

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

TITLE 7. MENTAL HEALTH AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

SUBTITLE C. TEXAS MENTAL HEALTH CODE

CHAPTER 573. EMERGENCY DETENTION

SUBCHAPTER A. APPREHENSION BY PEACE OFFICER OR TRANSPORTATION FOR  
EMERGENCY DETENTION BY GUARDIAN

Sec. 573.0001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Emergency medical services personnel" and "emergency medical services provider" have the meanings assigned by Section 773.003.

(2) "Law enforcement agency" has the meaning assigned by Article 59.01, Code of Criminal Procedure.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 541 (S.B. 344), Sec. 1, eff. June 9, 2017.

Sec. 573.001. APPREHENSION BY PEACE OFFICER WITHOUT WARRANT. (a) A peace officer, without a warrant, may take a person into custody if the officer:

(1) has reason to believe and does believe that:

(A) the person is a person with mental illness;  
and

(B) because of that mental illness there is a substantial risk of serious harm to the person or to others unless the person is immediately restrained; and

(2) believes that there is not sufficient time to obtain a warrant before taking the person into custody.

(b) A substantial risk of serious harm to the person or others under Subsection (a)(1)(B) may be demonstrated by:

(1) the person's behavior; or

(2) evidence of severe emotional distress and deterioration in the person's mental condition to the extent that the person cannot remain at liberty.

(c) The peace officer may form the belief that the person meets the criteria for apprehension:

(1) from a representation of a credible person; or

(2) on the basis of the conduct of the apprehended person or the circumstances under which the apprehended person is found.

(d) A peace officer who takes a person into custody under Subsection (a) shall immediately:

(1) transport the apprehended person to:

(A) the nearest appropriate inpatient mental health facility; or

(B) a mental health facility deemed suitable by the local mental health authority, if an appropriate inpatient mental health facility is not available; or

(2) transfer the apprehended person to emergency medical services personnel of an emergency medical services provider in accordance with a memorandum of understanding executed under Section [573.005](#) for transport to a facility described by Subdivision (1)(A) or (B).

(e) A jail or similar detention facility may not be deemed suitable except in an extreme emergency.

(f) A person detained in a jail or a nonmedical facility shall be kept separate from any person who is charged with or convicted of a crime.

(g) A peace officer who takes a person into custody under Subsection (a) shall immediately inform the person orally in simple, nontechnical terms:

(1) of the reason for the detention; and

(2) that a staff member of the facility will inform the person of the person's rights within 24 hours after the time the person is admitted to a facility, as provided by Section [573.025](#)(b).

(h) A peace officer who takes a person into custody under Subsection (a) may immediately seize any firearm found in possession of the person. After seizing a firearm under this subsection, the peace officer shall comply with the requirements of Article [18.191](#), Code of Criminal Procedure.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.  
Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 367, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 318 (H.B. 1738), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 776 (S.B. 1189), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.1366, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1236 (S.B. 1296), Sec. 21.001(33), eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 541 (S.B. 344), Sec. 2, eff. June 9, 2017.

Sec. 573.002. PEACE OFFICER'S NOTIFICATION OF DETENTION.

(a) A peace officer shall immediately file with a facility a notification of detention after transporting a person to that facility in accordance with Section 573.001. Emergency medical services personnel of an emergency medical services provider who transport a person to a facility at the request of a peace officer made in accordance with a memorandum of understanding executed under Section 573.005 shall immediately file with the facility the notification of detention completed by the peace officer who made the request.

(b) The notification of detention must contain:

(1) a statement that the officer has reason to believe and does believe that the person evidences mental illness;

(2) a statement that the officer has reason to believe and does believe that the person evidences a substantial risk of serious harm to the person or others;

(3) a specific description of the risk of harm;

(4) a statement that the officer has reason to believe and does believe that the risk of harm is imminent unless the person is immediately restrained;

(5) a statement that the officer's beliefs are derived from specific recent behavior, overt acts, attempts, or threats that were observed by or reliably reported to the officer;

(6) a detailed description of the specific behavior, acts, attempts, or threats; and

(7) the name and relationship to the apprehended person of any person who reported or observed the behavior, acts, attempts, or threats.

(c) The facility where the person is detained shall include in the detained person's clinical file the notification of detention described by this section.

(d) The peace officer shall provide the notification of detention on the following form:

Notification--Emergency Detention NO. \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

THE STATE OF TEXAS

FOR THE BEST INTEREST AND PROTECTION OF:

\_\_\_\_\_

NOTIFICATION OF EMERGENCY DETENTION

Now comes \_\_\_\_\_, a peace officer with (name of agency) \_\_\_\_\_, of the State of Texas, and states as follows:

1. I have reason to believe and do believe that (name of person to be detained) \_\_\_\_\_ evidences mental illness.

2. I have reason to believe and do believe that the above-named person evidences a substantial risk of serious harm to himself/herself or others based upon the following:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. I have reason to believe and do believe that the above risk of harm is imminent unless the above-named person is immediately restrained.

4. My beliefs are based upon the following recent behavior, overt acts, attempts, statements, or threats observed by me or reliably reported to me:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. The names, addresses, and relationship to the above-named

person of those persons who reported or observed recent behavior, acts, attempts, statements, or threats of the above-named person are (if applicable):

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For the above reasons, I present this notification to seek temporary admission to the (name of facility) \_\_\_\_\_ inpatient mental health facility or hospital facility for the detention of (name of person to be detained) \_\_\_\_\_ on an emergency basis.

6. Was the person restrained in any way? Yes  No

\_\_\_\_\_ BADGE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PEACE OFFICER'S SIGNATURE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL (if applicable)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

A mental health facility or hospital emergency department may not require a peace officer or emergency medical services personnel to execute any form other than this form as a predicate to accepting for temporary admission a person detained by a peace officer under Section 573.001, Health and Safety Code, and transported by the officer under that section or by emergency medical services personnel of an emergency medical services provider at the request of the officer made in accordance with a memorandum of understanding executed under Section 573.005, Health and Safety Code.

(e) A mental health facility or hospital emergency department may not require a peace officer or emergency medical services personnel to execute any form other than the form provided by Subsection (d) as a predicate to accepting for temporary admission a person detained by a peace officer under Section 573.001 and transported by the officer under that section or by

emergency medical services personnel of an emergency medical services provider at the request of the officer made in accordance with a memorandum of understanding executed under Section 573.005. Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 318 (H.B. 1738), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 541 (S.B. 344), Sec. 3, eff. June 9, 2017.

Sec. 573.0021. DUTY OF PEACE OFFICER TO NOTIFY PROBATE COURTS. As soon as practicable, but not later than the first working day after the date a peace officer takes a person who is a ward into custody, the peace officer shall notify the court having jurisdiction over the ward's guardianship of the ward's detention or transportation to a facility in accordance with Section 573.001. Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 313 (S.B. 1096), Sec. 13, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 573.003. TRANSPORTATION FOR EMERGENCY DETENTION BY GUARDIAN. (a) A guardian of the person of a ward who is 18 years of age or older, without the assistance of a peace officer, may transport the ward to an inpatient mental health facility for a preliminary examination in accordance with Section 573.021 if the guardian has reason to believe and does believe that:

(1) the ward is a person with mental illness; and

(2) because of that mental illness there is a substantial risk of serious harm to the ward or to others unless the ward is immediately restrained.

(b) A substantial risk of serious harm to the ward or others under Subsection (a)(2) may be demonstrated by:

(1) the ward's behavior; or

(2) evidence of severe emotional distress and deterioration in the ward's mental condition to the extent that the ward cannot remain at liberty.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 692, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.1367, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 573.004. GUARDIAN'S APPLICATION FOR EMERGENCY DETENTION. (a) After transporting a ward to a facility under Section 573.003, a guardian shall immediately file an application for detention with the facility.

(b) The application for detention must contain:

(1) a statement that the guardian has reason to believe and does believe that the ward evidences mental illness;

(2) a statement that the guardian has reason to believe and does believe that the ward evidences a substantial risk of serious harm to the ward or others;

(3) a specific description of the risk of harm;

(4) a statement that the guardian has reason to believe and does believe that the risk of harm is imminent unless the ward is immediately restrained;

(5) a statement that the guardian's beliefs are derived from specific recent behavior, overt acts, attempts, or threats that were observed by the guardian; and

(6) a detailed description of the specific behavior, acts, attempts, or threats.

(c) The guardian shall immediately provide written notice of the filing of an application under this section to the court that granted the guardianship.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 692, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 573.005. TRANSPORTATION FOR EMERGENCY DETENTION BY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDER; MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

(a) A law enforcement agency and an emergency medical services provider may execute a memorandum of understanding under which emergency medical services personnel employed by the provider may transport a person taken into custody under Section 573.001 by a peace officer employed by the law enforcement agency.

(b) A memorandum of understanding must:

(1) address responsibility for the cost of transporting the person taken into custody; and

(2) be approved by the county in which the law enforcement agency is located and the local mental health authority that provides services in that county with respect to provisions of the memorandum that address the responsibility for the cost of transporting the person.

(c) A peace officer may request that emergency medical services personnel transport a person taken into custody by the officer under Section 573.001 only if:

(1) the law enforcement agency that employs the officer and the emergency medical services provider that employs the personnel have executed a memorandum of understanding under this section; and

(2) the officer determines that transferring the person for transport is safe for both the person and the personnel.

(d) Emergency medical services personnel may, at the request of a peace officer, transport a person taken into custody by the officer under Section 573.001 to the appropriate facility, as provided by that section, if the law enforcement agency that employs the officer and the emergency medical services provider that employs the personnel have executed a memorandum of understanding under this section.

(e) A peace officer who transfers a person to emergency medical services personnel under a memorandum of understanding executed under this section for transport to the appropriate facility must provide:

(1) to the person the notice described by Section 573.001(g); and

(2) to the personnel a completed notification of detention about the person on the form provided by Section 573.002(d).

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 541 (S.B. 344), Sec. 4, eff. June 9, 2017.

SUBCHAPTER B. JUDGE'S OR MAGISTRATE'S ORDER FOR EMERGENCY  
APPREHENSION AND DETENTION

Sec. 573.011. APPLICATION FOR EMERGENCY DETENTION. (a) An



adult may file a written application for the emergency detention of another person.

(b) The application must state:

(1) that the applicant has reason to believe and does believe that the person evidences mental illness;

(2) that the applicant has reason to believe and does believe that the person evidences a substantial risk of serious harm to himself or others;

(3) a specific description of the risk of harm;

(4) that the applicant has reason to believe and does believe that the risk of harm is imminent unless the person is immediately restrained;

(5) that the applicant's beliefs are derived from specific recent behavior, overt acts, attempts, or threats;

(6) a detailed description of the specific behavior, acts, attempts, or threats; and

(7) a detailed description of the applicant's relationship to the person whose detention is sought.

(c) The application may be accompanied by any relevant information.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Sec. 573.012. ISSUANCE OF WARRANT. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (h), an applicant for emergency detention must present the application personally to a judge or magistrate. The judge or magistrate shall examine the application and may interview the applicant. Except as provided by Subsection (g), the judge of a court with probate jurisdiction by administrative order may provide that the application must be:

(1) presented personally to the court; or

(2) retained by court staff and presented to another judge or magistrate as soon as is practicable if the judge of the court is not available at the time the application is presented.

(b) The magistrate shall deny the application unless the magistrate finds that there is reasonable cause to believe that:

(1) the person evidences mental illness;

(2) the person evidences a substantial risk of serious

harm to himself or others;

(3) the risk of harm is imminent unless the person is immediately restrained; and

(4) the necessary restraint cannot be accomplished without emergency detention.

(c) A substantial risk of serious harm to the person or others under Subsection (b)(2) may be demonstrated by:

(1) the person's behavior; or

(2) evidence of severe emotional distress and deterioration in the person's mental condition to the extent that the person cannot remain at liberty.

(d) The magistrate shall issue to an on-duty peace officer a warrant for the person's immediate apprehension if the magistrate finds that each criterion under Subsection (b) is satisfied.

(e) A person apprehended under this section shall be transported for a preliminary examination in accordance with Section 573.021 to:

(1) the nearest appropriate inpatient mental health facility; or

(2) a mental health facility deemed suitable by the local mental health authority, if an appropriate inpatient mental health facility is not available.

(f) The warrant serves as an application for detention in the facility. The warrant and a copy of the application for the warrant shall be immediately transmitted to the facility.

(g) If there is more than one court with probate jurisdiction in a county, an administrative order regarding presentation of an application must be jointly issued by all of the judges of those courts.

(h) A judge or magistrate may permit an applicant who is a physician to present an application by:

(1) e-mail with the application attached as a secure document in a portable document format (PDF); or

(2) secure electronic means, including:

(A) satellite transmission;

(B) closed-circuit television transmission; or

(C) any other method of two-way electronic

communication that:

(i) is secure;

(ii) is available to the judge or magistrate; and

(iii) provides for a simultaneous, compressed full-motion video and interactive communication of image and sound between the judge or magistrate and the applicant.

(h-1) After the presentation of an application under Subsection (h), the judge or magistrate may transmit a warrant to the applicant:

(1) electronically, if a digital signature, as defined by Article 2.26, Code of Criminal Procedure, is transmitted with the document; or

(2) by e-mail with the warrant attached as a secure document in a portable document format (PDF), if the identifiable legal signature of the judge or magistrate is transmitted with the document.

(i) The judge or magistrate shall provide for a recording of the presentation of an application under Subsection (h) to be made and preserved until the patient or proposed patient has been released or discharged. The patient or proposed patient may obtain a copy of the recording on payment of a reasonable amount to cover the costs of reproduction or, if the patient or proposed patient is indigent, the court shall provide a copy on the request of the patient or proposed patient without charging a cost for the copy.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., 1st C.S., ch. 15, Sec. 5.19, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 243, Sec. 3, eff. Aug. 28, 1995; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 367, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1145 (S.B. 778), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 510 (H.B. 1829), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

#### SUBCHAPTER C. EMERGENCY DETENTION, RELEASE, AND RIGHTS

Sec. 573.021. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION. (a) A facility shall temporarily accept a person for whom an application for detention is filed or for whom a peace officer or emergency medical services personnel of an emergency medical services provider transporting the person in accordance with a memorandum of understanding executed under Section 573.005 files a notification of detention completed by the peace officer under Section 573.002(a).

(b) A person accepted for a preliminary examination may be detained in custody for not longer than 48 hours after the time the person is presented to the facility unless a written order for protective custody is obtained. The 48-hour period allowed by this section includes any time the patient spends waiting in the facility for medical care before the person receives the preliminary examination. If the 48-hour period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, legal holiday, or before 4 p.m. on the first succeeding business day, the person may be detained until 4 p.m. on the first succeeding business day. If the 48-hour period ends at a different time, the person may be detained only until 4 p.m. on the day the 48-hour period ends. If extremely hazardous weather conditions exist or a disaster occurs, the presiding judge or magistrate may, by written order made each day, extend by an additional 24 hours the period during which the person may be detained. The written order must declare that an emergency exists because of the weather or the occurrence of a disaster.

(c) A physician shall examine the person as soon as possible within 12 hours after the time the person is apprehended by the peace officer or transported for emergency detention by the person's guardian.

(d) A facility must comply with this section only to the extent that the commissioner determines that a facility has sufficient resources to perform the necessary services under this section.

(e) A person may not be detained in a private mental health facility without the consent of the facility administrator.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.  
Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 623, Sec. 1, eff. June 11,

2001; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 692, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 202 (H.B. 518), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 333 (H.B. 888), Sec. 1, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 318 (H.B. 1738), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 541 (S.B. 344), Sec. 5, eff. June 9, 2017.

Sec. 573.022. EMERGENCY ADMISSION AND DETENTION. (a) A person may be admitted to a facility for emergency detention only if the physician who conducted the preliminary examination of the person makes a written statement that:

(1) is acceptable to the facility;

(2) states that after a preliminary examination it is the physician's opinion that:

(A) the person is a person with mental illness;

(B) the person evidences a substantial risk of serious harm to the person or to others;

(C) the described risk of harm is imminent unless the person is immediately restrained; and

(D) emergency detention is the least restrictive means by which the necessary restraint may be accomplished; and

(3) includes:

(A) a description of the nature of the person's mental illness;

(B) a specific description of the risk of harm the person evidences that may be demonstrated either by the person's behavior or by evidence of severe emotional distress and deterioration in the person's mental condition to the extent that the person cannot remain at liberty; and

(C) the specific detailed information from which the physician formed the opinion in Subdivision (2).

(b) A mental health facility that has admitted a person for emergency detention under this section may transport the person to

a mental health facility deemed suitable by the local mental health authority for the area. On the request of the local mental health authority, the judge may order that the proposed patient be detained in a department mental health facility.

(c) A facility that has admitted a person for emergency detention under Subsection (a) or to which a person has been transported under Subsection (b) may transfer the person to an appropriate mental hospital with the written consent of the hospital administrator.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 842, Sec. 1, eff. June 18, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 367, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 510 (H.B. 1829), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.1368, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 573.023. RELEASE FROM EMERGENCY DETENTION. (a) A person apprehended by a peace officer or transported for emergency detention under Subchapter A or detained under Subchapter B shall be released on completion of the preliminary examination unless the person is admitted to a facility under Section 573.022.

(b) A person admitted to a facility under Section 573.022 shall be released if the facility administrator determines at any time during the emergency detention period that one of the criteria prescribed by Section 573.022(a)(2) no longer applies.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 692, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.1369, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 573.024. TRANSPORTATION AFTER RELEASE. (a) Arrangements shall be made to transport a person who is entitled to release under Section 573.023 to:

- (1) the location of the person's apprehension;
- (2) the person's residence in this state; or
- (3) another suitable location.

(b) Subsection (a) does not apply to a person who is arrested or who objects to the transportation.

(c) If the person was apprehended by a peace officer under Subchapter A, arrangements must be made to immediately transport the person. If the person was transported for emergency detention under Subchapter A or detained under Subchapter B, the person is entitled to reasonably prompt transportation.

(d) The county in which the person was apprehended shall pay the costs of transporting the person.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.  
Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 692, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 573.025. RIGHTS OF PERSONS APPREHENDED, DETAINED, OR TRANSPORTED FOR EMERGENCY DETENTION. (a) A person apprehended, detained, or transported for emergency detention under this chapter has the right:

(1) to be advised of the location of detention, the reasons for the detention, and the fact that the detention could result in a longer period of involuntary commitment;

(2) to a reasonable opportunity to communicate with and retain an attorney;

(3) to be transported to a location as provided by Section 573.024 if the person is not admitted for emergency detention, unless the person is arrested or objects;

(4) to be released from a facility as provided by Section 573.023;

(5) to be advised that communications with a mental health professional may be used in proceedings for further detention;

(6) to be transported in accordance with Sections 573.026 and 574.045, if the person is detained under Section 573.022 or transported under an order of protective custody under Section 574.023; and

(7) to a reasonable opportunity to communicate with a relative or other responsible person who has a proper interest in the person's welfare.

(b) A person apprehended, detained, or transported for emergency detention under this subtitle shall be informed of the rights provided by this section and this subtitle:

(1) orally in simple, nontechnical terms, within 24 hours after the time the person is admitted to a facility, and in writing in the person's primary language if possible; or

(2) through the use of a means reasonably calculated to communicate with a hearing or visually impaired person, if applicable.

(c) The executive commissioner by rule shall prescribe the manner in which the person is informed of the person's rights under this section and this subtitle.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1512, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 692, Sec. 10, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 318 (H.B. 1738), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.1370, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 573.026. TRANSPORTATION AFTER DETENTION. A person being transported after detention under Section 573.022 shall be transported in accordance with Section 574.045.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1512, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.