

## Seat Belts and Transportation

### 418.1 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 will apply to all employees operating or riding in a department vehicle (Vehicle Code 27315.5).

### 418.2 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

- California Vehicle Code §§ 165, 27315, 27315.5, and 27360, et seq.
- Riverside County Standard Safety Operations Manual – Document 4001

### 418.3 POLICY

Probationers in custody shall be transported in a manner that is safe and secure to minimize risk to anyone. Personnel operating, riding, or transporting in departmental vehicles shall comply with state and county mandates relating to seat belt use.

### 418.4 PROCEDURE

#### 418.4.1 WEARING OF SAFETY RESTRAINTS

- (a) Seat belts and/or chest restraints are to be worn at all times when driving a vehicle on behalf of the County of Riverside. The driver is responsible to make sure passengers wear their seat belts and chest restraints. (Riverside County Standards Safety Operations Manual Document #4001)
- (b) 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 member or the public. Personnel must be prepared to justify any deviation from this requirement.

#### 418.4.2 TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

In the event that exigent circumstances require the transporting of a child, personnel shall adhere to the following guidelines.

- (a) Children under the age of 8 should be transported in compliance with California's restraint system requirements (Vehicle Code 27360).
- (b) A child may be transported by sworn personnel without the use of a child passenger restraint system in an authorized emergency vehicle if a child passenger restraint system is unavailable and the child is secured by a seat belt (Vehicle Code 27363(b) and Vehicle Code 165).
- (c) Personnel shall deactivate, if available, the passenger side airbag when appropriate, such as when transporting a rear-facing infant or child in the front seat.

# Riverside County Probation Department

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#### 418.4.3 IN CUSTODY TRANSPORTATION

- (a) In custody transportation shall be in compliance with Handcuffing and Restraints Policy.
- (b) When personnel have the responsibility of transporting persons who are in custody, they shall carefully plan the circumstances of the transportation; including an assessment of potential problems, contingencies for dealing with unstable or dangerous probationers, securing an appropriate county vehicle and acquiring assistance, if needed. Personnel transporting persons in custody are prohibited from using any method of transportation that presents a substantial risk of asphyxiation.
- (c) Clients shall be transported in a caged vehicle or a non-caged vehicle with at least one additional staff member. Unless it is unavoidable, staff shall not transport alone, nor transport a probationer of the opposite sex alone.
- (d) Subjects shall be in a seated position in a seat where seat belts have been provided by the vehicle manufacturer. The vehicle restraint system is not intended to be a substitute for handcuffs or other appendage restraints.

#### 418.4.4 INOPERABLE SEAT BELTS

- (a) No person shall be transported in a seating position in which the seat belt is inoperable.
- (b) 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 Chief Probation Officer or designee.
- (c) 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.

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