

	<b>Houston Independent School District Police Department Directives</b>	<b>DIRECTIVE: 450-008</b>
		<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: August 7, 2014</b>
	<b>SUBJECT: Adult Prisoner Processing</b>	<b>REVISED DATE: February 4, 2022</b>

## **PURPOSE**

This directive aims to establish procedures regarding processing and prisoner transportation by officers of the HISD Police Department Juvenile Processing Center. The Chief of Police shall assign an individual to oversee the Juvenile Processing Center. This individual shall be responsible for all aspects of the processing center, including prisoner processing, record keeping, training, security, sanitation and maintenance, safety, and supervision.

## **POLICY**

The policy of the Houston ISD Police Department is to provide a secure and safe environment for the processing and transporting of all adult and juvenile defendants. While handling or transporting prisoners or other persons, employees shall treat all persons with dignity and respect and shall follow the procedures outlined in this directive.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Adult:** A person who is 17 years of age or older;

**Child:** A person who is ten years of age or older and under 17 years of age;

**Committing Offense:** The most serious offenses found true at the juvenile or adult's most recent judicial proceeding.

**Defendant:** A person who has been arrested and is being held at the processing center pending arraignment, release, adjudication, or transfer to another facility; and

**HISD JPC:** Houston Independent School District Juvenile Processing Center

**HCJP:** Harris County Juvenile Probation

**Parent, Guardian, Custodian:** Defendant's parent or legal guardian, or responsible adult responsible for the physical custody of a defendant.

**Positional Asphyxia:** Positional asphyxia, also known as postural asphyxia, is a form of asphyxia that occurs when someone's position prevents the person from breathing adequately. Positional asphyxia may be a factor in a significant number of people who die suddenly during restraints by police, prison (corrections) officers, or health care staff.

**Processing Area:** A room or space used for processing, questioning, or examining defendant(s). While in these areas, the defendant shall be under continuous control or supervision of HISD Police personnel and may not be restrained to a fixed object;

**Processing Center:** A temporary processing facility for which custodial authority of a defendant is usually less than 6 hours, pending their release, arraignment, adjudication, or transfer to another facility;

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY OF PRISONERS**

When a person is taken into custody, employees are responsible for that person's safety. Employees shall be aware of the well-being of all prisoners and shall respond appropriately if prisoners are in danger, whether intentionally or accidentally.

Employees observing circumstances believed to be an immediate threat of serious injury or death to any prisoner (including those in the custody of another employee) shall do all of the following:

- a) Take custody of the prisoner.
- b) Take the appropriate actions necessary to prevent injury to the prisoner.
- c) Notify a field or jail supervisor.
- d) Submit a written report of the incident to the Chief of Police through the chain of command.

In these circumstances, the arresting officer is still responsible for submitting the incident report related to the original arrest.

All persons under arrest shall be properly handcuffed behind the back before being thoroughly searched and shall remain handcuffed while transported in any police vehicle. Multiple prisoners transported in a prisoner van may be secured by a multiple prisoner transport chain. If a medical or specific physical condition precludes handcuffing behind the back, the prisoner shall be secured in the safest possible manner before being placed in a police vehicle.

Employees shall not place or leave any object capable of inflicting injury or death in a location accessible to a prisoner or suspect. Employees shall thoroughly check any area intended to house a suspect or prisoner before placing that person in that area (e.g., police vehicles, holding cells, offices, and interview rooms).

All police vehicles shall be thoroughly searched immediately following the transportation of any prisoner, suspect, or citizen. Prisoners shall not be left unattended in police vehicles unless employees maintain visual contact with them. The only exception to this policy is if an officer responds to a life-threatening situation and must immediately exit the police vehicle.

Under this circumstance, officers shall notify the dispatcher as soon as possible of their situation and the location of their police vehicle so another officer can be dispatched to assist and take custody of the prisoner. When abandoning their police vehicle in response to an emergency, officers shall take the vehicle's keys with them.

## **HEALTH OF PRISONERS**

A prisoner who is unconscious or unable to walk without assistance shall be placed in jail only when the jail medical specialist on duty in the jail has done both of the following:

- a) Examined the prisoner and authorized receipt of the prisoner.
- b) Assumed responsibility for the prisoner's medical condition.

A prisoner with a serious injury or illness shall be transported to a medical facility for treatment.

## **JAIL SAFETY**

Officers entering a prisoner processing room shall secure all weapons in a weapon lockbox before entry, except in emergencies.

## **TRANSPORTING PRISONERS OR OTHER PERSONS**

Whenever possible, prisoners shall be transported in vehicles with protective screens. Employees shall transport only as many persons as can be safely carried at one time in a police vehicle. Employees shall ensure that the number of persons being transported does not exceed the number of functioning seat restraints (i.e., seat belts and shoulder harnesses) in the police vehicle. Vehicles shall not be placed in motion until the driver and passengers have been fastened in their seat restraints.

The following persons shall be transported in separate vehicles unless the persons have been arrested due to the same incident or the transporting vehicle is a prisoner van or bus equipped with multiple, separate, and secure holding compartments.

- a) Adult and juvenile prisoners
- b) Prisoners of the opposite sex
- c) Prisoners and persons who are not under arrest (except as noted below)

Employees shall not transport a domestic violence suspect and victim in the same vehicle simultaneously.

A person under arrest shall not be transported with a prisoner unless it is hazardous to leave the person at the scene. A person who is not arrested shall not be left in an area of potential danger and shall not be left on the side of a freeway. Another police officer may be called to transport a non-prisoner away from a dangerous area. Any person placed in a police vehicle is subject to a weapons search.

The ethnicity of the person being transported shall not be broadcast. The dispatcher shall provide time checks on departure and arrival. The officer shall provide the current starting and ending mileage to the dispatcher and the condition of the prisoner upon arrival at the processing center. All transports shall be made via the safest, most direct route.

Traffic stops shall not be conducted while transporting prisoners unless a violator's actions pose an immediate threat to public safety and no other officer is available to stop the vehicle. Officers shall make every effort to follow the vehicle until another officer arrives. If no other officer is available, the officer shall stop the vehicle and follow the procedures for leaving a prisoner unattended in a life-threatening situation.

## **TRANSPORTING PERSONS WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

Employees shall exercise due care in transporting persons who are physically disabled or who require special equipment. Wheelchairs, crutches, prostheses, and other necessary medical equipment shall be transported with the person.

A supervisor shall be called to the scene when transporting a person aided by a mobility device (e.g., wheelchair, walker, or crutches). The supervisor shall determine the most appropriate means of transporting the person (e.g., using a patrol vehicle or calling for a paratransit vehicle). At no time shall a person with a mobility limitation be transported in the rear of a transport van. The supervisor shall remain on the scene to monitor the loading of the person.

Information about the method of transport shall be documented in the call history and the incident report is generated. For prisoners with physical disabilities who are being transported from the jail, the method of transport shall also be documented in the report.

## **TRANSPORTING VIOLENT PRISONERS OR PERSONS EXHIBITING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

When transporting a violent prisoner or a person exhibiting mental health crisis, officers shall use approved restraints (e.g., handcuffs) to ensure their safety and that of the person, remaining mindful that persons in crisis can be very unpredictable. Employees are expected to use sound judgment in deciding on the type and amount of physical restraint and the most appropriate mode of transporting such a person.

When dealing with a violent person who has been subdued using the interlocking technique, officers shall ensure there are at least 12 inches between the interlock (wrist to ankle). Employees shall pay close attention to persons who have been interlocked and may be susceptible to positional asphyxia.

When an officer needs to utilize the interlocking technique, the officer shall request a supervisor be dispatched to the scene to ensure the interlocking conforms to department policies. Officers shall utilize a two-officer unit for transporting an interlocked person unless otherwise approved by a supervisor. During transport, one officer shall periodically check the person for responsiveness, position, and general condition.

Neuro-Psychiatric Center (NPC) referrals, Southeast Texas Crime Information Center (SETCIC), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) prisoners requiring non-emergency medical care shall be transported by the arresting officer. If the arresting

officer is not available, the dispatcher shall assign an officer from the district where the prisoner was arrested. If none is available, the dispatcher may immediately assign an officer to transport the prisoner to the medical facility.

## **TRANSPORTING PRISONERS TO MEDICAL FACILITIES**

If a prisoner must be transported to a medical facility for treatment, the officer will notify an on-duty supervisor. Employees transporting a prisoner to a medical facility for treatment shall assist the admission clerk in acquiring the necessary information from the prisoner.

At least one officer shall ride in the ambulance transporting a prisoner to a medical facility if any of the following situations exist:

- a) The prisoner is suspected of a felony.
- b) The prisoner is violent or combative.
- c) The officer's presence is requested by ambulance personnel.

If a prisoner is transported by ambulance, the assigned officer shall meet the ambulance at the medical facility and remain with the prisoner. The assigned officer shall contact the station sergeant from the medical facility to determine whether another officer shall be assigned as a relief officer. When a prisoner requires transportation to a medical facility, a supervisor shall determine the method of transportation.

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## **PROCEDURES WHILE AT HISD PROCESSING CENTER**

The Houston ISD Juvenile Processing Center (Houston ISD-JPC) is located at 3501 Dixie, Houston, TX 77021. Entry to the Processing Center for Police Officers and suspects can be accessed from Tierwester Street (through double glass doors and enter room seven (7)). This area will be available for entry by key access 24 hours a day for Police Officers and other Law Enforcement officers. Parents/guardians should only enter the Processing Center at 3501 Dixie St. for the release of Juveniles. HISD Processing Center will maintain a log documenting the reason, date, time in/out of the facility, and any meals provided.

Access to the processing area is limited to authorized personnel. Non-essential personnel allowed access to the processing Area would ensure their presence does not violate a defendant's privacy, impede processing operations or hamper the gathering of information for court.

All defendants will be AFIS(ed) (fingerprinted) and photographed before release or transfer to Harris County. The officer will take a photo of the defendant during the AFIS process. The photos can be used for identification line-ups and media releases with approval from the Chief of Police or designee. The officer will ensure the photos are standard (e.g., a defendant doesn't make a face, tilt their head to the side, close their eyes, lift their chin, wear a hat, etc.) If this happens, the photo must be retaken.

## **AUDITS**

The HISD Prisoner Processing Center will conduct an administrative review at least once every three years. Inspections are conducted on each of the three patrol shifts for cleanliness, AFIS machine functionality, and to determine any unsafe conditions by the Patrol Sergeant on duty (Reference HISD Form 0211: Processing Center Inspection Records).

Approved By

  
Pedro Lopez Jr., Chief of Police