**POLICY DIRECTIVE**

| Policy: | **DOC 3.1.12 OFFENDER ESCORT AND TRANSPORT** |
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| Effective Date: | 02/01/1997 Page 1 of 4 |
| Revision Date(s): | 09/09/2016; 03/04/2026; 11/12/2026 |
| Signature/Title: | /s/ John Schaffer, Public Safety Division Chief |

## I. POLICY

The Department of Corrections will ensure offender escorts and transports are conducted in a safe and humane manner using trained staff and the necessary level of security, supervision, and control to ensure public safety.

## II. APPLICABILITY

All divisions, facilities, and programs Department-owned and contracted, as specified in contract.

## III. DEFINITIONS (see Glossary)

## IV. REQUIREMENTS

### A. General Requirements

1. If an offender becomes ill, medical assistance should be provided as soon as possible; transport officers will inform their supervisor as soon as possible.
2. Inmates shall be notified of travel no more than 15 minutes prior to departure and are not allowed to make phone calls after notification.

### B. Use of Firearms

1. Department officers will carry a firearm for all types of transports in accordance with *DOC 3.1.31 Firearms*, and:
   a. Officers who are not in an armed duty position will utilize the firearm checkout process at their respective facility; and
   b. Exceptions may be made by Sergeant/Shift Commander or higher in situations where carrying a firearm is not possible, for example, air transport.
2. During transport, each administrator will ensure that:
   a. Firearms are used in accordance with applicable state and federal law;
   b. Firearms are safeguarded to ensure an offender never has the opportunity to seize a weapon;
   c. Armed officers are securely separated from offenders during the transport, for example, by a law-enforcement grade barrier; and
   d. All associated equipment, holsters, magazine pouches, and duty belts are maintained in a serviceable condition.

### C. Restraints

1. Administrators will ensure that restraint processes comply with *DOC 3.1.8 Use of Force and Restraints* and related Department policies and procedures.

2. Restraint equipment will not eliminate the need for continuous, alert supervision during transport and must never be used as punishment, in a way that causes undue physical pain, or to restrict the offender's blood circulation or breathing.

3. The following factors will be considered when determining the level of offender restraint:
   a. Offender security classification;
   b. Anticipated contact with the public;
   c. Offender physical and mental health;
   d. Pregnancy status;
   e. Demonstrated offender behavior; and
   f. Trip purpose and destination.

4. Inmates of all custody levels will be restrained during transport with belly chains and leg irons.
   a. The use of additional restraints or limited restraints for special needs may be used at the discretion of the Sergeant/Shift Commander or higher.

5. Community supervision offenders will be restrained with handcuffs.
   a. Belly chains and leg irons may be used at the discretion of the P&P Officer.

**D. Vehicles**

1. Transport vehicles will be:
   a. Equipped with appropriate security features such as law enforcement grade barriers, deactivated rear window and lock, and two-way radios and/or cell phone;
   b. Thoroughly searched for contraband before and after each transport;
   c. Regularly inspected and maintained to ensure proper working order; and
   d. Wheelchair-accessible for offenders who are unable to transfer in and out of their wheelchair to a vehicle.

2. The use of seatbelts is mandatory for offenders and staff.

3. In the event of an accident, officers will:
   a. Contact the nearest law enforcement agency for assistance;
   b. Contact supervisor or higher for an incident report;
   c. Maintain constant supervision of the vehicle and offender;
   d. Secure and observe offenders in the vehicle to the extent possible and render first aid as necessary while waiting for law enforcement assistance; and
   e. In the event of a minor vehicle problem that can be repaired on the spot, secure and observe offenders in the vehicle to the extent possible.

**E. Pre-Transport**

1. Offenders will have all the necessary paperwork for transport:
   a. If in a facility, the inmate will need a travel packet that includes a gate pass; and
   b. If in the community, the offender will need placement paperwork.

2. Offenders will be thoroughly searched and restrained:
   a. If in a facility, the inmate will be searched, changed out, fully restrained, and kept separate from other inmates; and
   b. If in the community, the offender will be restrained accordingly.

3. Management may exercise operational discretion in assigning staff for offender transport.
   a. Staffing decisions shall ensure that transport of offenders remains safe, timely, and in compliance with this policy.

## V. APPOINTMENTS

### A. Off-Site Health Care

1. Authorized Department employees will provide safe and timely escort and transport for offender health care consistent with *DOC 4.5.23 Offender Health Care Escort and Transportation*, with consideration for:
   a. Health care advice and information provided to escort officers regarding the need for medical attention, medications, and maintaining patient confidentiality on offender transports;
   b. Requirements for the transport of ill or disabled offenders, or in the event of illness enroute;
   c. Prioritization of health care need;
   d. Urgency, for example, an ambulance vs. Standard transport;
   e. Use of a medical escort to accompany security staff; and
   f. Transfer of medical information.

2. Transport Officers who are transporting inmates will:
   a. Remain with the inmates at all times;
   b. Inspect the inmate examination/treatment area for escape routes;
   c. Identify routes that must be physically or visually monitored; and
   d. Maintain restraints on inmates during all medical appointments (unless otherwise requested by the medical advisor and approved by the Shift Commander or higher):
      1) Inspect the inmate examination/treatment area for potential weapons for removal in case it becomes necessary to remove the restraints;
      2) Explain the risks associated with removing restraints; and
      3) If there is any threatening or inappropriate inmate behavior, maintain or reapply the restraints and immediately return the inmate to their secure facility.

### B. Hospital Admissions

1. For planned hospital admissions, the statewide Transportation Manager will arrange for transport to and from the hospital when necessary.

2. Transport officers will:
   a. Inspect the inmate examination/treatment area for potential weapons for removal should it become necessary to remove the restraints;
   b. Maintain restraints on all inmates unless conditions or injuries preclude their use;
   c. Ride in the ambulance if ambulance transport is necessary;
   d. Not remove restraints at the hospital unless requested to by the attending health care provider and approved by a higher authority:
      1) For secure facility, contact the Shift Commander
      2) For community facilities, contact Community Corrections Facilities and Programs Bureau
      3) For community supervision, contact a P&P Sergeant or higher
   e. Remain with the offender unless otherwise instructed by the supervisor;
   f. Position themselves to prohibit direct contact between officer and offender (refer to post orders for more detail);
   g. Consult the Shift Commander or Transportation Staff Sergeant if questions arise about security; and
   h. Disable phone in the hospital room if possible or otherwise prohibit offender from using the phone

3. Offenders are not allowed visitors in the hospital except for deathbed visits or other visits as approved by:
   a. Facility Administrator or Designee (secure and community facilities); and
   b. Captains or higher (community supervision).

4. Transport staff will refer hospital staff to the Department Health Services Bureau regarding conversations about inmate health/wellness and to make decisions related to care.

### C. Court Appearances

1. The Department Records Unit will electronically sign a gate pass for every inmate leaving a facility and distribute it to the necessary individuals.
2. Two transport officers shall accompany an offender to court appearances; one officer will remain with the inmate while the other officer will post at a strategic point to monitor the courtroom.
3. Inmates must be kept in restraints unless the judge orders removal.
4. The court will be notified as soon as possible if the inmate demonstrates behavioral traits that are concerning (for example, hostility, aggression, unamenable) prior to court appearance.

### D. Out of State Transport

1. Commercial airline transport:
   a. The decision to utilize air transport will be determined by management;
   b. Officer must check with the airlines for allowable equipment and must complete any necessary forms;
   c. The use of restraints and weapons will be determined by airline policy;
   d. If the airline prohibits use of restraints, consideration must be given to transporting known inmate escape risks or disruptive inmates by ground;
   e. Transport officers must ensure they possess the necessary credentials to present to airline officials;
   f. While on the airplane, inmates will be dressed in clothing provided by the transport officer.
2. Out-of-state vehicle transport:
   a. Follow the above requirements in IV.D as applicable; and
   b. If overnight accommodations are necessary during transportation, a county jail will be used to house the inmates, and transport officers must:
      1) Inspect the cells that will hold the inmates to determine if they are adequate;
      2) Ask the jailers to isolate the inmates, if possible;
      3) Strip search the inmates prior to cell placement;
      4) Ensure the inmates are provided meals; and
      5) Inform the jailers of the scheduled departure time and provide the jailers with a phone number and location where the officers can be reached.

## VI. CLOSING

Questions about this policy should be addressed to the Transportation Manager or Facility Administrator.

## VII. REFERENCES

*A. § 46-19-101, MCA*
*B. ACA Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions*
*C. DOC 1.1.6 Priority Incident Reporting and Acting Director; DOC 3.1.8 Use of Force and Restraints; DOC 3.1.17 Searches and Contraband Control; DOC 3.1.31 Firearms; DOC 4.5.20 Emergency Medical Services; DOC 4.5.23 Offender Health Care Escort and Transport*