

LEG RESTRAINTS
GUIDELINES FOR USE
FOR THE HOLDFAST

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Leg Restraints For Violent Prisoners Guidelines

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Leg Restraints should only be used by officers who have been trained in the procedure by their Police Force.**
- 1.2 The Holdfast Leg Restraint is designed to reduce the inherent dangers that come with trying to control aggressive, violent persons who are handcuffed to the rear, but still represent a significant threat to officers.**
- 1.3 The Holdfast Leg Restraints will be able to provide officers considerably more control over violent subjects who resist when being placed into a Police vehicle.**
- 1.4 The intention behind the Holdfast Leg Restraint is to restrict the ability of the offender to kick. Reducing injuries to officers and subjects and will reduce damage to Police vehicles.**

2 Design – Specialised Velcro

- 2.1 Holdfast Straps – Two Holdfast straps that secure the legs together around the ankles and above the knees.**

3. Guidance on the use of Leg Restraints by The Police

3.1 The use of force is governed by the Common Law provisions in respect of self defence and by Section 3 of the Criminal Law Act 1967, which states:-

“A person may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstance in the prevention of crime or in the effecting or assisting in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders or of persons unlawfully at large”

3.2 IMPORTANT note the wording of Section 3 of the Criminal Law refers to “such force as is reasonable in the circumstance” and case law has stressed that very situation must be judged according to its particular circumstances. It makes clear that use of excessive force cannot be sanctioned. A Police officer is also provided with authority to use force when executing any of the powers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1084. Section 117 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 provides that:-

“Where any of the provisions of this ACT:-

- a. confers any power on a Constable; and**
- b. does not provide that the power may only be exercised with the consent of some person other than a Police officer may use reasonable force, if necessary, in the exercise of the power”**

3.3 The use of a Leg Restraints may be appropriate against:

- i) Those offering a level of violence which cannot be appropriately dealt with by lower levels of force;**
- ii) Violent offenders, where failure to restrain lower limbs as well as upper ones, would increase the risk to all present.**

3.4 A graduated and appropriate level of force in response to varying levels of aggression and violence may include the use of a Leg Restraint. The decision to use the Leg Restraint will be dependant on an officer’s assessment of the situation this will include their own ability to deal with the incident and threat posed by the suspect(s).

3.5 It is essential that an officer’s training and skill permits the exercise of maximum self control and control over the situation, thus permitting the application of only that level of force appropriate to the situation. The use of any form of force must be judged in relation to the level of resistance or violence to which an officer is subjected. Varying levels of aggression and violence require various responses from the Police, which must be strictly proportionate, ensuring that the Police use of force is always “reasonable in the circumstances”.

3.6 The ability to deal with hostile behaviour and to control the subject during the arrest process is a complex arrangement. Ultimately, officers may be called upon to explain and justify why force was used and action taken may need to be defended in both criminal and civil courts.

4. Training and Use

4.1 The leg restraint should only be used by those officers who are trained in it's use.

4.2 Officers should ensure that the Leg Restraint is clean, undamaged and prepared for use.

4.3 Leg restraints should only be used in circumstances where the actions of the subject are such that they represent a significant risk to the safety of the officers and themselves as they refuse to co-operate with being transported.

4.4 The Leg Restraint requires at least two officers working together to correctly apply it. The subject should be handcuffed to the rear and placed in the prone face down position before the Leg Restraints are placed on the subject.

4.5 Under NO circumstances should a fully restrained subject be left unattended. Officers should keep a close and careful watch on anyone who is restrained for signs of Positional Asphyxia. If there is any cause for concern the subject should be repositioned off their stomachs either in a sitting, kneeling or standing position.

4.6 The Leg restraint should not be used as a "handle" to lift a subject. A subject can be helped to their feet so they can walk to a Police Vehicle. If this option is used then the officers should closely supervise their progress to prevent the subject from falling. If a complete lift is needed, due consideration to the number of officers required should be made to prevent injury to either officers or the subject.

4.7 In the event of a medical emergency all leg restraints can be removed quickly and with ease.

4.8 An entry should be made on the custody record detailing the reason why the leg restraint was applied. Any injury should be documented. Any involvement of an FME will be a matter for the custody Sergeant.

5. (Re-cap)

Guide to Using Holdfast Straps

- **Ensure that the subject has been handcuffed to the rear.**
- **Ensure that the subject is in the prone face down position.**
- **At least two officers need to be present to use the Holdfast Leg restraints**
- **Whilst one officer secures the subjects legs, the other places the first strap around the subjects ankles.**
- **Once the ankles are secure the other strap is wrapped around the subjects legs just above the knees.**
- **When control has been established, check the security of the straps and adjust if necessary.**
- **Do not leave the subject unattended.**
- **Keep a close and careful watch on the subject for signs of Positional Asphyxia. Subject to be placed in sitting, kneeling or standing position as soon as it is safe to do so.**
- **Arrange transportation and consider searching the subject.**
- **DEPENDANT UPON CIRCUMSTANCES EITHER:**
- **Release the lower strap and allow them to shuffle to the vehicle. Supervise their progress to prevent them from falling.**
- **or**
- **Lift the offender into the vehicle with due consideration to the number of officers required to prevent injury to officers and subject.**
- **Avoid using the straps as a “handle” to lift the subject into the vehicle.**
- **Complete the necessary paper work to record the use of the straps.**