

# POLICY AND PROCEDURES

NUMBER: 813

SUBJECT: Inmate Searches

ACA STANDARDS: 4-ALDF-2C-01, 03, 04, 05

ACTING DIRECTOR: *Julia Childrey*

EFFECTIVE DATE: 4/1/86 REVISION DATE: 9/97, 11/99, 1/01, 1/09,  
11/11, 11/13, 9/14, 12/15, 12/18



## I. POLICY

The St. Louis County Department of Justice Services shall search inmates within the Justice Center to ensure the safe, secure operation of the facility. However, searches shall not be used for punishment or harassment.

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES

All St. Louis County Department of Justice Services' staff are responsible for the following procedures.

## III. DEFINITIONS

**Frisk:** The inspection of a fully clothed inmate using the hands to search clothing and personal belongings.

**Strip Search:** When all clothing is removed and a thorough and detailed examination of the unclothed body of the inmate and the clothing worn is performed by the Custody staff.

**Contraband:** Any prohibited or illegal item (altered and/or excessive authorized items and unauthorized items) whose importation, exportation or possession is forbidden.

**Reasonable Suspicion:** An action or behavior that would lead a person to believe that contraband is being concealed.

**Probable Cause:** Information developed from another source, such as statements

by police or other inmates that would lead a reasonable person to believe contraband is being concealed.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES**

##### **A. When to Conduct Inmate Searches**

- 1.** Prisoners will be frisked upon entering the Intake Service Center for booking.
- 2.** Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.
- 3.** Inmates returning from work details (e.g., laundry, kitchen, maintenance, etc) will be frisked by the escorting officer(s) upon returning to the housing unit floor. Inmates may be randomly stripped searched by the escorting officer upon the inmate's return from a work detail. The Security Manager/Unit Manager will predetermine the numerical sequence (e.g., every third person, every fifth person, etc) and how often a strip search will be performed, prior to starting the actual searches.

**NOTE:** An inmate will not be included in the random strip searches if he/she has a Caution Code that says "Not Strip Searchable". Officers conducting random strip searches will ensure that they are aware of which inmates in their work group have this Caution Code.

- 4.** Inmates on disciplinary restriction or secure move status will be frisked by the escorting officers after placing restraints on the inmates.
- 5.** Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.

6. Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.
7. Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.
8. Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.
9. Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.
10. Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.
11. Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.
12. Officers may conduct a frisk or strip search at any time if they possess reasonable suspicion that an inmate is carrying or concealing contraband. Strip searches on misdemeanor or traffic offenders must always be documented on a Strip Search Authorization Form.

13. Officers may conduct random frisks at any time.
14. If contraband is found during a frisk, the inmate can be strip searched at the discretion of the supervisor.
15. Inmates shall be strip searched upon admission to the facility, with the exception of misdemeanor or traffic offenders that fall under the criteria explained in Section C.

B. Guidelines for Searching Inmates

**1-13.** Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.

C. Misdemeanor or Traffic Offense Strip Searches

1. Arrestees who are charged with a misdemeanor or traffic offense, who are not sentenced, may not be strip searched pursuant to 544.197 RSMo. Arrestees charged with these minor offenses may be subjected to a strip search only when jail officials possess a reasonable suspicion or probable cause that the arrestee is carrying or concealing contraband.
2. Reasonable suspicion may be based on such factors as:
  - a. The arrestee's appearance
  - b. The nature of the offense
  - c. The prior arrest record.
3. All non-sentenced arrestees with
  - (1) felony convictions,
  - (2) any misdemeanor or felony weapons, contraband or violent crime convictions,
  - (3) pending felony cases, or
  - (4) any misdemeanor or felony weapons, contraband or violent offenses may be strip searched. All

sentenced inmates, no matter what the charge may be, strip searched.

4. The Pre-Classification Specialist will determine if the nature of the offense or a prior arrest record justifies the initial strip search of a misdemeanor or traffic arrestee. The Pre-Classification Specialist will note this information in the search column of the transfer list. (See Attachment #1)
5. If the inmate is arrested for a felony offense the search column of the transfer list shall read "OK". The searching officer may strip search this inmate.
6. If the inmate has been sentenced the search column will read "MIS/TRF (misdemeanor or traffic arrestee) Sentenced 1/2/97". The searching officer may strip search this inmate.
7. If the inmate has a misdemeanor or traffic offense and the record check indicates one of the following, the inmate may be strip searched:
  - a. Any prior felony convictions, any weapons, contraband or violent crime convictions.  
  
**Example:** Search column shall read "MIS/TRF Prior conviction 1-2-97".
  - b. Any pending felony cases. Example: Search column will read "MIS/TRF Prior pending felony case 11-3-93".
  - c. Any weapons or contraband arrests, current or prior.  
  
**Example:** Search column will read "MIS/TRF Prior Weapons arrest 10/3/94".
  - d. Any violent crimes, current or prior (can include misdemeanor assault or resisting arrest).  
  
**Example:** Search column shall read "MIS/TRF Prior Violent Crime arrest 10-10-90".
8. If the inmate was arrested for a misdemeanor or traffic offense and has
  - (1) no prior convictions,

- (2) no misdemeanor or felony, weapons, contraband or violent crime arrests, the search column shall read "NSS", (No Strip Search) indicating to the searching officer that the arrestee cannot be strip searched. The searching officer may strip search this arrestee only if the officer has reasonable suspicion to do so and has authorization from the supervisor.
9. Any time a misdemeanor or traffic inmate is strip searched, a Strip Search Authorization Form must be filled out accordingly. (See Attachment #2)
10. If a misdemeanor or traffic inmate is strip searched due to a reasonable suspicion that he/she is concealing or carrying contraband, the searching officer shall contact the supervisor by radio immediately. The supervisor will report to the searching area to authorize whether or not the inmate can be strip searched. The searching officer must restrain and secure the inmate if he/she must leave the area. The searching officer may also radio another officer to secure the area if the searching officer must leave. If at any time the inmate must be left alone, he/she must be secured away from other inmates and restrained so that contraband cannot be destroyed or passed in the interim. All efforts shall be made to have an officer observing the inmate in question at all times.
11. The officer conducting the strip search will inform the supervisor of his/her reasons for wanting to strip search, (i.e., there is reasonable suspicion the arrestee is carrying contraband). The strip search may be conducted in the above instance only after the supervisor determines there is probable cause for the strip search. The Strip Search Authorization Form will be completed immediately after the strip search and must be signed by both the searching officer and authorizing supervisor. This form is completed even if no contraband is found. Copies of the Strip Search Authorization Form and any other reports associated with the strip search must be attached to the supervisor's daily report.
12. Intake personnel who have reasonable suspicion that a misdemeanor or traffic offender is concealing contraband while in open seating, may conduct a strip search after consulting with the supervisor. A Strip Search Authorization Form must be filled out accordingly. If the arresting agency requests a strip search for any type of arrested offender, especially a misdemeanor or traffic offender, note this in the 'Reason for the Strip Search' section and have the arresting agency sign in this area.

- 13.** If an inmate as an "NSS" by his name on the roster, the inmate cannot be strip searched at any time unless there is reasonable suspicion or probable cause the inmate is concealing or carrying contraband.
- 14.** Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.
- 15.** If a housing unit/pod shakedown is conducted due to a reasonable suspicion that drugs or contraband are present in the cell or dorm the "NSS" inmate is in, that inmate can be strip searched, however, a Strip Search Authorization Form must be filled out.

**D. Inmate Frisk Procedure**

- 1-18.** Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.

**E. Inmate Strip Search Procedure**

- 1-20.** Portions of this record are closed pursuant to Section 610.021 (19) (21) RSMo and Section 114.020 (18) (20) SLCRO because public disclosure of such portions would threaten public safety by compromising the safe and secure operation of the Jail, and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the portions of such records.