



**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania**

**Policy 2-06**

**Policy Title:** Prisoner Transport

**Date of Issue:** December 1, 2022

**Rescinds:** None

**By Authority of:**

**Chief of Police**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines regarding the transportation and security of prisoners who are in the custody of the Springfield Township Police Department.

**II. Policy**

The transportation and security of prisoners is a potentially dangerous function. It is the policy of the Springfield Township Police Department to take necessary precautions while transporting and securing prisoners to protect the lives and safety of officers, the public, and the person in custody.

**III. Prisoner Search**

- A. The transporting officer shall always search a prisoner before placing them into the police vehicle. Officers must never assume that a prisoner does not possess a weapon or contraband or that somebody else has already searched the prisoner.
- B. Transporting officers shall always secure a prisoner's belongings and property by releasing it to a party approved by the prisoner, or by securing it in accordance with department policy. If applicable, a prisoner's vehicle shall also be secured by closing and locking the doors and windows before it is left unattended. If the vehicle is on private property, permission to store the vehicle on that property must be obtained. If it is not possible to secure the vehicle or obtain permission to store the vehicle, the officer should consider towing the vehicle.
- C. Any property seized from a prisoner, which is neither contraband nor evidence, and to be held for safekeeping, shall be documented on a completed Prisoner Property Record form (Attachment A).

1. Officers shall obtain the contact information for a person, selected by the prisoner, who shall be responsible for retrieving the prisoner's seized property from the department.
  2. If no name is provided, the seized property shall be destroyed, or in the instance of currency, surrendered to the state, after thirty (30) days, unless the rightful property owner claims the property first.
  3. The officer completing the Prisoner Property Record form shall send an email to the Evidence Custodian, with a carbon copy to their supervisor, advising that prisoner safekeeping property was seized. The completed form shall then be submitted to the Evidence Custodian.
- D. Prisoners shall be searched each time they come into the transporting officer's custody, including transports to and from court appearances.
1. Manner of Search
    - a. If available, prisoner searches should occur using two officers, with one officer performing the search and the other officer observing.
    - b. When practical and possible, officers shall attempt to perform all searches in full view of an in-car camera and / or body-worn camera, with the device actively recording.
    - c. Officers shall make all attempts to have the officer and prisoner to be searched of the same sex. If this cannot be done, officers performing searches of the opposite sex shall utilize professionalism and perform the search using the back of the hand.
    - d. Under exigent circumstances, an officer may thoroughly search a prisoner of the opposite sex if the officer sees any weapon, escape implement, or evidence, or if the officer has reason to believe that the prisoner is in possession of any of these items and there is no same sex officer available.
    - e. All opposite-sex searches shall be thoroughly documented in an incident report.
    - f. For searches involving transgender prisoners, they may request an officer of the same gender identity or expression to perform the search. When reasonable, an officer of the same gender expression as the arrestee shall perform the search.

#### **IV. Vehicle Inspection**

- A. At the beginning and end of each tour of duty, all vehicles regularly used for prisoner transport shall be inspected by the officer who will be operating the vehicle. The inspection shall be for readiness as follows:
  1. If equipped with a cage, the cage shall be securely in place and undamaged.

2. All windows shall be intact and outer door latches in proper working order.
  3. Rear-seat door handles and window controls shall be deactivated.
  4. The interior shall be thoroughly searched to ensure that no weapons or contraband have been left behind or hidden within the vehicle.
  5. The interior shall be inspected to ensure that there are no remaining bodily fluids or other contaminants. If present, they shall be removed prior to the vehicle being used.
- B. Prior to placing a prisoner in a 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.

**V. Prisoner Transport**

- A. Persons physically arrested shall be transported without unnecessary delay. The arrest shall be properly recorded. When transporting a prisoner, times and mileage shall be noted in the incident report and Montgomery County Emergency Dispatch Services shall be advised.
- B. Officers shall consider transporting prisoners in vehicles equipped with an in-car camera or mobile audio / video recording equipment.
- C. Prisoners transported in vehicles with a cage may be performed by one officer as the department recognizes that there are times when only one officer is working. However, if available, it is preferred that two officers are present at the time the prisoner is placed into the vehicle and two officers are present at the time the prisoner is removed from the vehicle. An "officer" is defined as any police officer, sheriff's deputy, PA State Constable, hospital security guard, and / or prison correctional officer.
- D. Combative, emotionally disturbed, or other disruptive prisoners shall require two officers to transport, if available. However, cooperative involuntary mental health commitment (302) prisoners may be transported in accordance with Section V (C) above and Section V (E) below.
- E. Officers performing a prisoner transport may request a second officer to assist with the transport by either following behind or riding along in the front. This request cannot be denied by any other officer or supervisor. No officer will be subjected to department criticism on the sole basis of their request for a second officer.
- F. For prisoners transported in vehicles without a cage, a second officer shall be required. The prisoner shall be seated in the backseat, handcuffed, and restrained using both a prisoner transport belt and shackles.
- G. Prisoners shall be handcuffed (double-locked) during transport.

- H. Prisoners shall be seat-belted for transport; however, officer safety shall not be compromised in order to place the seat belt on the prisoner.

## **VI. Interruption of Prisoner Transports**

- A. The primary duty of the transporting officer is the safe delivery of the prisoner in the officer's care. Therefore, the officer should not stop to render law enforcement assistance to third parties along the route except under extreme emergency conditions where the risk to third parties is clear and grave, and the risk to the prisoner is minimal. Should the officer decide to stop at a location outside the primary jurisdiction, the local agency shall be immediately notified of the following:
  - 1. The identity of the officer or unit number.
  - 2. The officer's status (prisoner transportation, etc.).
  - 3. The nature and location of the incident.
- B. The transporting officer should only consider stopping when arriving first on the scene, and will remain only until other emergency assistance has arrived.
- C. The transporting officer shall not become involved in a pursuit, roadblock, or other situation that might create a risk of harm to the prisoner.

## **VII. Prisoner Communication**

- A. Safety aspects of the transportation function require that the prisoner's rights to communicate with attorney, clergy, family, and / or others will not normally be exercised during the duration the prisoner is being transported. A prisoner will not be permitted to make any phone calls or communicate with the outside while being readied for transport. Should a special circumstance arise which would necessitate an exception to this policy, the transporting officer will be the individual responsible for monitoring the communication.
- B. Personnel shall not relate to family and / or friends of the prisoner the times of transport or routes of travel. Discretion should be used when the family and / or friends are subpoenaed as witnesses, or if they are following the officer to the Magisterial District Judge for a preliminary arraignment and to assist in obtaining bail.
- C. Prisoners will be permitted to speak with officers and other prisoners while in the transport vehicle.

## **VIII. Transport to Other Facilities**

- A. The transporting officer should be aware of and follow procedures at the different state institutions, forensic hospitals and mental health institutions, county prisons, Magisterial District Justices offices, or the Court of Common Pleas. The following policy shall apply to all facilities to which a prisoner is transported:
  - 1. Officers shall at no time enter a secure area of a prison or other areas with a firearm that are marked so as to prohibit weapons. Firearms will be secured for safekeeping using the established procedure of the receiving facility.
  - 2. The restraints will only be removed from the prisoner upon the instructions of the receiving officer at an institution or facility at the time of transfer of custody. In the case of court, the restraints shall not be removed until the suspect is taken into the courtroom and the proceeding is beginning. Restraints may continue to be used for combative and unruly prisoners.
- B. Medical and Safety Hazards
  - 1. The transporting officer shall inform the intake official of any potential medical and / or security hazards. This shall be documented in the incident report.
  - 2. When a prisoner who is to be transported to any court is considered an unusual or high security risk, the transporting officer shall notify the appropriate agency, presiding Judge, or Magisterial District Judge of such condition and request additional safeguards.
  - 3. In such cases, the Judge or Magisterial District Judge may allow or direct the use of restraining devices in the court and / or may request the assistance of additional personnel for security while at the court.
  - 4. It is the responsibility of each member of the department to properly document all information received regarding a high security risk prisoner.
- C. The transporting officer will be responsible to make sure all the necessary documentation is properly exchanged with regard to the transfer of the prisoner. The transporting officer shall obtain a signature from the receiving officer and / or detail the prisoner transaction within the incident report.
- D. The transporting officer is responsible for ensuring that all necessary paperwork is returned to the Court or Records.

**IX. Escape**

- A. It is the responsibility of every officer involved with prisoners, and the officer's supervisors, to ensure that prisoners do not escape from custody.
- B. If such an escape should occur, the involved officer(s) shall ensure that Montgomery County Emergency Dispatch Services and the shift supervisor are immediately notified, along with a

complete description of the fugitive, mode and direction of travel, crime, and propensity for violence, if known.

- C. The involved officer(s) and, if applicable, the ranking supervisor, shall ensure that every reasonable effort is made to apprehend the escapee.
- D. The involved officer will be responsible to ensure that the following notifications are made:
  - 1. Surrounding police jurisdictions (immediately).
  - 2. The Lieutenant, and / or Chief of Police (as soon as possible).
  - 3. The victim(s) of the prisoner's criminal act, within an appropriate time frame as determined by the circumstances. Circumstances may require immediate notification (especially for crimes of violence) or may allow this responsibility to be specifically transferred to a supervisor working during normal business hours.
- E. Officers shall prepare an incident report on the event and any other report deemed necessary by the Sergeant.
- F. Other actions to be taken:
  - 1. Notification should be made to the police agency in the jurisdiction of the last known address of the escapee.
  - 2. Notification should be made to the police agency where the victim resides and / or works, if known.
  - 3. NCIC/CLEAN entry shall be made as soon as possible in regard to the escapee.

**X. Prisoner Restraint**

- A. The following restraining devices are authorized for use by sworn members:
  - 1. Handcuffs.
  - 2. Prisoner Restraining Belt.
  - 3. Leg Restraints / Shackles
- B. Handcuffing / Use of Restraints
  - 1. Officers shall handcuff (double-locked) all prisoners with the hands behind their back. The prisoner restraining belt with the handcuffs in the front may be used.

2. The officer may handcuff the prisoner with their hands in the front, or use other appropriate and approved restraining devices, where the prisoner:
  - i. Is in an obvious state of pregnancy.
  - ii. Has a physical handicap, or is of advanced age.
  - iii. 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 in obvious state of pregnancy, or otherwise exempted from this policy.
4. Prisoners shall not be handcuffed to any part of the vehicle.
5. Wherever possible, officers should not transport prisoners who are restrained in a prone position.

#### **XI. Special Transport Situations**

- A. Whenever it becomes necessary to transport a prisoner who is sick, injured, or disabled in an ambulance, at least one police officer will accompany the prisoner. The transporting officer will remove the restraints only when it is deemed necessary and they are requested to do so by the medical staff.
- B. Any prisoner who is injured prior to or during an arrest situation will not be transported to any prison or holding facility until they have been examined and released by a physician, or qualified health care provider.
- C. Refusal of treatment shall be documented and verified by the officer and attending physician or health care provider. The officer shall obtain a copy of the refusal form prior to transporting the prisoner to the detention facility. If available, a copy of the form will become part of the incident report.
- D. Special Transport Situations shall require two officers for transport, if available, and in accordance with Section V (D) above.

#### **XII. Hospital Security and Control**

- A. When a prisoner is transported to a local hospital for any reason, the following will apply:
  1. Extreme caution will be taken to ensure that the prisoner is isolated from other patients and is not left unattended, or permitted to escape the immediate control of the transporting officer.

2. Should the prisoner need to be admitted, the transporting officer will notify the Sergeant of the circumstances.
3. The transporting officer shall not leave the prisoner until they are relieved by another officer or is instructed by a supervisor to do otherwise.
4. The transporting officer will remove the restraints only when it is deemed necessary or they are requested to do so by the medical staff.
5. In the event the medical procedures prevent the officer from accompanying the prisoner, they will contact the Sergeant.
6. Upon the admission of a prisoner into the hospital, the decision on whether a patrol officer will guard the prisoner will initially be made by the shift supervisor. The final decision rests with the Chief of Police.

### **XIII. Special Situations**

Officers shall not be utilized in the transportation of prisoners in special situations such as visiting critically ill persons, attending funerals, or attending a reading of a will. These situations would fall under the auspices of the Montgomery County Sheriff and / or prison personnel.

### **XIV. Transport Equipment**

In order to minimize opportunities for the prisoner to exit the patrol vehicle without assistance of the transporting officer, all marked and unmarked patrol vehicles used routinely for prisoner transportation shall be modified so that inside door handles and windows are inoperable from the rear compartment. This minimizes the opportunities for exit without the aid of the transporting officer.

### **XV. Prisoner Identification and Documentation**

- A. It shall be the responsibility of any officer transporting any prisoner to court or any other facility to verify the identity of such prisoner. Recommended methods of positive identification include, but are not limited to:
  1. Photo identification, such as driver's license or military ID
  2. Records check with PennDOT, JNET, or other state motor vehicle licensing agency
  3. Fingerprint identification through PSP or FBI databanks
  4. Prior arrest records
  5. Contact with a family member who can produce identification



6. Any other valid means available to the officer
- B. If a prisoner is transported to court, any appropriate court papers shall be furnished to the court of jurisdiction by the transporting officer at the time the prisoner is delivered to the court.
- C. When transporting a prisoner to Montgomery County Correctional Facility or other detention facility, the court commitment papers shall be in the possession of the transporting officer, who shall deliver them to the intake officer upon arrival and transfer of the prisoner at the receiving facility.
- D. If the prisoner is transported to the juvenile detention center or similar facility, the transporting officer shall provide any documentation that is required by that facility.
- E. Security Information
  1. Information regarding any potential security risks presented by the prisoner shall be documented and accompany the detainee to the facility with the transporting officer. Such information would include anything related to the detainee's escape or suicide potential or other personal traits of a security nature that may have an impact on the detainee's transportation or detention risk.

**XVI. Attachments**

- A. Prisoner Property Record Form

**ATTACHMENT A**



**Springfield Township Police Department  
 Prisoner Property Record**

Officer Printed Name:		Report #:
Officer Signature:		Date:
		Time:
<b>PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION</b>		
Owner Name		Owner DOB:
Owner Address:		Owner SSN:
		Owner Phone #:
		Owner Phone #:
<b>PROPERTY INVENTORY</b>		
1.	6.	
2.	7.	
3.	8.	
4.	9.	
5.	10.	
<p>Being the owner of the above listed property, and recognizing that I am a prisoner who is not free to leave, I understand that the above property will be held by the Springfield Township Police Department, and turned over to the contact person I have named below. If said property is not picked up within thirty (30) days of the date listed above, the property will be destroyed and / or confiscated by the Springfield Township Police Department. By signing below, I have read and understand this statement.</p>		
Property Owner's Signature:		
<b>CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION</b>		
Contact Name:		Relation to Owner:
Contact Address:		Contact Phone #:
		Contact Phone #:
Contact Called:		Scheduled Pickup Date:
Left Message:		Other:
<b>PROPERTY RELEASE</b>		
Property Released?    { }-YES    { }-NO		
Name:		Signature:
Address:		Date:
Phone #:		Time:
Witness Name:		Witness
		Signature:
<b>PROPERTY DESTRUCTION</b>		
Property Destroyed?    { }-YES    { }-NO		
Date:		Time:
Employee Name:		Employee Signature:
Witness Name:		Witness Signature:
Reason For Destruction:		
Other:		