

Seat Belts

1011.1 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 crash. 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.

1011.2 WEARING OF SAFETY RESTRAINTS

All employees shall wear properly adjusted safety restraints when operating or riding in a seat equipped with restraints, in any vehicle owned, leased or rented by this department, on- or off-duty, or in any privately owned vehicle while on-duty. The employee driving such a vehicle shall ensure that all other occupants, including non-employees, are also properly restrained.

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 must be prepared to justify any deviation from this requirement.

1011.2.1 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. 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 (625 ILCS 25/4).

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 airbag shall be deactivated if such a feature is available. In the event it is not possible to deactivate the passenger's airbag, officers should consider arranging for alternative transportation.

1011.3 TRANSPORTING PRISONERS

Whenever possible, prisoners should be secured in the prisoner restraint system in the rear seat of the patrol vehicle. 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.

Prisoners being transported in a police vehicle without a protective shield shall be secured, when possible, with a seat belt. Two officers should be present for the transport.

Urbana Police Department

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1011.4 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.

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.