

# EL DORADO COUNTY EMS AGENCY FIELD POLICIES

Effective: July 1, 2012

**Reviewed:** April 2012, July 2016

Revised: N/A

Scope: BLS/ALS – Adult/Pediatric



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EMS Agency Medical Director

## PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

### PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines on the use of physical restraints for patients who are violent, potentially violent, or who may cause harm to themselves in the field or during inter-facility transport.

### POLICY:

- 1) Prehospital personnel must consider that aggressive or violent behavior may be a symptom of underlying medical conditions.
- 2) The method of restraint used shall allow for adequate monitoring of vital signs and shall not restrict the ability to protect the patient's airway, nor compromise neurological or vascular status.
- 3) Padded leather restraints, or equivalent, shall be used when a 5150 patient is transported by ambulance.
- 4) Restraint equipment applied by prehospital personnel for non-violent patients (not on a 5150 hold) may be either padded leather restraints or soft restraints (i.e., Posey, Velcro, or seatbelt type). Both methods must allow for quick release.
- 6) Restraints applied by law enforcement require the officer's continued presence to remove or adjust the restraints for patient safety.
  - a. Restraint equipment applied by law enforcement (handcuffs, plastic ties, or hobble restraints) must provide sufficient slack in the restraint device to allow the patient to straighten the abdomen and chest and to take full tidal volume breaths.
- 7) Patients shall not be transported in a prone position. EMS personnel must ensure that the patient's position does not compromise the patient's respiratory/circulatory systems, or does not preclude any necessary medical intervention to protect the patient's airway should vomiting occur.
- 8) Restrained extremities shall be evaluated for circulatory, sensory, and motor function **AT LEAST EVERY 15 MINUTES**. This shall be documented on the PCR.
- 9) The following shall NOT be used by El Dorado County EMS personnel:
  - a. Hard plastic ties.
  - b. Sandwiching patients between backboards, scoop-stretchers, or flats as a restraint.
  - c. Restraining a patient's hands and feet behind the patient (i.e., hog-tying).
  - d. Methods or other materials applied in a manner that could cause respiratory, vascular, or neurological compromise.
- 10) Documentation of the use of restraints on the PCR shall include:
  - a. Type of restraints used.
  - b. Reason restraints were required.
  - c. Status of circulation distal to restraints every 15 minutes.
  - d. Transport times and exact mileages (especially critical).