



LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT
Ardmore, Pennsylvania

Policy 3.5.1

Subject:		Distribution:
Prisoner Transport		All Personnel
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References:		
CALEA: 70.1.1, 70.1.2, 70.1.6 - 70.1.8, 70.2.1, 70.4.2, 71.3.3, 71.5.1, 72.4.1; PLEAC: 1.3.10, 2.5.1 – 2.5.8, 3.1.5, 3.1.9 – 3.1.11, 3.1.13, 3.1.15, 3.1.16, 3.2.5		
By Authority of:		
		Superintendent of Police

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform procedures for the custody and transportation of prisoners. This procedure is designed for the protection and safety of the person in custody, the public, and police officers.

PRISONER SEARCH

- A. Prior to transport, all prisoners, and all possessions of the prisoner, shall be thoroughly searched by the transporting officer before placing him/her into the police vehicle. This is not a “frisk” search; this is a search for any weapons, contraband, evidence or tools of escape. This search shall be conducted by the arresting officer. If the transporting officer is different from the arresting officer, the transporting officer shall conduct a separate search. All officers will be held accountable for any undetected items of contraband later found in their vehicles or on the prisoner. **(CALEA 70.1.1) (PLEAC 2.5.1)**
- B. When practical, prisoner searches should be conducted by an officer of the same sex as the prisoner, except that the arrestee may request a male or female officer, consistent with their gender identity, to conduct the search.

VEHICLE INSPECTION

- A. At the beginning and end of each tour of duty, all vehicles regularly used for prisoner transport shall be inspected by the officer operating the vehicle. **(CALEA 70.1.2) (PLEAC 2.5.2)**
 - 1. The interior shall be thoroughly searched to ensure that no weapons or contraband have been left behind or hidden within the vehicle.
 - 2. The interior shall be inspected to ensure that there are no remaining bodily fluids or other contaminants. If present, they shall be removed.

prior to the vehicle being used.

TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT

- A.** In order to minimize opportunities for the prisoner to exit the patrol vehicle without assistance of the transporting officer, all marked patrol vehicles used routinely for prisoner transportation shall be modified as follows; **(CALEA 70.4.2)**
1. The cage separating the driver from the prisoner shall be securely in place and undamaged.
 2. All windows shall be intact and outer door latches in proper working order.
 3. Rear-seat door handles and window controls shall be deactivated.
- B.** The primary purpose of the marked patrol van is prisoner transport. It has been specifically modified to separate the driver from the prisoner and prevent the prisoner from gaining access to the driver's compartment.

PRISONER TRANSPORT

- A.** The Police Custody/Detention Checklist ([AUX-42](#)) is to be completed at each phase of the prisoner handling process.
- B.** Prior to placing a prisoner in a vehicle for transport, the transporting officer shall inspect the interior for weapons and contraband. The vehicle shall be searched again after the prisoner has been delivered to the detention facility or other destination. **(CALEA 70.1.2) (PLEAC 2.5.2)**
- C.** Arrestees shall be transported without unnecessary delay. The Communications Center shall be advised of time and mileage pre and post transport.
- D.** Prisoners shall be transported by two officers. In vehicles with a cage, and when utilizing the van, the second officer may ride in the front or follow behind in a separate vehicle.
- E.** Prisoners shall be seat belted for transport; however, with a high risk or violent prisoner, officer safety shall not be compromised in order to place the seatbelt on the prisoner.
- F.** When utilizing the prisoner van, the door to the interior cage shall be locked when a prisoner is inside.
- G.** Prisoners shall be transported in the following manner:
1. Multiple arrestees should not be transported together in a sedan when there is an indication that one or more of them may become violent.

2. Where the vehicle has a security screen, but only one transporting officer, the prisoner shall be placed in the back seat on the right-hand side. No prisoner shall be transported by a lone officer in a vehicle that is not equipped with a security screen.
 3. When the prisoner is being transported in a two-officer vehicle without a security screen, the prisoner shall be placed in the right rear seat. The second officer shall be unarmed and sit in the left rear seat behind the driver.
 4. The transporting officer shall monitor the prisoner during transport for any unusual or disorderly behavior. In the event of such, a supervisor shall be notified immediately, and the behavior recorded in the officer's incident report.
 - a. The prisoner van should be used for unruly or violent prisoners.
 - b. The transport should be delayed if the prisoner becomes so violent as to risk injury to the transporting officer, themselves, or damage to the police vehicle.
- G.** Any wheelchairs, crutches, and medication should be transported with the prisoner, but not in the possession of the prisoner.
- H.** Whenever it becomes necessary to transport a prisoner, who is sick, injured or disabled, in an ambulance, at least one police officer will accompany the prisoner. The transporting officer will remove the prisoner's restraints only when it is deemed necessary and he/she is requested to do so by the medical staff. **(PLEAC 2.5.7)**
- I.** Any prisoner who is sick, injured or disabled prior to or during an arrest situation, will not be transported to any prison or holding facility until he/she has been examined and released by a physician or qualified health care provider.
- J.** All medical related problems will be fully described in the incident report and the prisoner log.
- K.** Refusal of treatment shall be documented and verified by the officer and attending medical care provider. The officer will note the refusal on the Police Custody/Detention Checklist, ([AUX-42](#)), prior to transporting the prisoner to the detention facility. This form will be initialed by the officer and placed with the prisoner log and noted in the incident report.
- L.** If necessary, Narberth Ambulance, or other appropriate EMS may be called to provide an ambulance for transportation to a medical facility.
- M.** If the injury is the result of a use of force by Department personnel, the requirements of the Use of Force Policy will be followed.
- N.** The supervisor will have photographs taken of the injury, investigate the facts and obtain all MVR recordings that capture the incident. No actions will be taken which involve the use of force, or which may give the impression of the use of force when trying to photograph the injuries of uncooperative prisoners. Instead, the

photographer should get the best photographs possible or wait until the prisoner becomes cooperative. The investigative report should describe the prisoner's lack of cooperation.

INTERRUPTION OF PRISONER TRANSPORTS

- A.** The primary duty of the transporting officer is the safe delivery of the prisoner in his or her care. Therefore, the officer should not stop to render law enforcement assistance to third parties along the route except under extreme emergency conditions where the risk to third parties is clear and grave and the risk to the prisoner is minimal. Should the officer decide to stop, the local agency shall be immediately notified of the following:
 - 1. The identity of the officer or unit number.
 - 2. The officer's status (prisoner transportation, etc.).
 - 3. The nature and location of the incident.
- B.** The transporting officer should only consider stopping when arriving first on the scene and will remain only until other emergency assistance has arrived.
- C.** The transporting officer shall not become involved in a pursuit, roadblock, or other situation that might create a risk of harm to the prisoner.

PRISONER COMMUNICATION

- A.** Safety aspects of the transportation function require that the prisoner's rights to communicate with attorney, clergy, family, and/or others will not normally be exercised during the duration the prisoner is being transported. A prisoner will not be permitted to make any phone calls while being readied for transport. Should a special circumstance arise which would necessitate an exception to this policy, the transporting officer will be the individual responsible for monitoring the communication.
- B.** Personnel shall not relate to family and/or friends of the prisoner, the times of transport or routes of travel. Discretion should be used when the family and/or friends are subpoenaed as witnesses, or if they are following the officer to the Magisterial District Judge for a preliminary arraignment and to assist in obtaining bail.
- C.** Prisoners will be permitted to speak with officers and other prisoners while in the transport vehicle.

TRANSPORT TO OTHER FACILITIES

- A.** The transporting officer should be aware of and follow procedures at the different state institutions, forensic hospitals and mental health institutions, county prisons, Magisterial District Judges' offices, or the Court of Common Pleas.

- B.** Officers shall at no time enter, with a firearm or other restricted weapon, a secure area of a prison, or other areas, that are marked so as to prohibit weapons. When required, firearms and other restricted weapons will be secured for safekeeping using the established procedure of the receiving facility. **(CALEA 70.1.6a) (PLEAC 2.5.3a)**
- C.** The restraints will only be removed from the prisoner upon the instructions of the receiving officer at an institution or facility just prior to placing the prisoner in a cell or holding room. In the case of court, the restraints shall not be removed until the suspect is taken into the courtroom and the proceeding is beginning. **(CALEA 70.1.6b) (PLEAC 2.5.3b)**
- D.** The transporting officer will be responsible to make sure all necessary documentation is properly delivered to the receiving officer with regard to the transfer of the prisoner. The transporting officer shall document the name of the receiving officer and/or record the prisoner transaction in the Alert Report. **(CALEA 70.1.6 c, e) (PLEAC 2.5.3 c, d)**
- E.** The transporting officer shall be responsible to ensure that all necessary paperwork is returned to the Records Section as appropriate.

MEDICAL AND SAFETY HAZARDS

- A.** The transporting officer shall inform the intake official or Judge of any potential medical, suicide and/or security risk, when a prisoner is to be transported to any other agency or court. This shall be documented in the incident report. **(CALEA 70.1.6 d, 70.1.8) (PLEAC 2.5.3 e, 2.5.5)**
- B.** In such cases, the Judge may allow or direct the use of restraining devices in the court and/or may request the assistance of additional personnel for security while at the court.

ESCAPE

- A.** It is the responsibility of every officer and the officer's supervisors, to ensure that prisoners do not escape from custody while in transport or at our facility.
- B.** If such an escape should occur, the involved officer(s) shall ensure that the Montgomery County Communications Center and the on-duty supervisor are immediately notified, along with a complete description of the fugitive, mode and direction of travel, crime, and propensity for violence, if known. **(CALEA 70.1.7a) (PLEAC 2.5.4 a)**
- C.** The involved officer(s) and the ranking supervisor shall ensure that every reasonable effort is made to apprehend the escapee.
- D.** The shift supervisor will be responsible to ensure that the following notifications are made: **(CALEA 70.1.7 a) (PLEAC 2.5.4 a)**

1. Immediately notify surrounding police jurisdictions.
 2. As soon as possible, notify the on-call Watch Commander or the Operations Division Commander.
 3. Notify the victim(s) of the prisoner's criminal act, within an appropriate time frame as determined by the circumstances. These circumstances may require immediate notification (especially for crimes of violence) or may allow this responsibility to be specifically transferred to a supervisor working during normal business hours.
- E. Officers shall prepare an incident report on the event and any other report deemed necessary by the supervisor. **(CALEA 70.1.7 b) (PLEAC 2.5.4 b)**
- F. Other actions to be taken: **(CALEA 70.1.7 c) (PLEAC 2.5.4 c)**
1. Notification should be made to the police agency in the jurisdiction of the last known address of the escapee.
 2. Notification should be made to the police agency where the victim resides and or works, if known.
 3. NCIC/CLEAN entry shall be made as soon as possible in regard to the escapee.

PRISONER RESTRAINT

- A. The following restraining devices are authorized for use by sworn members:
(CALEA 70.2.1) (PLEAC 2.5.6)
1. Handcuffs.
 2. Prisoner Restraining Belt.
 3. Leg Shackles.
 4. Nylon Leg Restraints.
 5. Prisoner Restraint Chair.
 6. Anti-Spit Hood.
- B. Handcuffing
1. Officers shall not transport prisoners who are restrained in a prone position.
 2. Officers shall handcuff (double-locked) all prisoners with their hands behind their back using the cross-arm method, one palm up and one palm down.

3. The officer may handcuff the prisoner with his/her hands in front, or use other appropriate and approved restraining device(s) when the prisoner:
 - a. Has a physical disability or is infirm.
 - b. Has an injury that could be aggravated by standard handcuffing.
4. Females shall be subject to the same handcuffing and restraint policy as males, unless in an obvious state of pregnancy or otherwise exempted by one of the above exceptions. **(PLEAC 2.5.7)**

C. Restraint Belts

1. Restraint belts are available to be used for transporting prisoners between our facility and the various correctional facilities in our area. The belts are designed to be worn with the metal loop in front and the handcuffs placed through the loop. For transports that present a security risk, these belts can be used with the subject handcuffed behind their back and leg shackles should be utilized. These belts are stored in room 233 and the Investigations Unit.

D. Leg Shackles

1. Leg shackles are to be used to transport a prisoner that presents a security risk. Leg shackles are located in room 233 and the Investigations Unit and the Lock-Up Facility. The following instructions are to be adhered to:
 - a. The cuffs are to be placed loosely around the ankles, just tight enough to prevent them from sliding over the feet.
 - b. Once in place, they are to be double locked at all times.
 - c. While in place, a prisoner's mobility is limited. Use care when moving the prisoner in and out of a vehicle and up or down steps.

E. Additional approved restraint devices may be used at the direction of a supervisor to secure a prisoner who violently resists arrest or who manifests mental health issues such that he/she presents a threat to themselves, the public or property.

1. A prisoner who displays violent behavior shall be placed in the appropriate seating position and shall be properly secured. To further immobilize the prisoner, a nylon leg restraint may be used. The nylon belt equipped with the D- rings will be placed around the prisoner's knees and pulled flush securing the knees. To prevent injury to the prisoner, the belt buckle should be pulled securely to the door seam and the rocker panel and should not be allowed to hang free.

2. The on-scene supervisor will supply the nylon restraint belt.

F. "Hog tying" and "choke holds" are prohibited **(PLEAC 1.3.10a)** – Hog tying refers to

the practice of pulling the prisoner's legs behind their back and securing them to their wrists with restraints. This technique has been connected to a potentially fatal condition called positional asphyxiation. The choke hold is prohibited as it can cause serious injury.

- G.** Unruly prisoners who present indications of violent or physically aggressive behavior may be secured in the prisoner restraint chair when necessary to prevent injury to themselves or damage to the facility. The chair may be used to house the prisoner in a cell or to move the prisoner from/to cell and transport vehicle.
1. Use of the chair shall be at the direction of a supervisor and shall follow the [manufacturer's instructions](#).
 2. Prisoners shall not be left in the chair for more than two hours.
 3. Communications Center personnel shall be notified when a prisoner is housed in the chair, and the prisoner shall be closely monitored via CCTV video and audio.
 4. Officers shall periodically check on the prisoner in-person. These checks shall occur every 30 minutes or sooner. If the prisoner's aggressive behavior is believed to be the result of a mental health issue, then the prisoner shall remain under constant and direct (in person) observation while alternative housing and care are immediately pursued.
 5. If the prisoner's actions and demeanor indicate a change to compliance, the prisoner shall be removed from the chair. The chair shall not be utilized any longer than is necessary.
 6. Use of the chair shall be documented, to include time/duration, in the investigative report and on the prisoner log.
- H.** Unruly prisoners may also be secured with handcuffs and/or leg shackles in the cell. Restraints for this purpose are located in the lock-up facility. The following instructions are to be adhered to:
1. Non-compliant prisoners who attempt to block or cover the CCTV camera, or who otherwise attempt to damage or vandalize the cell through non-violent or non-physically aggressive means may be leg shackled through the cuff port of a lower bench while laying on their back ([example](#)). This method is less restrictive as the hands and arms are left free and uncuffed. The main purpose is to prevent movement around the cell.
 2. If the prisoner restraint chair is not available, violent or physically aggressive prisoners may be secured to a cell bench when necessary to prevent injury to themselves or damage to the facility. The prisoner shall be placed in a seated position on a lower bench with one hand handcuffed to the cuff port ([example](#)). Depending on the level of non-

compliance, the prisoner's legs can also be shackled in a non-tethered fashion ([example](#)).

3. The restraint methods described in this section must be utilized at the direction of a supervisor. Each prisoner's size and mobility should be considered when determining whether a restraint method is appropriate and suitable.
 4. The same monitoring and documentation procedures listed in the prior section for the prisoner restraint chair (**G. 3 thru 6**) shall be followed. Upon each physical check, the handcuffs and/or shackles shall be inspected.
- I. Department issued anti-spit hoods may be used on prisoners who attempt or show indications that they will attempt to spit on persons or property, such as the interior of the police vehicle. The hoods shall only be used on conscious prisoners who are under direct, in-person, observation (prisoners should not be housed in a cell with a hood on). The use of a hood shall be documented, to include time/duration, in the investigative report.

HOSPITAL SECURITY AND CONTROL

- A. When a prisoner is transported to a local hospital for any reason, the following will apply: (**PLEAC 2.5.8**)
1. Extreme caution will be taken to ensure that the prisoner is isolated from other patients and is not left unattended or permitted to escape the immediate control of the transporting officer.
 2. Should the prisoner need to be admitted, the transporting officer will notify the patrol supervisor of the circumstances.
 3. The transporting officer shall not leave the prisoner until he/she is relieved by another officer or is instructed by the supervisor to do otherwise.
 4. The transporting officer will remove the restraints only when it is deemed necessary or he/she is requested to do so by the medical staff.
 5. In the event the medical procedures prevent the officer from accompanying the prisoner, he/she will contact the shift supervisor.
 6. Upon the admission of a prisoner into the hospital, the decision on whether a patrol officer will guard the prisoner will initially be made by the shift supervisor. The final decision rests with the Watch Commander.
 7. Security personnel at the hospital rendering treatment will be notified by Communications Center personnel prior to the prisoner's arrival.

PRISONER IDENTIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION

- A. It shall be the responsibility of any officer releasing a prisoner or transporting any prisoner to court, or any other facility, to verify the identity of such prisoner prior to release. Recommended methods of positive identification include, but are not limited to: **(PLEAC 3.1.15)**
1. Photo identification, such as driver's license or military ID.
 2. Records check with JNET, PennDOT, or other state motor vehicle licensing agency.
 3. Fingerprint identification through PSP or FBI databanks.
 4. Prior arrest records.
 5. Contact with a family member who can produce identification.
 6. Any other valid means available to the officer.

LOCK-UP FACILITY PROCEDURE

- A. Upon arrival at the entrance to the sally port, one of the transporting officers shall notify the Communications Center and open the sally port door. Transporting officers may activate the door by use of their assigned access card.
- B. Once the transporting vehicle is parked inside of the sally port, the bay door is to be secured. Officers shall secure all weapons in the lock boxes located inside the sally port, except that a cover officer(s) may retain OC spray and/or an ECW if circumstances dictate such a need. A minimum of two officers shall be present prior to the arrestee(s) being removed from the transport vehicle and shall accompany the prisoner until he/she is secured in the lock up. Outside agencies must follow this procedure and be accompanied by at least one member of this Department. **(CALEA 71.3.3a, 71.5.1b, 72.4.1) (PLEAC 3.1.5, 3.2.5a)**
- C. Absent an emergency, all personnel entering the lock-up via the second-floor internal entrance must secure all weapons in a lock box prior to entry, except that a cover officer(s) may retain OC spray and/or an ECW if warranted. This internal entrance shall not be used for the initial intake of any prisoner into the lock-up facility. **(CALEA 72.4.1) (PLEAC 3.1.5, 3.2.5a)**
- D. Once the sally port door and the officers' restricted weapons have been secured, the prisoner shall be transported by the security elevator to the lock-up.
- E. Upon arriving in the second-floor lock-up area, the arrestee shall be searched, processed immediately and lodged. The Prisoner Intake form ([AUX-8](#)) shall be filled out in its entirety and placed in the log book in the Communications Center. At any point during any stage of processing a prisoner a delay is encountered, the nearest

available cell or cuff port shall be utilized to secure the prisoner. **(PLEAC 3.1.11, 3.2.5e)**

- F. At the time of processing, and prior to being placed in a cell, the processing officer is to conduct a complete inventory search of the arrestee, which is to include the use of the booking area metal detector. In addition, all prisoners are to have their footwear and belts removed. Any other clothing accessories that they are wearing that may be used to harm an officer, or themselves, are to be removed prior to the prisoner being placed in the cell. **(PLEAC 3.1.9a)**
- G. Normal items of clothing (shirts, pants, socks, undergarments, etc.) are not to be removed. In situations where the clothing of an arrestee is needed for investigative purposes, that clothing is to be removed and the prisoner will be issued a paper suit, and or, footwear as needed. The investigative report shall indicate the reason that the clothing was removed from the prisoner.
- H. All personal property, including jewelry, shall be removed, inventoried, itemized and sealed in a prisoner property envelope. Supervisors are to be notified when prisoners are found to be carrying unusually large sums of money. Supervisors shall determine if alternate measures are required to secure the money. **(PLEAC 3.1.9b)**
- I. The person in custody shall read the inventory of property and sign the envelope. Failure to do so shall be documented by the co-signing officer.
- J. All property removed from the detainee shall be placed in a prisoner locker and secured with a security seal. The locker and seal number are to be recorded on the property envelope and the Police Custody/Detention Checklist prior to placing in the locker. **(PLEAC 3.1.10)**
- K. This procedure shall be repeated when the property is returned to the prisoner. Upon release, the arrestee will sign the property envelope acknowledging return of the property. The locker seal will be placed in the property envelope and returned to the case file. **(PLEAC 3.1.16)**
- L. Prisoners shall be informed that they may utilize the telephone and shall be allowed to do so following processing or within a reasonable amount of time after being brought to the facility.
- M. No prisoner shall be booked into the facility or otherwise held who has injuries or illness that requires hospitalization or attention of a health care professional. If the severity of the medical condition is unclear or if a prisoner requests medical attention, he/she shall be transported as soon as possible to the appropriate emergency care provider. All medical related problems will be noted in the investigation report and on the prisoner intake form.
- N. Decontamination stations are available in the sally port and lock-up area.
- O. All prisoners released from the lock-up shall be taken via secure elevator to the sally

port area exit.

- P.** Prisoners who are under the influence of alcohol, drugs or who are violent or self-destructive are to be segregated from all other prisoners. Whenever it is determined that any of these conditions exist, the supervisor shall ensure that the detainee is checked every 10 minutes and indicate it on the intake form. **(PLEAC 3.1.13)**
- Q.** A computer check shall be made on all prisoners to determine if the prisoner has any outstanding warrants and to confirm the prisoner's identity.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all supervisory personnel to ensure that all employees under their immediate supervision comply with this policy.