



# LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

## USE OF FORCE

### DIRECTIVE

UOF Directive No. 9

December 2023

#### HOBBLE RESTRAINT DEVICE

##### PURPOSE

Police officers are routinely confronted by violent or potentially violent suspects who must be restrained when taken into custody. The Hobble Restraint Device (HRD) can be a valuable tool in the control of such suspects. The Department-approved techniques for using the HRD are depicted in this Directive.



##### PROTOCOL

The HRD can be used to control the feet/legs of a violent or potentially violent arrestee, or hands/arms of a non-violent arrestee when normal handcuffs are impractical due to injury or other extenuating circumstances (e.g., size). Most importantly, the HRD **shall not** be used to bind the suspect's hands and feet together in any manner.

**Note:** The mere application of the HRD does not constitute a reportable use of force. However, if a reportable use of force occurs during the application of the HRD, it shall be investigated and reported according to Department guidelines.

Consistent with the Department's Tactical De-escalation and Use of Force policies, officers should utilize appropriate care when dealing with subjects either known to be or perceived to be from vulnerable populations. Vulnerable populations, as defined here, include but are not limited to, children, elderly persons, people who are pregnant, and people with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities.

##### PROCEDURES

The HRD was designed to be used to secure the ankles, knees or elbows of an individual who is potentially violent or displaying violent behavior by kicking, fighting, biting, punching or thrashing about, or to secure a person's feet during transportation in a police vehicle. These techniques can be varied according to the circumstances officers may

encounter, but in each application, care should be taken to minimize any injury to the arrestee.

Once the HRD is secured on the person, officers shall immediately search the waistband area and as soon as practical place the individual in an upright, seated position or on his or her left side (left lateral recumbent position). If this is not possible due to medical or tactical issues, then placing the individual on his/her right side is an acceptable substitute.

### **Securing the Ankles**

This restraint device can be applied to a suspect's ankles when the suspect is in the seated, kneeling, or prone position. Officers must be cautious of the suspect's feet and knees and his/her ability to strike out at the officers.

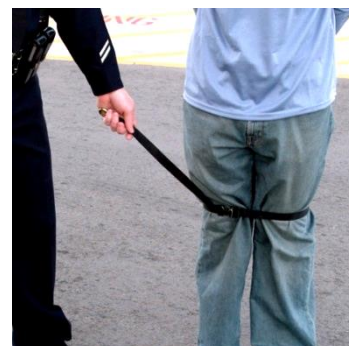
To apply, the HRD is held in the fully open position (the loop is opened as large as possible) with the friction-locking clip in the palm of the hand, teeth towards the officer's body. The suspect's ankles, preferably crossed, are placed inside the loop. The officer then grasps the strap just before the snap-hook and pulls sharply, tightening the loop and binding the suspect's feet together. To prevent accidental opening of the HRD, a half-hitch knot should be placed next to the friction-locking clip.



To tie the half-hitch knot, pass the snap-hook under the portion of the strap that encircles the suspect's ankles, then feed it through the loop that is formed and pull the snap-hook firmly.

### **Securing the Knees**

After a suspect has been restrained at the ankles, it may be to the officer's benefit to allow the suspect to walk in a controlled and restricted manner. To accomplish this, the officer loosens the HRD loop and slides it up the suspect's legs, stopping just above the knees. The officer then grasps the strap just before the snap-hook and pulls sharply, securing the suspect's knees together. The officer can easily guide the suspect in the desired direction by holding the strap of the HRD in one hand and maintaining a firm grip on the suspect's elbow with the other.



Officers should consider having additional officers to assist the suspect while walking, in order to minimize the possibility of the suspect falling and sustaining an injury. Considerations may include the suspect's size, mental or physical impairments, or being under the influence of alcohol and/or a controlled substance.

### Securing the Elbows

This technique can be used to restrain the arms for removing handcuffs from a violent arrestee for fingerprinting, medical treatment, or placing the arrestee into a holding cell. While the arrestee is still handcuffed, the officer places the HRD loop just above the elbows. The loop is slowly tightened until it appears the arrestee cannot escape. The officer can now safely remove the cuffs for medical treatment or fingerprinting. Additionally, if the officer intends to place the arrestee into a cell, this method allows control of the arrestee at the elbows. The officer then directs the arrestee into the cell. As the arrestee moves forward into the cell, the officer releases the HRD and pulls it free from the arrestee's arms. Using the HRD to secure the elbows may also be used as an alternative to handcuffs on a non-violent arrestee with an arm injury or full arm cast.

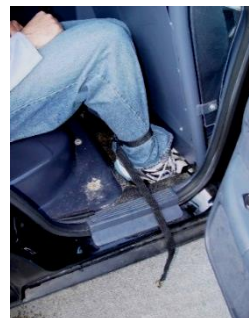


### Transportation Application

If there is no injury requiring immediate medical attention, officers can transport the person in a police vehicle with the HRD in place. The HRD is designed to allow officers to transport violent arrestees in an upright, seated position, while maintaining an acceptable level of restraint. Officers may use the HRD to secure a violent or potentially violent person transported in a police vehicle when:

- The person's hands are secured with handcuffs that are double-locked behind the person's back;
- The person is secured to the police vehicle's seat with the police vehicle's safety belt; and,
- The HRD strap is pulled out of the rear door, the loose end (snap-hook end) of the strap is placed on the front passenger floorboard, and both doors are closed to secure the strap.

**Note: No portion of the strap should be exposed outside of the vehicle.**



## Violent Suspects

If body weight is used to gain control of an individual, officers should only apply direct weight to the suspect's back for as long as reasonable to control the individual. Once the HRD is secured on the person, officers shall immediately search the waistband area and as soon as practical place the individual in an upright, seated position or on his or her left side (left lateral recumbent position). If this is not possible due to medical or tactical issues, then placing the individual on his/her right side is an acceptable substitute. This minimizes the time the suspect spends on his/her stomach after being restrained.



If the individual continues to act violently or potentially endangers the officers, themselves or others, officers may use physical force to hold the individual in one of the approved positions. An officer should maintain control of the HRD's strap during the incident. The HRD **shall not** be used to bind the suspect's hands and feet together in any manner.

**Note:** There may be unique situations where moving the subject/suspect in the seated or recovery position may not be advisable due to injury. Officers' actions in these situations must be based on objective reasonableness, the totality of the circumstances and the Department's guiding principle of reverence for human life.

## Medical Treatment

Officers should monitor the individual for signs of medical distress. Generally, the passenger/cover officer is responsible for monitoring the individual's condition and shall request a rescue ambulance if the individual shows signs of medical distress, such as unconsciousness or has difficulty breathing.

## Reporting

Any wrist lock, joint lock, C-grip, firm grip, walk down, push, pull, or bodyweight, including application of the Hobble Restraint Device, that results in an injury or complained of injury to the subject, shall be reported in accordance with current Department policy.



## Transporting Violent Suspects

Officers shall request a rescue ambulance to transport a violent person only when one of the following circumstances exists:

- If the person in the police vehicle would likely sustain a serious injury or cause vehicle damage and requires restraint to the extent that he or she must be transported in a recumbent position; or,
- If the person is injured or physically ill and in need of immediate medical attention.

When an arrestee is transported by ambulance, at least one officer shall accompany the arrestee in the ambulance.

## DEFINITIONS

**Hobble Restraint Device.** A one-inch wide polypropylene-webbed strap with a bronze snap-hook at one end and a steel friction-locking clip at the other.

**Left/Right Lateral Recumbent Position.** Refers to the lying of the suspect on his or her left/right side.

**Prone Position.** Lying in a face-down position.

**Supine Position.** Lying in a face-up position.

### Points to Remember

- Only apply direct weight to the suspect's back for as long as reasonable to control and secure the individual.
- Place a hobbled suspect in a seated position or on their left side. If this is not possible, the right side is an acceptable substitute.
- Monitor for signs of medical distress.
- The hobble shall not be used to bind the suspect's hands and feet together in any manner.

**Important Reminder**

Deviation from these basic concepts sometimes occurs due to the fluid and rapidly evolving nature of law enforcement encounters and the environment in which they occur. Deviations may range from minor, typically procedural or technical, to substantial deviations from Department tactical training. Any deviations are to be explained by the involved officer(s), and justification for substantial deviation from Department tactical training shall be articulated and must meet the objectively reasonable standard of the Department's Use of Force Policy.

**AMENDMENTS**

This Use of Force Directive cancels and supersedes Use of Force-Tactics Directive No. 2.3, Hobble Restraint Device, August 2022.



MICHEL R. MOORE  
Chief of Police

DISTRIBUTION "A"