



DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL: SPIT HOODS/MASKS

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On-the-Job Training

DOM 51020.16—APPLICATION OF SPIT HOODS OR MASKS

Only departmentally approved spit hoods/masks are authorized for use. A spit hood/mask shall not be placed upon an inmate who:

- Is in a state of altered consciousness (visibly drowsy, stuporous, or unconscious); or
- Has any visible signs of seizure; or
- Is vomiting or exhibits signs of beginning to vomit.

A spit hood/mask may be applied to an inmate if:

- There is verbal or physical intent by the inmate to contaminate others with spit or bodily fluids from the nose or mouth; or
- The inmate is not able to control expelling fluids from the nose or mouth (with the exception of vomit); or
- The inmate is on authorized security precautions according to the procedures of the unit where the inmate is housed.
- If the inmate was contaminated with OC before the mask was applied, the mask shall be kept on until the inmate is afforded decontamination unless the inmate is in a state of altered consciousness (visibly drowsy, stuporous, or unconscious); or has any visible signs of a seizure; or is vomiting or exhibits signs of beginning to vomit. In this case the spit hood/mask will be removed immediately and appropriate treatment will be administered.

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Pop Quiz!

What is the purpose of a spit hood/mask?

- A. To punish an inmate
- B. To humiliate an inmate
- C. To prevent West Nile Virus/Zika Virus
- D. For staff to wear for protection from inmate bodily fluids

If you chose any of the answers above, you would be wrong.

Because not all California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation institutions use spit hoods/masks, this concept might be new to you. Use of a spit hood/mask on an inmate is a temporary and, sometimes, necessary tool for custody staff. The goal of the spit hood/mask is not punishment, but protection of all staff and other inmates from the bodily fluids of the inmate wearing the spit hood/mask. Serious consequences can arise from using a spit hood/mask incorrectly, so it is imperative that it be used according to Department policy and manufacturer guidelines.

The DOM spells-out the rules for using and applying a spit hood/mask (see the side bar). It's important to remember what the product package states regarding the use of The TranZport Hood: "Improper use can result in serious injury or death."

Inmates can asphyxiate, suffocate, or drown in their own bodily fluids (i.e., saliva or vomit) when spit hoods/masks are used incorrectly. Positional asphyxia can result from an



“WARNING: IMPROPER USE OF TRANZPORT HOOD CAN CAUSE INJURY OR DEATH” - The Tranzport Hood product label

inmate being left in the prone position while in restraints for an extended period of time, and this can be exacerbated by previous exposure to chemical agents, seizure, vomiting or beginning to vomit, etc., while wearing a spit hood/mask. Inmates should only be on their stomachs, or in a position enabling them to roll onto their stomachs, long enough to gain control and/or place them in restraints.

Once an inmate has a spit hood/mask on, they must be constantly supervised until the spit hood/mask can safely be removed. However, if the inmate begins to show signs of distress, the spit hood/mask must be removed immediately and appropriate treatment given.

The CPOST staff would like to thank the In-Service Training (IST) department at California State Prison, Sacramento for the On-the-Job Training topic.

If your IST department has an OJT idea, please share it via email: CPOST.mailbox@cdcr.ca.gov .

Sources: CDCR Adult Institutions, Programs, and Parole—Operations Manual

CopQuest—https://www.copquest.com/safariland-tranzport-hood_19-1740.htm

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If the inmate is decontaminated with fresh moving air, the spit hood/mask may remain on during decontamination and can be exchanged for a new spit hood/mask when decontamination is complete. If the inmate is decontaminated with water, the spit hood/mask shall be removed during decontamination and a new spit hood/mask can be placed on the inmate when decontamination is complete.

If an inmate has been exposed to chemical agents after the spit hood/mask is applied, the spit hood/mask shall be replaced with a new one when it is safe to do so.

If a spit hood/mask was applied and the inmate loses consciousness, begins seizing, or begins vomiting the spit hood/mask shall be removed immediately and appropriate treatment will be administered.

If a spit hood/mask is applied to an inmate, it is imperative that constant supervision of the inmate be maintained for signs of respiratory distress. If any respiratory distress is observed, the spit hood/mask shall be removed until the signs of respiratory distress have dissipated.

Once an inmate is exposed to chemical agents and/or if a spit hood/mask is placed on the inmate, staff shall not place them on their stomachs, or in a position that allows the inmate to end up on their stomach, for any period longer than necessary to secure (e.g. handcuff) and/or gain control of the inmate. A prone position makes it difficult for any exposed individual to breathe and may be a contributing factor in positional asphyxia. Positional asphyxia occurs when an individual's body position interferes with respiration, resulting in death.

If an exposed individual is in handcuffs and requires transportation via a gurney, stokes litter, etc., they shall be positioned on their back or side.