

# TEXARKANA POLICE DEPARTMENT

## GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Texarkana District Court Security</b>		
<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>1108.17</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	<b>July 20, 2017</b>
<b>Scheduled Review Date</b>	<b>August 30, 2018</b>	<b>ISSUE DATE</b>	<b>July 20, 2017</b>
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>July 20, 2017</b>	<b>REVISION DATE</b>	<b>July 20, 2017</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b>		<b>ALEAP Standards</b>	11.01; 11.02; 11.03

I. Purpose and Scope

- A. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the decorum and security of the Texarkana, Arkansas District Court.

II. Policy

- A. It shall be the policy of the Texarkana Police Department to ensure proper security and appropriate court decorum is maintained whenever the Texarkana, Arkansas District Court is in session, as this is necessary for the administration of justice and for the protection of court personnel and the public.
- B. Regardless of the level of offense, court hearings can be emotionally charged and decorum must be maintained; therefore, the police department shall provide officers who will serve as court security officers during every session of the Texarkana, Arkansas District Court. The court security officers assigned to the court shall provide for the court's security, overall decorum and protection of the court's personnel as well as those who are in attendance.
- C. Department personnel shall recognize and adhere to the guidelines contained within this policy. Supervisors shall ensure compliance with this policy wherever practical.

III. Organization and Staffing

- A. When the Texarkana, Arkansas District Court (TADC) is in session, the police department is responsible for its security. The department is also responsible for emergency operation plans for incidents that might occur in the court.
- B. An officer is assigned as court security officer when the court is in session. A Services Division supervisor will ensure that the court security officer reports for court sessions as required. Only officers who have been trained to perform the duties of a court security officer shall serve in this capacity.

IV. Operations

- A. The assigned court security officer, who will be assigned to attend all sessions of the court unless dismissed by the judge, has the following duties:
  - 1. The assigned court security officer will ensure all defendants, witnesses and observers are standing prior to the entrance of the officers of the court.

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2. The assigned court security officer will perform opening ceremonies of the court and announce the judge's entrance into the courtroom.
  3. The assigned court security officer will enforce the rules of the court, which are posted at the public entrance point, and preserve order and appropriate decorum while the court is in session.
- B. During periods when the TADC is in session, the assigned court security officer may be directed by the presiding judge to place an individual under arrest. Whether or not to use physical restraints for such arrests is at the discretion and direction of the presiding judge. Any force used during any session of the TADC shall conform to the guidelines contained within *General Order 1102.03---Use of Force*.
- C. High risk persons brought into the TADC courtroom shall be appropriately restrained. All TADC court security officers maintain access to handcuffs, leg restraints and belly chain restraints.
- D. The TADC judge shall only allow sworn law enforcement officers to be armed during sessions of the court. Any other person wishing to carry weapons into the TADC courtroom shall do so under the direct permission of the judge.
- V. Court Security Plan
- A. Facilities and Equipment
1. The TADC judge, through the court clerk, maintain access to a telephone located within the courtroom. The court security officers assigned to the TADC carry police radios that maintain the ability to communicate with Central Records and Communications. [ALEAP 11.02](#)
  2. A magnetometer is maintained at the entrance to the TADC courtroom. All personnel coming into the courtroom through the front entrance shall be scanned utilizing this piece of security equipment.
  3. In case of a power failure, the court security officers assigned to the TADC maintain access to a flashlight.
- B. Prior to the beginning of each TADC session, the court security officer in charge of the security detail shall ensure the following precautions are observed:
1. The court security officer(s) shall ensure emergency doorways in the TADC courtroom are free of obstructions;
  2. The court security officer(s) shall conduct a search of the entire courtroom area to ensure all areas are free of weapons and related contraband.
  3. The court security officer(s) shall ensure the public entrance of the TADC courtroom are open, free of any weapons or related contraband and the magnetometer is functioning properly.
  4. The court security officer(s) shall ensure the telephone positioned at the court clerk's desk is functioning and all applicable police radios are configured for proper use.
- C. Courtroom Operations
1. The TADC judge shall enter and exit the courtroom through the doorway located just beyond the court clerk's desk.
  2. The court security officer(s) shall ensure the public enters and exits the TADC courtroom only through the main doors leading into the gallery area.

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3. The court security officer(s) shall ensure all prisoners are brought into courtroom prior to the judge taking his seat at the bench. The prisoners will be removed from the court at the direction of the judge and whenever the prisoner's removal is necessary to maintain proper order and decorum within the courtroom.
4. Law enforcement officers and court security officers assigned to the TADC are the only persons authorized to carry weapons into the courtroom. If a court security officer develops information leading him/her to believe an unauthorized person may be carrying a weapon, the court security officer(s) will remove this person from the courtroom to be rescanned by the magnetometer.
5. Contraband taken into the courtroom for evidentiary purposes shall remain in the possession of the testifying officer unless otherwise directed by the TADC judge.

D. Unusual Occurrences

1. In the event of an emergency, disturbance or any other unusual occurrence, the court security officer or ranking police officer shall assume control and request additional police, fire or medical assistance as the circumstances require.
2. Medical Emergencies in the Courtroom
  - a. A first-aid kit shall be maintained in the office of either the judge or the court clerk;
  - b. All requests for medical assistance or calls for additional security resources shall be facilitated whenever practical through Central Records and Communications;
  - c. If the medical emergency involves a person who is in custody, the court security officer shall maintain security of the prisoner;
  - d. If the medical emergency involves a court participant or spectator, the court security officer shall maintain security of any prisoners who are present and provides any assistance possible. The court security officer will contact the dispatch center via radio (or most appropriate available means) and request the proper assistance.
  - e. If other police officers are present, the ranking officer will assume control and direct the actions of the court security officer, responding officers and other personnel.
  - f. The Life Net ambulance service or first responders shall provide appropriate emergency medical service and transportation to the hospital via the ambulance. A court security officer shall accompany any prisoner transported off site for medical treatment and maintain custody and control.
  - g. The court security officer assigned to the TADC shall be responsible for the completion of all police reports necessitated by a medical emergency.
3. High-Risk Trials
  - a. If information develops that indicates an increased threat exists for the judge or any other participant in the proceeding, the judge or prosecutor will ensure the court security officer is notified who shall implement additional security measures.
  - b. Whenever the judge or other court official deems any trial to be high risk, the Services Commander will be briefed, and he should confer with the court security officer, evaluate the circumstances and implement appropriate security measures.
4. Evacuation Plan

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- a. In the event of an evacuation of the TADC courtroom, the court security officer shall assume control of the evacuation and ensure the evacuation plan is followed.
- b. The members of the court shall exit the courtroom pursuant to the evacuation plan. Spectators positioned within the gallery shall be instructed to exit through the main doors and exit the building through the nearest public entrance or exit.
- c. A fire evacuation chart will be maintained at the rear of the courtroom near the exit.

VI. Arkansas Court Security Training [ALEAP 11.01](#)

- A. The court security officers assigned to the TADC must be a certified law enforcement officer by the Arkansas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training and complete the Court Security Officers Training program. Pursuant to the statutory requirements set forth in the Arkansas Court Security Act (*Act 576 of 2007*), a Services Division supervisor shall ensure all court security officers complete this mandatory training.
- B. In addition to the above training, all court security officers will undergo special training on the carrying of weapons inside the courtroom as well as the use of restraints.

VII. Annual Review of Court Operations [ALEAP 11.03](#)

- A. The Services Division Commander, or his designee, shall contact the TADC judge prior to January 31<sup>st</sup> each year to schedule evacuation training for all TADC personnel. The Services Commander, or his designee, will ensure all TADC personnel are briefed yearly concerning the evacuation plan, including the fire evacuation plan as well as a training review on emergency response protocols. All assigned court security officers shall attend this yearly training.
  - 1. An annual inspection will be conducted during the evacuation plan review training by a Services Division supervisor and a representative of the Court Clerk's Office. The inspection should include all lights, doors, door locks, communication devices and any other security device. All maintenance issues should be immediately addressed through appropriate channels.

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