



Kern County Sheriff's Office
Policies and Procedures

TITLE: USE OF FORCE-HANDCUFFS		NO: F-150	
APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner			
EFFECTIVE: August 20, 2013	REVIEWED: 07/10/2020	REVISED:	UPDATED: 10/13/2017

POLICY

This procedure provides guidelines for handling situations involving handcuffing during detentions and arrests. This policy is also applicable to Flexcuffs, which will be considered synonymous with handcuffs for purposes of this policy.

Although recommended for most arrest situations, handcuffing is a discretionary procedure and not an absolute rule of the Sheriff's Office. When deciding whether to handcuff an arrestee, deputies should carefully balance officer safety concerns with factors including, but not limited to the following:

- The circumstances leading to the arrest
- The attitude and behavior of the arrested person
- The age, sex and apparent health of the person
- 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
- Whether the person has any other apparent disability

It is not the intent of the Sheriff's office to dissuade deputies from handcuffing all persons they believe warrant that degree of restraint, nor is it the intent of this policy to create the atmosphere that in order to avoid risk, a deputy should handcuff all persons regardless of the circumstances. In most situations handcuffs should be applied with the hands behind the person. Handcuffs should be removed as soon as it is reasonable or practical to do so.

DIRECTIVE A – IMPROPER USE OF HANDCUFFS

Handcuffing is never done to punish, to display authority, or as a show of force. Persons are handcuffed only to restrain their hands to ensure officer safety. When practical, handcuffs shall be double locked to prevent tightening which may cause undue discomfort or injury to the hands or wrists.

DIRECTIVE B – JUVENILES

Juveniles 14-years of age or older may be handcuffed when the act committed is of a felonious nature or when their acts have amounted to crimes where the deputy has a reasonable suspicion the suspect may have a desire to escape, injure themselves, injure the deputy, or destroy property.

Juveniles under 14-years of age will generally not be handcuffed unless their acts have amounted to a dangerous felony or when the nature of the crime or their apparent state of mind is such that it suggests a reasonable probability of a desire to escape, injure themselves, the deputy, or to destroy property.

DIRECTIVE C – HANDCUFFING OF DETAINEES

Situations may arise where it may be reasonable to handcuff an individual who may, after subsequent investigation, be released prior to arrest. Such a situation is considered a detention, rather than an actual arrest. Unless arrested, the use of handcuffs on detainees should continue for only as long as is reasonably necessary to assure the safety of deputies and others. Deputies should continuously weigh the safety interests at hand against the intrusion upon the detainee when deciding to remove handcuffs from a detainee.

When an individual is handcuffed and released without an arrest, a written report of the incident shall be made to document the details of the detention and need for use of handcuffs.

DIRECTIVE D – HANDCUFFING OF PREGNANT ARRESTEES

Female arrestees who are known to be pregnant or in recovery from delivery should be handcuffed to the front of the body only.

Sheriff’s Personnel who are caring for, guarding, or transporting a female inmate confined to any detention facility will comply with Detentions Bureau policy C-400.

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