

Seat Belt Procedure

1022.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The use of seat belts and other safety restraints significantly reduces the chance of death or injury in case of a traffic collision. This policy establishes guidelines for seat belt and child safety seat use to promote maximum operator and passenger safety, thus reducing the possibility of death or injury as the result of a motor vehicle crash. This policy shall apply to all Members operating or riding in Department vehicles (Vehicle Code § 27315.5).

1022.1.1 DATE POLICY APPROVED OR REVISED

Effective: June 17,2010

1022.2 WEARING OF SAFETY RESTRAINTS

All Members shall wear properly adjusted safety restraints when operating or riding in Department-owned, leased or rented vehicles and while operating or riding in privately owned vehicles while on duty. The driver is responsible for ensuring all occupants, including non-Members, are in compliance with this policy.

It is the intent of this policy that all Members wear seat belts whenever possible. However, sworn deputies may dispense with wearing safety restraints in specific tactical situations or when it reasonably appears that, due to unusual circumstances, wearing a seat belt would hinder rather than increase safety.

1022.2.1 TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

An approved child safety restraint system should be used for all children of age, size or weight for which such restraints are required by law (Vehicle Code § 27360). In the event that an appropriate approved child safety restraint system is not available, the child may be transported by sworn personnel and should be restrained in a seat belt (Vehicle Code 27363(b)).

Rear-seat passengers in a cage-equipped vehicle may have reduced clearance, which requires careful seating and positioning of seat belts. Due to this reduced clearance, children and the child restraint system or booster seat should be secured properly in the front seat of these vehicles, provided this positioning meets the vehicle and child restraint system manufacturer's design and use recommendations. In the event that a child is transported in the front seat of a vehicle, the passenger side air bag should be deactivated. In the event this is not possible, officers should consider arranging alternative transportation.

1022.3 TRANSPORTING PRISONERS

Whenever possible, prisoners should be secured in the prisoner restraint system in the rear seat of the patrol vehicle or, when a prisoner restraint system is not available, by seat belts. The prisoner should be in seating position for which seat belts have been provided by the vehicle manufacturer. The prisoner restraint system is not intended to be a substitute for handcuffs or other appendage restraints.

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1022.4 INOPERABLE SEAT BELTS

No person shall operate a Department vehicle in which the seat belt in the driver's position is inoperable. No person shall be transported in a seating position in which the seat belt is inoperable.

No person shall modify, remove, deactivate or otherwise tamper with the vehicle safety belts, except for vehicle maintenance and repair staff who shall do so only with the express authorization of the Sheriff.

Members who discover an inoperable restraint system shall report the defect to the appropriate supervisor. Prompt action will be taken to replace or repair the system.