. The report shall be reviewed to determine if established procedures were followed and if a change in procedure is needed to prevent future escapes.

B. Unusual Security Risks

1. The magistrate or receiving agency will be notified of any prisoner who is an unusual security hazard prior to taking the prisoner into a hearing room or other facility.

2. In those cases, the receiving agency may take additional security steps or the magistrate may allow or direct the use of restraining devices in the hearing room and may request the assignment of additional security officers while at the hearing room.

4-300.11 PRISONER PROPERTY

All of a prisoner's personal property that can be reasonably removed will be taken from the prisoner at the location of the arrest using the following procedures:

A. Property will be placed in an envelope labeled with prisoner's name for small items, and kept with the arrestee.

B. Purses, knapsacks, or other similar containers used to carry items will be removed from the prisoner and searched in prisoner's presence.

C. Containers too large to be accepted by the detention facility will be inventoried by the arresting officer. A property sheet shall be filled out and attached to the item to be held for safekeeping.

D. Prisoners will be searched prior to being placed in any holding cell.

E. When a prisoner is in possession of perishable property, arresting officers may release the property to a responsible party prior to transport.

1. If a responsible party cannot be located the prisoner will be informed that the Police Department will not hold the perishable property.

2. Perishable property will be disposed of with a supervisor's approval.