

## Bush Torture Memo's Released by Obama Extract Regarding Hypothermia

*As part of an ongoing court case, the Department of Justice released on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009, memos issued by the Office of Legal Counsel between 2002 and 2005, detailing techniques used for interrogation of terrorism suspects.*

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11. *Water dousing.* Cold water is poured on the detainee either from a container or a hose without a nozzle. This technique is intended to weaken the detainee's resistance and persuade him to cooperate with interrogators. The water poured on the detainee must be potable, and the interrogators must ensure that water does not enter the detainee's nose, mouth, or eyes. A medical officer must observe and monitor the detainee throughout application of this technique, including for signs of hypothermia. Ambient temperatures must remain above 64° F. If the detainee is lying on the floor, his head is to remain vertical, and a poncho, mat, or other material must be placed between him and the floor to minimize the loss of body heat. At the conclusion of the water dousing session, the detainee must be moved to a heated room if necessary to permit his body temperature to return to normal in a safe manner. To ensure an adequate margin of safety, the maximum period of time that a detainee may be permitted to remain wet has been set at two-thirds the time which, based on extensive medical literature and experience, hypothermia could be expected to develop in healthy individuals who are submerged in water of the same temperature. For example, in employing this technique:

- For water temperature of 41° F, total duration of exposure may not exceed 20 minutes without drying and rewarming.
- For water temperature of 50° F, total duration of exposure may not exceed 40 minutes without drying and rewarming.
- For water temperature of 59° F, total duration of exposure may not exceed 60 minutes without drying and rewarming.

The minimum permissible temperature of the water used in dousing is 41° F, though you have informed us the in practice the water temperature is generally not below 50° F, since tap water rather than refrigerated water is generally used. We understand that a version of water dousing routinely used in SERE training is much more extreme in that it involves complete immersion of the individual in cold water (where water temperature may be below 40° F) and is usually performed outdoors where ambient impact on body temperature; SERE training also involves a situation where the water may enter the trainee's nose and mouth.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See October 17 [redacted] Letter at 2-3. Comparison of the time limits for water dousing with those used in SERE training is somewhat difficult, as we understand that the SERE training time limits are based on the ambient air temperature rather than water temperature.

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