



CITY OF AKRON, OHIO
POLICE DIVISION
KENNETH R. BALL II, CHIEF OF POLICE

NUMBER P-2020-040	EFFECTIVE DATE July 23, 2020	RESCINDS P-13-040 Issued 08/19/13
SUBJECT Strip/Body Cavity Search Procedure		ISSUING AUTHORITY Chief Kenneth R. Ball II

I. POLICY

Certain limitations and requirements are placed on law enforcement personnel regarding strip and body cavity searches of persons who are detained or arrested¹. It is important that officers are familiar with the requirements for these types of searches because a violation may result in both criminal and civil sanctions as well as departmental disciplinary action.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Strip search – An inspection of the genitalia, buttocks, breasts, or undergarments of a person that is preceded by the removal or rearrangement of some or all of the person’s clothing and is conducted in any manner while the person is detained or arrested.
- B. Body cavity search – An inspection of the anal or vaginal cavity of a person is conducted in any manner while the person is detained or arrested.

III. PROCEDURE

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR STRIP/BODY CAVITY SEARCHES

- 1. Must have probable cause to believe that the person is concealing evidence of the commission of a criminal offense, including fruits or tools of a crime, contraband, or a deadly weapon that could not otherwise be discovered.
- 2. Must consider the nature of the offense with which the person to be searched is charged, the circumstances of the arrest, and the prior conviction record, if known.
- 3. Shall only be conducted after the officer receives written authorization from a supervisor unless a medical emergency exists that makes this impracticable. All supervisors are designated by the Chief of Police to authorize a strip search.
- 4. When conducting a strip or body cavity search, officers should make all attempts to do so in a manner that maintains the dignity of the individual being searched.
- 5. Safety and the preservation of evidence shall take priority during each search.

6. Officers may immediately remove any item reasonably believed to be a weapon from a person detained or in custody.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR A STRIP SEARCH

1. Shall only be conducted by sworn police officers.
2. Shall be conducted by a person of the same sex as the person being searched.
3. Officers shall utilize personal protective equipment (i.e. gloves) when conducting a strip search.
4. Must be conducted in a manner and location that permits only the persons who are physically conducting the search to observe.
5. There shall be a minimum of two and a maximum of three officers present when any strip search is conducted. If safety dictates, more officers may attend if approved by a supervisor.
6. After the search is completed, the remainder of the Authorization for Strip/Body Cavity Search form must be completed.

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR A BODY CAVITY SEARCH

1. Shall only be conducted after a search warrant is issued that authorizes the search unless there is a medical emergency justifying a warrantless search.
2. Shall only be conducted under sanitary conditions by a physician, registered nurse, or licensed practical nurse that is registered or licensed to practice in the state of Ohio. Only one officer may observe unless the authorizing supervisor approves more.
3. Shall only be observed by officers who are the same sex as the person being searched.
4. Must be conducted in a manner and location that permits only the persons who are physically conducting the search to observe.
5. After the search is completed, the remainder of the Authorization for Strip/Body Cavity Search form must be completed.

D. AUTHORIZATION FOR STRIP/BODY CAVITY SEARCH FORM

1. All reports shall be assigned a report number even if an incident report is not required.
2. The original shall be forwarded to the Record Room.
3. A copy shall be given to the person being searched.

E. USE OF CAMERAS DURING A STRIP OR BODY CAVITY SEARCH

1. Body worn cameras (BWC) shall not be used to record any portion of a strip or body cavity search.
2. If equipped with a BWC, officers will record the area where the search is to be conducted to document that it is a private area. They will then turn their cameras off before proceeding with the search.
 - a. Once the search is completed and the subject is fully clothed, officers shall wait 30 seconds before turning their cameras back on. This is done to avoid inadvertently filming a partially clothed subject during the 30 second buffer period.
 - b. Officers shall then use their camera to document the subject’s condition and again record the area where the search was conducted. Any BWC footage shall be categorized as Use of Force/Complaints.
5. Strip searches shall not be performed in the DB interview rooms due to the presence of cameras.
6. Officers shall ensure that no other cameras are able to capture any portion of a strip or body worn cavity search.

By Order Of,

Kenneth R. Ball II
Chief of Police

Date _____

¹ Ohio Revised Code Section 2933.32