

**SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION DIRECTIVE**

DIRECTIVE #: D 304

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SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION OF PRISONERS

DATE: NOV. 21, 1997

RELATED DIRECTIVES, STANDARDS, ETC:

LAST REVISION: SEP 1, 2011

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY: DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this directive is to provide guidelines for transporting persons in custody of law enforcement officers of this division between points of arrest and initial booking.

**DIRECTIVE:** Transporting prisoners is a potentially dangerous function. Therefore, it is the practice of this law enforcement division to take the precautions necessary while transporting prisoners to protect the lives and safety of officers, the public, and the person in custody.

**PROCEDURES**

**A. Vehicle Inspection**

- 1) All vehicles used for prisoner transport shall be placed for readiness as follows:
  - (a) All windows shall be intact and outer door latches in proper working order.
  - (b) Prior to placing a prisoner in the vehicle for transport, the transporting officer shall inspect the interior for weapons or contraband. The vehicle shall be searched again after the prisoner has been delivered to the detention facility or other destination.

**B. Handcuffing/Use of Restraints**

- 1) Officers shall handcuff (double-locked) all prisoners with their hands behind their back, except as found in Number 2 below.
- 2) The officer may handcuff the prisoner with his/her hands in front, or use other appropriate and approved restraining device(s) where the prisoner:
  - (a) is in an obvious state of pregnancy,
  - (b) is in a boat, provided that the prisoner is properly fitted with an approved personnel flotation device (PFD),
  - (c) has a physical handicap, or

- (d) has injuries that could be aggravated by standard handcuffing procedures.
- 3) Females shall be subject to the same handcuffing and restraint policy as males unless otherwise exempted by this policy.
- 4) Prisoners shall not be handcuffed to any part of a vehicle or vessel during transport.
- 5) Additional approved restraint devices may be used to secure a prisoner who poses a threat to him/her or to the public.
- 6) Officers are prohibited from transporting prisoners who are restrained in a prone position.

### C. Transport

- 1) Prior to transport, all prisoners shall be thoroughly searched for any weapons or contraband.
  - (a) A protective search should be conducted by an officer of the same sex as the prisoner whenever practical.
  - (b) The transporting officer(s) should search the prisoner regardless of searches that may or may not have been conducted by arresting officer(s).
- 2) Females shall not be handcuffed to male prisoners and should normally be separated during transport, if practical.
- 3) Juveniles **shall not** be transported in the same vehicle with adult prisoners.
- 4) Special precautions shall be employed when transporting high-risk prisoners.
  - (a) Waist chains should be employed in addition to handcuffs; and
  - (b) Rival gang members should not be transported together.
- 5) Prior to initiating the transport, the officer shall provide the communications center with the following information when possible:
  - (a) Arrest location and destination of transport; and
  - (b) Time and mileage readings before and after transport of a prisoner. Mileage may be omitted in boats.
- 6) The officer should use care when assisting a prisoner into the vehicle or vessel for transport.
- 7) Prisoners shall be transported in vehicles and vessels in a manner that allows for constant visual observation. Seating of officers and prisoners should conform to the following:
  - (a) Where the vehicle has a security screen and only the transporting officer, the prisoner shall be placed in the back seat on the right-hand side of the vehicle. When the vehicle is not equipped with a security screen and has only one transporting officer, the prisoner shall be placed in the right front seat.
  - (b) When a prisoner is being transported in a two-officer passenger vehicle (sedan, utility vehicle) without a security screen, the prisoner shall be placed in the right rear seat. The second officer shall sit in the left rear seat behind the driver.
  - (c) When a prisoner is being transported in a one-officer pickup, the prisoner shall be placed in the front seat. If two officers are in the pickup, transport assistance should be requested.
  - (d) Leg restraints shall be used when an officer believes the prisoner has a potential for violent behavior.
  - (e) All prisoners shall be secured in the vehicle by proper use of a seat belt.
- 8. The physical well being of prisoners shall be monitored during transit. Particular attention shall be directed to persons reported or suspected of being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol or who have a history or propensity for violence.

- (a) Prisoners who report/display symptoms of serious illness during transit shall be taken to the nearest emergency room for treatment.
  - (b) Escorting officers shall remain with the prisoner (patient) at all times unless relieved by other authorized personnel.
  - (c) Potentially violent persons in custody shall be restrained at all times in the treatment facility unless such restraint would interfere with essential treatment.
- 9) Symptoms or reports of physical or mental illness (such as threats of suicide or psychotic behavior) shall be reported to the booking officer and both the information and the notice to the booking officer shall be documented.
  - 10) Any wheelchairs, crutches, prosthetic devices, and medication should be transported with, but not in the possession of the prisoner.
  - 11) Prisoners shall not be left unattended during transport.
  - 12) Officers shall not engage in enforcement activities while transporting prisoners unless failure to act would risk death or serious bodily injury to another. In non-life threatening yet serious situations, officers should call for back-up assistance and may remain on-hand until such assistance has arrived.
  - 13) Any escape shall immediately be reported to the communications center together with a complete description of the fugitive, mode and direction of travel, crime and propensity for violence, if known.
  - 14) Approved personal flotation devices must be worn by prisoners at all times while on a boat.

APPROVED:



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A.C. Frampton, Colonel