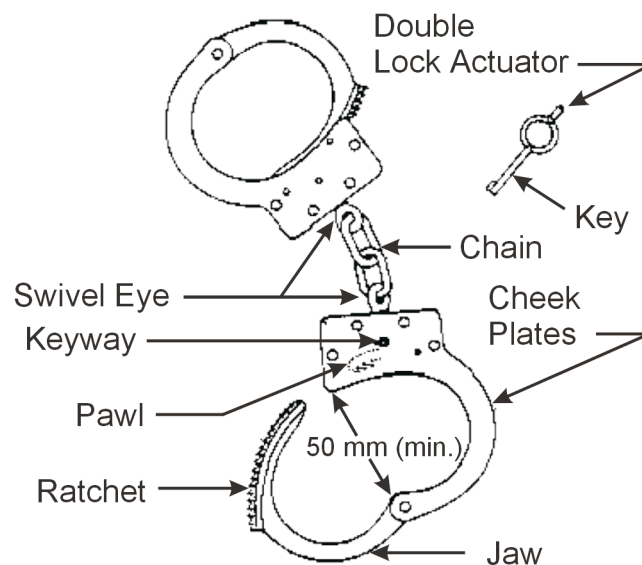


## LAKE COUNTY SHERIFF'S

## RESERVE DEPUTY UNIT



# Handcuffs and Handcuffing

# **Mission Statement**

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Lake County Sheriff  
Emergency Management Agency  
Reserve Deputy Unit

TO PROMOTE EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE,  
WHILE ENHANCING AND PROVIDING FOR A  
GREATER LEVEL OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

TO PROMOTE A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE,  
WHILE ASSISTING THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS  
WELL AS OTHER AGENCIES.

TO EXECUTE THE ASSIGNED DUTIES OF THE  
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF WITH THE HIGHEST  
LEVEL OF PRIDE AND AWARENESS.

Approved

Gary Del Re  
Sheriff

# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Handcuff Anatomy 101 .....	3
<b>TYPES OF HANDCUFFS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Standard .....	5
Hinged .....	5
Flexible .....	6
<b>THE CARRYING &amp; CARE OF HANDCUFFS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Handcuff Carrying Methods .....	7
Handcuff Cleaning .....	8
<b>THE DECISION TO USE HANDCUFFS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>THE PROPER APPLICATION OF HANDCUFFS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SEARCHING AN INDIVIDUAL .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SEARCH &amp; HANDCUFFING POSTIONS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Wall/Standing .....	15
FBI prone .....	17
Kneeling Legs Crossed .....	19
<b>PRACTICES TO AVOID .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>22</b>



## INTRODUCTION

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Handcuffs are very common devices used by law enforcement personnel. Handcuffs control or restrict the movements of the individual that is “cuffed.” It is imperative that officers realize that handcuffs are restraining devices. This is probably the most important fact that many officers fail to remember.

To restrain does not mean to secure or immobilize. A misunderstanding of the limitations of handcuffs has lulled officers into a false sense of security. In that moment of relaxation, a restrained person may be able to escape and cause serious injury or death to the officer or others.

### Handcuff Anatomy 101

It is a good idea that an officer has a basic understanding of the parts of the handcuffs. This is for operational reasons as well as care and maintenance of the handcuffs.

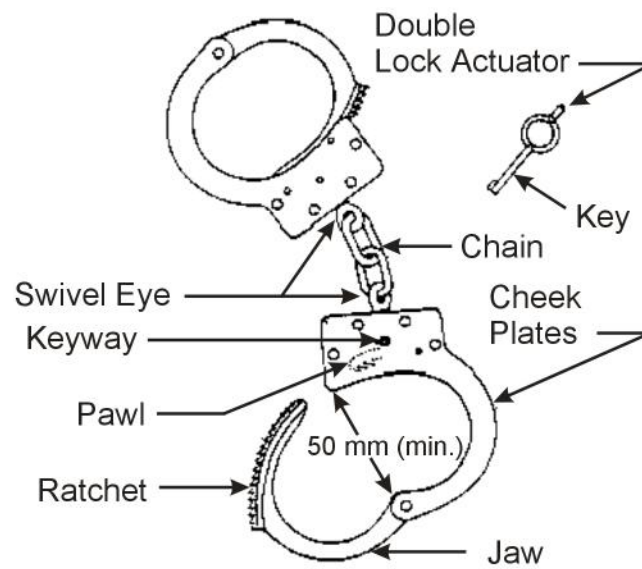
Refer to Figure 1 on page 4.

1. Chain - Links the two cuffs together.

***Note: Note: Some handcuffs use a hinge in place of the chain.***

2. Cheek Plates - Non-moving part of cuffs.
3. Double Lock Actuator - Part of Key that “double locks” the cuffs so that they cannot be resized without first unlocking the cuffs.
4. Jaw - Moveable portion of the handcuff with the exposed toothed edged portion (see ratchet).
5. Key - Device for locking and unlocking the cuffs.
6. Keyway - Insertion point for key (“keyhole”).
7. Pawl - Toothed edged portion of the cuff (inside Cheek Plates near Keyway) that allow the sizing of the cuff (dependant on wrist size). When engaged, the Ratchet will move through the Pawl in only one direction (until the key unlocks the cuff).
8. Ratchet - Exposed toothed edged portion of the cuff (see Jaw) that allow the sizing of the cuff (dependant on wrist size). When engaged, the Ratchet will move through the Pawl in only one direction (until the key unlocks the cuff).
9. Swivel Eye - Allows the chain to swivel on the cuff. Otherwise, if twisted enough, a “fixed” chain (one without a swivel) could be broken.

**Figure 1.**  
**Parts of the**  
**Handcuff**  
**(Standard Chain**  
**Linked)**



## TYPES OF HANDCUFFS

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Several types and manufacturers of handcuffs exist today. The three primary types that we will be concerned with are the standard (chain), hinged and flexible (plastic) cuffs.

### Standard

Standard handcuffs (see Figure 2) consist of two nickel plated steel or blue steel cuffs connected by a single heat-treated steel chain. The inner perimeter of the cuffs adjust from 5  $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 8". They have 19 or 20 locking positions, have a self-locking single lock and most have a double lock-engaging pin. Some manufacturers double lock their handcuffs in the counterclockwise direction with the key.

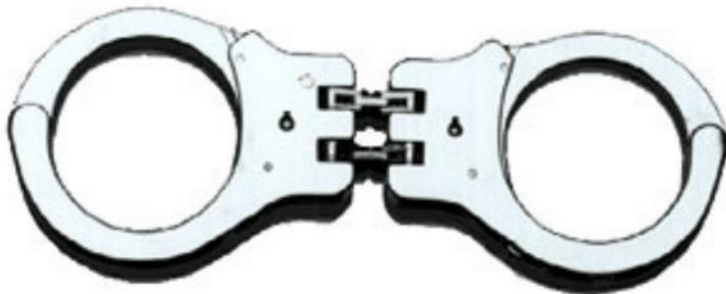
**Figure 2.**  
**Standard Chain**  
**Link Handcuffs**  
**(Stainless Steel)**



### Hinged

Hinged handcuffs (see Figure 3) are the same as standard with one important difference. Instead of the steel chain, a double hinge is used to connect the two cuffs. The hinge does not allow the cuffs to swivel in opposite directions further restricting the movements of the individual handcuffed. These cuffs (depending on manufacturer) can be 25% larger than the standard cuff.

**Figure 3.**  
**Hinged**  
**Handcuffs**  
**(Stainless Steel)**



## Flexible

Flexible handcuffs (see Figure 4) are heavy-duty plastic restraints. These restraints resemble cable ties or tie wraps used to bundle a variety of items especially wires in electrical cabinets. They come in a variety of lengths and strengths but are generally 22 inches long with a tensile strength of approximately 350 lbs. They are extremely lightweight and disposable. They do require cutters to remove once applied. Several can be stored inside departmental headgear and are generally used for backup or when an individual's wrists are too large for conventional cuffs.

***Caution: Plastic cuffs, to be effective, must be quite tight. This can cut off circulation quickly, leading to serious results. These cuffs cannot be loosened once they are applied and must be cut off in order to be removed.***

**Figure 4.**  
**Flexible Cuffs**





## THE CARRYING & CARE OF HANDCUFFS

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### Handcuff Carrying Methods

Handcuffs are carried in a variety of ways. They can be carried in special pouches, handcuff straps or in uniform pockets. They are also stored in glove compartments and duty bags. In all cases, handcuffs are exposed to a variety of natural and man-made environmental conditions that can affect their proper operation.

To carry handcuffs on the duty belt, an officer could use one of the following:

1. Open case (see Figure 5).
2. Closed case (see Figure 6).
3. Handcuff strap (see Figure 7 on page 8).

**Figure 5.**  
**Handcuff Case**  
**(Open)**



**Figure 6.**  
**Handcuff Case**  
**(Closed)**



**Figure 7.**  
**Handcuff Strap**



## **Handcuff Cleaning**

Dust, dirt and moisture can easily find their way into the working mechanism of the handcuffs. The malfunctions that can be encountered range from cuffs that will not lock to cuffs that once applied cannot be unlocked. Surface rust may also appear on the cuffs or chain. If left untreated, the metal may weaken to the point that an individual may actually break the cuff or chain.

Preventive maintenance is not only for weapons and vehicles. Handcuffs should be inspected and cleaned frequently. Keep the handcuffs dry and test the key and lock. A light coat of a general lubricating oil on the exposed metal will help keep rust from forming. Use a light amount in the locking mechanism to keep it operational. DO NOT OVERLUBRICATE. Too much oil will attract and hold dust and dirt. Also, stay away from lubricants such as WD-40. They are aerosol propelled and have a tendency to collect dust and dirt and dry much quicker than standard oil.

## THE DECISION TO USE HANDCUFFS

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Knowing when to use handcuffs is a very important part of police work. Departmental policy normally specifies circumstances that call for the use of handcuffs. However, the final decision to use handcuffs is made by the officer. It is the decision of the officer based on his responsibility to protect himself, the public and the person to be restrained. It is also based on the officer's interpretation of the situation, his training and experience.

1. An important item to know up front is that just because a person is handcuffed does not mean they have been arrested. People can be detained in handcuffs when an officer determines it necessary for a number of reasons.
  - a. The person poses a possible safety threat to the officer or others.
  - b. The person is trying to harm him or herself.
  - c. The officer cannot determine the alleged guilty party when more than one person is involved in the situation or crime.
  - d. The individual attempts to flee.
  - e. Because of departmental policy.

The above situations may ultimately lead to an arrest, but are not automatically one. Legal clarification is discussed in the Laws of Arrest training.

2. A person considered under arrest is handcuffed because of the following reasons:
  - a. The person could pose or is posing a safety threat to the officer or others.
  - b. The person may try to harm or is harming him or herself.
  - c. The individual may attempt or has attempted to flee.
  - d. To give the officer a greater control of the situation.
  - e. To give the officer greater control and safety when conducting a search of the individual.
  - f. To prevent the individual from disturbing, removing or destroying evidence on him or herself or at the scene.
  - g. Because of law or departmental policy.



## THE PROPER APPLICATION OF HANDCUFFS

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Once the decision has been made to handcuff an individual, the handcuffs must be applied properly. Improper application could cause injury to the officer or the individual. It could also lead to charges filed against the officer. In other cases, improper application could allow the individual to escape. When handcuffing an individual the officer needs to do or be aware of the following things:

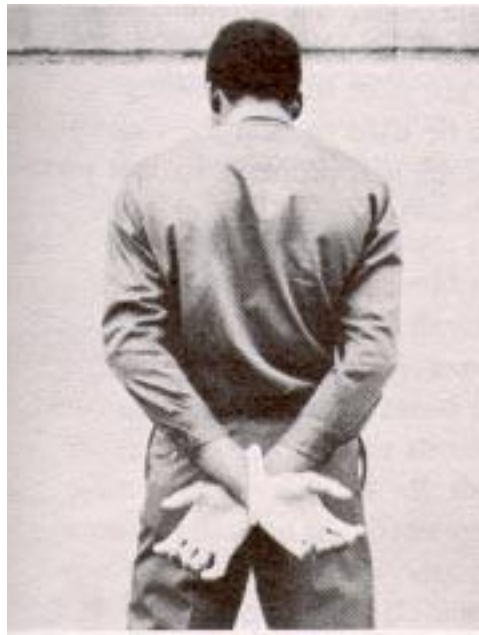
1. Remain alert for any unexpected moves made by the detained individual or others around him.
2. Approach from the rear or the side in order to keep the individual as off balance as possible.
3. Never turn your back on the individual.
4. Stay out of the individual's reach until he is in position to be searched.
5. The individual must be searched for possible weapons, evidence, contraband or items that can be used to escape. The decision to handcuff before or after a pat down search is either departmental policy or officer personal preference. Even if an officer searches first and then handcuffs, it is in his best interest to search once more.
6. The individual is handcuffed with hands behind his back and palms facing outward with thumbs pointing up.
7. If an extra degree of security is needed, the handcuffs may be slid behind the individual's belt.
8. The keyhole for the handcuffs should face towards the individual's back. This makes it more difficult for an individual to remove the handcuffs should they get a hold of a key or other lock-picking device.
9. Do not "slap" the handcuff on the individual's wrist. Have the cuff on the final ratchet (inside diameter of the cuff at its smallest). Put the cuff jaw piece (the one with the "teeth" on it) against the wrist and apply a downward even pressure. The cuff jaw will swing around and catch on at least the first ratchet.
10. Close the cuff jaw around the wrist enough to prevent the individual from rotating their wrist around inside the cuff. However, not tight enough to pinch the skin or cut off circulation. Some officers use their little finger as a "gauge" between the individual's wrist and the inside of the cuff jaw.

11. The handcuffs need to be double locked. Check them by pulling and pushing on the handcuff jaw. This will keep the handcuffs from tightening on the individual once applied. In addition, it is easier to get out of handcuffs if they are not double locked.

**Figure 8.  
Proper  
Application Of  
The Standard  
Handcuffs**



**Figure 9.  
Proper  
Application Of  
The Flex Cuffs**



## SEARCHING AN INDIVIDUAL

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Individuals usually are handcuffed after being searched whenever two officers are conducting the arrest or detention. If an officer is required to do the arrest or detention unaided, handcuffing before the search offers greater safety for the officer. When a dangerous or violent individual is being searched, it is often best to handcuff first.

When conducting a search, the officer should do the following:

1. Ask the individual being searched if they have any weapons or sharp objects on their person. If they respond negatively, do not take it for granted. Do not let your guard down simply because they sound convincing. For your safety and the safety of others, search as if you expect to find something. If you do not find anything, and have done a complete and thorough search, you have done your job.
2. Use a systematic search pattern. Start with the head and work your way down. Check the headgear and the hair. Check for items around the neck on neck chains or in the collar. Then split the body into quadrants and search. An example would be upper left, upper right, lower left and finally lower right. The sequence is not as important as the officer checking all areas, the same way, on all individuals. If the officer is consistent in his search patterns, chances for missing items is lessened.
3. Carefully grab and squeeze the clothing. Simply patting will not detect items in the clothing. Use extreme caution while squeezing. Sharp objects, especially hypodermic needles may be present. With the introduction of AIDS, a new level of awareness has become necessary when searching a person.
4. When searching a person of the **same sex**, do not be embarrassed to thoroughly check “private areas” such as the groin or around and between breasts. Many weapons, lock picking devices and other contraband can be hidden in those areas. You may use an open hand and fingers.
5. When searching a person of the **opposite sex**, do not be embarrassed to check “private areas” such as the groin or around and between breasts. If an officer of the same sex is not available, these areas can be checked with the back of the hand or with a device such as a Kubotan, Baton Key Chain Holder, or a Mini-Mag Flashlight.

The opportunity for an individual to claim an officer of the opposite sex used the search as a means of sexual gratification or humiliation must be reduced. Again, the situation of safety versus open-

ing up an officer to civil liability comes into play. **“Better to be tried by twelve than carried by six”** is a phrase many officers live by. In other words, better to err on the side of caution than to worry so much about liability that you put yourself or others in harms way.

A member of the same sex needs to do a follow up search on the individual as soon as possible to ensure a thorough search and to be witness to the physical condition of the individual. This may aid the original officer should a complaint against him or her be filed because of the first search.

6. When conducting a search, be aware of weapons, drugs, drug paraphernalia and evidence related to the crime or situation. Also, individuals who have been arrested previously have been known to hide handcuff keys on their person.
7. Be aware of seemingly innocent items that can have alternate uses.
  - a. Paper clips, bobby pins, small metal or plastic strips or an altered ink cartridge from a ball point pen can be used to open handcuffs. Also, jewelry may have alternate uses.
  - b. Safety pins, pens, combs, safety razors, fishing line and many other items can be used as weapons.
8. Places to search in clothing.
  - a. Waistbands, pockets or cuffs of pants.
  - b. Collars, pockets, cuffs and sleeves of shirts and jackets.
  - c. Heels, soles, tongues and inside of shoes or boots.
  - d. Under or inside belts or the belt buckle itself.
  - e. Any place in the clothing that may have two pieces of material that can form a “pocket” to hide items.
  - f. Socks, stockings and hosiery.
  - g. Women’s brassieres.
  - h. In hats, scarves, bandanas, gloves, headbands, wristbands and any other additional items of clothing.
9. Places to search on the individual.
  - a. Under arms.
  - b. Small of the back.
  - c. Groin area.
  - d. Around or between breasts.
  - e. Under bandages or Band-Aids.
  - f. In hair, wigs or hair pieces.



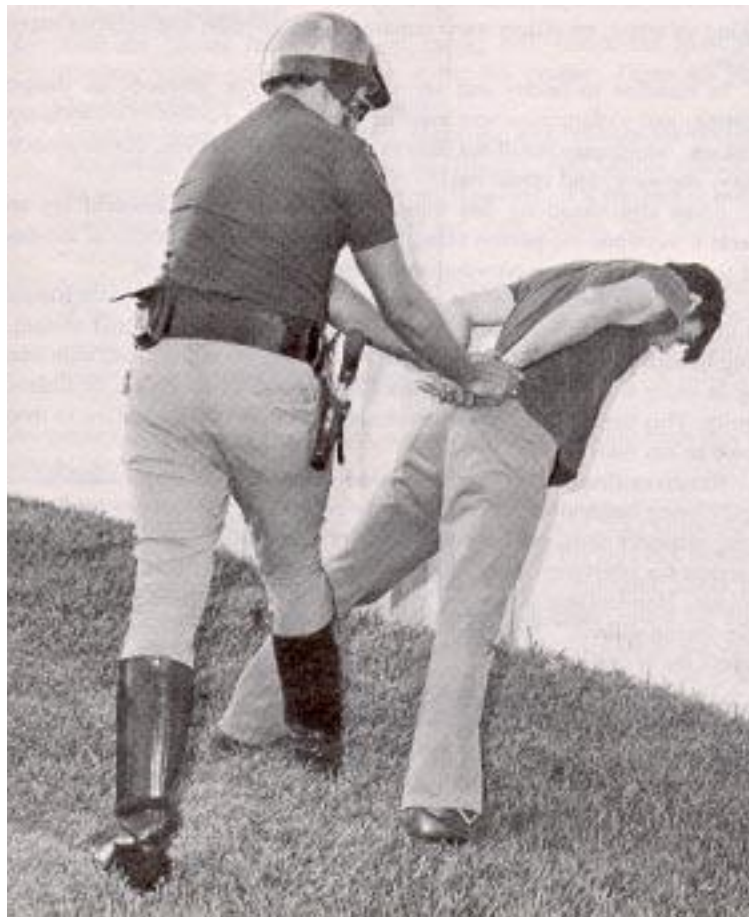
## SEARCH & HANDCUFFING POSTIONS

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### Wall/Standing

The “traditional” leaning the individual against the wall with feet spread shoulder width apart. The individual needs to be at an angle keeping him or her off balance. The same is true if the search and handcuffing is conducted with no wall or other item to lean the suspect against.

**Figure 10.  
Applying  
Handcuffs While  
Against A Wall**



1. Make announcement to suspect.  
“Police, don’t move. Slowly put your hands in the air.”
2. Visually check the suspects waistband for weapons.  
“Slowly turn around.” (Have the suspect stop when they are facing away from you.)

3. Order the suspect into an off balance position.  
“Slowly spread your feet apart with your toes pointed outward. Lean against the wall.”
  4. Order suspect to place hands in cuffing position.  
“Hands behind your back. Back of your hands together, thumbs up.”
- Note: Not all people will be able to get the back of their hands together.***
5. Make use of Contact and Cover. Make suspect aware they are being covered.  
“Turn your head to the (right/left); do you see my partner?”
  6. Cuffing officer makes approach to suspect
  7. Cuff the suspect as described in “THE PROPER APPLICATION OF HANDCUFFS” on page 11.
  8. Make sure to double lock the handcuffs.
  9. Perform a thorough pat-down for weapons and items that could be used to get out of the handcuffs (See “SEARCHING AN INDIVIDUAL” on page 13.)

**Figure 11.  
Handcuffing A  
Standing  
Suspect With No  
Wall For Support**



## FBI prone

The individual is ordered to lie flat on the ground. Hands are extended out from the sides, palms up, and facing away from the officer. The search is conducted with the individual handcuffed and on the ground.

1. Make announcement to suspect.  
“Police, don’t move. Slowly put your hands in the air.”
2. Visually check the suspects waistband for weapons.  
“Slowly turn around.” (Have the suspect stop when they are facing away from you.)
3. Order the suspect into the prone position.  
“Slowly drop to your knees.”  
“Slowly place both of your hands on the ground.”  
“Walk your feet back until your stomach is on the ground.”  
“Put your arms straight out, like an airplane, with your palms facing up.”  
“Turn your head away from me.”  
“Cross your ankles.”
4. “Raise your feet into the air by bending your knees.”

**Figure 12.**  
**Using The**  
**Suspect's Bent**  
**Legs To Maintain**  
**Control**



5. Cuffing officer makes approach to suspect
6. Secure the suspect.

“Raise your (right/left) hand.” (Cuff the raised hand as described in “THE PROPER APPLICATION OF HANDCUFFS” on page 11.)

“Raise your other hand.” (Cuff the remaining hand.)
7. Make sure to double lock the handcuffs.
8. Perform a thorough pat-down for weapons and items that could be used to get out of the handcuffs (See “SEARCHING AN INDIVIDUAL” on page 13.)
9. To bring suspect to their feet:
  - a. Roll suspect onto their side and into a sitting position.
  - b. Have suspect place the heel of one of there legs against their buttocks.
  - c. The officer place one hand near the suspects head and neck area for support.
  - d. The officer places the other hand on the suspect’s biceps.
  - e. On the officer’s signal, have the suspect roll over their bent knee to the standing position with the officer’s assistance.

## Kneeling Legs Crossed

The individual is ordered to his or her knees. The left leg is lifted and the left ankle is crossed over the right ankle. The officer places his left foot on the bottom of the individual's left foot, holding it in place. If the officer's strong side is the left, the same procedure can be done using the opposite legs on the individual and the officer.

1. Make announcement to suspect.  
"Police, don't move. Slowly put your hands in the air."
2. Visually check the suspects waistband for weapons.  
"Slowly turn around." (Have the suspect stop when they are facing away from you.)
3. Order the suspect into the kneeling position.  
"Slowly drop to your knees and cross your legs at the ankles."

**Figure 13.**  
**Suspect In The**  
**Kneeling**  
**Position**



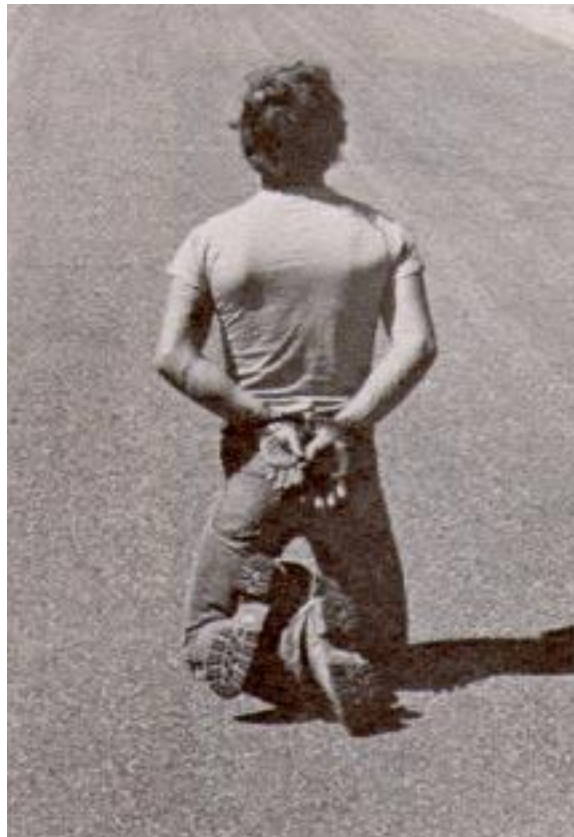
4. Order suspect to place hands in cuffing position.  
"Hands behind your back. Back of your hands together, thumbs up."

***Note: Not all people will be able to get the back of their hands together.***

5. Make use of Contact and Cover. Make suspect aware they are being covered.  
"Turn your head to the (right/left); do you see my partner?"
6. Cuffing officer makes approach to suspect

7. Cuff the suspect as described in “THE PROPER APPLICATION OF HANDCUFFS” on page 11.
8. Make sure to double lock the handcuffs.
9. Perform a thorough pat-down for weapons and items that could be used to get out of the handcuffs (See “SEARCHING AN INDIVIDUAL” on page 13.)
10. To bring suspect to their feet:
  - a. The officer place one hand near the suspects head and neck area for support.
  - b. The officer places the other hand on the suspect’s biceps.
  - c. On the officer’s signal, have the suspect stand with the officer’s assistance.

**Figure 14.**  
**Suspect**  
**Handcuffed In**  
**The Kneeling**  
**Position**



## PRACTICES TO AVOID

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Along with proper handcuffing techniques, things or situations need to be avoided by an officer. They increase an officer's safety, security and reduce his liability.

1. Do not handcuff an individual to an object such as a signpost, auto bumper, door handle, etc.
2. Do not handcuff an individual with his hands in the front unless they are suffering from a deformity or disability that does not allow handcuffing behind the back.
3. Do not handcuff yourself to the individual.
4. Do not use the handcuff as a come-along.
5. Do not handcuff with out searching the individual for possible weapons, evidence, contraband or items that can be used to escape.
6. Do not use handcuffs on mentally disturbed persons except as a temporary restraining device to allow them to be secured with padded straps or other materials.
7. Do not underestimate the individual you are detaining. Just because they are cooperative at first does not mean they will remain that way.
8. Do not let your judgement be swayed at the apparent change of attitude when handcuffing or after handcuffing an individual.
9. The age or sex of an individual should not influence the officer to hesitate or make them reluctant to use handcuffs. However, when handcuffing minors or members of the opposite sex, extra caution is needed. It is always best to have another officer present. If possible, officers of the same sex as the individual should be used for the handcuffing and searches of these individuals.
10. **Never assume the handcuffs are foolproof security devices.** Handcuffs are only temporary restraining devices.
11. Do not allow the individual's attitude, actions or words affect your treatment of the person. Keep a level head. Retaliating against the individual will only lessen your case against them or open you up to criminal and/or civil liability.

## CONCLUSION

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Handcuffing is a way of restraining an individual. Searching an individual is a way to insure that they do not have weapons, evidence, contraband or items that can be used to escape or cause harm. An officer's ability to use both effectively will protect not only the officer, but the restrained individual and possibly others.







**LAKE COUNTY SHERIFF'S**

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**RESERVE DEPUTY UNIT**

Lake County Sheriff's  
Reserve Deputy Unit  
1303 North Milwaukee Avenue  
Libertyville, Illinois 60048

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