

Civil Commitments, Protective Custody and Mental Health Holds

408.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for when officers may place an individual under protective custody for civil commitment (CRS § 27-65-105).

408.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Colorado State University Police Department to protect the public and individuals through legal and appropriate use of the civil commitment process.

408.3 AUTHORITY

Officers may take a person into protective custody (CRS § 27-65-105).

- (a) When the officer has probable cause to believe that a person is either gravely disabled or an imminent danger to him/herself or others.
 - 1. The officer must transport the person to a facility designated or approved by the local mental health authority for a 72-hour treatment and evaluation.
- (b) When the officer has probable cause to believe that a person is in immediate need of evaluation to prevent physical or psychiatric harm to him/herself or others.
 - 1. The officer must transport the person to an outpatient mental health facility or other clinically appropriate facility designated or approved by the local mental health authority.

If the appropriate facility is not available, officers may take the person to an emergency medical services facility, as defined by CRS § 27-65-102 (CRS § 27-65-105).

408.3.1 DETENTION

Detention of a person under this policy does not constitute an arrest. When a person is taken into custody, that person shall not be detained in the jail, lockup, or other place used for the confinement of persons charged with an offense (CRS § 27-65-105(2)).

408.3.2 VOLUNTARY EVALUATION

If an officer encounters an individual who may qualify for a civil commitment, he/she may inquire as to whether the person desires to voluntarily be evaluated at an appropriate facility. If the individual so desires, the officers should:

- (a) Transport the individual to an appropriate facility that is able to conduct the evaluation and admit the person pursuant to a voluntary application.
- (b) If at any point the individual changes his/her mind regarding voluntary evaluation, officers should proceed with the civil commitment, if appropriate.

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- (c) Document the circumstances surrounding the individual's desire to pursue voluntary evaluation and/or admission.

408.4 CONSIDERATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Any officer handling a call involving an individual who may qualify for a civil commitment should consider, as time and circumstances reasonably permit:

- (a) Available information that might assist in determining the cause and nature of the individual's action or stated intentions.
- (b) Community services.
- (c) Conflict resolution and/or de-escalation techniques.
- (d) Community or other resources available to assist in dealing with mental health issues.

While these steps are encouraged, nothing in this section is intended to dissuade officers from taking reasonable action to ensure the safety of the officers and others.

Civil commitments should be preferred over arrest for people who have mental health issues and are suspected of committing minor crimes or creating other public safety issues.

408.5 TRANSPORTATION

When transporting any individual for a civil commitment, the transporting officer should have Dispatch notify the receiving facility of the estimated time of arrival, the level of cooperation of the individual and whether any special medical care is needed.

Officers may transport individuals in a patrol unit and shall secure them in accordance with the Handcuffing and Restraints Policy. Should the detainee require transport in a medical transport vehicle and the safety of any person, including the detainee, requires the presence of an officer during the transport, Shift Supervisor approval is required before transport commences.

408.6 TRANSFER TO APPROPRIATE FACILITY

Upon arrival at the facility, the officer will escort the individual into a treatment area designated by a facility staff member. If the individual is not seeking treatment voluntarily, the officer should provide the staff member with the written application for a civil commitment and remain present to provide clarification of the grounds for detention, upon request.

Absent exigent circumstances, the transporting officer should not assist facility staff with the admission process, including restraint of the individual. However, if the individual is transported and delivered while restrained, the officer may assist with transferring the individual to facility restraints and will be available to assist during the admission process, if requested. Under normal circumstances, officers will not apply facility-ordered restraints.

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408.7 DOCUMENTATION

If applicable, the officer may complete an application for emergency commitment, provide it to the facility staff member assigned to that patient and retain a copy of the application for inclusion in the case report (CRS § 27-65-105).

The officer should also provide a verbal summary to any evaluating staff member regarding the circumstances leading to the involuntary detention.

408.8 CRIMINAL OFFENSES

Officers investigating an individual who is suspected of committing a minor criminal offense and who is being taken into custody for a civil commitment should resolve the criminal matter by issuing a warning or a citation, as appropriate.

When an individual who may qualify for a civil commitment has committed a serious criminal offense that would normally result in an arrest and transfer to a jail facility, the officer should:

- (a) Arrest the individual when there is probable cause to do so.
- (b) Notify the appropriate supervisor of the facts supporting the arrest and the facts that would support the civil commitment.
- (c) Facilitate the individual's transfer to jail.
- (d) Thoroughly document in the related reports the circumstances that indicate the individual may qualify for a civil commitment.

In the supervisor's judgment, the individual may instead be arrested or booked and transported to the appropriate mental health facility. The supervisor should consider the seriousness of the offense, the treatment options available, the ability of this department to regain custody of the individual, department resources (e.g., posting a guard) and other relevant factors in making this decision.

408.9 FIREARMS AND OTHER WEAPONS

Whenever an individual is taken into custody for a civil commitment, officers should seek to determine if the individual owns or has access to any firearm or other deadly weapon. Officers should consider whether it is appropriate and consistent with current search and seizure law under the circumstances to seize any such firearms or other dangerous weapons (e.g., safekeeping, evidence, consent).

Officers are cautioned that a search warrant may be needed before entering a residence or other place to search, unless lawful, warrantless entry has already been made (e.g., exigent circumstances, consent). A warrant may also be needed before searching for or seizing weapons.

Officers should further advise the individual of the procedure for the return of any firearm or other weapon that has been taken into custody in consideration to state mandated requirements and background checks.

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408.10 TRAINING

This department will endeavor to provide department-approved training on interaction with persons with mental health disorders and on civil commitments and crisis intervention.