

# Restraints

## Procedure

Douglas County KS EMS System

March 2022

**Approved Provider:** EMR, EMT, AEMT, Paramedic

**Reference Protocols:** [Patient Restraint](#)

### **Background:**

- Sometimes, administration of restraints are necessary in the prehospital setting for the assessment, treatment and delivery of care.
- We only utilize "soft type" restraints made of padded soft cloth or Velcro that is manufactured for the purpose of restraint. Gauze (e.g., Kerlix), tape or hard plastic ties (e.g., zip ties) should not be used.

### **Indications**

- Patients that are a threat to themselves and others that verbal de-escalation has been unsuccessful
- A valid medical reason for transport to the ER **MUST** be present. If none are present, then transport with or by law enforcement is advised

### **Contraindications**

- Patients without a valid medical reason for transport to the ER

### **Precautions**

- Have all equipment and personnel ready
  - Suction
  - Restraints and a way to promptly remove them
- Patients should not be placed in a prone position. They shall not be placed in a prone position with arms and/or legs flexed backwards and restrained behind the patient. There shall not be any compression of the patient's chest, neck, or abdomen.
- The patient shall not be "sandwiched" by any device.

### **Procedure**

- Patients should be restrained in the supine position or on their side. If necessary, one arm may be placed above the head and the other arm to the side. The patient's legs should be restrained at the ankles in the extended position.
- Use assistance such that, if possible, a provider handles each limb and another person manages the head or supervises the application of restraints.
- Apply restraints to the extent necessary to allow treatment of, and prevent injury to, the patient.
- Wrist and ankle restraints should be secured to the frame of the gurney or alternate fixed point (e.g. backboard), and not to any moveable parts (e.g., rails, levers, etc.).
- Straps may be used across the pelvis and the knees in order to further immobilize the patient. Straps should not be placed in a position that compromises ventilation or circulation such as on the neck, chest, or abdomen.

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### Procedure (Cont.)

- If the patient is spitting, a surgical mask, oxygen mask with oxygen flowing, or a "spit sock" allowing for assessment of skin color (lips) and breathing may be placed over the patient's mouth to protect EMS personnel and others
- If the patient must be transported in handcuffs they shall be accompanied by law enforcement in the ambulance.

### Complications

- Loss of PMS due to restraints being too tight
- Lack of proper ventilation due to improper positioning of restraints

### Documentation

- Indications for procedure
- Description of procedure
- Response to procedure

### Notes

- The EMS provider has the discretion to restrain patients using all four extremities, or both upper extremities, or one upper and one lower extremity.
- Law Enforcement should be present and requested if not on scene