

## **1022 SEAT BELTS**

### **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 accident. 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 collision. This policy will apply to all employees operating or riding in department vehicles.

The department follows the policy listed in the Department of Finance Risk Management policy titled Seat Belt Policy

#### **1022.2.1 TRANSPORTING CHILDREN**

To be properly restrained as required in this policy, child passengers shall be transported using an approved child restraint system for all children younger than 16 years of age (§ 307.179.2, RSMo). Children shall be transported in compliance with Missouri's restraint system requirements based on the age and weight of the child.

Rear seat passengers in a cage-equipped vehicle may have reduced clearance that requires careful seating and positioning of seat belts. If permitted by law, children and any child restraint system may be secured in the front seat of vehicles provided this positioning meets the vehicle and federal safety standards and, if the child is under 13, the seat is pushed back as far as possible and the passenger-side air bag deactivated. If this is not possible officers should consider arranging alternative transportation.

#### **1022.3 TRANSPORTING PRISONERS**

Safety belts are not required for the rear seats of police vehicles (§ 307.165.1, RSMo). However, prisoners should be secured in the prisoner restraint system in the rear seat of the patrol vehicle or by seat belts when a prisoner restraint system is not available. 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.

#### **1022.4 INOPERABLE SEAT BELTS**

No department vehicle shall be operated if 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 belt system, except for vehicle maintenance and repair staff, who shall do so only with the express authorization of the Chief of Police.

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