

**MODEL SAFETY BELT ENFORCEMENT GUIDELINES &
TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT OBJECTIVES
(SPEED-DUI-OCCUPANT PROTECTION)**

Model Traffic Enforcement Objectives

Purpose:

These guidelines are designed to assist you in achieving uniform enforcement of the safety belt law in your jurisdiction. It is hoped that uniform enforcement of this law will result in voluntary compliance by the motoring public. The intent is not to supplant the judgment of your officers for it is impossible to foresee every conceivable situation involving traffic violations.

These enforcement guidelines are intended to heighten the awareness of the importance of occupant restraint systems use within your agency and the community. By promoting a uniform approach and outlining some enforcement activities, the goal of reducing fatalities and injuries in traffic crashes can be realized.

Discussion:

Research clearly indicates that the use of safety belts has significant effect in reducing the number of deaths and the severity of injuries resulting from traffic crashes. Strong evidence also indicates that the level of public compliance with a law of this nature has a direct relationship to the number of persons who will survive a serious traffic crash. Therefore, enforcement is considered essential in achieving citizen compliance.

Officer Guidelines:

- Each officer should insure that at every traffic enforcement contact, the use of safety restraints is addressed, to include positive reinforcement if proper use of the safety restraint is observed. ALL vehicle occupants should be checked for compliance.
- When safety restraints are not being used correctly, officers should provide the appropriate educational information to encourage their proper use.
- If the non-use or intentional misuse of safety restraints is noted, the appropriate enforcement action should be taken.
- ALL enforcement actions should be accomplished in a firm, fair, impartial and courteous manner using one of the following methods:
 - Verbal Warning
 - Citation (Notice to appear)
 - Written Warning

- The officer's action should demonstrate a professional attitude and serve to improve the relationship between the public and the department.

Addressing the Need:

Attention must be given to the manner in which these guidelines are transmitted through the agencies various leaders.

- The chief or director should provide positive direction for implementing the enforcement guidelines agency-wide.
- An enforcement directive should be issued to command staff personnel actively encouraging the enforcement actions.
- The chief or director should outline the need for these guidelines.

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Each agency should define traffic enforcement expectations and goals by developing enforcement objectives.

Personnel should define these expectations and develop enforcement objectives targeting specific areas where this enforcement can make an impact in the community.

Sample Objectives:

To achieve the overall goal of reducing injuries and deaths in motor vehicle crashes the department should set an objective of at least ____% occupant protection compliance by the motoring public. (The state objective is 82% by 2007) Once the objective is achieved the department should strive to set a new compliance level objective greater than the current level, and prioritize occupant protection enforcement accordingly to achieve and maintain these levels.

Traffic enforcement should be provided by all uniformed personnel within the police department with specific emphasis on the following traffic violations:

- *Drunk or drugged driving*
- *Speeding*
- *Non-use of safety belts*
- *Non-use or incorrect use of child safety seats*

An effectiveness indicator should be developed. As an example, the department should maintain the number of targeted traffic violations in this calendar year at levels equal to or greater than the last calendar year with an appropriate percentage of the total number of summonses issued being safety belt and/or child safety seat use violations.

Performance standards and the appropriate percentage of summonses to be written should be determined by the agency after the appropriate evaluation of the jurisdictions fatal/injury crash data. Factors to be included in determining the amount of enforcement are:

- Current rate of safety belt/child safety restraint use.
- Current number of safety belt/child restraint violations.
- Current number of fatal/injury traffic crashes
- Projected safety belt/child restraint use effectiveness in these crashes.

These factors should be continuously evaluated so that the department can effectively determine the specific number of speeding, DUI and occupant protection enforcement actions that need to be taken in order to meet the departments goals and objectives.

Several performance standard examples:

- At least 20% of any departments total citations should include safety belt violations until safety belt use reaches ____%.
- At least 2% of the departments total citations should include child safety restraint violations until the use rate reaches ____%.

These standards and objectives should be reviewed each calendar year. All personnel assigned should be issued a copy of these objectives and briefed on there implementation.

The performance objectives are to be reasonable, attainable, quantifiable, measurable, and sufficiently flexible to permit change, as needed.