

Involuntary Commitments

410.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for when officers may detain and transport a person for an involuntary commitment (50 P.S. § 7301 et seq.).

410.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Plymouth Township Police Department to protect the public and individuals through legal and appropriate use of the involuntary commitment process.

410.2.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include (50 P.S. § 7301 et. seq.):

Clear and present danger - Commission of any of the following acts committed within the 30 days preceding detention for an involuntary commitment:

- (a) The person has acted in such a manner as to evidence that he/she has inflicted or attempted to inflict serious bodily harm on another and that there is a reasonable probability that such conduct will be repeated.
- (b) The person has acted in such manner as to evidence that he/she would be unable, without care, supervision and the continued assistance of others, to satisfy his/her need for nourishment, personal or medical care, shelter, or self-protection and safety, and that there is a reasonable probability that death, serious bodily injury or serious physical debilitation would ensue within 30 days without treatment.
- (c) The person has attempted suicide or committed acts in furtherance of a threat to commit suicide.
- (d) The person has substantially mutilated him/herself or committed acts in furtherance of a threat to mutilate him/herself.

Severely mentally disabled - A person is severely mentally disabled when, as a result of mental illness, his/her capacity to exercise self-control, judgment and discretion in his/her conduct and social relations or to care for his/her own personal needs is reduced to such a degree that he/she poses a clear and present danger to others or him/herself.

410.3 AUTHORITY

An officer may take a person into custody and transport him/her to an approved facility for an involuntary commitment when, based upon personal observation, statements or evidence, the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the person is severely mentally disabled and in need of immediate treatment (50 P.S. § 7301; 50 P.S. § 7302).

Officers will also take a person into custody for an involuntary commitment pursuant to a warrant. The person shall be transported to the facility specified in the warrant (50 P.S. § 7302).

Plymouth Township Police Department

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410.3.1 VOLUNTARY EVALUATION

If an officer encounters an individual who does not qualify for an involuntary commitment, he/she may inquire as to whether the person desires to be voluntarily evaluated at an appropriate facility. If the person so desires, the officer should:

- (a) Transport the person to an appropriate facility that is able to conduct the evaluation and admit the person.
- (b) Document the circumstances surrounding the individual's desire to pursue voluntary evaluation and/or admission.

If at any point the person changes his/her mind regarding voluntary evaluation, the officers should proceed with the application for involuntary commitment, if additional information leads the officer to believe the individual is a danger to himself or others in the past 30 days.

410.7 DOCUMENTATION

The officer shall complete an application for involuntary commitment and treatment, provide it to the facility staff member or doctor assigned to the individual and retain a copy for inclusion in the case report (50 P.S. § 7302).

The officer should also provide a verbal summary to any evaluating staff member or doctor regarding the circumstances leading to the involuntary detention.

410.10 TRAINING

This department will endeavor to provide department-approved training on interaction with mentally disabled persons, involuntary commitments and crisis intervention.

New officers shall receive training to recognize and respond to suspected mentally ill persons.

All officers shall receive update training whenever the mental health statute changes and in any event no less than once every three years.