



POLICY RECOMMENDATION

TO: Chief Lisa Davis, Austin Police Department
FROM: Director Gail McCant, Office of Police Oversight
DATE: Thursday, September 11, 2025
SUBJECT: OPO Policy Recommendation: 321 CARE AND TRANSPORT OF PRISONERS

Dear Chief Davis:

This memorandum provides feedback and recommendations for improving the Austin Police Department's (APD) General Order (GO) 321 CARE AND TRANSPORT OF PRISONERS.

The specific policy reviewed in this memorandum is as follows:

- 321.3.2 SPECIAL SITUATIONS.

The following policy recommendations will help the Austin Police Department (APD) safeguard vulnerable populations, improve officer safety, and build community trust while aligning with modern policing standards. Many agencies nationwide already use specialized protocols for transporting juveniles, transgender individuals, and people with disabilities. Adopting these recommendations will align APD with national best practices and ensure respectful and lawful treatment of individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable laws.

The OPO trusts that this APD policy can be improved and that it benefits the City of Austin, APD, and community members. We look forward to improving policies to enhance APD's transparency and accountability.

Sincerely,



Gail McCant
Director
Office of Police Oversight



POLICY RECOMMENDATION

321 CARE AND TRANSPORT OF PRISONERS

Recommendation #1:

OPO recommends that the APD restore policy language regarding real-time special situation procedures when transporting the following vulnerable populations: prisoners of the opposite gender, juveniles, prisoners known to the officer to be transgender, or those whose gender is undetermined.

Law enforcement agencies are held to high standards regarding the treatment of prisoners, particularly minors and vulnerable individuals. In addition to radioing dispatch and logging odometer readings, officers can utilize dash cams, body-worn cameras, GPS tracking, and transport logs to record their location and actions during transport. The best practice is often to use a combination of these methods, as overlapping records strengthen credibility and protection. It is crucial to document these procedures within policy to improve accountability and safeguard prisoners and officers.

Recommendation #2:

OPO recommends that APD add a separate section to GO# 321.3.2 Special Situations, providing specific considerations when transporting individuals with disabilities or those with physical functional limitations.

Best practices and current laws require reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities and state that officers should not separate individuals or prisoners from wheelchairs, mobility aids, prosthetics, medical equipment, or service animals unless it is necessary for safety. When transportation is required, reasonable efforts should be made to secure and transport these devices with the individual. Because mobility devices and medical equipment (such as oxygen tanks) can pose unique safety risks, officers must follow procedures to ensure devices are adequately secured, individuals are safely lifted and positioned with correct seatbelt use, and medical needs are considered. These protocols help reduce the risk of injury to both the individual and the officer.