


<b>HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL</b>		
<b>Issue Date</b> February 2021	<b>Review Date</b> February 2022	<b>Directive Number</b> <b>1.2.5</b>
<b>Accreditation Index:</b> 1.2.5		<b>Rescinds:</b> Directive 1.2.5 of November 2019
<b>Chapter:</b> One – Organization & Management		<b>Section:</b> Two – Limits of Authority
<b>Chief of Police:</b> <i>John F. Viola</i>		

**SUBJECT: STRIP AND/OR BODY CAVITY SEARCHES**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Directive is to provide officers with guidelines for determining if and under what conditions the use of strip searches and body cavity searches are permissible and to establish guidelines for the appropriate conduct of such searches.

**II. POLICY**

This Department recognizes that the use of strip searches and body cavity searches may, under certain conditions, be necessary to protect the safety of officers, civilians and other prisoner(s); to detect and secure evidence of criminal activity and to safeguard the security, safety and related interests of the Department’s prisoner detention and holding facilities. Recognizing the intrusiveness of these searches on individual privacy, however, it is the policy of this Department that such searches shall be conducted only with proper authority and justification, with the due recognition and deference for the human dignity of those being searched and in accordance with the procedural guidelines for conducting such searches as set forth in this policy.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

**Strip Search** – Any search of an individual requiring the removal or rearrangement of some or all clothing to permit the visual inspection of genital areas, buttocks, anus, or female breasts.

**Body Cavity Search** – Any search involving not only visual inspection of skin surfaces but the internal physical examination of body cavities and, in some instances, organs such as the stomach cavity.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES**

##### **A. Strip Searches**

1. Individuals arrested for traffic violations and other minor offenses of a nonviolent nature shall not be subject to strip searches unless the arresting officer has articulable, reasonable suspicion to believe that the individual is concealing contraband or weapons. Reasonable suspicion may be based upon, but not limited to, one or more of the following criteria:
  - a. the nature of the offense charged
  - b. the arrestee's appearance and demeanor
  - c. the circumstances surrounding the arrest
  - d. the arrestee's criminal record, particularly past crimes of violence and narcotics offenses.
  - e. the discovery of evidence of a major offense in plain view or in the course of a search incident to the arrest.
  - f. detection of suspicious objects beneath the suspect's clothing during a field search incident to arrest.
2. Field strip searches of prisoners shall be conducted only in the rarest of circumstances under exigent circumstances where the life of officers or others may be placed at risk, and only with the explicit approval of a supervisory officer.  
**(PLEAC 1.2.5 a)**
3. Where articulable, reasonable suspicion exists to conduct a strip search, the arresting officer shall request a supervisor or other designated authority for permission to proceed with the search. The supervisor should review the basis of the officer's reasonable suspicion and ensure the criteria for a strip search have been met.  
**(PLEAC 1.2.5 a)**
4. When authorized by the supervising authority, strip searches may be conducted only:
  - a. by designated personnel;
  - b. in conformance with approved hygienic procedures and professional practices;
  - c. by the least number of personnel necessary and only by those of the same sex; and

d. under conditions that provide privacy from all but those authorized to conduct the search.

**(PLEAC 1.2.5 b)**

5. Following a strip search, the officer performing the search shall submit as part of the arrest incident report the following details:

a. date and place of the search

b. identity of the officer conducting the search.

c. identity of the individual searched.

d. those present during the search

e. a detailed description of the nature and extent of the search.

f. any weapons, evidence or contraband found during the search.

**(PLEAC 1.2.5 c)**

## B. Body Cavity Searches

Should visual examination of a suspect during a strip search and/or other information lead an officer to believe that the suspect is concealing a weapon, evidence or contraband within a body cavity; the following procedures shall be followed:

1. The officer shall consult with his immediate supervisor to determine whether probable cause exists to seek a search warrant for a body cavity search. The decision to seek a search warrant shall recognize that a body cavity search is highly invasive of personal privacy and is reasonable only where the suspected offense is of a serious nature and/or poses a threat to the safety of officers or others, and/or the security of the Department's detention operations.
2. If probable cause exists for a body cavity search, an affidavit for a search warrant shall be prepared that clearly defines the nature of the alleged offense and the basis for the officer's probable cause.
3. On the basis of a search warrant, a body cavity search shall be performed only by an authorized physician or by other medically trained personnel at the physician's direction.
4. Search warrants must be approved by a representative of the District Attorney.  
**(PLEAC 1.2.5 a)**
5. For safety and security reasons, a designated officer or matron will witness the search.  
**(PLEAC 1.2.5 b)**
6. Body cavity searches shall be performed with due recognition of privacy and hygienic concerns previously addressed in this policy.  
**(PLEAC 1.2.5 b)**

7. The authorized individual conducting the search shall file a report with this Department. The witnessing officer or matron shall cosign the report and comply with information requirements specified in section IV, paragraph A, subsection 5 of this policy.  
(PLEAC 1.2.5 c)

C. Visual Inspection of the mouth

1. Nothing in this directive is meant to restrict a cursory visual inspection of the mouth.

**BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE**