



**California State University, Los Angeles**  
**Department of Public Safety**

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SUPERSEDES: 1/1/2001 Reviewed/Revised: May 12, 2010

SUBJECT: **Prisoner Transport**

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I. PURPOSE:

This directive forms the guidelines to be followed when agency personnel perform the prisoner transport function.

II. POLICY:

It is the policy of this Department to provide for the safety and security of the arrestee, the transporting officers, and the public. These procedures are provided to ensure that prisoners are transported in a manner that will maximize their safety as well as the transporting officer's safety.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Arrest. To deprive a person of his/her liberty by legal authority.
- B. Arresting Officer. A sworn law enforcement officer who takes a person into custody, with or without a warrant.
- C. Booking. A procedure for admitting to a holding facility a person charged with an offense; includes searching, fingerprinting, photographing, medical screening, collecting personal history data, and inventorying and storing a person's property.
- D. Custody. Legal or physical control of a person in an area or facility or while in transit; legal, supervisory, or physical responsibility for a person.
- E. Detainee. A person, who having been arrested and detained, is held in a holding facility usually not more than 72 hours. Such persons are held in the holding facility pending arraignment, release, adjudication, or transfer to another facility.
- F. Disabled Prisoner. A prisoner with an anatomical, physiological, or mental impairment that hinders mobility.
- G. Full Custody Arrest. Arrest authority, with or without a warrant, which includes the legal authority to physically remove a person from their location, taking the person to a place of confinement or judicial authority.
- H. Holding Facility. A temporary confinement facility for which the custodial authority is usually less than 72 hours.
- I. In Custody. Being under the full control of a law enforcement officer.
- J. Physical Arrest. Any enforcement action that consists of taking persons into custody for the purpose of holding or detaining them to answer a charge of law violation before the court.

- K. Prisoner. A person who has been arrested and taken into custody.
- L. Processing. Includes pre-booking activities involving detainees in custody, after which detainees may be released from custody by one of several means or be escorted to a holding facility – at which time they would be booked.
- M. Temporary Holding Area. A room, space, or area for the processing, questioning or testing of detainees where they may not be subject to the continuous control or supervision of agency personnel in the same room, space, or area. The time period for which a detainee may be held under these circumstances may not exceed two hours.
- N. Transport Vehicle. The vehicle used for transporting a prisoner from one point to another. The transport vehicle shall be a patrol vehicle and will have a safety barrier. No prisoners will be transported in vehicles without barriers.
- O. Transporting Officer. A sworn law enforcement officer who is responsible for transporting a prisoner from one point to another. This may be the arresting officer or another officer who is assigned to the responsibility for the transport.

#### IV. PROCEDURES:

- A. Search of Prisoners and Transport Vehicles.
  - 1. The transporting officer shall search all prisoners before they are transported.
    - a. It should never be assumed that someone else has searched the prisoner.
    - b. It must be assumed that the prisoner may have had an opportunity to obtain contraband or a weapon prior to the time of transport.
    - c. Prisoners will be searched each time they come into the transporting officer's custody, or placed in the custody of a different officer, including transports between detention facilities.
  - 2. The transporting officer, prior to and after transporting prisoners, will search the transport vehicle.
    - a. The entire area that would be accessible to a prisoner will be searched for weapons; contraband and other items.
    - b. The shift supervisor will be advised of any items found.
    - c. If items are found, they shall be documented in a supplemental report.
- B. All officers will examine their vehicles at the beginning of each shift prior to use for transporting prisoners:
  - 1. Check for proper equipment and general condition; and
  - 2. Examination and search of the transport area shall be completed to ensure it is free of weapons and contraband.

C. Procedures for Prisoner Transports.

1. Positioning of prisoners in any transport vehicle:
  - a. When one officer is transporting one prisoner, the prisoner will be positioned on the rear seat on the side opposite the officer driving.
  - b. When one officer is transporting more than one prisoner, the prisoners will be located on the rear seat.
  - c. If more than one officer is involved in the same transport:
    - 1) One officer should position himself in the rear of the transporting vehicle with the one prisoner on the side away from the officer's weapon.
    - 2) In a situation where more than one prisoner is being transported by two officers in the same vehicle, the prisoners will be positioned on the rear seat and the assisting officer will position himself in the front seat and keep visual contact with the prisoners at all times.
2. All prisoners being transported will be secured with a seat belt.
3. No more than two prisoners will be transported in any police vehicle.
4. Visual Contact:
  - a. The transporting officer will maintain visual contact at all times with prisoners that are being transported.
  - b. On lengthy transport, where a prisoner may require the use of toilet facilities, the officer should ensure that he/she has as much control of the situation as possible.
    - 1) Do not allow another person in the facility with the prisoner.
    - 2) Ensure that there are no escape routes within the facility.
    - 3) Ensure there are no potential weapons available to the prisoner.
5. Conditions an officer may interrupt a prisoner transport for necessary stops and/or to render emergency assistance.
  - a. The primary duty of the transporting officer is the safe delivery of the prisoner in his care.
  - b. Officers may only stop to render assistance if the risk to third parties is both clear and grave and the risk to the prisoner is minimal.
  - c. In all other cases, the officer shall advise dispatch to notify the appropriate agency, and have other officers respond.

- D. Circumstances which a prisoner may communicate with others while being transported:
1. A prisoner's right to communicate with others will not normally be exercised during the period that the prisoner is being transported.
  2. Officers may allow prisoners to communicate with others if the situation is such that a verbal exchange is necessary. These actions shall be documented within a written supplemental report. There is no expectation to privacy while within a police car, and officers may desire to record conversations between prisoners without their knowledge, so long as all legal considerations are met.
- E. Actions of the transporting officer at the destination (facility receiving prisoner):
1. Firearms will be secured in the designated place at the entered facility.
  2. Restraining devices will be removed only when directed to do so by the receiving facility or when the officer is sure that the prisoner is properly controlled and secure.
  3. The proper documentation will be transported with the prisoner and submitted to the proper person at the receiving facility. This will include:
    - a. Booking forms, warrants, etc.; and
    - b. Prisoner's property and property form.
  4. The officer will obtain documents from the receiving officer detailing the prisoner transaction.
  5. Transporting officers will convey to the receiving facility any information of a medical or security nature involving a prisoner to include:
    - a. Escape tendencies;
    - b. Suicide tendencies; and/or any
    - c. Unusual illnesses.
- F. In the event a prisoner escapes while being transported, the transporting officer will:
1. Notify the dispatcher to immediately advise the appropriate jurisdiction in which the escape occurred, the Watch Commander, and other on-duty CSU officers;

2. The Lieutenant in charge of Operations, or the on-duty Command Officer will be notified as soon as possible of the circumstances involved in the escape;
  3. The transporting officer will submit a written report to the Chief of Police explaining the circumstances of the escape and a supplemental report will be completed for ARMS;
  4. Provide a description of the escapee including charges being held on to surrounding jurisdictions; and
  5. Assist in recapturing the prisoner.
- G. If an officer makes a transport to another agency or court and the prisoner is considered an unusual security risk, the transporting officer will notify them of this situation.
- H. Restraining Devices and methods to be used during prisoner transports.
1. All prisoners being transported by members of this Department will be restrained during transport.
  2. Single prisoners will be handcuffed behind the back, with the only exceptions being for medical or physical reasons.
    - a. In such instances the watch commander will be notified;
    - b. Only with the watch commander's permission may a subject be handcuffed in front;
    - c. The watch commander will assess the medical circumstances, charges, and criminal history of the arrestee and a determination will be made as to the devices and restraining techniques to be utilized.
  3. Officers when transporting any prisoner they have reason to believe might be an escape risk may use additional restraining devices.
  4. Flexcuffs or specially designed restraining devices may be used to control the legs of prisoners who have demonstrated violent tendencies.
  5. Under no circumstances will a prisoner be handcuffed to a part of the transport vehicle itself, such as the door, post, protective screen barrier, etc.
  6. When a prisoner has a handicap that is such that there is no danger of escape or injury to the prisoner or officer, then restraining devices may be inappropriate.

*Only the watch commander may make the determination that restraining devices are not required.*

7. Mentally disturbed prisoners will be restrained in such a manner so as to prevent them from injuring themselves or others. Flex-cuffs may be utilized to restrain the extremities of the detainee.
  8. Police vehicles used regularly for transporting prisoners will be equipped with plexi-glass shields between the driver and the rear seat.
  9. Police vehicles used for transporting prisoners will be modified so that rear windows and doors cannot be opened from inside the vehicle.
  10. Whenever handcuffs are utilized, they will be double-locked.
  11. "Hog-tying" prisoners is strictly prohibited.
- I. Procedures for transporting sick, injured, or disabled prisoners.
1. If a prisoner becomes sick or complains of an injury subsequent to arrest, the officer will:
    - a. Notify the dispatcher immediately;
    - b. The watch commander will respond and evaluate the situation;
    - c. Paramedics will be called to the scene and make transport if necessary;
    - d. The watch commander will ensure all appropriate reports are completed;
    - e. If the prisoner is subsequently transported to a holding facility, the transporting officer will inform the receiving agency of the circumstances.
  2. Transportation of disabled prisoners:
    - a. A disabled prisoner will never be placed into a position that could possibly result in injury or complicate their safety.
    - b. Officers who encounter this situation will notify the Watch Commander immediately.
    - c. The Watch Commander will evaluate the situation as to the proper and safe actions to be taken.
    - d. The receiving agency will be notified and a determination will be made as to whether they will accept the prisoner.
    - e. A request will be made to the receiving agency to provide a special transport vehicle, if required.

3. Transport of Prisoner to a Medical Care Facility:

- a. When a prisoner is transported to a medical facility by paramedics and is admitted to the facility by the attending physician, the officer will immediately notify the Watch Commander and will utilize the following procedures to ensure control of the prisoner.
  - 1) Have the prisoner released from custody, if possible and appropriate.
  - 2) If the prisoner has to remain in police custody, the medical facility should be requested to put the prisoner in as secure a private room as possible.
  - 3) The prisoner should be kept under observation at all times and normally restraining devices should be utilized. Officers should consult with medical personnel in reference to the best utilization of restraining devices.
- b. These same procedures apply for the commitment of mentally disturbed persons with the exception that officers may be relieved when the subject has completed the intake process and is turned over to the facility staff.

J. Special Transport Situations.

1. When transporting a female prisoner, male officers will:
  - a. At the beginning of the transport, advise dispatch of odometer mileage and vehicle number;
  - b. Proceed directly to the destination by shortest route practical;
  - c. Upon arrival at destination, advise dispatch of odometer mileage;
  - d. Time of radio transmissions will be recorded;
2. When making lengthy transports, an officer of the same sex should be used. If this is not possible, two officers will be used for the transport.
3. Department officers are not authorized to transport prisoners for the purpose of their attendance to funerals, visiting hospitals, or any other special circumstance not previously covered by this directive, unless a valid court order has been obtained and, the transport would not compromise the security of the officer, prisoner, or other citizens.

K. Documentation of prisoner from a facility.

1. Prisoner Identification – When picking a prisoner up for transport at a detention facility, the transporting officer should ensure that he has the correct person. This can be accomplished by:
  - a. Officer's personal knowledge of the prisoner;
  - b. Requesting verification by jail personnel of the prisoner's identity.
  - c. Verifying booking papers and the prisoner's personal identification to include viewing the booking photograph when possible.
2. Documentation that should accompany the prisoner being transported between facilities shall include:
  - a. the commitment papers of the relinquishing agency;
  - b. the prisoner's medical records, if any; and
  - c. the prisoner's personal property.
3. Information shall be sought as to the prisoner's escape or suicidal potential or other personal traits of a security nature. This information shall be recorded within a supplemental report and included in any information given the next receiving agency.

V. APPENDICES: None.