



Norwich Police Department Standard Operating Procedure

Subject:	Use of Seat Belts	
Distribution:	All Officers & H.Q.	
Approved / By order of:	Jennifer Frank, Chief of Police	

I. PURPOSE:	<p>The use of seat belts and other safety restraints significantly reduces the chance of death or injury in the event a traffic collision occurs. The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to establish guidelines for Norwich Police Department employees regarding the use of seat belts while on duty, and for those operating or riding in Norwich Police Department vehicles; in order to promote maximum operator and passenger safety, thus reducing the possibility of death or injury as the result of a motor vehicle crash</p> <p>This Standard Operating Procedure becomes effective July 1, 2020, and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.</p>
II. POLICY:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. All Norwich Police Department employees shall wear properly adjusted seat belts when operating or riding in a seat equipped with restraints, in any vehicle owned, leased, or rented by the Norwich Police department while on- or off-duty, or while riding in any privately owned vehicles while on duty.B. The employee driving such a vehicle shall ensure that all other occupants, including non-members, are also properly restrained when the vehicle is in motion, whenever factory installed seat belts are present for the seat position.C. When arriving at a call for service, or making a traffic stop, officers may remove their seat belt just prior to stopping for a quick exit, or if the safety restraint would have an adverse effect on officer safety, or interfere with tactical or other functions.
III. DEFINITIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. <u>Seat belt:</u> A vehicle safety device designed to secure the driver or passenger of a vehicle against harmful movement that may result during a collision or a sudden stop.

IV. PROCEDURES:	<p>A. Juveniles should be transported in compliance with Vermont’s restraint system requirements. A juvenile 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.</p> <p>B. Whenever possible, passengers/detainees should be secured in the detainee restraint system in the rear seat of the patrol vehicle or, when a detainee restraint system is not available, by seat belts. The detainee should be in a seat position for which seat belts have been provided. The detainee restraint system is not intended to be a substitute for handcuffs or other appendage restraints. Officer(s) are afforded discretion regarding their personal safety, based on the behavior of any detainee. If an officer believes the application of a safety belt would jeopardize or compromise the safety of the officer, detainees may be transported without the use of a safety belt.</p> <p>C. 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 seat position in which the seat belt is inoperable. No person shall modify, remove, deactivate, circumvent, or otherwise tamper with Norwich Police Department vehicle seat belts. Employees who discover an inoperable restraint system shall report the defect to the appropriate supervisor and take the vehicle out of service.</p>
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