

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



DIRECTIVE TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		INDEX NUMBER: GO0009
SUBJECT: Prisoner Transportation		
ISSUE DATE: June 5, 2000	REVISED: 7/16/04, 7/21/06, 5/14/13, 8/18/15,	AMENDS/RESCINDS: NA
REVISIONS CONTINUED: 11/10/16, 6/12/17, 8/7/19		DISTRIBUTION: B, C (2, 3, 7)

I. Policy

The St. Joseph Police Department will follow prisoner transportation practices designed to ensure the safety and security of prisoners, transporting officers, and the general public. If a member finds that circumstances prevent them from following the provisions of this General Order, the transporting officer shall notify and gain approval from their Supervisor before transport.

II. Procedure

A. Responsibility for Transport:

1. The St. Joseph Police Department is responsible for transporting:
 - a. Persons arrested for Municipal Ordinance and State Statute violations;
 - b. Persons arrested for active warrants;
 - c. Intoxicated persons placed into protective custody;
 - d. Mentally ill persons taken into custody by officers when a mental health warrant has not yet been filed; and
 - e. Persons arrested by officers, and not yet arraigned.
2. Prisoners will be transported:
 - a. For lodging in jail or from other detention facilities;
 - b. To medical facilities for treatment;
 - c. To court or other hearings when in custody for a municipal ordinance violation; and
 - d. Pursuant to a specific court order directing an officer to transport the prisoner.
3. Exceptions may arise, and shall be brought to the attention of a supervisor for decision.

B. Searching prisoners and police vehicles:

1. All prisoners shall be thoroughly searched each time they come into the custody of an officer and before transport. A member shall not assume that the prisoner has been searched already by another law enforcement officer,

- including those from other agencies.
2. If the prisoner to be transported is of the opposite sex, efforts should be made to have the prisoner searched by someone of the same sex. When this is not feasible, searches shall be conducted following established policy with the primary importance being officer safety.
 3. Strip searches of prisoners shall be conducted in a private area of a detention facility, and only under extenuating circumstances and/or specific criminal charges such as possession of illegal weapons and drugs, or other illegal contraband. A Commanding Officer shall be contacted before any strip search is done. The search will be conducted before a prisoner is placed in a holding cell, and only officers of the same sex will conduct a strip search. Strip searches will be conducted in accordance with established Department policy.
 4. Body cavity searches shall only be conducted under sanitary conditions at a medical facility, and shall only be done by a physician. Such searches shall only be done after the issuance of an appropriate court order, and in accordance with established Department policy. Only members of the same sex will witness a body cavity search.
 5. In order to ensure that the vehicle is free of weapons and contraband, any vehicle used to transport a prisoner shall be searched at the beginning of each member's tour of duty, before and after a prisoner is transported. Any item found in a vehicle shall be turned over as found property or tagged as evidence.

C. Restraints:

1. Prisoners shall be properly restrained for transport according to Department Policy governing "Handcuffs and Restraints", and the following procedure:
 - a. All prisoners will be restrained by handcuffs prior to transport. This also applies to mentally ill and intoxicated persons, whether arrested or taken into protective custody. Exceptions to handcuffing will be made for disabled, sick, or injured prisoners when handcuffing would be physically impossible, harmful to the prisoner or would interfere with necessary medical procedures. Officer discretion shall be used in these situations, the primary concern being the security and safety of the prisoner and transporting officer.
 - b. All prisoners will be handcuffed behind the back. Exceptions will be made for disabled, ill, or injured persons, when handcuffing behind the back would be physically impossible, harmful to the prisoner or would interfere with necessary medical procedures.
 - c. Handcuffs will be double locked.
 - d. The prisoner shall never be handcuffed to any part of the vehicle unless approved vehicle restraining devices are provided.
 - e. Seat belts will be used on prisoners being transported in department vehicles. Exceptions may include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Resisting and/or violent prisoners;
 - 2) Physically disabled prisoners; and
 - 3) Sick and/or injured prisoners.
 - f. Leg restraint devices may be used on combative or kicking subjects at the discretion of the transporting officer (including hobbles, plastic strips, and/or other restraining

devices used for the purpose of officer safety). At no time will a prisoner be “hog tied”. This may cause physical injury to a prisoner.

- g. Officers transporting subjects in police vehicles equipped with “Prostraint seats” shall secure the subject in the seat with the seat restraint strap.

D. Prisoner Placement:

The following procedures, when appropriate, are to be followed while transporting prisoners:

1. Vehicles equipped with a safety barrier:

- a. Prisoners will be transported in the back seat of vehicles equipped with a safety barrier, and the sliding window will be closed.
- b. Vehicles will have the door handle, any window mechanism, and manual door lock disabled or inaccessible from the rear compartment.
- c. One officer may transport up to three prisoners in a unit equipped with a safety barrier-- two in the caged area and one in the front passenger’s seat.

2. Vehicles without protective cages:

- a. No more than two prisoners will be transported in vehicles without safety barriers.
- b. With one officer and one prisoner—The prisoner will be placed in the front passenger’s seat.
- c. With two officers:
 - 1) If there is one prisoner, the prisoner will be in the rear passenger’s seat, with the second officer behind the driver.
 - 2) If there are two prisoners, one prisoner will be in the front passenger’s side and the second prisoner will be in the rear passenger’s side, with the second officer behind the driver.

3. Juvenile Prisoners

- a. Juvenile prisoners are to be transported separately from adults unless extenuating circumstances prevent such, including but not limited to:
 - 1) Multiple arrests involving members of the same family;
 - 2) Multiple arrests at the scene of large disturbances, fights, parties, etc.; or
 - 3) Mental health/medical transports when parental presence is a necessity.

E. Disabled Prisoners and Medical Transports:

1. Physically disabled prisoners will be transported by police cruiser, when appropriate. If this is not possible, the transport shall be by ambulance or other suitable means. Proper care should be utilized when placing said prisoner in a vehicle. The prisoner’s wheelchair, crutches, or prosthetic appliances and all medications, shall be secured by the officer and transported along with the prisoner to the detention facility. All other procedures shall apply as to non-handicapped persons.
2. Impaired Individuals:
 - a. When individuals under the influence of alcohol are taken into custody the arresting officer shall take appropriate steps to determine their approximate blood alcohol content (BAC).

- b. Subjects with a BAC of .20 to .24 shall be closely monitored and consideration should be made to seek medical treatment/clearance.
 - c. Subjects with a BAC of .25 or higher shall be transported to a medical facility for treatment and clearance.
 - d. Any person who appears seriously intoxicated, regardless of their BAC level, or under the influence of controlled substances and is in distress, a state of unconsciousness or semi-unconsciousness, shall be transported for medical treatment.
3. Medical Transports:
- a. Arresting officers and/or Booking personnel shall advise a shift supervisor of the need for medical attention for any prisoner that becomes sick or injured pursuant to an arrest and/or confinement in a detention facility.
 - b. If the injuries are minor and the injured person requires medical treatment at the time of arrest, the arresting officer will transport the person to a hospital.
 - c. Persons with minor injuries who are already confined in a detention facility, will be transported by officer or ambulance, at the discretion of the shift supervisor.
 - d. An ambulance shall be summoned if the injuries are serious at the time of arrest and/or later confinement, and an officer shall accompany the ambulance to the medical facility. The shift supervisor will determine:
 - 1) How many officers will accompany the prisoner to the medical facility;
 - 2) If the arrest is for a misdemeanor, whether the person arrested should be issued a summons and released upon arrival at the hospital, unless unusual circumstances exist; and
 - 3) If the arrest is for a felony, the supervisor will direct the arresting officer to remain with the prisoner during treatment, keeping the prisoner under observation at all times. This officer will stay with the prisoner until a supervisor authorizes relief. The use of restraints during treatment should be in accordance with the guidelines under "Restraints" in this General Order. (See C1a.b.)
 - 4) If a prisoner is admitted, a shift supervisor will determine:
 - a) Whether or not a police hold or guard is necessary;
 - b) Whether or not restraints should be utilized, following the guidelines under "Restraints" in this General Order. (See C.1. a. b.)
 - c) Officers will not allow visitors with the prisoner, including telephone contact. (Exception would be parental contact with a juvenile for purposes of medical consent).
 - e. Police holds should only be used if the prisoner/patient is cooperative, non-violent and not an escape risk. They will only be used under the following conditions:
 - 1) On prisoners with active warrants for their arrest - officers will list the active

warrants on the hold form in the space provided.

- 2) For prisoners being placed on a 96 hour hold for mental health evaluation.
 - f. When released from treatment, the prisoner's condition should be noted on the officer's report. A copy of all instructions for future treatment and medication should be signed by an attending physician, and given to the prisoner. This copy will be placed in their personal property upon return to the detention facility.
 - g. Before leaving the medical facility, the prisoner shall be searched; restraining devices will be used, when appropriate.

F. Guidelines During Transport:

1. Prisoners must be under observation during transport; officers should avoid responding to other calls for service. Any exception will be made only with approval of the Shift Supervisor. The primary responsibility should be to keep the prisoner in sight and safe at all times. Exceptions may include:
 - a. Response to an officer needing assistance in the immediate area, if the transporting officer/supervisor feel that the prisoner will not be placed in personal danger;
 - b. Upon encountering an emergency involving injury or the potential for injury; where immediate first aid or assistance is required; and
 - c. In incidents involving these aforementioned exceptions, the transporting officer shall notify the Communications Dispatcher as to the reason they are stopping, their exact location, and will request another unit to either relieve the officer or complete the transport.
2. Prisoner Communication:
 - a. Prisoners should not be allowed to communicate with other prisoners during transport;
 - b. Prisoners who are suspects in the same case shall be transported by separate vehicles, to prevent collusion, unless extenuating circumstances exist;
 - c. Prisoners will not communicate with their attorney during transport; and
 - d. Prisoners should not be allowed to communicate with persons other than transporting officers, except when doing so serves a legitimate purpose and would in no way compromise investigative efforts or safety.
3. Any police unit used to transport a prisoner outside the City limits should have the tire pressure, fuel, and oil checked prior to transport. The shift supervisor shall also make sure the transporting officer has a means to pay for gasoline or other incidental expenses. The officer will be reimbursed for any authorized out of pocket expenses.
4. No police vehicle that is mechanically unsafe will be used to transport prisoners;
5. Toilet facilities will not normally be required from the point of arrest to the "Booking" point. In transports of more than 15 minutes, prisoners will be allowed to use toilet facilities if needed. Officers shall not lose sight of prisoners of the same sex. When prisoners of the opposite sex are permitted to use toilet facilities, officers shall position themselves in

such a manner so as to prevent escape;

6. Upon reaching the Booking Area, members shall:
 - a. Secure their duty weapons in an appropriate lock box or in their locked police vehicle;
 - b. Remove any restraining devices unless the prisoner is combative or procedures require otherwise (BA room, etc.)
 - c. Deliver appropriate documentation to the receiving personnel;
 - d. Obtain the signature of the Booking personnel and/or written documentation detailing the prisoner transaction (when appropriate); and
 - e. Advise the Booking personnel of any known information concerning escape, suicide potential, illnesses, or other security problems the prisoner may present.
7. Personal property that is found on an arrestee shall not be turned over to any other individual before the prisoner is transported (exceptions may be made for items such as car keys when this would not jeopardize public safety or the investigation). Once the prisoner is booked at the station, such property shall not be released to any other individual until the lead officer and/or investigator on the case has approved the property's release.

G. Transfers To and/or by Other Detention Facilities:

1. The transporting officer must positively identify each prisoner being transported from a Detention facility to another location. Booking records and numbers assigned to the prisoner in the current Detention facility must be verified as being the same person as the one who is about to be transported. Proper documentation will be obtained by the transporting officer(s), and will accompany the prisoner being transported;
2. When transporting a prisoner with escape or suicide potential, the officer should have all documentation to that effect, and should relay that information to the Booking personnel upon arrival at the Department;
3. Officers shall follow the directives of a Detention facility regarding securing their firearms and ammunition at the facility, unless extenuating circumstances apply;
4. Restraints should be removed prior to booking the prisoner; and
5. Alternative arrangements (summons, release) will be made by an on-shift supervisor for prisoners in City custody when it is determined necessary.

H. Transporting Prisoners to Court:

The City Court Marshall or Courthouse Security Officer(s) will transport Department prisoners to court, unless directed otherwise by a Supervisor. The Judge and/or Court Marshall should be notified if a prisoner being escorted poses any security hazards. Proper documentation will be provided to the Judge and Court pertaining to the prisoner.

1. Prisoners Scheduled to Return to Booking After Court

- a. The prisoner shall be searched prior to being escorted to Court, and prior to being returned to the Department holding facility.
- b. Prisoner documentation will accompany the prisoner back to the Department holding facility, if the prisoner is to be returned, with any changes in charges and bond information noted on the Booking Sheet.

2. Prisoners Being Released from Custody Prior to Court

- a. With the exception of potential weapons (pocket knives, etc.) all property shall be returned to the prisoner prior to being escorted to court.
- b. Potential weapons shall be retained by the Court Marshall or turned over to Courthouse Security Officers until the conclusion of court.
- c. Weapons will be returned to the prisoner upon their exit from the courthouse.

I. Escape of Prisoners During Transport

- 1. In the event of an escape during transport, officers shall:
 - a. Notify the dispatcher and a supervisor immediately;
 - b. Provide the following:
 - 1) Name, physical description, and clothing description of the escapee;
 - 2) Location and direction of travel, and means of transportation of the escape;
 - 3) Any knowledge of possible weapons held by the escapee; and
 - c. Take appropriate action to recover the prisoner.
- 2. The Communications Dispatcher shall then broadcast the information to all local units, and will notify other agencies in the area.
- 3. The Shift Supervisor shall coordinate the search and determine when to terminate the search.
- 4. If an escape occurs while transporting a prisoner through another jurisdiction, the local law enforcement agency must be immediately notified, and the St. Joseph Police Department shall be notified as soon as possible. The transporting officer will furnish that agency with any reasonable assistance they request, and furnish them with the following information:
 - a. Prisoner's name, date of birth, and physical description;
 - b. Clothing description;
 - c. Method and last direction of travel;
 - d. Exact location and method of escape;
 - e. Crime(s) for which the prisoner is convicted; and
 - f. Any knowledge of possible weapons held by the escapee.
- 5. The transporting officer will submit a detailed report concerning any escape from custody to their immediate supervisor, who will refer it to the appropriate Commanding Officer and the Chief of Police.

Chris Connally, Chief of Police

Date