

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

No. 520

Supersedes: 1-92 72.3.6

Effective: September 1, 2006

Page: ALL Section: ALL

Page: 1 OF 3

Dated: April 21, 1992

EVACUATION OF HOLDING CELLS

- I. **PURPOSE:** The safety and well being of detainees in our holding cells is the responsibility of the Upper Merion Township Police Department. Should an emergency occur within the Township Building, especially the Detention Area, an emergency evacuation plan must be mobilized to ensure the safety and security of detainees.
- II. **POLICY:** During an emergency at the Upper Merion Township Building, the Upper Merion Township Police Department will endeavor to ensure the well being of holding cell detainees while maintaining their secure custody.
- III. **DEFINITION:** EMERGENCY: Any condition or occurrence which poses a threat to a detainee in an Upper Merion Township holding cell.
- IV. **RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- A. COMMUNICATION OFFICER:
1. Monitor the closed circuit television and audio system to check the status of prisoners in cells.
 2. This section has been redacted – procedurally sensitive.
 3. Immediately announce the emergency over the building paging system. This will alert any personnel in the building and these people can respond.
 4. Notify ambulance and fire companies when appropriate.
 5. Notify the shift supervisor that an emergency exists, the nature of the emergency, and the number, sex and age of any detainees in the cells.

6. Communications officers may respond to the Detention Area to investigate an apparent emergency when there are no sworn police officers in the building. However, only sworn officers shall open cell doors and enter occupied cells in response to an emergency.
 - a. When only one communications officer is on duty, leave the Communications Center ONLY to respond to a suicide attempt or a fire/smoke emergency in the Detention Area. Advise the shift supervisor that the Communications Center is being left unattended.
 - b. When more than one communications officer is on duty, only one communications officer should proceed to the Detention Area and respond to the emergency.
 - c. The Communications officer should return to the Communications Center upon the arrival of the first officer and the first support person unless one officer can safely deal with the situation.
 - d. A lock box key shall be located in the Communications Center. The bottom lock box contains the cell key and a knife, which can be used to cut down a hanging suicidal person. The 0700-1900 communications officer shall inventory and note on the Sergeant's Daily Report the presence of the lock box key in the Communications Center.

B. SHIFT SUPERVISOR:

1. Immediately assign a sufficient number of officers and vehicles to evacuate the holding cells and temporarily house the detainees until the emergency is over.

V. PROCEDURE:

1. The emergency evacuation plan shall be posted in the Detention Area. There are three available exits from the lower level of police station in the event of a fire. All three exits are clearly marked with overhead EXIT signs.
2. Evacuation of the Detention Area should begin with cell #4, and proceed in order to the front of the Detention Area and cell #1.
3. One cell should be evacuated and the detainees secured before a second cell is opened.
4. Two officers should evacuate each cell. Normally, one unarmed police officer should not open or enter an occupied cell to respond to an emergency until support arrives. However, each emergency situation may contain circumstances that could dictate a different response. The first officer may have to take action to prevent death or injury if the circumstance reasonably indicated the response will not jeopardize the safety of the officer or the security of the prisoner.

5. All doors to the Detention Area shall be closed after the evacuation has been completed.
6. Detainees should be handcuffed and led to police vehicles or other areas designated by the shift supervisor.
7. Police vehicles should be parked at a location which is not immediately threatened by the emergency.
8. When the detainees have been evacuated, the shift supervisor, or his/her designee, shall check for any injuries and, if necessary, make arrangements for transport and treatment.
9. One officer should remain with detainees in a police vehicle or other area to which they are moved.
10. Males, females, and juveniles should not be temporarily lodged in the same vehicle.
11. If the emergency persists for an extended time period, the detainees should be transported to another holding facility.
12. Unit #45 should be used as a temporary holding facility when practical.

APPROVED: _____

DATE: _____

APPROVED: _____

DATE: _____

TO BE REVIEWED: ANNUALLY

DISTRIBUTION: All police officers
All police dispatchers
Township Manager
File