



MYRTLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Subject: *Handling Person(s) Contemplating and/or
 Attempting Suicide*

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PURPOSE

To establish guidelines to assist officers in handling person(s) who are contemplating and/or attempting suicide; or, because of mental illness, they are exhibiting traits that indicate there is a substantial risk of their harming themselves or others or being incapable of caring for themselves.

DEFINITIONS

1. Certificate of Detention – Also known as “Order of Detention” – The document issued by the Probate Court Judge giving the authority to have an individual transported to an approved facility for evaluation and/or treatment.
2. GSRMC – Grand Strand Regional Medical Center.
3. Friend or Family Member – Parent, guardian, spouse, adult next-of-kin or nearest adult friend.

PROCEDURE

1. An officer answering a call for service in a situation described above will follow the guidelines listed in this regulation.
 - A. Attempt to convince the subject to voluntarily accept medical attention and/or transportation to a local hospital or mental health clinic for evaluation. If he/she refuses and a family member or friend is available,

attempt to have the subject voluntarily be transported to the hospital or mental health clinic by the friend or family member.

- B. If medical attention and/or mental evaluation is declined by the subject, the officer will stand by with them until such time as necessary steps can be taken to obtain an Order of Detention from the Probate Court Judge that would compel the person to submit to an evaluation.
- C. Contact a supervisor who will call Waccamaw Mental Health and relay the facts to a Mental Health Counselor.
 - 1) The daytime number is also to be used during non-business hours, as the call will automatically be forwarded to the on-call counselor.
 - 2) The counselor will need to know if the situation involves drug and/or alcohol abuse.
 - 3) The counselor may also determine that he/she will need to respond to the scene to interview the subject prior to contacting the Probate Court Judge.

Note: At no time will a counselor be allowed into a situation that may place the counselor or others in jeopardy.

- D. If determined to be necessary, the mental health counselor will contact the Probate Court Judge and request that an Order of Detention be issued. The supervisor will designate an officer to respond to the Probate Court in Conway to obtain the order.
- E. The officer will contact the dispatcher as soon as the order is obtained. The dispatcher will notify the officer(s) on the scene who will then transport the subject to Waccamaw Mental Health to be evaluated. The order will be delivered to the mental health facility immediately upon receipt. In the event it occurs during non-business hours for Waccamaw Mental Health, the subject will be transported to GSRMC for evaluation and the Order of Detention will be taken to GSRMC also.
- F. In the event the Probate Court Judge declines to issue the order, the supervisor at the scene will decide when it is appropriate to vacate the premises after all means have been exhausted to resolve the situation.
- G. When an Order of Detention is issued, it is the duty of the officer to transport the subject in custody to the hospital or mental health facility for evaluation and to maintain custody of this person until such time as a disposition is determined.
- H. Any friend or family member may transport the individual (if the officer feels that it is appropriate) provided the friend or family member has read the Certificate of Detention and signed the statement on the back that

clearly states that the responsibility lies with the officer, but the family member or friend freely chooses to assume that responsibility without entitlement to reimbursement for the cost of transportation.

- I. Should the subject commit any violation of the law in the presence of the officer or is subject to arrest in the case of a felony or freshly-committed misdemeanor, the officer shall handle the violation accordingly. If a lawful arrest is made, the subject will immediately be transported to Waccamaw Mental Health or GSRMC for evaluation prior to being taken to jail. If committed for further evaluation, the supervisor will determine if it is in the interest of justice that the criminal charges be pursued following the subject's release from the mental health facility or hospital. If the supervisor requests no further prosecution, he/she will document the reason(s) for such request and forward it through the proper chain of command as stated in Myrtle Beach Police Department Administrative Regulations and Operating Procedures entitled "Voluntary Dismissal or Reduction of Charges, Section 400 Court Matters, #402.
- J. If after responding to the call, the supervisor determines the subject is not going to harm himself/herself and is not in need of immediate mental evaluation, the officer(s) may clear the scene without notifying the Probate Court. The incident and disposition will be properly documented on a Uniformed Crime Report (UCR).
- K. Under exigent circumstances, the supervisor on the scene may deviate from the procedure and bypass contacting the Mental Health Counselor and directly seek an order from the Probate Court Judge when deemed necessary.
- L. It is important to verify the status of the Order of Detention before service to ensure it is active. This is especially important when an officer is presented with an order that is hand delivered by a family member or in cases where copies have been distributed to other law enforcement agencies.