

CHAPTER 73 COURT SECURITY

DISCUSSION: The court adjudicates cases, penalizes those found guilty of violating the law and protects the constitutional rights of those brought before it. Accordingly, an appropriate level of security should prevail to protect the integrity of court procedures, to sustain the rights of individuals before it, to deter those who would take violent action against the court or participants and to sustain the decorum of the court. The policy and procedures presented in this chapter define the role of the Department and its representatives in relation to the function of the Municipal Court.

73.1 ADMINISTRATION

73.1.1 The Security Function

- A. The City of Hattiesburg pursuant to State Code has established a Municipal Court to handle misdemeanor violations occurring inside the geographical boundaries of the city.
- B. The Hattiesburg Police Department is not mandated by law to provide for court security. However, court room security and transportation services are furnished by the Warrants Section.
- C. The primary mission of warrants officers is the protection of the Judge, court employees and other persons in the court room.
- D. The Warrants section shall provide for the safe and secure transportation and processing of prisoners, service of process for the court and what ever else may be required by the court in the line of duty. The Hattiesburg Police Department shall maintain direction and control over Warrants Officers.
- E. Two uniformed officers are assigned to the court to protect the judge, court employees and those persons in attendance. One (1) in the court room and the other in the lobby area prior to the beginning of the session. One (1) officer will be stationed at the head of the court room while court is in session with the other at the rear to provide an enforcement presence in the court room to maintain order and enforce judicial control.
- F. The court room is searched for weapons or items that could be used for weapons as well as any suspicious/foreign items prior to opening the doors for the court session. This includes checking the Judge's bench area, under tables and chairs, Judges Chambers and the lobby.
- G. Items not allowed in court:
 - 1. Cellular Phones

2. Pagers
 3. Knives (of any type)
 4. Chemical agents such as mace or pepper spray
 5. Any other item deemed a security risk by the court officers or the Judge.
- H. Purses, briefcases or any other container is subject to search prior to admission to the court room.
- I. Persons coming into court go through a metal detector. If the detector alarms to something then that person is checked with the hand held metal detector by the officer working in the lobby.

73.2 OPERATIONS

73.2.1 Facilities and Equipment

- A. The Municipal Court is located and holds session at the Hattiesburg Police Department, # 1 Government Plaza. The court room is an auditorium style with public access from the exterior and private access from the interior. Chambers are provided for the judge along with space for attorneys and officers awaiting trial.
- B. The court shares emergency equipment provided for the Police Department to include:
1. Emergency power generator
 2. Fire alarms
 3. Fire suppression equipment
First Aid
- C. An access ramp is available at the back door of the Police Department with admission to the court from the interior entrance.
- D. Telephones are located in the Judges Chamber and attorney waiting area.
- E. Handcuffs, restraints and other shackling devices are assigned to the Warrants Unit and are thus available to the court.
- F. A walk through metal detector with a partition is placed at the entrance to the court room and is operated by an officer screening people having business with the court. Hand held metal detector may be used when the walk through sounds an alarm or as an additional precaution. These devices are owned by the court system and monitored by the officers.

- G. Warrant Officers are supplied/issued the same basic equipment as Patrol Officers which provides the court with:
 - 1. The presence of sworn armed officers
 - 2. Chemical Agents
 - 3. Direct contact with the police communication center by radio.
 - 4. Duress alarms located on portable radios.
- H. Doors leading from the court room to the interior of the Police Station are locked and remain closed while court is in session.
- I. Inspectional service shall occur every three (3) years. The results of this survey/inspection shall be used to amend, add or delete policy as it relates to the court function.
- J. Operational readiness of equipment is maintained as follows:
 - 1. Officer's assigned equipment is inspected as a line inspection. This can take the form of a supervisor's inspection, staff inspection, or a line inspection as it relates to a particular piece of equipment such as the annual inspection of department firearms.
 - 2. Fire and safety equipment is inspected by the Hattiesburg Fire Department. The last inspection date is noted and attached to the equipment. Fire Extinguishers are inspected and recharged by a local service with the date noted on the canister.
 - 3. Fleet Maintenance is responsible for service and repair of the transport bus.

73.3 POLICY

73.3.1 Weapons

Sworn officers are allowed to retain possession of their side arm while in court unless conditions dictate otherwise or at the request of the presiding Judge. The Warrants Officer shall take charge of any such weapon, make the weapon safe (unloaded action open) and provide a secure location. Lock boxes are available in the Detective Division

73.3.2 Use of Restraints

All Department personnel shall follow guidelines for transporting prisoners in AOM Chapter 71. Due to the nature of the violations heard by this court subjects will not, under normal

conditions, be restrained when before the judge and/or in the court room. Restraints will be used on subjects that are considered a threat to the safety of individuals in the court room or an escape risk.

73.3.4 Summons and Court Appearance

- A. Officers shall honor any summons to court which require his/her presence. Municipal Court with its close ties to the Police Department may develop an alternative notification system such as posting of court dates or docket. The Department shall be responsible for advising all officers of the court's current method of notification. In turn, it becomes the officer's responsibility for court appearances.
- B. Municipal Court has made an effort to work with the Department by scheduling court appearances with work schedules. Officers appearing in Municipal Court will wear their normal work uniform. (AOM Chapter 26)
- C. Officers testifying in court actions where a strong professional appearance/image is desired shall appear as follows: (i.e. Grand Jury, Circuit Court, Jury Trial or any other trial resulting in high exposure for the Police Department.)
 - 1. Detectives:
 - a. Males shall wear coat and tie (preferably a suit)
 - b. Females shall wear a dress, business suit or other attire rendering a professional appearance.
 - 2. All other Officers regardless of assignment (excepting modified duty) shall wear the Official Hattiesburg Police Uniform as described in AOM 26.5.3 unless otherwise specified by the Chief of Police.
 - 3. Officers assigned to modified duty shall dress according to "B" or "C.1" above depending on the circumstances of the court appearance.
- D. Officers shall only enter the Municipal Court Room when they have business with the court. An area has been provided for officers and attorneys awaiting business with the court.

73.3.5 Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, the communications center shall be notified of the occurrence along with nature of the emergency. Patrol and/or other officers shall respond as dispatched IAW established procedures pertaining to the type of incident. Examples of court emergencies include:

- A. Escape

- B. Bomb Threat
- C. Civil Disturbance
- D. Hostage
- E. Fire
- F. Medical
- G. Disaster

73.3.6 Prisoner Observation

The Municipal Court has set specific days and times to hear cases of persons that have been incarcerated. The Warrant Unit by function shall be responsible for the transportation and control of those prisoners. Prisoners brought before the court shall be kept under constant observation by department personnel.