

Safety Belts

1011.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

State NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 42.3

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of safety belts and child restraints. This policy will apply to all members operating or riding in department vehicles.

1011.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Federal NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 42.3

Definitions related to this policy include:

Child restraint system - An infant or child passenger restraint system that meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and regulations set forth in 49 CFR 571.213.

Safety belt system - A system utilizing a lap belt, a shoulder belt or any other belt or combination of belts installed in a motor vehicle to restrain drivers and passengers, and that conforms to federal regulations (49 CFR 571).

1011.2 POLICY

Best Practice NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 42.3

It is the policy of the Syracuse Police Department that members use safety and child restraint systems to reduce the possibility of death or injury in a motor vehicle accident.

1011.3 WEARING OF SAFETY RESTRAINTS

Best Practice NY_CALEA6.13 - 41.3.3 NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 42.3

All members 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 while on- or off-duty, or in any privately owned vehicle while on-duty. The member driving such a vehicle shall ensure that all other occupants, including those who are not members of the Department, are properly restrained.

Exceptions to the requirement to wear safety restraints may be made only in exceptional situations where, due to unusual circumstances, wearing a safety belt would endanger the department member or the public. Members must be prepared to justify any deviation from this requirement.

1011.4 TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

State NY_CALEA6.13 - 41.3.3 NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 42.3

Child passengers shall be transported using an approved child restraint system in compliance with Vehicle and Traffic Law § 1229-c.

Rear seat passengers in a cage-equipped vehicle may have reduced clearance, which requires careful seating and positioning of safety belts. Due to this reduced clearance, and if permitted by law, children and any child restraint system may be secured in the front seat of such vehicles

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provided this positioning meets federal safety standards and 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 seat should be pushed back as far as possible and the passenger-side airbag should be deactivated. If this is not possible, members should arrange alternate transportation when feasible.

1011.5 TRANSPORTING SUSPECTS, PRISONERS OR ARRESTEES

Best Practice MODIFIED NY_CALEA6.13 - 41.3.3 NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 42.3, 64.1

Suspects, prisoners and arrestees should be in a seated position and secured in the rear seat of any department vehicle with a prisoner restraint system or, when a prisoner restraint system is not available, by safety belts provided by the vehicle manufacturer. The prisoner restraint system is not intended to be a substitute for handcuffs or other appendage restraints.

All non-police persons who are passengers in a Departmental vehicle are required to wear a seat belt. However, situations may arise when transporting prisoners or emotionally disturbed persons when seat belt use is not practical or feasible and good judgement on the part of an officer must prevail.

Any subject transported in the rear of the Prisoner Transport vehicle shall be restrained with a seatbelt.

Prisoners in leg restraints shall be transported in accordance with the Handcuffing and Restraints Policy.

1011.6 INOPERABLE SAFETY BELTS

Best Practice NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 42.3

Department vehicles shall not be operated when the safety belt in the driver's position is inoperable. Persons shall not be transported in a seat in which the safety belt is inoperable.

Department vehicle safety belts shall not be modified, removed, deactivated or altered in any way, except by the vehicle maintenance and repair staff, who shall do so only with the express authorization of the Chief of Police.

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.

1011.7 VEHICLES MANUFACTURED WITHOUT SAFETY BELTS

Best Practice NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 42.3

Vehicles manufactured and certified for use without safety belts or other restraint systems are subject to the manufacturer's operator requirements for safe use.

1011.8 VEHICLE AIRBAGS

Best Practice

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In all vehicles equipped with airbag restraint systems, the system will not be tampered with or deactivated, except when transporting children as written elsewhere in this policy. All equipment installed in vehicles equipped with airbags will be installed as per the vehicle manufacturer specifications to avoid the danger of interfering with the effective deployment of the airbag device.