20-20 - The Decision to Use Handcuffs During Critical Incidents

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services

THE DECISION TO USE HANDCUFFS DURING CRITICAL INCIDENTS

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information to Department personnel on when it is appropriate to use handcuffs on a suspect during a critical situation, and to advise personnel of pending policy change to the Manual of Policy and Procedures section 3-01/110.23, Handcuffing Prisoners.

Department personnel have the challenge of responding quickly and appropriately in all situations. The duties of Department personnel when on scene of a call for service or observation call is to protect life and property, preserve the public peace, prevent crime, detect and arrest violators of the law, and enforce federal, state, county, and city laws or ordinances as stated in MPP 3-01/050.15, Duties of Deputy Personnel.

Department personnel are usually the first uniformed presence to arrive on scene of an emergency. When the situation involves a medical emergency, deputies have a duty to provide basic or emergency care to all injured persons, including suspects.

This brings us to the question, when is it appropriate to use handcuffs on an injured suspect?

The decision to use or not use handcuffs should always be carefully balanced between the care of the suspect in custody vs. officer's safety, and the ability to safely secure the suspect. Officer safety is paramount.

Handcuffs may or may not be necessary for suspects when:

- The suspect is obviously deceased (absence of respirations and pulse);
- The handcuffs interfere with medical treatment; and
- The security of an injured suspect can be achieved by alternate means (additional sufficient personnel to secure scene safely, soft restraints, etc.).

REFERENCES

MPP 3-01/050.15, Duties of Deputy Personnel

MPP 3-01/110.23, Handcuffing Prisoners

FOSS Newsletter 17-01 Deputy's Duty to Provide Emergency Medical Care