

# Hamden Police Department General Orders

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**Policy Number:** 001-008  
**Section:** Role and Authority  
**Title:** Handcuff Procedures

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2015  
**Rescinds:** August 01, 2005  
**Approved By:** Police Commission  
**Approval Date:** December 10, 2014

## PURPOSE

To establish set procedures for officers of the Hamden Police Department in the use of handcuffs.

## POLICY

The control and protection of person(s) in police custody, as well as the safety of law enforcement personnel, and the general public, requires the usage of authorized restraint systems by members of the Hamden Police Department. As such, Hamden Police Department members are authorized to use handcuffs on all persons in custody in accordance with good judgment and discretion of the officer in relation to each situation. The Hamden Police Department authorizes the use of restraint devices in accordance with this policy, the Use of Force policy, and Department training. Restraint devices shall not be used to punish, the display authority, or as a show of force.

## PROCEDURES

### A. General

1. Only Department issued and approved handcuffs will be used by Hamden Police Department members.
2. All handcuffs utilized by Department members must double lock, and lock and unlock with a standard key.
3. Plain-clothes officers shall have access to handcuffs at all time, except those officers working in an undercover capacity.
4. Handcuffs should be carried in a "ready position" (single bar placed on the last tooth of the latch.) This allows for speedy application of the handcuffs.
5. When a prisoner is taken into custody, handcuffs will be used, excluding any special circumstances.
6. In all cases, whenever possible, individuals should be handcuffed with their hands behind their backs, palms facing out, and handcuffs shall

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- be double locked. The belt or other similar device may be employed to hold the prisoner's hands to the rear and prevent the prisoner from stepping over the cuffed hands.
7. Officers are responsible for ensuring that handcuffs are snug enough to prevent an arrestee from turning his hands palm to palm but not so tight as to cause injury.
  8. If a prisoner complains of discomfort from the handcuffs, the officer should check the handcuffs for proper application. Officers should use the assistance of another officer when checking or adjusting handcuffs to prevent escape.
  9. Handcuffs may be applied to the wrists with the hands positioned in the front in some circumstances, such as:
    - (a) The prisoner is physically incapable of placing his hands behind his back.
    - (b) The prisoner is handicapped to the extent that placing his hands behind his back is unwarranted.
    - (c) The prisoner is sick or injured to the extent that placing the hands behind the back would be impractical, exacerbate the illness or cause additional injury.
  10. Violent or out of control prisoners may require immobilization to prevent harm to themselves or others.
  11. Most courts will not permit prisoner to be handcuffed while court is in session.
    - (a) The officer will comply with the desire of the court.
    - (b) If the prisoner is known to be violent or prone to escape the officer will notify the court and the decision to remove the cuffs will be that of the court.

### **B. Prohibitions/Precautions**

1. Handcuffing is never done to punish, to display authority, or as a show of force. Persons are handcuffed only to restrain their hands to ensure officer safety.
2. A female prisoner shall not be handcuffed to a male prisoner except in an emergency.

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3. A juvenile shall not be handcuffed to an adult except in an emergency, or if the adult is a relative.
4. Officers shall not handcuff themselves to prisoners. A single cuff shall not be used as a "come-along" unless a subject who was compliant becomes non-compliant and is resisting the cuffing procedure.
5. Officers shall not handcuff prisoners to any part of a vehicle, boat, or aircraft.
6. The officer shall not handcuff a person while the officer has a drawn weapon.
7. Restraints will not be used to lift or carry a prisoner.
8. Excessive force will not be used in applying restraints and restraints will be applied only after an officer has achieved physical control of the person to be restrained.
9. In order to prevent accidental asphyxiation of prisoners, no prisoner should be handcuffed and placed on their stomach especially if they are obese or have noticeable respiratory problems. Officers will seek immediate medical attention for detainees who exhibit signs of acute distress.
10. If under emergencies a prisoner must be placed on his/her stomach they must be monitored continuously for proper breathing.
11. At no time shall a member use any restraining technique that results in a prisoner being restrained with both the hands and feet together behind the back.

### **C. Special Needs/Disabilities**

1. Officers will usually handcuff persons in the back, but handcuffing techniques may need to be altered or restraining devices may be unnecessary under extenuating circumstances including, but not limited to, arrest of the following: elderly, obese, physically or mentally handicapped, obviously ill, pregnant persons, or persons suffering from an injury possibly complicated by handcuffing.
2. While being transported, a sick or injured prisoner will be handcuffed. The only exception would be if the handcuffs would further compound the injuries.

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3. If it is known that a person has a medical condition, injury, is pregnant, or has a disability that may be affected by the use of restraints, officers will seek the advice from a supervisor prior to using restraints.
4. It should not be assumed that restraining devices are not required on physically disabled prisoners. A prisoner in a wheelchair or who uses walking aids, may not require the use of restraining devices in all instances; however, every precaution should be taken to ensure the safety of the officer and the physically disabled prisoner. When possible, the prisoner will be handcuffed. A physically disabled prisoner should not be transported un-handcuffed unless at least two officers are assigned to the transportation detail.
5. Persons who are known to be pregnant should be restrained in the least restrictive manner that is effective for officer safety. No person who is in labor shall be handcuffed or restrained except in extraordinary circumstances and only when a supervisor makes an individualized determination that such restraints are necessary to prevent escape or injury.

### **D. Placement of Handcuffs/Keys**

1. Handcuffs shall be carried in a department-approved handcuff case. The case shall be worn in such a way as to not hamper the drawing of the firearm or other tools.
2. Officers may purchase and carry a second set of handcuffs in either an approved second handcuff case or a double-stacked handcuff case. The handcuffs shall be similar in appearance and design to the current department-issued handcuffs. The department-issued key shall be capable of unlocking the secondary handcuffs.
3. Double-stacked handcuff cases and the additional set of handcuffs shall be approved by the Division Commander prior to wearing them.

### **E. Care/Maintenance**

1. Once issued, Officers shall be responsible for the proper maintenance, care, and the efficient operation of their handcuffs.
2. Officer will follow the following guidelines for the proper care of handcuffs:

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- (a) Frequent cleaning and lubrication of handcuffs is important to ensure that the single bar moves freely and smoothly during application.
- (b) All parts of the handcuffs will be maintained in good condition, especially the blade and double lock actuator pin.
- (c) The blade must pass freely between the cheek plates of the same handcuff.
- (d) The double lock actuator pin must activate smoothly when the pin is pushed inward on the locking block.
- (e) The ratchet must engage with the pawl in the locking block.
- (f) Damage, needed repairs, or loss will be immediately reported to the Training Division.

### **F. Reporting**

1. In all cases where a prisoner is handcuffed the officer's report will so indicate.
2. If an individual is restrained and released without an arrest, the officer shall document the details of the detention and the need for handcuffs or other restraints.
3. All injuries resulting or claimed to have resulted by handcuffing will be detailed in the officer's report.
4. When a complaint has been made that the handcuffs have injured the prisoner's wrists, a photograph should be taken of the wrists after the handcuffs have been removed. A photograph of the prisoner should be taken as well.
5. The duration of time a prisoner was handcuffed should be noted.
6. An officer should note the demeanor, language, and threatening conduct of the subject arrested, if any. Also, any damage to the officer's uniform, leather, or person should be documented.

### **G. Medical Attention**

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1. In any arrest or situation where injury is claimed to be caused by handcuffing, the prisoner will be afforded medical attention.
2. Medical attention will be provided at the earliest possible time.