



October 2019

Freedom of Information Request Reference N^o: FOI 003260/19

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 10th September 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

I understand that there is Home Office Approved Training for the application of handcuffs on suspects/detainees, however, there seems to be a lack of information regarding what type of suspect/detainee should have which of the approved application methods applied.

I have found information that rear handcuffing in the stack position should be applied to slimmer people and larger suspects should have either back to back (of hand) or if impractical, to have 2 sets of handcuffs connected together.

It is clear that some people are too large to have rear stack at all or are large enough not to be able to have rear stack without causing considerable pain, discomfort and injury, yet I have found evidence of some people who clearly shouldn't have been handcuffed in the rear stack position being handcuffed in the aforementioned position.

What is your force policy on handcuffing large people who struggle to or cannot practically position their hands/arms for a rear stack and what are officers taught in regards to handcuffing in the rear stack position?

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 12th September 2019.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have located the following information as relevant to your request.

The Constabularies' Operational Training Manager has provided the following:-

There are a number of methods for the application of handcuffs that are approved by the Home Office. The application of handcuffs is a dynamic decision that has to be justified and proportionate by the officer applying the handcuffs. There is no set approach or policy based around the physical size or attributes on an individual. The use of handcuffs to the rear can be necessary if the level of violence being used means that an officer has the need to control the subject on the ground, making any application to the front impossible, but there are many other factors that could influence a decision. Officers are constantly seeking to minimise risk and therefore where resistance is such that the application of a single set of handcuffs is not possible, officers have the opportunity to use additional sets to link handcuffs together to broaden the distance between arms. This approach can also assist officers who are faced with violent persons who may also have mobility or physical attributes that make the application of a single set of handcuffs to the rear a factor. However, this does not preclude the use of a single set of handcuffs when the situation and risk requires.

The application of handcuffs is an objective basis use of force that must be proportionate and justified. It is also a continuing use of force and therefore Officers should always check the fitting of handcuffs and consider the reposition of any handcuffs when safe to do so.