

Handcuffing and Restraints

302.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the use of handcuffs and other restraints during detentions and arrests. Members should be able to articulate the lawful authority and necessity when using handcuffs and/or other restraints, such as temporary detention, arrest, emergency detention, etc.

302.2 POLICY

The Fargo Police Department authorizes the use of restraint devices in accordance with this policy, the Use of Force Policy, the Transporting Persons in Custody Policy, and department training. Restraint devices shall not be used to punish, to display authority, or as a show of force.

302.3 USE OF RESTRAINTS

Only members who have successfully completed Fargo Police Department-approved training on the use of restraint devices described in this policy are authorized to use these devices.

When deciding whether to use any restraint, officers should carefully balance officer safety concerns with factors that include, but are not limited to:

- (a) The circumstances or crime leading to the arrest.
- (b) The demeanor and behavior of the arrested person.
- (c) The age and health of the person.
- (d) Whether the person is known to be pregnant.
- (e) Whether the person has a hearing or speaking disability. In such cases, consideration should be given, safety permitting, to handcuffing to the front in order to allow the person to sign or write notes.
- (f) Whether the person has any other apparent disability.

302.3.1 RESTRAINT OF DETAINEES

Situations may arise where it may be reasonable to restrain an individual who may, after brief investigation, be released without arrest. Unless arrested, the use of restraints on detainees should continue only for as long as is reasonably necessary to assure the safety of officers and others. When deciding whether to remove restraints from a detainee, officers should continuously weigh the safety interests at hand against the continuing intrusion upon the detainee.

302.3.2 RESTRAINT OF PREGNANT PERSONS

Persons who are known to be pregnant should be restrained in the least restrictive manner that is effective for officer safety. Leg restraints, waist chains, or handcuffs behind the body should not be used unless the officer has a reasonable suspicion that the person may resist, attempt escape, injure themselves or others, or damage property.

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No person who is in labor, delivery, or recovery after delivery shall be handcuffed or restrained except in extraordinary circumstances, and only when a supervisor makes an individualized determination that such restraints are necessary for the safety of the detainee, officers, or others. See the Transporting Persons in Custody Policy for guidelines relating to transporting pregnant persons.

302.4 APPLICATION OF METAL HANDCUFFS OR PLASTIC CUFFS

Metal handcuffs and temporary nylon or plastic cuffs shall be department issued and should only be used to restrain a person's hands to ensure their safety, as well as the safety of the officer and the public.

Metal handcuffs should be utilized for all arrest and appropriate detention situations. When feasible, handcuffs should be double-locked to prevent tightening, which may cause undue discomfort or injury to the hands or wrists. See the Contacts and Temporary Detentions policy (419) for additional guidance regarding handcuffing during temporary detentions.

In situations where one pair of metal handcuffs does not appear sufficient to restrain the individual or may cause unreasonable discomfort due to the person's size, officers should consider alternatives, such as using an additional set of metal handcuffs, a combination of metal handcuffs secured by a plastic cuff or multiple plastic cuffs.

Temporary nylon or plastic handcuffs should be utilized in situations involving multiple arrests, such as search warrants, crowd management activities or as otherwise appropriate pursuant to this policy.

Regardless of the type of cuffing restraint utilized, handcuffs should be applied with the hands behind the person's back unless impractical to do so or pursuant to considerations outlined in this policy. Handcuff restraints should be removed as soon as it is reasonable or after the person has been searched and is safely confined within a detention facility with the approval of detention personnel.

302.5 APPLICATION OF SPIT HOODS/MASKS/SOCKS

Spit hoods/masks/socks are temporary protective devices designed to prevent the wearer from biting and/or transferring or transmitting fluids (saliva and mucus) to others.

Spit hoods may be placed upon persons in custody when the officer reasonably believes the person will bite or spit, either on a person or in an inappropriate place. They are generally used during application of a physical restraint, while the person is restrained, or during or after transport.

Officers utilizing spit hoods should ensure that the hood is fastened properly to allow for adequate ventilation and that the restrained person can breathe normally. Officers should provide assistance during the movement of restrained individuals due to the potential for impaired or distorted vision on the part of the individual. Officers should avoid commingling individuals wearing spit hoods with other detainees.

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Spit hoods should not be used in situations where the restrained person is bleeding profusely from the area around the mouth or nose, or if there are indications that the person has a medical condition, such as difficulty breathing or vomiting. In such cases, prompt medical care should be obtained. If the person vomits while wearing a spit hood, the spit hood should be promptly removed and discarded. Persons who have been sprayed with oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray should be thoroughly decontaminated including hair, head and clothing prior to application of a spit hood.

Those who have been placed in a spit hood should be continually monitored and shall not be left unattended until the spit hood is removed. Spit hoods shall be discarded after each use.

302.6 APPLICATION OF AUXILIARY RESTRAINT DEVICES

Auxiliary restraint devices include transport belts, waist or belly chains, transportation chains, leg restraints, and other similar devices. Auxiliary restraint devices are intended for use during long-term restraint or transportation. They provide additional security and safety without impeding breathing, while permitting adequate movement, comfort, and mobility.

Only department-authorized devices may be used. Any person in auxiliary restraints should be monitored as reasonably appears necessary.

302.7 APPLICATION OF LEG RESTRAINT DEVICES

Leg restraints may be used to restrain the legs of a violent or potentially violent person when it is reasonable to do so during the course of detention, arrest or transportation. Only restraint devices approved by the Department shall be used.

In determining whether to use the leg restraint, officers should consider:

- (a) Whether the officer or others could be exposed to injury due to the assaultive or resistant behavior of a suspect.
- (b) Whether it is reasonably necessary to protect the suspect from his/her own actions (e.g., hitting his/her head against the interior of the patrol unit, running away from the arresting officer while handcuffed, kicking at objects or officers).
- (c) Whether it is reasonably necessary to avoid damage to property (e.g., kicking at windows of the patrol unit).

302.7.1 GUIDELINES FOR USE OF LEG RESTRAINTS

When applying leg restraints, the following guidelines should be followed:

- (a) If practicable, officers should notify a supervisor of the intent to apply the leg restraint device. In all cases, a supervisor shall be notified as soon as practicable after the application of the leg restraint device.
- (b) Once applied, absent a medical or other emergency, restraints should remain in place until the officer arrives at the jail or other facility or the person no longer reasonably appears to pose a threat.

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- (c) Once secured, the person should be placed in a seated or upright position, secured with a seat belt, and shall not be placed on their stomach for an extended period, as this could reduce the person's ability to breathe.
- (d) The restrained person should be continually monitored by an officer while in the leg restraint. The officer should ensure that the person does not roll onto and remain on their stomach.
- (e) The officer should look for signs of labored breathing and take appropriate steps to relieve and minimize any obvious factors contributing to this condition.

302.8 COMPLAINTS OF INJURY BY RESTRAINED PERSONS

302.8.1 COMPLIANT HANDCUFFING

Pursuant to the Use of Force Policy (300), section 300.1.1, compliant handcuffing is not a use of force. However, should a compliant person complain of injury or sustain an actual injury subsequent to being handcuffed, a supervisor shall respond to the scene and ensure:

- (a) Photographs are taken of any actual injury or lack thereof, and appropriate medical assistance is provided.
- (b) The complaint is documented on a department memo and forwarded to the Professional Accountability Unit.

A use of force report is not required in these instances.

302.8.2 NON-COMPLIANT HANDCUFFING

Members shall comply with the Use of Force Policy (300) for all other injuries related to restrained persons.

302.9 TRAINING

The Training and Development Unit (TDU) Lieutenant should ensure that officers receive periodic training on the proper use of handcuffs and other restraints, including:

- (a) Proper placement and fit of handcuffs and other restraint devices approved for use by the Department.
- (b) Response to complaints of pain by restrained persons.
- (c) Options for restraining those who may be pregnant without the use of leg restraints, waist chains, or handcuffs behind the body.
- (d) Options for restraining amputees or those with medical conditions or other physical conditions that may be aggravated by being restrained.
- (e) Proper placement of safely secured persons into an upright or seated position to avoid placement on the stomach for an extended period of time, as this could reduce the person's ability to breathe.

302.10 REVISION DATE 06/17/2025