

 El Paso Police Department Procedures Manual	Chapter 3: Field Operations, Custody and Traffic Enforcement
306 Care, Transport and Booking of Prisoners	Policy Effective: 03/30/2023 Previous Version: 01/12/2022

306 CARE, TRANSPORT AND BOOKING OF PRISONERS

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Officers will make reasonable efforts to take all necessary safety precautions while transporting persons under arrest or in custody to protect the lives and safety of officers, the public, and the person in custody. Officers transporting prisoners will not run Code III nor engage in vehicle pursuits. Vehicles used to transport prisoners will be searched for contraband, weapons and property at the beginning of the shift, prior to each prisoner transport, and after each prisoner transport.

306.1 SOLO UNITS

The following procedures define when a solo unit may transport prisoners.

- A. The prisoner will be properly handcuffed and secured in the rear seat with safety belts.
- B. With Safety Screen/Prisoner Seat. Solo units equipped with safety screens and prisoner seats may transport up to two prisoners only under the following circumstances and with supervisor approval.
 1. Each prisoner will be properly handcuffed and belted into the prisoner seat using the prisoner restraint equipped with the seat.
 2. A solo officer may transport more than one prisoner from the scene to a regional command directly to a sally port with supervisor approval.
 3. Officers must request assistance to remove prisoners from units upon arrival to the sally port.
- C. Solo officers will not transport more than one prisoner to booking without assistance from another officer.
- D. No Safety Screen. Solo units not equipped with safety screens will not transport prisoners.
- E. Extra consideration and precaution will be taken with prisoners that have previously exhibited behavior that indicates a risk of escape or evading. Prisoners that have exhibited this behavior, or that are combative or unruly will be transported with supervisory approval, to include the use of additional officers for transport.

306.2 TRANSPORTING FEMALES

Male officers will obtain a time check from dispatch and give the location of departure and mileage upon leaving the scene when transporting females. Upon arrival at their destination, officers will request a time check from dispatch and give their location and ending mileage. Officers incurring delays along the route will advise dispatch, request a time check, and give the location and mileage.

306.3 RESPONSIBILITY OF TRANSPORTING OFFICERS

Persons under arrest or in custody will never be left unattended in any Department vehicle. It is the responsibility of the officer to diligently watch and guard the prisoner and maintain physical control of the prisoner under the following circumstances:

- A. When the prisoner is not in a secured cell
- B. When the prisoner is not in the secured transport area of the unit
- C. When the prisoner is going through the booking process at the El Paso County Detention Facility (EPCDF) first floor
- D. When the prisoner is not handcuffed to the hospital cot during medical clearance (unless the medical treatment prevents the officer from maintaining physical control)

While in transport, officers will maintain observation of the prisoner for any actions, movements, or behavior which could threaten the health or safety of the prisoner or officers.

- A. Interrupting Transport. Officers who observe incidents that require immediate law enforcement action while transporting a prisoner will interrupt their transport and stop to render assistance only if doing so would present no danger to the prisoner. Officers who interrupt transport under these circumstances shall summon other officers to the scene to handle the incident and resume transport as soon as possible.
- B. Documentation. Officers who take custody of a prisoner shall ensure the identity of the prisoner by verifying identification documents and case report information. Officers will verify that they have all the required documentation needed to transport and book the prisoner and shall ensure that any special risks are noted in the required arrest documentation.

306.4 SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Special circumstances may indicate the need to transport a person under arrest or in custody by other means.

- A. When a person being transported displays actions, movements, or behaviors which may threaten his or her health or safety, officers will immediately stop the vehicle and conduct a primary survey of the person's airway, breathing, and pulse. Officers will determine whether to continue transport or if EMS should be called.
- B. When an arrested person has been physically subdued and officers have reason to believe that a medical emergency exists due to injury, ingestion of drugs or narcotics, or other behavior indicating physical distress, officers will immediately request an EMS unit to evaluate the prisoner.
- C. If a medical emergency arises while officers are transporting a prisoner or if there is any doubt regarding the prisoner's condition, officers will seek immediate medical attention for the prisoner. Officers may transport directly to the nearest medical facility or call EMS to their location. This decision should be based on providing the fastest access to advanced life support and professional medical care.
- D. The following persons will not be transported by officers of this Department, except in an emergency when medical transportation is not available. When transporting these persons, officers will advise a supervisor and continue to summon EMS. Officers will continue to observe the person until medical help arrives.
 1. Unconscious persons
 2. Persons at high risk for Sudden in Custody Death Syndrome (SICDS) or Positional Asphyxia, according to the SICDS Risk Assessment Scale found in Appendix E

3. Persons who exhibit any of the extreme risk factors for SICDS
4. Persons in any type of respiratory distress
5. Persons who, because of age, impairment, or injury, could be injured or further injured by conventional transport

306.5 PRISONERS IN MEDICAL FACILITIES

Once a person has been admitted or has received treatment from a hospital, officers may not transport that person between hospitals for any purpose or reason. Division commanders will decide if the Department will continue to maintain custody of a prisoner that is admitted to a hospital for treatment. If custody is relinquished, the transporting officer shall file an arrest warrant or present a non-arrest case at the direction of the division commander. While maintaining custody of prisoners receiving treatment at a medical facility, the officer shall keep continuous supervision of the prisoner. Prisoners in custody receiving treatment at a medical facility will not be allowed visitors. Prisoners in hospitals are the responsibility of the division that made the arrest. Relief schedules shall be arranged for guarding prisoners receiving longer care at medical facilities.

306.6 RESTRAINT PROCEDURES FOR TRANSPORT

Persons under arrest or in custody will be transported in a sitting position only. Under no circumstances will a prisoner be transported in a Department vehicle in any other position. Handcuffs shall be securely fastened with hands behind the back and double locked in place unless a deviation per section A is warranted and approved.

- A. When age, physical impairment, or injury of a person make it impractical or impossible to handcuff behind the back, officers may deviate from the standard procedure after contacting their supervisor to develop an appropriate method. This includes persons who are obese or large bellied, where handcuffing and securing in a safety belt may limit breathing.
- B. The following restraint devices are approved for use, when warranted. Officers must note the type of restraint used, if other than handcuffs, in the Complaint Report.
 1. Double Cuffs. The use of two handcuffs, interlocked.
 2. Flex Cuffs. Plastic straps used for temporary restraint of hands or feet.
 3. Nylon Leg Restraint. Nylon strap used to temporarily restrain the legs. It is secured by closing the rear door of the vehicle on the restraint to minimize the prisoner's movement.
 4. Leg Shackles. Leg shackles are authorized for use when justified such as to ensure the safety of officers and/or a combative prisoner when other restraint means are inappropriate or unavailable.
 5. Vehicle Installed Restraint. Any bar, strap or other device installed in a Department vehicle for the purpose of restraining prisoners.
 6. Medical Stretcher. Used in EMS vehicles. Officers may be called upon to assist EMS personnel in restraining the prisoner.
 7. Officers will not use the "hog-tie" method of restraint. This method of restraint, which positions the prisoner stomach-side down with hands and feet joined in the back, places the prisoner in a position that could restrict breathing capability.

306.7 INJURY TO PERSONS IN CUSTODY

All injuries to prisoners will be brought to the supervisor's attention. Supervisors will determine when the injury occurred.

- A. Injuries Prior to Initial Contact. If the injuries occurred prior to the officer's initial contact with the person, the injury will be briefly documented in the Supervisor's Daily Log with photographs attached. Officers with Injuries During or After Initial Contact. If the injuries occurred during or after initial contact with officers, supervisors will conduct interviews with the officers, the prisoner, and any witnesses to the incident. Supervisors will thoroughly document the incident in the Supervisor's Daily Log.
- B. Supervisors will take photos when there are visible injuries or the prisoner makes an outcry of alleged unauthorized force. Photos will be submitted as evidence with the case.
- C. Serious Injuries. If the injuries require admission of the prisoner into a medical facility and there is an outcry of alleged unauthorized force or improper tactics, or the prisoner is incapacitated to the extent that he or she is unable to respond, supervisors will contact the Internal Affairs Division. In addition, any incident of serious bodily injury occurring to a person in custody due to interactions with officers that requires medical attention or medical clearance requires supervisors to notify Internal Affairs. The Chief of Police will be notified through the chain of command.

306.8 SEARCH INCIDENT TO ARREST

As soon as possible after an arrest is made, but before transport, officers will search subjects carefully for any evidence, weapons or items which may be used to cause harm or physical injury. If it becomes necessary to transfer a subject between units, the receiving officer will conduct a search of the prisoner prior to effecting the transfer.

306.9 PHYSICAL EXAM (STRIP SEARCH)

When necessary and legally appropriate, at least two officers may conduct a physical examination (strip search) of subjects of the same sex as the officers. Supervisors will be notified when such an exam is necessary and will be present during the exam if of the same sex as the person being searched. The purpose of the examination is to seize evidence or weapons. Officers must have articulable and reasonable suspicion that the prisoner is concealing contraband or weapons in such a manner as to avoid normal search procedures. Officers must document the purpose of the examination in a Supplement Report. Strip searches are limited to a visual search of the body and a thorough search of the clothing. Anal and vaginal body cavity searches are only conducted by medical personnel and by authority of a search warrant only. Physical examination of subjects in custody is commonly done by jail personnel during booking.

306.10 PRISONER PROPERTY

Officers are responsible for the accountability and protection of a prisoner's property until turned over to Booking at the jail. Officers will retrieve the prisoner's personal property for safekeeping and any property which can be used as a weapon. Officer will properly secure the prisoners personal property in a paper or plastic bag prior to being transported to a regional command. Officers should store prisoner

property in a paper bag, stapled shut, and carry it with the prisoner to Booking. All firearms, excess property disallowed by the jail, and weapons will be turned in to the Property Office as evidence or for safekeeping.

306.11 PRISONER COMMUNICATION

Prisoners will not be allowed to communicate with anyone during transport or processing. Exceptions may be granted when required by on-going investigations or when a prisoner is attempting to make bond arrangements for class C warrants. Officers shall ensure that persons with whom the prisoner is communicating do not take or pass weapons/contraband from the prisoner.

306.12 PROCEDURES AT COUNTY JAIL

Officers shall follow all rules and regulations set by the Sheriff's Department. Officers shall secure their firearms, ammunition and less-lethal weapons as directed, remove restraining devices when advised, deliver all required documentation to the jail staff and advise the jail staff of any safety or medical hazards posed by the prisoner. The use of Record Management Systems by both the Sheriff's Department and the EPPD alleviates the need for officers to obtain any hard copy receipts from jail staff.

306.13 PRISONER ESCAPE

If a prisoner escapes from custody, officers will notify communications, a supervisor and will make a spot broadcast. The primary goal is to recapture the prisoner while protecting public safety. Supervisors notified of an escape shall respond to the location and assume incident command of the search. Escapes shall be documented with an offense report and a notation on the station log and a supervisor's log.

306.14 TRANSPORT OF MENTALLY ILL PERSONS

Any mentally ill person in custody under an EDO who are exhibiting mental distress, intoxicated on any substance, violent, uncontrollable, or in need of emergency medical treatment shall be transported by El Paso Fire Department to any designated facility.

Issues can be reported to any CIT supervisor.

For the restraint and transport by officer of mentally ill persons, the mentally ill individual may be restrained only during apprehension, detention, or transport. The means of restraint, however, must permit the individual to sit in an upright position without undue difficulty. The exception to this is when the individual is transported by FMS in an ambulance.