



# Alexandria Police Department

## Directive 10.41



# INTERVIEW ROOMS

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### 10.41.01 POLICY/PURPOSE

It is the policy of this Department to ensure the protection of personnel and the safety of the arrestee, suspect, person of interest, victim, witness, or applicant. The purpose of this directive is to provide written guidelines for the proper use of designated interview rooms, which are commonly used in the investigative process.

### 10.41.02 DEFINITIONS

**Floor Mounted Restraining Device** – an immovable apparatus fixed to the floor consisting of a leather strap connected to a handcuff, designed and intended to be used for temporarily securing arrestees/suspects during an interview/interrogation.

**Hard Interview Room** – interview rooms designated for interviews/interrogations of arrestees, suspects, and persons of interest. These rooms are located in secured areas.

**Interrogation** – a conversation between the interrogator and the arrestee/suspect, during which the subject is accused of involvement in a particular incident or group of incidents. The accusatory tone of the exchange is what distinguishes the interrogation from the interview.

**Interview** – a non-accusatory, structured conversation during which specific, behavior-provoking questions are asked with the purpose of eliciting interpretable behavior symptoms considered typical of truth or deception. Additional factual information concerning the case and/or suspects may also be developed during this non-accusatory exchange.

**Interview Room** – any designated room(s) that will be used to either conduct custodial interrogation of arrestees or non-custodial interviews of witnesses, victims, potential suspects, persons of interest and applicants.

**Person of Interest** – a person authorities would like to speak with or investigate further in connection with a crime, however, is not formally accused of committing the crime.

**Soft Interview Room** – interview rooms designated for interviews of victims and witnesses.

**Suspect** – a person believed to have committed a crime, but who has not been formally charged with the crime.

**Wanted Person** – a person known to have committed a crime and has active warrants on file for their arrest.

### **10.41.03      RESPONSIBILITIES**

The responsibility for the safety and security of persons brought into the interview room remains with the original officer/detective, unless relieved by another officer/detective of this Department.

All individuals being interviewed/interrogated are afforded an opportunity to address their personal needs during an interview/interrogation. It will be at the officer/detective's discretion when a break will be conducted. All individuals being interviewed/interrogated who wish to utilize the facilities (restrooms, water, etc.) shall be escorted by an officer/detective at all times within any secured area of the building.

*The Criminal Investigations Section* (CIS) and Patrol will ensure all interview rooms are vacant and no forms, documents, contraband or evidence is present in the interview rooms after each use of the room.

### **10.41.04      PROCEDURES**

Designated interview rooms may only be utilized by authorized personnel for either custodial interrogations of arrestees or non-custodial interviews with witnesses, victims, suspects, persons of interest, or applicants. Officers from outside agencies are permitted to use the rooms only if accompanied by an Alexandria officer. The following procedures shall apply to all designated interview rooms.

**A. Weapons Control**

1. Prior to conducting an interview/interrogation in a designated hard interview room, officers/detectives will secure firearms in one of the weapons storage boxes located near the interview room area.
2. Removal of firearms for interviewing victims and witnesses in soft interview rooms is not required.
3. Less than lethal weapons may be worn in any of the interview rooms.

**B. Custodial Interrogations**

1. All arrestees/suspects will be thoroughly searched for weapons, contraband, and evidence prior to being placed in the interview room.
2. Each arrestee/suspect will be placed in a separate interview room apart from other arrestees/suspects.
3. Arrestees/suspects will be handcuffed prior to being placed in the interview room. Handcuffs may be removed at the discretion of the officer having physical custody of the arrestee/suspect. If there is any doubt as to officer safety, the handcuffs will remain in place.
4. At no time will arrestees/suspects be secured to any object in the interview rooms other than the approved floor mounted restraining device.
5. Each hard interview room in CIS is equipped with a floor mounted restraining device. Use of the floor mounted restraining device is only authorized on custodial subjects.
6. The interview rooms are not arrestee/suspect holding cells. If an arrestee/suspect is left alone in an interview room, an officer will maintain visual contact, i.e., through an open door or video surveillance.
7. If an evacuation becomes necessary due to a fire alarm or actual fire, the arrestee/suspect will be immediately taken out of the building using the safest route.

**C. Non-Custodial Interviews**

1. If, in the opinion of the officer/detective or polygraph examiner, a frisk for weapons is necessary, a frisk will be conducted. Only officers/detectives are authorized to conduct frisks. Frisks should be conducted by the same sex officer/detective, if available.

2. Victims, witnesses, suspects, or persons of interest should not be left alone in the interview rooms for extended periods of time. Officers/detectives should make visual contact at least once every fifteen minutes with interviewees. Visual contact may be made through an open door or video surveillance.
3. At no time will a non-custodial interviewee be restrained with any type of restraining device.

**D. Patrol and Criminal Investigations/Polygraph Interview Room Guidelines and Maintenance**

1. Each interview room shall contain a table, enough chairs to accommodate the individuals in the room, and a rubber trash can. The interview rooms shall be left clean. No forms or other documents shall be left or stored in the interview rooms.
2. Hard interview rooms in CIS are equipped with a floor mounted restraining device, for securing arrestees/suspects.
3. One soft interview room is used for conducting family and juvenile interviews, which is furnished with toys and props.
4. All CIS interview rooms are equipped for audio/video recording and visual monitoring.
5. Each interview room is equipped with a red emergency call button. These duress buttons are for safety purposes should the officers/detectives need assistance during an interview/interrogation. When activated, an audible alarm is simultaneously broadcasted in the Department of Emergency Communications center, the Criminal Investigations Section, the Patrol corridor, and at the atrium security post. Appropriate response is initiated.
6. Duress alarms are tested and inspected *semi-annually* as a part of the preventive maintenance performed on the facility. This testing and inspection ensures the system is functioning properly.
7. Prior to usage of an interview room, officers/detectives shall search the room for the presence of weapons, contraband, and evidence.
8. Once the interview/interrogation has been completed, the officers/detectives will again search the room prior to exiting.
9. All interviews/interrogations of arrestees/suspects will be conducted with two officers/detectives.

10. All interviews/interrogations of persons of interest will be conducted with one or two officers/detectives.
11. All interviews of victims or witnesses will be conducted with one or two officers/detectives present, except when articulable extenuating circumstances exist.
12. Polygraph interviews will be conducted by a licensed polygraph examiner.
13. No interviews/interrogations of arrestees/suspects will be conducted with more than two law enforcement personnel present, except when articulable extenuating circumstances exist.
14. Special circumstances may require a parent, guardian, legal representation, and/or translator to be present during the interview/interrogation. Ultimately, the primary officer/detective will make the decision on a case-by-case basis as to who may be present.
15. All interview rooms are equipped with exhaust systems in the event interviewees choose to smoke. Employees are prohibited from smoking in interview rooms unless it is during the course of an active interview.
16. Custodial staff, building tours, and maintenance or contractual personnel are prohibited access to the interview room area while any interview is being conducted. Illuminated signage above each interview room door indicates when the room is in use.

**BY AUTHORITY OF:**

**Earl L. Cook**  
**Chief of Police**