Application of restraint devices as a method of protecting the personal safety of the police officers

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Abstract: The existence of special police authorizations justifies the legal goal of applying restraint devices. Considering its function, the application of restraint devices must be an exception, not a rule and that's the reason why it should be applied only when there are no other methods of solving a conflict between the police and citizens. When applying restraint devices, special attention should be put on the safety of the police officers. Taking into consideration all potential and unseen threats that may arise, it is crucial to provide high quality preconditions for the legal proceedings. As a result of that, this paper analyses and elaborates in detail the tactical model during the direct application of the restraint devices - "handcuffs". The application of this model includes performing several tactical and security activities that would minimize the security risks among the police but in the meantime will not put into danger the dignity of the person being handcuffed.

Keywords: POLICE AUTHORIZATIONS, RESTRAINT DEVICES, TACTICAL PROCEDURES, SECURITY ASSESSMENT, SECURITY TRIANGLE

1. Introduction

Handcuffing, as a coercion method used by the police to restrict the movement of a person is applied by the use of two types of devices: formative and manual [1]. Formative devices include handcuffs and plastic straps, while manual devices can include different items such as a strap, adhesive tape, scarf, rope, clothing, chain, etc. In all cases, where the conditions for handcuffing a person are met, the formative devices (metal handcuffs have an advantage) must be used, and while the manual devices are used only in those situations when a sufficient amount of metal or plastic handcuffs is not available.

Determining the conditions under which the police use coercion methods usually happens when a person is detained, deprived of liberty, or executed. This means that the police have a legitimate right to use methods of coercion in the following cases: to prevent a resistance by a person or to prevent an attack to a police officer, to prevent a person from escaping and to prevent self-harm or injury [2]. Knowledge of the legal grounds regarding the use of restraint devices is a good prerequisite for high quality and effective implementation of the legal duties, but this condition alone is not sufficient if other conditions are not provided for safe and smooth implementation of the entire restraining procedure.

2. Tactical model of policing during the implementation of restraint devices

The legal obligation to use restraint devices requires that the police implements suitable tactical manners of conducting the procedure that is in full compliance with the prescribed safety procedures [3]. If the use of restraint devices is known to be a very dynamic and complex process, then the police must not allow the consequences of inadequate and inappropriate actions to occur. The main goal, during the application of restraint devices, is ensuring personal and the safety of other individuals, because in this way it directly reduces of avoids the danger of unwanted bodily injuries among both parties [4].

When the handcuffing is carried out, it must be performed in a fast and energetic manner and not to allow any reactions from the persons being detained (attempt to escape, attack on police officers or other personal, self-harm). If it happens that the persons manifest any of these illegal actions, then it is necessary to use other methods of coercion to prevent such behavior and not to allow further escalation of the situation [5]. In the process of finding a solution for the proper use of the restraint devices, the tactical procedure through which the essential requirements of the police will be met implies the consistent fulfillment of a number of tactical-security activities that will enable the normal course of the legal procedure [6, 7].

When initiating the handcuffing procedure, the first step is to make a personal safety assessment. The initial security assessment of the situation is an important part of the tactical procedure, as it includes all relevant data on individuals and influences the decision-making process of police officers in the process of restraining. When assessing the safety of the individuals, specific information about body constitution and appearance, physical abilities, skills, emotions and mental status are important. In order to avoid an attack and prevent the behavior of people who are not cooperative, it is necessary to determine the order of use of appropriate tactical methods. When it comes to making a security assessment of people, there are three different categories of behaviors [8]: people who cooperate completely, people who do not potentially cooperate, and people who do not cooperate at all.

The first category includes persons who actively and voluntarily cooperate and do not oppose the given orders and requests from the police officers for handcuffing. If resistance occurs among these individuals, it is usually verbal and is expressed through various voice complaints, repetition of questions, and so on. People who do not potentially cooperate in the initial part of the procedure, there is no need to manifest visible verbal or physical resistance, but they manifest number of physical signals such as rubbing the hands, spreading the pupils, tightening the facial muscles, stiff posture, through which signals are intentionally or unintentionally sent for their further conduct. In such circumstances, the police officers are involved in a continuous monitoring and preparation for an appropriate response depending on the resistance that may arise at any point in the restraining or handcuffing procedure. The category of people who do not cooperate completely are people who show behavior that aims to physically impede the attempt of police officers to use restraining devices. In such complex communication circumstances, the police officers are forced to use additional means of coercion (physical force, rubber truncheon) to overcome resistance and establish physical control over those who are to be detained.

After conducting the security assessment of the individuals that should be detained, the next step is to bring the persons to an appropriate handcuffing position. The choice of the position in which the handcuffing will take place should be in accordance with the behavior of the persons, in order to timely prevent an attempt to escape, to overcome resistance, to repel an attack and to prevent self-harm. Depending on the behavior of the individuals, the handcuffing is performed in a standing, kneeling or lying position [9]. Among cooperative individuals, the handcuffing procedure is usually performed in a standing position, while among less cooperative individuals, the handcuffing is always carried out in kneeling or lying position.

The tactical procedure of bringing individuals into a handcuffing position begins with indicating the reasons and the legal obligation to use of the restraint devices. During the official
address of the police officers, voluntary consent is required for placing handcuffs, which especially emphasizes the need for full cooperation during the procedure. If successful, the police officers, by giving simple verbal guidance and instructions, bring the persons to the desired position (Fig. 1).

![Fig. 1 Taking position for handcuffing.](image1)

After bringing the persons in a handcuffing position, the next step in carrying out the tactical procedure and to bind the persons. In order to gain an advantage and control over those who are being arrested, police officers need to take the following tactical actions into consideration [4, 6]:

- to perform adequate tactical and secure spatial positioning;
- to take a preparatory position for taking out the handcuffs;
- to hold the handcuffs in a proper manner;
- to choose the appropriate way of approaching the individual being detained;
- to establish strong physical contact with the individual;
- to maintain the correct position of the handcuffs when using them.

Proper tactical and security positioning in space means that police officers should always stay at a safe distance, i.e. at a minimum distance of three to five steps from the person to be detained. This distance is a "remote security zone" because police officers can protect themselves or avoid possible counter-attack by the individual. Once the preparation position is established, they proceed with removing the handcuffs from the holster. The handcuffs are usually held with the dominant hand in the area that connects the two steel rings in the direction of the rings in order to allow a quick reaction in case of a sudden attack. The position of the forearms and elbows should be close to the body, because in a case of an attack they will be able to more easily protect the head and upper body. Before approaching and making physical contact with the person that should be arrested, the police officers are placed at an angle of 45 degrees and thus form a "security triangle" (Fig. 2).

![Fig. 2 Forming a "security triangle" during handcuffing.](image2)

At the moment when physical contact with the person that should be detained is established, the positioning of the police officers depends on the position of the person and on the manner in which they behave. Control over those who cooperate, regardless of their position, is achieved by taking a stable position and by covering (fixing) the hand in the part of the wrist around the palm. This tactical way of proceeding, implemented by the police officers, provides an advantage and additional protection if there is a reaction from those who are arrested.

Once the necessary conditions for establishing physical control over the person have been provided, police officers proceed with putting the handcuffs around the wrists of the person. The handcuffs are placed in such a way that the moving part of the bracelet approaches to the wrist of the nearest and then the farthest hand, and is pressed until it closes and enters the grooves of the fixed part of the bracelet. When placing the handcuffs, police officers should be careful not to over-tighten the handcuffs, as normal blood circulation and damage to the skin and soft tissues of the wrists may occur. To prevent this from happening, an additional check is always made of the tightness of the handcuffs and, if necessary, they are loosened. In addition, double locking of the handcuffs is performed with the help of a locking fuse in order to prevent abuse by persons who may intentionally cause the handcuffs to tighten (Fig. 3).

![Fig. 3 Putting, checking and handcuffs double locking.](image3)

After the handcuffing procedure is completed, prevention search is continued. The manner of the search largely depends on the situation and the circumstances under which the connection is made, as well as on the very situation in which the persons find themselves. It is common practice to conduct the search in the same position in which the handcuffing took place, but if necessary (visible verbal or physical resistance is manifested) the individuals can be brought to another less risky position (from standing to lying down, and from kneeling in lying position).

At the moment when the search begins, it is necessary to provide all the conditions for safe and uninterrupted conduct of the entire search procedure and not to allow any possibility of any reaction by the person being searched. To achieve this, certain rules must be observed when searching [10]:

- never step in front of people during the search;
- systematically divide the body parts vertically and horizontally;
- not to proceed to the other side of the body of the person, until one half of the body has been searched in detail;
- to practice a search by touching with the back of the palm;
- always maintain physical control over the person by holding the handcuffs or using a lever on the palm;
- when performing the search, pay special attention to all the natural indentations of the body, groin, armpits, hair, shoulders, front and back waist;
- whenever there are conditions to practice the search, it should be performed by two police officers.

Adhering to the basic safety rules, the search of a person in a standing and kneeling position is performed by pulling the upper part of the body backwards or pressing it forward in order to further disturb the stability, and then all parts of the body on the right and left. Unlike the previous two positions, the search in a supine position due to the specific placement of the faces and the minimum possibility of moving is performed with the help of police officers who twist the person on the right and left side so that they can more easily conduct the search (Fig. 4).

![Fig. 4 Searching a person in standing, kneeling and lying position.](image4)
The search is followed by a tactical procedure of guide the detainees. In order to initiate this procedure, it is necessary to bring the searched person to an appropriate position. Among people who are in a standing and kneeling position, this is achieved only by issuing short verbal orders, while in persons who are in a supine position, a complete procedure for lifting the faces is performed. Once the people have been brought into the wanted position, it is very important to maintain total control over them and eliminate any possibility of reaction and an attempt to escape. Depending on the category of people and their behavior, an appropriate tactical approach to is used. Among people who cooperate, control is provided by soft (preventive) physical contact, which is achieved by holding the handcuffs and the hand in the area of the elbow, while among people who partially, or not fully cooperate, control is achieved by inflicting an appropriate degree of pain in the area of the hand (Fig. 5).

**Fig. 5 Leading a handcuffed person who shows resistance.**

In the last part of the tactical procedure, the handcuffs are removed and the person is released. This procedure is usually carried out at the moment when the person is brought to the police station or handed over to other state institutions and services. In order to enable the safe removal of handcuffs from the detainees, it is very important that the approach of the police officers is fully official and that they do not relax at any time. When starting the final procedure, first of all, the person is required to place themselves in a standing position, and after fulfilling this request, they move on to removing the handcuffs, first on the more distant and then on the closer hand. During the whole unlocking process, control is maintained on the person by holding the connective parts of the handcuffs. In exceptional situations when a person who have previously manifested visible physical or armed resistance is released, the removal of the handcuffs is performed in a supine position [11]. In this position, the persons must be brought in with the help of two police officers who help him to occupy and maintain the required position with the body for the whole time while the handcuffs are being removed from their hands (Fig. 6).

**Fig. 6 Releasing a handcuffed person in lying position.**

### 3. Conclusion

The police profession, due to its specific nature and exceptional social significance, always carries a high risk and danger for the police officers, especially in those cases when the legal requirements for the use of coercion methods are met. Given that any presumed situation in which coercion methods are used, including handcuffing, poses a serious problem for the protection and the personal safety of members of the police, then, it is necessary to develop solutions in order to reduce or avoid negative consequences. Therefore, within the frames of this paper, through elaboration and detailed analysis of the tactical model for police action and the immediate use of the methods of coercion - “handcuffs”, an attempt was made to single out and emphasize the most important tactical-security activities that would allow uninterrupted procedure without violating the dignity and reputation of the person being detained. Moreover, of special importance for solving the complex problems between the police and the citizens, is to work continuously on raising the quality of education and training in order to improve mutual communication and personal security.

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