



EL PASO INTELLIGENCE CENTER

EPIC TRANSPORTATION UNIT BULLETIN EB07-09

Officer Safety: Concealed Handcuff Keys

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Officer Safety Alert

Handcuff keys that can easily be mistaken for common everyday items pose a continuing threat to the safety of law enforcement personnel. The following information on two new recently reported handcuff key concealments and several previously reported key concealments is shared to aid law enforcement personnel in search procedures and security checks.

Ring Handcuff Key

Police officers in San Gabriel, California, recently encountered a unique handcuff key in the form of a ring. This type of handcuff key can be easily hidden by turning it around on a finger so that the key is to the inside of the hand. From the top of the hand, the ring has the appearance of a gold wedding band. Officers discovered the concealed handcuff key in the possession a suspect arrested at a traffic stop.



Basketball Shoe Can Conceal Handcuff Key

The new Adidas Tracey McGrady basketball shoes have a small compartment on the heel designed to hold a key. The shoes have no laces and are tightened and loosened with a special key. A snap on the back of the shoe opens a compartment where the special key can be stored. As shown, a handcuff key can easily be concealed inside the compartment. This shoe style is also sold in boy's sizes.

(Police One member Officer Jerome Sipes, Department of Veterans Affairs, Tampa Bay, Florida.)

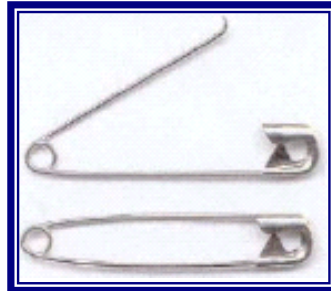


The belt buckle shown below appears to be a normal belt buckle that fits any standard 1 1/2" belt, but the pin in the belt is actually a standard handcuff key. (<http://www.calibrepress.com/newsline>). The cross necklace key could easily be mistaken for a regular necklace.



Safety Pin used as a handcuff key.

The tip of this safety pin was bent to a 90-degree angle for the purpose of opening handcuffs. With only a short practice time, Illinois police officers found that standard handcuffs could be opened in seconds using this technique.



Handcuff key concealed within a key.

This key case conceals a handcuff key and a sharp serrated knife blade. The modified key would easily blend with other keys on a key ring.



Handcuff keys concealed on coins.

These coins appear to be normal on one side, but on the other side is a handcuff key that rotates 180 degrees. The key will open most modern handcuffs.



Handcuff keys hidden on the body.

Concealing handcuff keys in body orifices is a continuing threat. One unique incident involved an inmate who, following an escape from a correctional facility in Kalamazoo, Michigan, was involved in a car accident. During a routine X-ray for a head injury received in the accident, a concealed handcuff key was found inside his mouth. The key was in a pouch-like pocket made of skin which was likely created by techniques similar to those used in body piercing. (*Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center and The New York Police Department*)

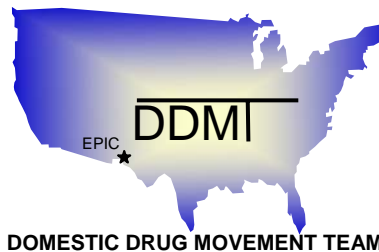
Any questions or comments in reference to this report can be directed to the EPIC Research and Analysis Section, Transportation Unit, IA Kastner at (915) 760-2751, or the Transportation Unit Chief Nancy Thompson at (915) 760-2105.

Arthur Doty, Director

Approved By: Michael Logsdon

Acting Chief, Research and Analysis Section

Prepared By: IA Sharon Kastner



DOMESTIC DRUG MOVEMENT TEAM

◇ EPIC Transportation Unit Domestic Drug Movement Team Points-of-Contact ◇

- Team Leader, Intelligence Analyst Monika Barnum, DEA, (915) 760-2747, monika.m.barnum@usdoj.gov
 - Intelligence Analyst Robert Singh, DEA, (915) 760-2749, robert.x.singh@usdoj.gov
 - Intelligence Analyst Jeff Jasek, DEA, (915) 760-2753, jeffrey.g.jasek@usdoj.gov
 - Intelligence Analyst Sharon Kastner, DEA (915)769-2751, sharon.a.kastner@usdoj.gov
 - Criminal Analyst Isaac Casillas, USDOT, (915) 760-2350, isaac.x.casillas@usdoj.gov
 - Intelligence Data Investigator. Fernando Vega, (915) 760-2748, fernando.r.vega@usdoj.gov
- Fax Number: (915) 670-2297 or 2389

Mailing Address:

El Paso Intelligence Center
11339 SSG Sims Street
El Paso, Texas 79908-8098
Attn: NERT/Transportation Unit/DDMT