

Monterey County EMS System Policy



Policy Number: 4508
Effective Date: 7/1/2023
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USE OF RESTRAINTS

I. PURPOSE:

To establish standards for the use of restraints.

II. POLICY:

The following principles shall be followed when utilizing patient restraints:

- A. Restraints shall be humanely and professionally applied to protect the patient's safety and dignity.
- B. The method of restraint should be the least restrictive necessary for the safety of the patient and others.
- C. The use of restraints shall be thoroughly documented. Documentation shall include the reason(s) for use of restraints, type of restraints used, what limbs are placed in restraints, the use of sedation (if applicable), and regular assessments of the restrained patient.
- D. Assessments of the restrained patient shall be conducted and documented at least every 15 minutes. Documentation shall include the patient's level of consciousness, respirations, and distal perfusion to any restrained extremities.
- E. **Patients SHALL NOT be restrained in a prone position.**

III. PROCEDURE:

Patients who meet one or more of the following criteria shall be restrained to the gurney utilizing a minimum of two-point restraints.

- Patients who have been placed on an involuntary psychiatric hold (referred to herein as a "5150 hold"),
- Patients who present a potential danger to themselves or others as determined by EMS personnel, law enforcement, emergency department staff, or other prehospital personnel,
OR
- Patients who require medical attention and are in law enforcement custody.

Unless contraindicated by an upper extremity amputation or injury, acceptable two-point restraints include application of a restraint to both wrists. If an amputation or injury makes it not feasible to place both wrists in restraints, then at least one wrist and one ankle shall be placed in restraints.

When transporting a patient in restraints, EMS personnel shall ensure the following:

- A. **NEVER RESTRAIN A PATIENT IN A PRONE POSITION.** Restrained patients shall be placed in a supine, semi-Fowler's, or Fowler's position. Patients shall never be transported in a prone or "hog-tied" position
- B. Only restrain patients in a manner that allows for rapid access to the airway, rapid initiation of CPR, and full expansion of the patient's chest during respirations.
- C. In addition to restraints, all patients shall be secured to the gurney utilizing all appropriate standard safety belts.
- D. The patient shall be securely restrained to the gurney PRIOR to placing the patient in the ambulance.
- E. Patient safety buckles and restraints shall be clearly visible and continually monitored by the attending EMS provider at all times during the course of transport.
- F. Patients shall remain in restraints for the duration of the transport.
- G. Except for brief removal of restraints to enable a patient to utilize the bathroom during a long-distance transport, restraints shall not be removed until the patient is safely inside the receiving facility and patient care has been transferred to the receiving facility staff.
- H. The use of chemical sedation DOES NOT satisfy the need for application of physical restraints. Patients who have been chemically sedated due to dangerous, aggressive, or unpredictable behavior shall also be placed in restraints for the duration of the transport.
- I. Patient restraints shall never be imposed as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation.

IV. PATIENTS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT CUSTODY

Patients in law enforcement custody who require EMS transport shall either be transported in restraints or handcuffed by a law enforcement officer..

- A. Patients who are handcuffed require a law enforcement officer to accompany the patient in the back of the ambulance during transport to the receiving facility. EMS personnel are not authorized to use handcuffs or manage the restraint of a patient placed in handcuffs.

Patients who are restrained with EMS restraints (not handcuffs) do not require the presence of a law enforcement officer in the back of the ambulance during transport to the receiving facility.

V. PATIENT ESCAPE:

Should a patient escape from restraints and exit the ambulance, the following steps should be initiated:

- A. Do everything possible to minimize injury to EMS personnel and the patient.
- B. Contact EMS Communications **immediately** and advise them of the situation, location, and status of the patient.
- C. EMS Communications shall notify law enforcement and request their presence at the scene of the incident. EMS Communications shall also notify the Monterey County EMS Duty Officer.
- D. EMS personnel shall attempt to maintain visual contact with the patient as long as possible and shall update EMS Communications as needed.
- E. EMS shall remain at the scene until cleared by law enforcement or the On-Duty Supervisor
- F. In addition to the ePCR, each crew member of the EMS team transporting the patient at the time of the patient's escape shall complete a detailed incident report.

VI. DOCUMENTATION:


When a patient is transported in restraints, the following information must be documented:

- A. Reason(s) for use of restraints (danger to self/others, risk/history of violence, etc.).
- B. Type of restraints used and what limbs are in restraints.
- C. Assessment of patient condition shall be conducted and documented at least every 15 minutes. Documentation shall include the patient's level of consciousness, respirations, and distal perfusion to any restrained extremities.

VII. NOTES

Please refer to Monterey County EMS Agency **Policy #4050- Psychiatric Evaluation- 5150 Transports** and **Protocol M-5 Agitated/Combative Patient** for further guidance.

END OF POLICY


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