

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		166
Chapter:	Juvenile Justice	
Subject:	Woodside Admission Procedures - Searches	Page 1 of 3
Approved:	Cynthia K. Walcott, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 6/3/13
Supersedes	Policy 166	Dated: 4/20/10

Purpose

To provide guidelines for the search of youth being admitted to Woodside, which balance the traumatic impact of such searches with the need for a safe and secure environment for all residents and staff.

Policy

Searches of youth being admitted to Woodside will be of the least intrusive type necessary to satisfy the safety and security needs of the facility. All searches shall be conducted by the same gender staff of the resident. The only exception is for pat searches, and then only if absolutely necessary (see next section).

Pat Searches

The pat search is the initial method of searching the youth upon admission. A pat search shall be conducted by a person of the same gender as the resident except when circumstances are such that delay would jeopardize the safety of the resident or staff member. The staff person shall wear gloves.

1. All residents are pat searched in the sally port in the presence of the transporting officer.
2. The staff person explains the purpose of and procedure for the pat search.
3. The preliminary pat search is conducted prior to the removal of mechanical restraints.
4. The resident removes his/her belt and all jewelry; these items are given to the staff person.
5. The resident is asked to place his/her hands on the wall and widen his/her stance.
6. The staff member pats all body parts, alert for items in pockets, collar, socks, waist area, shoes, hands, arms, head, neck, groin (with back of hand), and under the breasts with a bladed (fingers together) hand.

Non-strip searches

If it is determined that a strip search is not warranted, the following steps will be taken to be confident that the resident does not possess any contraband that would compromise the safety and security of the residents, the staff or the building:

1. The resident will be asked to remove all clothes in the shower area, out of view of the staff member.
2. Staff will search the clothes of the resident, and will ensure that the clothes are washed and placed in storage.
3. The staff member will remain in the bathroom doorway, out of view of the resident and propping the door open, while the resident takes a shower.

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4. The resident will be given a Woodside intake uniform, with Woodside undergarments, to wear after taking a shower.
5. The resident will be pat searched again after the shower when dressed.
6. The bathroom will be searched after the resident has left.

Strip Searches

Strip searches are authorized when reasonable suspicion* exists that the resident may possess contraband, weapons, or other concealed items that may present a threat to the safety and/or security of the facility, residents, and/or staff. Reasonable suspicion always exists when:

- Charges involve a crime of violence;
- Charges involve use of a weapon;
- Charges involve drugs;
- The resident's history includes arrest, charges, convictions of the above; and/or
- There is evidence of self-harming or suicidal ideation.

Strip Determined:

1. Staff will explain the following simply and quietly during the preliminary pat search: The staff person says 'After the initial paperwork we will go in to the bathroom where you will be required to remove your clothing. I will remain 4-6 feet away from you. You will not be touched. I will give you instructions that will allow me to complete a full visual inspection of your person. Do you have any questions? Are you willing to go through the process?' If yes, continue to #2 below. If no, see refusal process.
2. The restraints are removed.
3. The resident is escorted to the office (remaining in full view) apart from other residents.
4. The staff person engages the resident in rapport building through the completion of intake paperwork.
5. In order to ensure privacy, the resident is escorted to the bathroom. The staff person follows the resident carrying the towel, uniform, and other accoutrements.
6. The resident moves to the back wall of bathroom, the staff person remains 4-6 feet away from resident.
7. The resident removes hair accessories and runs hands through hair to check for pills or other articles hidden in the hair, taped behind the ear, or in the mouth. When checking the mouth the resident performs a finger sweep.
8. Resident removes all clothing. In an effort to limit the time the resident is exposed, the staff person avoids searching the clothing while in the bathroom.
9. Staff does a visual inspection of the resident when clothes are removed.
10. Resident raises arms, allowing view of armpits and beneath breasts (other folds are lifted to expose skin beneath)

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11. Resident turns 180 degrees (away from staff), squats, stands upright, leans forward at waist (staff instruct resident to lean forward at waist, take a wider stance. **DO NOT USE** the following terms: bend over, spread your legs).
12. The bottoms of the feet are shown to the staff person who ensures that nothing is taped to the bottom of the foot.
13. Braces and bandages are removed unless contraindicated.
14. Resident spreads fingers and shows hands to staff person.
15. The staff person leaves the bathroom with the resident's personal clothing.
16. The resident may shower, if there is any indication that the resident cannot be safe, the staff remains present.
17. The staff person thoroughly searches and then launders the clothing.

Refusal Process

Refusal of all or part of the search requires segregation of the resident to ensure safety. Refusal during the preliminary pat search will result in the application of secondary mechanical restraints* prior to removal of transporters restraints. The resident is escorted to a wet room where the restraints are removed. The resident will remain in the wet room until it is determined that he/she is free from contraband. While segregated, supervision is constant, uninterrupted, and documented on a special observation form. The Supervisor is notified immediately and must give approval and oversight. If segregation exceeds 30 minutes the Director must be notified.

Staff will use the same criteria in determining the intensity of search that needs to be conducted each time a resident returns to the building after a leave for any reason.

Notice to Residential Licensing

Residential Licensing must be notified within 24 hours of the following:

- A pat search is conducted by a person not of the same gender as the resident.
- A Strip search is authorized that does not meet the specific criteria identified in bullets 1-5.
- Whenever mechanical restraints are applied by Woodside staff within the building.