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## Seat Belt Policy

### 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 will apply to all employees operating or riding in department vehicles and employees riding in privately owned vehicles on Department business.

### SEATBELT REQUIREMENT

All employees shall wear properly adjusted safety restraints when operating or riding in [Insert name of agency] 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 nonemployees, are in compliance with this policy.

Exceptions to the requirement to wear safety restraints may be made only in exceptional situations where, due to unusual circumstances wearing a seat belt would endanger the officer or the public. Employees should be prepared to articulate justification for any deviation from this requirement.

### TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

Children under the age of 6 or who weigh less than 60 pounds should be transported in compliance with [Insert state specific mandate if applicable]. Members should deactivate, if available, the passenger side airbag when appropriate, such as when transporting a rear facing infant or child in the front seat.

### 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 a 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.

### 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 that shall do so only with the express authorization of the [Insert responsible person/agency].

Employees 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.