


<p style="text-align: center;">RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</p>  <p>General Order Number: 8.02</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Date of Issue</p> <p style="text-align: center;">02/23/2016</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Effective Date</p> <p style="text-align: center;">02/23/2016</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Revision Date</p>
<p>Subject: Courthouse Security Plan</p>	<p>Amends:</p>		<p>Rescinds:</p>
<p>Index as:</p>	<p>State Certification Standards: 6.16</p>		

Special Instructions:

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to prescribe the policies and procedures of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office Court Services Unit for Court Security.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office that the Court Services Unit will be responsible for the security at the Rabun County Courthouse, the courtrooms contained therein, and the other facilities in the Complex. This policy shall apply to all personnel assigned to provide security at the Rabun County Courthouse, whether or not the personnel are assigned directly to the Court Services Unit.

DISCUSSION

It is the duty of the Sheriff "...to attend, by himself or his deputy, upon all sessions of the superior court of the county and also upon sessions of the probate court whenever required by the judge and, while the courts are in session, never to leave same without the presence of himself or his deputy, or both, if required" (O.C.G.A. 15-16-10) AND "...to attend regularly all sessions of magistrate court." (O.C.G.A. 15-10-100)

I. DEFINITIONS

Magnetometer — A device for measuring magnetic field; used to detect ferrous and non-ferrous metal objects in either hand-held or walk-through configurations, commonly known as a "metal detector".

I. DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Rabun County Sheriff's Office is responsible for the following:

1. Providing security to the courts when in session within the Courthouse;
2. Responding as needed to requests for law enforcement assistance within the Courthouse involving possible violations of State or Federal law or that represent a threat to public safety; and
3. Providing emergency response to life-threatening situations within the Courthouse.

II. COURT SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Court Services Unit Sergeant is responsible for the management of the Sheriff's Office court security program, to include providing appropriate staffing and equipment resources and for conducting the security survey. The Court Services Unit Sargent is also responsible for:
 - A. The day-to-day supervision of the Sheriff's Office court security program.
 - B. Enforcement of the court security procedures outlined in this General Order;
 - C. Determining appropriate manpower requirements and personnel assignments for court related activities;
 - D. Training assigned personnel in court related operations and emergency procedures;
 - E. Ensuring that all equipment and security devices are properly maintained and operational;
 - F. Maintaining liaison with the Sheriff and the Chief Deputy, and judicial officials for security related matters;
 - G. Assuming command of all unusual occurrences at the Courthouse until properly relieved;
 - H. Ensuring that all civilian personnel are aware that they are not permitted to bring weapons into the Courthouse under any condition. (O.C.G.A. 16-11-127)
 - I. Conducting the 3 year court survey and reporting to the Sheriff any plans or procedures that need to be revised or implemented.
 - J. Operating the courthouse monitoring equipment.
2. Court Service Deputies are responsible for performing courtroom security inspections of facilities immediately prior to court sessions.

III. COURTROOM OPERATIONS

1. The mission of Court Services Unit personnel is to provide necessary security to the courtroom by performing the following tasks:
 - A. Insuring that all personnel comply with the direction of the judge with respect to their individual conduct and behavior;
 - B. A thorough search of each courtroom shall be completed by the deputy assigned to that courtroom. This will insure that there are no weapons, contraband or other items concealed in the courtroom that may affect the security and operation of the court.

- C. If contraband or other suspicious articles are found, the deputy shall secure the area and contact a supervisor.
 - D. Deputies shall not leave the courtroom during breaks unless the courtroom has been cleared of all people, all evidence has been secured, and all doors have been locked. If the judge takes a break or the deputy needs a break, a supervisor shall be contacted for relief.
 - E. Maintaining appropriate control over prisoners;
 - F. Taking immediate action to respond to any violent or potentially disruptive situation that might threaten public safety;
 - G. Protecting the Judge(s), members of the jury or juries, and other courtroom officials as appropriate;
 - H. Removing individuals who might pose a threat to public safety or who otherwise interfere with the decorum of the court;
 - I. Notifying back up to other public safety personnel when an emergency situation arises and taking other actions as required by the situation;
 - J. Other duties as may be assigned.
2. Deputies assigned to court security duties are expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct and appearance. Deputies shall refrain from engaging in any forms of behavior that may, in any manner, reflect unfavorably on the department or the decorum of the court.
 3. The presence of a deputy in a courtroom represents a visible deterrence to those who might present a threat to the safety of others. However, it is also recognized that while presenting such deterrence, court security duty can be routine and uneventful, and may require long periods of inactivity and little inter-personal contact.
 4. During such periods while court proceedings are being conducted, deputy must remember that they are under the continuous observation and scrutiny of the general public, the judge, defense and prosecuting attorneys, members of the jury, and other court officials.
 5. It is of paramount importance that deputies remain alert and vigilant for any potential threats to security and public safety. Deputies shall position themselves to maintain continuous observation over spectators and defendants to properly respond to any threatening situation.
 6. It is also important that deputies remain personally uninvolved in court proceedings and refrain from publicly showing their emotions or feelings concerning the rulings or verdicts of the court. When such decisions are rendered, deputies must be especially alert to the emotional actions of others that might prove to be disruptive or threatening.
 7. Deputies should refrain from any actions that might be distracting from courtroom proceedings. Whenever possible, they should not walk in front of the judge, the defense and prosecuting attorneys, or the members of the jury. Nor should deputies lean on the court's bench or against other furniture in a manner that would suggest inattentiveness. If a deputy is feeling tired or sluggish, they shall notify a supervisor for a break.

IV. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Court Services Unit personnel shall adhere to the following requirements:

1. Notify the on-duty supervisor when late proceedings have ended;
2. Notify the on-duty Shift Supervisor and Shift Supervisor at the Rabun County Jail when courts remain in session past normal duty hours.

V. RESTRAINING DEVICES

1. All prisoners, regardless of age or gender, will be restrained with handcuffs anytime they are outside of a holding cell in the Courthouse.
2. Handcuffs shall be double-locked.
3. Normally, the hands shall be cuffed to the front of the prisoners who appear in court.
4. While in transport to and from the Courthouse, handcuffs shall be placed to the rear of the prisoner.
5. Prisoners will not be handcuffed to a fixed object or to a vehicle.
6. If the prisoner has only one arm or one arm is injured and cannot be cuffed, the available arm will be handcuffed and the free handcuff attached to the prisoner's belt or pants loop on the opposite side of the cuffed arm.
7. Prisoners who are sick or injured may not require restraining devices based upon the circumstances. The requirement for handcuffs under such circumstances shall be determined by the ability of the prisoner to escape or injure others.
8. If the prisoner's wrists are so thin that handcuffs will not stay on; he will be cuffed above the elbows.
9. Disabled prisoners, such as those in a wheel chair or who use walking aids, shall be handcuffed whenever practicable while being moved to and from the courtroom and will be handcuffed once situated in the courtroom.
10. Deputies may use waist-chains and/or leg irons when appropriate to secure prisoners considered to be violent, disruptive, or who, in any way, represent a threat to the safety of others or to the general order of the courtroom setting.
11. On occasion, an attorney may request that the judge authorize the removal of restraining devices from the defendant; in these cases the react belt may be considered as an option.
12. When so directed to remove the restraining devices by the judge, the assigned deputy in the courtroom will inform the judge that unrestrained prisoners in the courtroom may pose a security risk and are against the Sheriff's Office security procedures.
13. If the judge still orders the removal of the restraints, the deputy will comply with his instructions and immediately inform the on duty supervisor.
14. The restraining devices will be put back on the prisoner if the prisoner becomes disorderly, when directed by the judge, or when the trial proceedings have been concluded and it is time to remove the prisoner from the courtroom.

VI. EQUIPMENT

Deputies assigned to courtroom security duties shall carry their assigned weapon, Taser, pepper spray, and radio. Additionally, deputies shall confirm the following are immediately available for use when appropriate:

1. Handcuffs;
2. Belly Chains;
3. Leg irons (cuffs).

VII. DURESS ALARMS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Duress Alarms are available in each courtroom.

VIII. MAGNETOMETERS/HAND HELD METAL DETECTORS

Pre-positioned magnetometers and hand-held metal detectors are available for use during special security situations when directed by the presiding trial judge. This equipment shall be inspected before use by the assigned deputy.

IX. FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Firefighting equipment is available throughout the courthouse complex as prescribed by the local building codes and all deputies shall be trained in said equipment.

X. SPECIAL SECURITY SITUATIONS

1. Plans and procedures for handling emergency situations, high-risk trials, searches, weapons, use of restraining devices, detainee movement, and circulation pattern shall be based upon a documented survey conducted every three years. The survey will be performed under the direction of Sargent of Court Services Unit. The survey will involve a review of all court related security procedures; consultations with the Sheriff and Chief Deputy, judicial prosecuting officials; and, if possible, the involvement of physical security consultants to revise, where necessary, existing plans and procedures and to identify new personnel and equipment requirements that necessitate special funding.
2. The ranking on-duty Court Services Unit deputy shall be in command of all unusual occurrences at the Courthouse that involve other Court Security personnel and/or other deputies, until relieved by proper authority.

XI. COURTROOM DISTURBANCES

1. Whenever there is a disturbance, deputies shall immediately notify other security personnel and request back-up assistance.
2. If a prisoner causes a disturbance, he will be removed from the courtroom and placed in a holding cell.
3. Should a spectator cause a disturbance, the prisoner in the case shall be removed from the courtroom and properly secured in a holding cell. The deputy will then immediately return to the courtroom to assist other security personnel in handling the disturbance.

XII. HIGH-RISK TRIALS

The District Attorney's Office, Sheriff and Chief Deputy, or other judicial official will identify which situations are to be handled as a high risk trial, based upon several factors, to include severity of the offense, media interest, expressed

public concerns, notoriety of defendant, witness(s), or victim, or criminal intelligence information. Once informed that the trial is declared "high-risk," the Commander of the Court Services Unit shall:

1. Contact the presiding judge to determine what special security arrangements should be made;
2. Contact the prosecuting attorney and review the case file in order to identify the names of all interested parties (i.e., witnesses, victim(s), family members, friends and associates);
3. Provide all available information to the Criminal Investigations Division so that appropriate background information can be developed;
4. Make arrangements for additional court security personnel, if required;
5. Test all electronic devices and other security equipment to insure all are in operational condition.

XIII. FIRE

1. The first Court Services Deputy who receives information concerning a fire, will immediately notify the 911 Dispatch Center, and other Court Services Deputies and appointed facilitators by the quickest means possible.
2. Such initial notifications shall be made in a non-disruptive manner and as quietly and discreetly as possible.
3. If a trial is in session, the deputy assigned to the courtroom shall approach the judge and inform him privately of the situation and request that the prisoner be removed for transport to the Rabun County Jail, should it become necessary to evacuate the building.
4. The Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Chief Judge, and Court Services Sargent shall be notified as quickly as possible and advised of the situation so that a determination can be made whether to order an evacuation of other courtrooms and of the building.
5. An evacuation of the entire Courthouse will only be ordered by the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Chief Judge. Deputies will only direct an evacuation of the building if an actual fire is observed.
6. Should an evacuation be ordered, it will be conducted in an orderly and effective manner. Court Services Deputies shall take the following actions:
 - A. Place handcuffs on all prisoners in the building and bring them by the quickest means possible, to the Sheriff's Office to transport them to the Rabun County Jail by using available vehicles;
 - B. If transport vehicles are not available, the prisoners shall be escorted to the rear exit area or parking facility until vehicles arrive;
 - C. Once all prisoners are accounted for, Court Services Unit personnel who are not needed for prisoner control and transport, shall assist in the evacuation of the Courthouse;
 - D. Persons to be evacuated should be advised of the situation and instructed to remain calm and to evacuate the building immediately, without running or making any unnecessary noise and without using the elevators;
 - E. Deputies should be alert for any disabled, extremely young or elderly personnel, who may require special assistance from others being evacuated;

- F. All light switches, computers, telephones, facsimile machines, and other electrical devices should not be touched;
- G. No items should be removed from the building except for readily available personal property, such as pocket books, briefcases, and outer-clothing;
- H. Evacuees should be directed to leave the building through the nearest ground-floor exit and to proceed to the Town Square or at a safe distance.

XIV. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

1. At first sign of a possible medical emergency, Court Services Unit personnel shall immediately contact the 911 Dispatch Center and request Emergency Medical support to respond. The address of the courthouse is 25 Courthouse Sq, Clayton.
2. First aid will be provided if within the capability of the deputy to do so and when there is no risk to prisoner security.

XV. HOSTAGE / BARRICADE SITUATIONS

1. A hostage situation is normally initiated by a criminal defendant, aided by associates, for escape purposes or during/following a civil trial as a way to protest a custody decision or other judgment of the court.
2. Court Services personnel shall initially discern whether the incident is a hostage situation or involves only a barricaded suspect. If there is any doubt as to whether or not there are hostages, it will be assumed hostages may be involved. Of primary importance, is to contain the situation by isolating the immediate area.
3. Immediately request assistance by contacting the 911 Dispatch Center and other Court Services personnel.
4. All personnel not involved in the situation shall be evacuated to a safe location as quickly as possible. Other individuals not involved in the situation will be prevented from entering the area.
5. Upon their notification of the situation, other Court Services personnel will immediately secure and escort their prisoners to the holding cell area in the basement and proceed to the incident scene to render assistance.
6. An inner perimeter shall be established around the area where the subject(s) are located.
7. Once the immediate incident area is isolated, all individuals on the floor of the situation shall be instructed to leave the building by the quickest means possible.
8. Primary and emergency exits on the floor shall be manned or locked to prevent any entry on the floor by non-law enforcement personnel.
9. Once the floor area of the incident is under control, instructions will be given to all other individuals in the Courthouse to evacuate the building.
10. Upon their arrival, other law enforcement personnel will establish an outer perimeter around the Courthouse.
11. An initial command post will be established in the Courthouse parking area.
12. Operation of the situation and negotiations will be handled by the Sheriff or his appointed officer(s).

XVI. CIVIL DISTURBANCES

1. Civil Disturbances occurring within the Courthouse or on courthouse property shall be the responsibility of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office.
2. Appropriate actions shall be taken to control the situation and to stop the disturbance.
3. If the on-scene deputy cannot properly bring the matter under control, he will immediately request back-up support before attempting to take any further action. Only until the arrival of sufficient law enforcement personnel will any attempt be made to bring the matter under control.
4. Upon their notification of the incident, other Court Services personnel will immediately secure and escort their prisoners to the holding cell and then proceed to the incident area.
5. Other individuals not involved in the disturbance will be directed to remain away from the incident.

XVII. JURY SEQUESTRATION

Should the jury be sequestered, Court Security personnel must first be sworn as bailiffs by the presiding judge. (O.C.G.A. 15-12-140) (If the Judge decides to use certified deputy sheriffs).

XVIII. BOMB THREATS

1. The first Court Services deputy who receives information concerning a bomb threat, will immediately turn off his portable radio and notify the Court Services Sargent and Deputies and appointed facilitators by the quickest means possible without using radio communications.
2. Such initial notifications shall be made in a non-disruptive manner and as quietly and discreetly as possible.
3. If a trial is in session, the deputy assigned to the courtroom shall approach the judge and inform him privately of the situation and request that the prisoner be removed for possible transport to the Rabun County Jail, should it become necessary to evacuate the building.
4. The Sheriff, Chief Deputy and Court Services Sargent shall be notified as quickly as possible and advised of the situation.
5. Unless a suspected explosive device is found, an evacuation of the Courthouse will only be conducted upon the order of the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Chief Judge. Deputies will only direct an evacuation of the building if a suspicious device or actual bomb is located.
6. Should an evacuation be ordered, it will be conducted in an orderly and expeditious manner.
7. Court Services personnel shall take the following actions:
 - A. Place handcuffs on all prisoners in the building and bring them by the quickest means possible, to the exit area for transporting them to the Rabun County Jail by using available vehicles;
 - B. If transport vehicles are not available, the prisoners shall be escorted to the exit area until transport vehicles arrive;

- C. Once all prisoners are accounted for, Court Services personnel who are not needed for inmate control and transport, shall assist in the evacuation of the Courthouse;
- D. Persons to be evacuated should be advised of the situation and instructed to remain calm and to evacuate the building immediately, without running or making any unnecessary noise and without using the elevators;
- E. Deputies should be alert for any disabled, extremely young, or elderly personnel who may require special assistance from others being evacuated;
- F. All light switches, computers, telephones, facsimile machines, and other electrical devices should remain untouched;
- G. No items should be removed from the building except for readily available personal property, such as pocket books, briefcases, and outer-clothing;
- H. Evacuees should be directed to leave the building through the nearest ground-floor exit and to proceed to the Town Square.

8. Search Procedures

- A. When available, a bomb dog should be obtained to conduct the search.
- B. If a bomb dog is not available, the best individuals to search are employees familiar with the area. They are more aware of items that are out of place or alien to the facility.
- C. Search teams should be formed, consisting of two deputies. Each team shall be assigned a specific location to search.
- D. The Court Services Sargent should plan actions by search personnel. There should be no undue movement, bumping, or shaking of items and furniture.
- E. Always start searching outside the building facility and then start at the lowest level of the interior of the building (basement) and work up to the highest floor.
- F. Never touch light switches or electronic control panels.
- G. If the building is not evacuated, the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Court Services Sargent or his designee will be asked for permission to conduct a discrete search of the inside and outside of the premises, especially in those areas accessible to the public, such as rest-rooms, waiting and reception areas.
- H. If the building is evacuated, the search shall not begin until all evacuees have left the area.

9. Search Techniques

The search of a building should be divided into three areas.

A. Exterior

The exterior search begins at the ground level. Close attention should be given to piles of leaves and refuse, shrubbery, trashcans, and parked vehicles adjacent to the facility (see vehicle search procedures below).

B. Public Areas

The public area surrounds the facility and extends outward 25 to 50 feet from the building to some natural obstacle such as a wall or curb.

C. Interior Areas

- a. Special attention should be given first to unlimited access areas, rest rooms and utility areas.
- b. Whenever entering an area, remain calm and quiet. Listen closely for any unusual sounds. Search from the lowest point and work upwards in four levels.

Level One - floor to waist: Check chairs, desks, trashcans, cabinets, and any other place where a bomb might be concealed;

Level Two - waist to eye level: Check behind pictures, tall cabinets, and within closets;

Level Three - eye level to the ceiling: Check any item suspended from the ceiling, such as light fixtures and heating/air conditioning ducts; and

Level Four - ceilings and false ceilings.

D. Vehicle Searches

- a. Bombs in vehicles are normally meant to kill rather than to harass. While devices in buildings are designed to explode at specific times, those in vehicles are usually set to explode with a triggering device.
- b. The first step is to locate the vehicle's owner. A registration check should be performed from a neutral area by notifying the E911 Dispatch Center via telephone.
- c. Ascertain (if possible) when the vehicle was last operated, whether it was left locked or unlocked, who the passenger(s) were, who the next driver was intended to be, and if previous threats had been made.
- d. Check the exterior of the vehicle for any signs of tampering and the immediate area for unusual marks on the ground and for bits of tape or wire.
- e. Isolate the area if there are any indications of an explosive device.
- f. Safety of Sheriff's Office personnel and others in the area is of utmost importance.
- g. If a bomb dog is available, it should be used to conduct the vehicle search.
- h. If a bomb dog is not available, Emergency Ordinance and Disposal (EOD) personnel should be contacted to complete the search of the vehicle.
- i. Strict radio and mobile telephone silence will be maintained at all times.
- j. Communications between search teams and with other response personnel shall be performed by runner.

- k. Delay search if too close to detonation time.
 - a) All search activities will be suspended no later than 15 minutes prior to the time the device is scheduled to detonate, when such activation information is available.
 - b) All search personnel will be evacuated to a safe location outside the inner-perimeter AND will remain there for at least one hour past the time the device was to be detonated, before resuming the search.
- l. If no explosive or suspicious device is located, the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, or Court Services Sargent or designee will be informed of the results of the search and told that it is now their responsibility to authorize the re-entry of evacuated personnel.

I. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN UPON LOCATING A SUSPECTED BOMB

- 1. If a suspected bomb is located, do not touch it or move it.
- 2. All search activities will stop and all personnel will evacuate the area to a safe location outside the inner-perimeter.
- 3. The individual who located a suspected explosive device shall obtain as much information about the item as possible, to include:
 - A. Its exact location;
 - B. A complete physical description, to include size, color, the presence of wires or batteries, and any other distinguishing characteristics;
- 4. Bomb disposal personnel shall assume responsibility of the incident scene upon their arrival and until such time as the device is neutralized or removed from the area.
- 5. Duties of Command Post Personnel
 - A. Monitor on-going activities of and give assignments to response personnel.
 - B. Coordinate with E911 Dispatch Center for additional assistance.
 - C. Maintain accountability of response personnel.
 - D. Obtain blueprints or floor diagrams.
 - E. Insure proper reports are initiated upon termination of the incident.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**
Sheriff, Rabun County