



ESCORT PROCEDURES AND TRANSPORTING HIGH RISK PRISONERS

By
VEN JO TESORO

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References:

Memorandum

Seminar-Workshop for BuCor Escorting Units

Excerpt on Revised Penal Code

(Infidelity in the custody of Prisoners)

Acknowledgement

This work has been prepared for the Seminar/Workshop for Bureau of Corrections Escorting Unit (scheduled on April 9, 2007 at NBP Conference Hall). Insights and ideas were explored in this pamphlet came from books and electronic media for additional and relevant concepts. Aside from the experience and cases endemic in the course of escorting challenges, the experiential contribution of correctional officers (PGI (Ret.) Romy Chavez, PGIII Angelito Padilla, PGIII Melencio Faustino, PGI Boyet Maristella, PGI Arlene Casilihan and PGI Teresa Agaloos) increased and heightened the thoughts which should govern properly the escorting function of the correctional system.

Author

CHAPTER I. ESCORT PROCEDURES

Escorting or transporting prisoners from one station to another is one of the most delicate functions in correctional administration. All prisoners for that matter are presumed high security risk and therefore requires that the officers tasked for the mission observe the mandatory obedience to rules and procedures pertaining movement of prisoners. Unlike in other corrective agencies in Southeast Asia, it is only here in this country where the basic escorting procedures have defined and almost detailed criterion and decorum in escorting and transporting prisoners. And yet, most of prison violations including escapes are unfortunately traced on non-observance of the rules and procedures on escorting prisoners.

The following are excerpts from the Manual of Operations as guide and reminder to the officer on matters essential for their survival not only in their career but personal safety as well.

Unfortunately for most officers involved or assigned in escorting/ transporting prisoners, most of the rules are forgotten if not ignored. Let us consider the rules once again.

. “Section 1. **Primary duties of escort guards.**- Escort guards shall exercise extreme caution at all times and shall see to it that the inmate does not---

- a. Escape;
- b. Converse with unauthorized persons;
- c. Obtain forbidden articles, especially intoxicants or weapons;
- d. Annoy passersby, and
- e. Suffer harm or humiliation.

Section 2. Distance of guard from inmates.- If escorting a group of inmates, a guard shall keep a distance of not less than ten (10) paces from his charge. Upon arrival at the destination, he shall station himself at a vantage point where all the inmates are within sight and can be properly controlled.

When on board a ship or boat, the group of inmates shall be positioned in the most secure part of the vessel and shall be required to sit down. The guard shall station himself at strategic points where they can effectively respond. An inmate shall not be allowed to stand up or move about until the vessel is ready to dock, except when the guard needs to have a clear view of the port and starboard passages.

Section 3. Basic escort procedures.- An escort guard shall strictly observe the instructions written at the back of the inmate's pass and the purpose and destination of the escort mission. These include, but not limited to, the following:

- a. While in transit, the inmate shall not be allowed to stop at any place or contact any person until the destination is reached.
- b. The inmate shall at all times be placed under proper restraint e.g. handcuffs. However, the same shall be removed when the inmate enters the courtroom.
- c. The inmate shall be returned to the prison facility immediately after the purpose of the pass has been served.
- d. The use of a privately-owned vehicle in transporting an inmate is prohibited.

Section 4. Escort procedures for court appearance.- In escort duties for court hearing, the Superintendent shall provide at least two (2) guards for every inmate. However, when two or more inmates are to be escorted, the number of guards may be reduced proportionately without sacrificing security requirements. If an

inmate is notorious or has a previous record of escape, additional escort guards shall be assigned.

Section 5. Appearance in Metro Manila Courts.- In conducting NBP or CIW inmates for appearance in Metro Manila Courts, the escort detail shall be headed by a supervising guard or by a senior officer. If the court concerned is in the suburbs of Metro Manila e.g. Cavite, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna and Batangas, the escorts shall return their wards to the NBP or CIW immediately after the hearing.

Section 6. Turnover of inmate to local jail.- A guard assigned to escort an inmate for court hearings who cannot return to the prison of origin on the same day shall request the court to issue an order turning over the inmate to the nearest provincial/ city jail or police detention cell. The escort guard shall not stay in a private dwelling or hotel with the inmate.

Section 7. Acknowledgment of turnover of inmate.- Upon turning the inmate over to an authorized officer at the destination, the escort-in-charge shall secure an acknowledgement receipt for the custody of the inmate. This shall clearly bear the name of the receiving officer, his designation and the date and time the inmate was received.

Section 8. Postponement/ resetting of hearing.- After the hearing or if the scheduled hearing is postponed/ reset to another date, the inmate shall be returned to the prison of origin without delay. If feasible, the escort-in-charge shall secure from the court an order committing the inmate to the provincial/city jail or other detention center.

Section 9. Procedure if escort guard becomes sick.- If the escort guard becomes sick, he shall notify the Superintendent of

the prison or origin thereof by the fastest means available so that a replacement can be sent to continue the mission.

Section 10. Fake or spurious subpoena.- If the subpoena received by the prison turns out to be spurious, or if, in spite of a valid subpoena, the scheduled trial is not held, the inmate shall be immediately returned to the prison of origin. The escort-in-charge shall submit a written report to the Superintendent on the matter.

Section 11. Certificate of appearance.- Immediately after the trial but before leaving the court premises, the escort-in-charge shall secure from the clerk of court a certificate or other proof of appearance.

Section 12. Procedure during outside movement of inmate.- The following security procedures shall be observed during the outside movement of an inmate:

a. Before departure from prison

- a. The written mission order issued by the Superintendent, the mitimus and other prison records of the inmate shall be given to the escort guards. In case of detainee, the records shall include the written authorization of the appellate or sentencing court for the outside movement of the detainee.
- b. Whenever possible, the transfer shall be effected during daylight hours.
- c. The escort guards shall be given detailed instructions on their duties and responsibilities, to include the instruction that they use the most direct travel route to their authorized destination.
- d. The inmate shall be thoroughly searched for contraband or deadly weapons or objects which may be used for escape, (violence) or self-destruction.

- e. Money found in the possession of the inmate shall be confiscated by the Desk Officer who shall issue a receipt therefore and who shall return the money to the inmate upon his return. If the inmate is to be confined and needs money for medicine or food, the money therefore shall be turned over under receipt to the escort guard. All disbursements made by the escort guard shall be properly receipted for.
- f. The inmate shall be placed in handcuffs or other instrument of restraint. If there is more than one inmate to be transferred, they shall be grouped in pairs and securely connected to one another by a rope, ascertaining that the inmate does not have crippled, deformed or very small hands to allow his to slip the handcuffs off.
- g. Handcuffs shall be properly adjusted for tightness before departure to avoid the need of adjusting the same while in transit.
- h. The inmate shall stay inside the prison premises until the vehicle to be used in transporting him is ready for boarding. The inmate shall board a motor vehicle ahead of the guard.

b. In Transit

- a. The handcuffs or instruments of restraint shall not be removed while the inmates are in transit. An inmate shall not be handcuffed to any part of the vehicle during transit to avoid his being trapped in case of a vehicular accident.
- b. If it is necessary to board public transportation such as a ship or airplane, the guards shall position themselves with their inmates in an area that is cleared of civilians

or if this is not possible, shall sit/position themselves between the civilians and the inmate/s.

- c. All inmates being escorted shall be under the supervision of a guard at all times, including going to the toilet or washroom. The guard shall always be close enough to the inmate to respond to any untoward incident.
- d. If there is more than one inmate being escorted, there shall be a head count of the inmates every turnover of guarding shift. The team leader of the escort guard detail shall conduct an inspection during all guarding shifts.
- e. An inmate shall not be allowed to tinker with his handcuffs or other instrument of restraint.
- f. A guard shall always walk behind and not in front of the inmate being escorted.
- g. If armed, the guard shall not sit, stand or walk beside the inmate, or in any case, allow the inmate to reach his firearm.
- h. The guard shall not pass any unauthorized place while in transit.

c. Arrival at Destination

- a. Upon arrival at the authorized destination, the guards and their inmate/s shall stay in the public transportation until the same is cleared of the other passengers. They shall only disembark after the inmate and his personal belongings have been searched/ inspected and the transportation that will bring them finally to their final destination is ready for boarding.
- b. The handcuffs or instrument of restraint may be removed at the authorized destination if there is no danger of escape.

- c. The guard shall return the inmate to the prison of origin as soon as the purpose of the outside movement has been served.
- d. After-Mission Report.- After completing the mission, the leader of the guard detail shall submit a written report to the Superintendent, together with copies of the transmittal letter and certificate of appearance. In case of an inmate being transferred to another prison or jail institution or competent authority, the responsibility for said inmate shall remain with the custodian until formally received by another custodian.

Sec. 13. **Other security procedures.**- the following security procedures shall also be observed in case of an inmate subject of a medical referral or who is allowed to view the remains of a deceased relative:

a. Medical Referrals

- a. The inmate who is brought to an outside hospital for medical treatment/examination shall be provided with at least two (2) escort guards and returned to the prison of origin during the daylight hours after the treatment is completed. Upon said return, the Department shall be furnished copies of the inmate's medical certificate, diagnosis and plan of management.
- b. If the inmate is to be confined in a hospital, the inmate may be handcuffed to the bed if he is ambulatory and there is a risk that he may escape.

b. Viewing the Remains

- a. The inmate shall not be allowed more than three (3) hours from the time of arrival at the wake to the time of departure from the place where the remains lie in state.

- b. The remains to be viewed must be in a place within a radius of thirty (30) kilometers from the place of confinement. Where the distance is more than thirty (30) kilometers, the privilege may be enjoyed if the inmate can leave and return to his place of confinement during the daylight hours of the same day.

Sec. 14. Outside work detail of medium security inmates.- In case a medium security inmate is detailed to work outside the immediate vicinity of the prison compound, the following security procedures shall be observed:

- a. In no case shall an inmate be allowed to work outside the prison compound without an escort guard.
- b. Security shall be on a one inmate to one guard ratio.
- c. The inmate shall be bodily searched before and after his work detail.”

Reference: Bureau of Corrections Operating Manual, Part V. Escort Procedures, March 2000 edition

Those are the rules. Now, what if despite your posture, the inmate would still insist and even cajole you into violating the rules? Since there is no penalty clause for the inmate but only those rules stacked up against the officer, it would be easy for the prisoner to use everything to persuade the officer. After all, there is nothing in the rules that would compel the prisoner to do your bidding except your will power and your adherence to the Manual. Here is where the doctrine of using force may be introduced for your awareness, understanding and application. The officer is not helpless after all.

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CHAPTER II: USE OF FORCE

Guidance on the use of force is incorporated in orders, plans, SOPs, and instructions WITH RESPECT TO THE TEN GENERAL ORDERS (which all correctional officers must commit to memory). Using firearms or other means of deadly force is justified only under conditions of extreme necessity and as a last resort. Do not use physical force against a prisoner except in self-defense, to prevent escape, to prevent injury to others, to prevent damage to property, to quell a disturbance, to move an unruly prisoner, or as otherwise authorized in the BuCor Manual.

In the event of an imminent group or mass breakout from the area or the facility or another general disorder, ensure that prisoners know authority prevails, order will be restored, and means are available to restore order by force if necessary. Before applying force, try to reason with prisoners if the situation permits. If reasoning fails or if the existing situation does not permit reasoning, issue prisoners a direct order to terminate the disorder. Do not give the order until it can be enforced effectively by applying force as the situation requires. Before escalating beyond a show of force, allow uninvolved prisoners to voluntarily assemble in a controlled area away from the disturbance.

When force is necessary, apply it according to the priorities of force and limit it to the minimum degree necessary. The use of deadly force is prescribed by General Orders. The application of the priorities of force, or the application of a higher numbered priority without first employing a lower numbered one, depends on and is consistent with the situation encountered during any particular disorder. The priorities of force are as follows:

- **First: Verbal persuasion.**
- **Second: Show of force.**

- **Third: Chemical aerosol irritant projectors (subject to local and HN restrictions).**
- **Fourth: Use of physical force other than weapons fire.**
- **Fifth: Presentation of deadly force capability.**
- **Sixth: Deadly force.**

The facility commander coordinates with the higher echelon commander and the Superintendent. He designates representatives who are authorized to direct the use of firearms and riot control agents in the event of a riot or other disturbance. Orders, plans, SOPs, and instructions include use-of-force rules and specify the types of weapons to be used.

ESCAPE

Provide each guard with a whistle or other suitable alarm. Pursuant to the ten (10) General Orders, using firearms to prevent an escape is justified only when there is no other reasonable means available. If a prisoner tries to escape from the facility, the guard—

- Alerts other guards of the attempted escape by blowing three short blasts on a whistle or delivering the signal with another alarm.
- Orders the prisoner to halt three times in a loud voice.
- Fires only when the prisoner has passed all barriers of the facility and is continuing to escape. (The location of a barrier is determined by the physical arrangement of the facility. It normally includes fences or walls enclosing athletic, drill, recreation, housing, and administrative areas.)

Do not fire on an escapee if it endangers others. When firing is necessary, aim shots to disable the prisoner rather than kill him. Guidance for the use of firearms by guards escorting prisoners outside the facility are the same as those for using firearms in the facility.

The facility commander ensures that guards are trained in the use of their assigned weapons. Orient all personnel on policies regarding the use of force. Issue 12-gauge shotguns with cylinder (unchoked) barrels to facility guards, and ensure that barrels do not exceed 20 inches in length. Authorized ammunition for armed guards (perimeter and escort) is number 9 shot in trap loads of 2 3/4 grams of powder and 1 1/8 ounces of shot. Tower guards use number 00 buckshot ammunition.

Instruct tower and escort guards not to fire at less than 20 meters to prevent prisoner escapes. Ensure that these instructions appear in training programs and special instructions for guards.

Guards use a 9-millimeter pistol when escorting prisoners. Do not use rifles, machine guns, or submachine guns when guarding prisoners. Do not take weapons inside the controlled areas except as directed by the Superintendent or facility commander.

TRANSPORTATION

The facility commander maintains safety and security for prisoners under his control. He is also responsible for transportation requirements when prisoners are in his custody. Ensure that guard and escort personnel are familiar with the use-of-force guidelines. Some of the tasks are as follows:

Motor vehicle transport . Escort guards—

Know the type of vehicle, the departure time, the number of prisoners and their status, the number of assigned escorts, and the type of weapon and restraint (if applicable), and the release procedures at the final destination.

Know the actions to take in case of a disorder or an escape attempt.

Conduct a thorough vehicle search and remove or secure all items that can be used as weapons.

Do not handcuff two escape risk prisoners together or handcuff prisoners to any part of the vehicle.

Sign the necessary forms for each prisoner escorted out of the facility and frisk him before he enters the vehicle.

Follow the loading procedures for the vehicle.

Aircraft transport. Escort guards—

Know the type of aircraft, the departure time, the number of prisoners and their status, the number of assigned escorts, and the type of weapon and restraint (if applicable), and the release procedures at the final destination.

Follow the procedures for transporting prisoners via a commercial aircraft.

Sign for each prisoner on necessary forms provided..

Do not secure prisoners to any part of the aircraft.

Know latrine, beverage, meal, loading, and unloading procedures.

Rail transport . Use two escort guards (one armed and one unarmed) when transporting prisoners by rail. If possible, transport

prisoners in enclosed accommodations or compartments (day and night). If they are unavailable, use coach class or standard sleeping cars. Escort guards seat themselves in such a way that they block avenues of escape. The unarmed guard accompanies prisoners who use latrine facilities and remains in visual contact with them.

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CHAPTER III: SCENARIOS WHERE SECURITY IS OFTENTIMES COMPROMISED

1. The Escort guard conducts a prisoner to a court hearing. The hearing takes hours to complete. Escort and prisoner are hungry after the hearing. The following instances may take place:
 - a. Inmate will ask escort to wait for a relative or a friend who will shoulder their meals.
 - b. Inmate will ask escort to accompany him to his house nearby to take their meals.
 - c. Escort will take inmate to a nearby eating place for them to take their meals.
 - d. Others _____

2. The Escort guard conducts a prisoner to a court hearing. They used public transportation. The public transport bogs down. The following may take place.
 - a. Inmate may volunteer a friend with vehicle to use in transporting them.

- b. Inmate may volunteer his place to spend the night while waiting for -response.
 - c. Others _____
- 3. The Escort guard conducts a prisoner for medical referral. The Hospital requires the prisoner patient to be confined. The following may take place.
 - a. Inmate requests the escort not to use handcuff (since normally, inmates are to be handcuffed to their bed).
 - b. Inmate requests the escort to take their meals at the hospital canteen or nearby restaurant.
 - c. Inmate
 - d. Others _____
- 4. The Escort guard conducts a prisoner for viewing the remains. The location where the wake is situated is in a remote island for squatters. The following may take place.
 - a. Inmate requests the escort to remove handcuff to join mourning family.
 - b. Inmate relatives and friends compel escort guard to join in drinking spree.
 - c. Others _____.
- 5. The Escort guard conducts a female prisoner for court appearance. The court hearing takes hours. The following may take place:
 - a. Inmate asks escort guard to use comfort room.
 - b. Inmate faints.
 - c. Escort faints.
 - d. Others _____.

6. The Escort guard conducts a prisoner for transfer to another penal colony. The penal colony can be reached through different routes. The following may take place:
 - a. Inmate requests escort to spend a day in a relative or friend's house.
 - b. Inmate requests escort to stay for a while in a hotel.
 - c. Others _____.

7. The escort guard conducts a prisoner for a court hearing. The hearing terminated immediately. The following may take place:
 - a. Inmate while being escorted out of court house faints.
 - b. Escort while on the way to terminal faints.
 - c. Others _____.

8. The escort guard conducts a prisoner to a nearby farm within the reservation. Proper escort ratio is observed. The following may take place:
 - a. Escort diverts an inmate to work in his quarters.
 - b. Inmate is left to work on his own.
 - c. Others _____.

9. The escort conducts a prisoner for medical referral. The inmate while being diagnosed snatched a bladed instrument and held the nurse as hostage. The following may take place.
 - a. Escort immediately alerts the vicinity.
 - b. Others _____.

On each instance or similar scenarios which may obtain in every mission, the Escorting Commander must have a ready advise and strategy which his unit must apply considerably. He must as a rule, subject his unit to a regular conference or workshop, discussion tactics and strategies, exploration of problems and

solutions. Unnecessary failure in pursuing the proper course is a direct miscarriage of supervisory competence.

It should be stressed therefore that the escort guard while on a mission of transporting a prisoner is in a state of heightened alertness. He is practically, if a soldier, in the battlefield conducting himself, literally, in a war. He must have the provisions necessary---**a pack lunch** (good for estimated number of days the mission is to be completed), **communication instruments** (government issued cellular phone with load and accessories), **proper firearms, spare instrument of restraint** among others to sustain himself and carry through the mission without glitch. For this purpose, the institution or his supervisor before allowing the escort to proceed shall have a checklist on which to review the provisions.

To start with, the escorting unit commander should see to it that the following are considered:

1. All his escorting officers are able bodied and physically fit.
2. Only those officers whose age is 45 years old and below.
3. Those without record of substance abuse.
4. Those without record of escape and other prison rule violations.
5. Those without pending administrative cases.

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CHAPTER IV: BASIC OFFICER SAFETY ADVICE

A veteran police officer who has spent years escorting and transporting detainees and prisoners advised the following:

“You know, it’s the same old (but so very true) stuff you have been hearing ever since you entered the profession. Gather as much information as you can about the call or assignment before you make contact. Do not rush unnecessarily. Get as much help on-scene as necessary, and use it properly. Stay alert for the danger signs. Always wear your body armor when you are on duty. Maintain a reactionary gap between yourself and the subject – don’t get too close, too soon. Always keep a sharp eye on his hands. Do not make dangerous assumptions. Use cover to your advantage. Expect the unexpected and have some contingency plans in mind in case your subject does not do as you planned (he virtually never will.) Realize the limitation of both yourself and your equipment, and never engage in “cowboy” tactics that could get you (or your partner) killed. Be willing to practice tactical withdrawal if the odds are stacked heavily against you. Stay in good shape both mentally and physically. Keep a winning mind-set and remember to survive emotionally, as well as physically.

You also have undoubtedly heard the roster of fatal errors that can get you killed. Taking a poor position is one of them. Being apathetic, or just plain careless, is another. Failing to maintain proficiency with all the equipment of your business is a third. In addition, you do not want to be guilty of relaxing too soon, before the threat has passed. And, you don’t want to be sleepy or asleep on the job. It’s all basic stuff, but it’s also the stuff that just might keep you from ending up with some holes in your body that Mother Nature didn’t put there.”

Watch Your Approach and Positioning

It's no secret that more peace officers perish during the arrest process than engaging in any other activity that peacekeepers do. Unless you've got fifteen foot long arms, you must get in close to complete the arrest process. It is at this time, while you're in close, that the detainee has the best chance to assault you or go for your weapon if he's of a mind to do so. Realizing the existence of this window of vulnerability, arrest control instructors instill in their students several tactics and techniques for taking the advantage back from the criminal.

Stay out of an attacker's reach for as long as possible. When you do have to get in close, have your subject at a disadvantage. On a high risk or felony arrest, that may mean having him kneel or prone, ankles crossed, facing away from you. In some other arrest situations, it may require that the arrestee be facing away from you, fingers interlaced atop his head, legs spread wide apart. In each case, you approach from behind and out of the subject's view.

Give simple, clear verbal instructions to your subject that he is under arrest and exactly what you want him to do. Be prepared to repeat them, if required. Do not get impatient. A drunk or a subject whose first language is not English may take awhile to comprehend what you want.

Whenever possible, make an arrest only with a cover officer present. In the best "contact and cover" tradition, it's his (or her) job to watch your every move and react with the appropriate amount of force should you have trouble. With a known dangerous subject, running the risk of letting the crook get away is preferable to rushing to contact while you are alone. There likely will be another time to get him when you DO have help –

assuming, that is, you have not done something foolhardy and taken yourself out of the game, perhaps permanently. Wait for your help and use it wisely.

Follow Proper Handcuffing Practices

There is a cardinal rule of handcuffing that you should follow. It goes something like this: If you have lawfully arrested your prisoner, you can lawfully handcuff him. Unless there is an **EXTREMELY** good reason not to, medical or otherwise, all prisoners who come into your custody should be handcuffed. That includes persons detained for public intoxication or mental health holds. In both instances, these people are being handcuffed for their own safety as well as that of others, including yours. Handcuffed means properly handcuffed, and properly handcuffed means hands cuffed behind the subject's back with the handcuffs double locked and snug, but not tight enough to stop circulation. If possible, you also should secure the handcuffs in your subject's rear by slipping them beneath his belt. Then, double-check to be sure you have done it right.

Your handcuffs should be the quality, brand-name ones and not something you picked up cheap at the secondhand shop. Both the chain-link and the newer, hinged ones are fine. Carry two pairs, as bad guys often don't come solo. In addition, you will want to supplement your prisoner restraint equipment with some of the flexible plastic or nylon ties that also can be used for restraining legs or ankles of an arrestee intent on kicking the daylights out of something or someone – like you, for instance.

Remember that the best handcuffs are only temporary restraints. More than a few streetwise crooks, given enough time, can defeat them. Small boned women or juveniles may be able to pull their wrists right through the openings if the cuffs

are not properly applied and double-checked for snugness. But, regardless of who your handcuffed subject happens to be, be sure to visually check the status of your cuffs periodically, particularly during a lengthy transport. You do not want to share the experience of the officer who had her cuffs tossed to her by a fleeing gangbanger who bolted from her backseat at the end of a transport. And, you certainly don't want to match stitches with the patrolman who was struck in the face with the open arm of a cuff dangling from the wrist of an inebriated escape artist.

You must practice your handcuffing techniques under the supervision of a good arrest control instructor on a periodic basis. Doing so also will help you discover and fix any sloppy cuffing habits you may have picked up over time. The exact details of how to handcuff properly will vary a bit from one instructor to the next and from one law enforcement agency to another. Nevertheless, you count on some basic cuffing tactics and techniques to be virtually universal among safety smart officers. For example:

- Approach your subject from the rear for cuffing. Keep his hands within your sight at all times.
- Keep a tight grip on your handcuffs throughout the cuffing process. A loose or dangling cuff has some nasty little teeth and can make an excellent weapon to be directed against you.
- Try to keep your arrestee off balance and, thus, at a physical disadvantage throughout the cuffing procedure. Be careful not to lose your own balance.
- Never try to “slap” the cuffs against your subject’s wrists as a TV cop might do. You’ll have more success by pressing the cuff arm against your subject’s wrists, one wrist at a time. If

you have maintained your cuffs properly, the arm should swing freely and engage on the other side, assuming you've kept obstructions like coat sleeves out of the way.

- Once you have double locked the handcuffs on your arrestee according to the cuff manufacturer's instructions, check to see that they have engaged and latched properly and are neither too loose nor too snug. If they tighten down further when you press against a cuff arm with your finger, they obviously have not double locked.

- Walk a prisoner by holding onto his arm from the side, not by gripping the handcuff chain with one or more fingers. A suddenly violent prisoner can slice your fingers badly by manipulating his cuffs so as to catch you between the two bracelets.

- Never handcuff yourself to a prisoner. For that matter, never cuff your prisoner to a stationary object and then go away leaving him totally unobserved. The reality is that he's your prisoner and you are responsible for his safety while he is in your custody.

- Do not walk between two prisoners, handcuffed or otherwise. Do not walk in front of one or more prisoners, either. Walk alongside a single, handcuffed prisoner that you are guiding by the arm. Keep your weapon side turned away from him. Walk to the rear of a pair of prisoners.

- Carry a spare handcuff key hidden on your uniform or person. It can save some moments of embarrassment and inconvenience if you lose your primary key. More important, it just might help save your life if you are taken hostage and secured with your own handcuffs.

- Never carry a firearm into an area of a law enforcement facility where prisoners are being processed or secured. At the same time, be absolutely certain that any prisoner you introduce into that “sanitized” area is in possession of nothing with which he could harm you or a fellow officer.

Search Carefully

Prisoner searches represent one of the few activities in law enforcement where it is acceptable to get into a routine. Indeed, you should get into the habit of searching systematically so that you do it in a similar fashion each time. That generally means starting with your prisoner’s hair or headgear and proceeding downward to his footwear, socks and feet. There is no designated number of times you should search. Rather, the idea is to search and search again until you are convinced that your prisoner has nothing with which he could hurt someone, himself included. At the very least, however, he or she should be searched at the point of arrest, again before being transported, and at least once more upon reaching the booking area or lockup. Generally speaking, each search will be more detailed than the one that preceded it. Remember: Handcuff first, search second.

Always search a prisoner being turned over to you by another officer. If your peer has as much safety sense as he should, he will not be insulted by your double-checking his work. It’s the survival smart thing to do.

Poor searches remain one of the leading causes of injury and death for law enforcement officers. As a result, your initial posthandcuffing search following arrest should be primarily for weapons or other objects that could cause injury to someone. Obvious evidence or contraband also can be removed at this

time. By the time you arrive at a jail or other booking facility, you also will be looking for evidence of a crime, drugs or other contraband that you do not want introduced into a “secure” environment. Items such as lighters, matches, pocketknives, pens, necklaces, shoelaces, belts and ties are typically removed before the jail door slams shut. These are not returned until the subject is released from custody.

Never stop looking for the next potential threat when it comes to prisoner searches. The small knife you missed just could be the one your prisoner shoves into your neck a bit later on. Shoes and waistbands must be probed for items like knives, razor blades, syringes and handcuff keys. Hairdos should have a comb or your gloved fingers run through them to detect any well-hidden surprises. As you carry out your search, keep an eye out for needle tracks that may indicate you now have a prisoner with a drug monkey on his back within the walls of your lockup. That could mean a whole new set of problems if he begins feeling the effects of his chemical fix or goes into withdrawal.

It never hurts to ask a prisoner before you search him if he has any items like blades or needles hidden on him that could hurt you if accidentally discovered. Make it clear that you expect a truthful answer for both your safety and his. But, do not bank on an honest answer. Search methodically and carefully, regardless of the response you get.

To help in preventing an attack by the prisoner you are searching, try to have a cover officer close by when you are carrying out your searches. If your prisoner has already proven by his history, deeds or words that he is dangerous, always have a cover officer present during the searching and booking process. Take him at his word if he’s already threatened you and keep plenty of help on hand until he is locked away or otherwise

out of your presence. If you demonstrate that you have prepared for the worst, you decrease the chances of the worst actually happening.

Follow your jurisdiction's statutes and your employer's rules and regulations for carrying out strip or "skin" searches. As you would expect, this is an area of considerable liability for you and your agency. Have a solid reason for what you want to do. Any search of a bodily orifice must be carried out at a medical facility by medical personnel. Before you request any such search, you'll need to seek supervisory review. You must be able to state clearly why you have reason to believe a weapon or contraband is concealed there. A few more search reminders include the following:

- Wear gloves during a prisoner search. The puncture-resistant ones are your best bet.
- Develop a pattern or system to your prisoner searches and stick to it as much as possible.
- Don't pass up some of the crooks' favorite hiding places – the groin area, small of the back and beneath the belt.
- Just because you have found one weapon or hidden item does not mean that there are not more. Keep looking for the next threat.
- Unless you are confronted by an on the street emergency when you must go after a suspected hidden weapon immediately, beneath clothing searches normally should be carried out in a private facility by an officer of the same sex as the prisoner.

Practice Good Weapon Retention

Taking someone into custody and then working with them for minutes or hours means getting into close proximity with them for a good part of that time. It is during this time that more than a few officers have lost their weapons to offenders and perished as a result of their momentary lapse. Some basic weapon control practices can keep you from adding to the roster of “killed with their own gun” victims. Be aware of who is around you at all times. That advice goes double for prisoners – yours or someone else’s – who may be in the vicinity. That’s particularly good advice when you are in an area such as a booking room or lockup where multiple arrestees or inmates are present.

Keep all of your weapons – baton and chemical spray included – well outside the reach of a potential grabber. Whether you are conversing with a soon to be prisoner or escorting a handcuffed one, keep your gun side turned away from him at all times. Be sure your weapon is snapped firmly into its holster. Keep your arm or elbow locked down atop your weapon and holster as much as possible. Have a plan for reacting instantly if someone makes a grab for your firearm. Remember, if you are in a struggle for your gun, you are literally fighting for your life. You want to make your attacker think of just about anything other than trying to get your gun. That’s why kicks to the shins or other pain inducing moves work so well at such a time of crisis.

Like handcuffing and searching, you can learn some very helpful things about weapon retention by reading and watching videotape presentations, but to learn weapon retention moves well enough to save your life, you will need to practice with a partner on the mats with inert weapons, under the eye of a competent instructor. Here you can take turns being the gun grabbing bad guy.

Transport Your Prisoner Safely

You have already searched your prisoner at least once. Now, search him once more, even more thoroughly this time, before you place him into your vehicle for transport to the police station, jail or other facility. You also will want to be sure that the vehicle you are about to put him into has been searched for weapons or other contraband since the last “guest” was aboard. If you operate a patrol car, a pretrip inspection of the backseat prisoner’s area should be a part of your daily beginning duty routine. Your search should be primarily a visual one. In order to preclude needle sticks and similar unpleasant and potentially dangerous injuries, you should not put your unprotected hands or finger into places you cannot readily see. Puncture-resistant gloves also can help guard you during the patrol vehicle search process. At the end of your trip, search the backseat area again, just in case your prisoner has managed to ditch something you missed in your searches of his clothing and person.

Once you have safely seat belted your prisoner in and locked the door, monitor him for changes in behavior while you are en route to your destination. If unusual movements on his part convince you that he’s up to something that needs checking out, call a backup to your location before you enter his area of control to investigate. He just might have managed to slip his cuffs and is about to attack as soon as that car door is opened. Even if he is still cuffed, he may plan to knee you in the face, bite or head butt you. That’s why you do not want to lean over him as you check the handcuffs he claimed were “too tight.”

Expect a trap anytime a prisoner wants something that would bring you as the transport officer into close contact with him. Try to have help on hand anytime you must check out a potential problem. That includes prisoners who are apparently ill, passed

out, hallucinating or suddenly violent. Whatever their situation, real or feigned, an acting out prisoner poses a serious threat to you, the transporting officer. Call as much help as you need, including paramedics, if the situation indicates. If you must resecure your prisoner, try to have adequate help on hand and do it out of the car rather than try to work in the narrow confines of your backseat. Climbing back there is a great way to get hurt, lose your gun or both.

Be aware that your prisoner could be experiencing legitimate medical problems, particularly if you suspect he has been doing drugs or know that he has exerted himself violently during, or just before, your custody attempt. Get medical help on the way if you think that he might be injured or ill, but do not lower your level of caution in the meantime. Police officers have been harmed by ill or injured people, too.

If you must restrain a violently resisting prisoner beyond handcuffing him, watch out for the dangers of positional asphyxia. A knee placed in his back while he is prone could keep your prisoner from breathing and kill him, so could trussing him up, hands cuffed to his secured ankles, while he is left facedown on the car seat or other surface. That could result in positional asphyxia, too, so do not do it. A number of restraint rigs are now on the market that allow a violent prisoner to be immobilized while in a sitting position. Your agency should invest in one of these for each officer or patrol car. You also may need to have a second officer accompany you by sitting in the backseat with a troublesome prisoner to keep him upright and under close surveillance for escape attempts as well as medical emergencies. Note, however, that weapon retention now becomes a major concern for this backseat officer. Some agencies require that an officer riding in such close proximity to

a violent or potentially violent prisoner surrender his firearm to the officer up front.

Finally, do not let down your guard with any prisoner, obviously violent or not, once you reach your destination. Officers have been hurt and killed within the confines of their own police station or lockup facility. An even more detailed search should be done here before your party is released from his restraints. Particularly since you should have locked up your gun before going into this supposedly “sanitized” area, the surprise appearance of a weapon in your prisoner’s hands could ruin more than your whole day. Search in detail and avoid that kind of terminal error

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ESCORT PROCEDURES AND TRANSPORTING HIGH RISK PRISONERS