



# Training Bulletin

SANTA BARBARA POLICE DEPARTMENT



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## Attempted hanging during prisoner transportation

### DISCUSSION POINTS

- Recent department incidents
- Suggested technique
- Applicable Department Policies

Transporting a prisoner in the back seat of a patrol vehicle can be potentially dangerous for the officer and the prisoner. A majority of prisoner transports are accomplished without incident. However prisoners have occasionally intentionally attempted to hang themselves, or injured themselves in the back of patrol cars by banging their heads against the window or plexi-glass partition and its framing. Prisoners have also caused considerable damage to patrol cars by kicking metal window frames and breaking windows.

### Previous Department Incidents

A recent incident involved a handcuffed seat belted prisoner in the back of a patrol car who attempted to hang himself using the seatbelt. The prisoner was able to intentionally manipulate his upper torso in an elliptical motion to wrap the shoulder strap around his neck. The prisoner then leaned down and toward the center of the seat until the remaining slack in the belt was exhausted which created a noose. The prisoner then used his body weight to tighten the noose and initiate a self-inflicted choke.

A second incident involved a handcuffed, seat belted and leg restrained prisoner in the back of a patrol car who was able to unfasten his seatbelt, slip his handcuffs under his buttocks and remove the leg restraint. With his seatbelt unfastened and handcuffs hands in front of him he was able to reach down and remove a shoelace from one of his boots and used it to attempt to strangle himself.

In both incidents the transporting officer noticed the unusual movement in his rear view mirror, which caused alarm and the transporting officer pulled over to assess the prisoner.

### Suggested Technique

A suggested technique to reduce the risk of possible future incidents of a prisoner's attempt to harm themselves or cause damage to the patrol vehicle is to remove the excess seatbelt strap from the spool until the strap stops. This manually engages the locking mechanism. Assure the prisoner is leaning all the way back in the rear seat and slowly feed the strap back into the spool. The farther back the strap is fed back into the spool the more secure the restraint that is applied to the prisoner. The restraint of the seatbelt strap has the ability to prevent large movements of the upper torso which could allow the prisoner to harm himself or cause damage to the patrol vehicle. This technique does not alleviate the officer's responsibility to monitor the prisoner during transport and should be noted in the arrest narrative.

Refer questions to, Officer Biamonte

## **Department Policies**

### **306.3.2 TRANSPORTING HOBbled SUSPECTS**

When transporting a suspect(s) who has been restrained, officers shall observe the following procedures:

- (a) Suspects who are hobbled only by their feet and can sit upright may be transported in a police car. They shall be seated in an upright position and secured by a seatbelt. The long lead of the restraint will be placed outside the rear door and wrapped around the door pillar bringing it up through the passenger front door to prevent the lead from dragging on the ground. When the suspect cannot be taken by ambulance/paramedic unit.
- (b) When taken by ambulance/paramedic unit, the suspect shall be accompanied by a sworn officer.

### **418.6 TRANSPORTATION OF MENTALLY ILL PERSONS**

An officer shall request an ambulance to transport mentally ill persons only if the person is:

- (a) Violent and requires restraint to the extent that he must be transported lying down.
- (b) Injured or physically ill and is in need of immediate medical attention.

### **446.3.1 REQUIRED ACTIVATION OF MAV**

This policy is not intended to describe every possible situation where the system may be used however here are many situations where the use of the MAV system is appropriate. In addition to the required situations, officers may activate the system any time he/she believes its use would be appropriate and/or valuable to document an incident. In some circumstances it is not possible to capture images of the incident due to conditions or location of the camera however the audio portion can be valuable evidence and is subject to the same activation requirements as the MAV. The activation of the MAV system is required in any of the following situations:

(a) All field contacts involving actual or potential criminal conduct, within video or audio range, which includes:

1. Vehicular pursuits
2. Suspicious vehicles
3. Arrests
4. Pedestrian checks
5. DUI investigations including field sobriety tests
6. Consensual encounters
7. Responding to an in-progress call

(b) All self-initiated activity in which an officer would normally notify Combined Communications Center

(c) Any call for service involving a crime where the recorder may aid in the apprehension and/or prosecution of a suspect, such as:

1. Domestic violence calls
2. Disturbance of peace calls
3. Offenses involving violence or weapons

(d) Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording

(e) Any other circumstances where the officer believes that a recording of an incident would be appropriate

Once the MAV system is activated, it shall remain on and shall not be turned off until the incident has concluded. For purposes of this section, conclusion of an incident has occurred when all arrests have been made, arrestees have been transported, and all witnesses, victims, etc. have been interviewed. Recording may cease if an officer is simply waiting for a tow truck or a family member to arrive or other similar situations.