

San Diego Police Department

TRAINING BULLETIN

A PUBLICATION OF THE SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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SEATBELT RESPONSIBILITY OF TRANSPORTING OFFICERS

This Training Bulletin supersedes and incorporates Training Bulletin 20-14 for renewal purposes without substantive change.

I. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines to officers who transport prisoners on the various restraint systems and their correct usage.

II. BACKGROUND

Department Policy 6.01 states, “Officers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all subjects who are taken into custody. It is an officer’s duty to keep prisoners safe from harm and prevent their escape, while also protecting others and preserving evidence.” This bulletin is to address the prisoner safety restraint systems within the patrol vehicles and the correct way they should be utilized.

The San Diego Police Department utilizes three different safety restraint systems in vehicles that are outfitted for prisoner transport. The first is the standard three point or “inertia wheel” belt. This belt stretches across the torso and lap, securing the suspect at three fixed points.

The second is the lap belt only. This belt is a two point safety belt that straps the suspect in across his or her hips. This belt is only found in some of the prisoner vans.

The third belt is the “Pro-Gard Outboard Seat Belt.” This seatbelt features a center mount base point for the belts that is anchored in the center of the prisoner transport seat. The two buckles are located on the exterior side of the prisoner

compartment. The “stored” position is located high on the outside of the prisoner transport partition while the seat is unoccupied. The belt is latched in the traditional fashion, similar to the three point belt. The officer is required to manually tighten the chest portion.

III. Proper Restraint Usage

- A. Effective immediately, the following procedures shall be utilized regarding seatbelts within the prisoner portion of the vehicles. Prisoners are to have their seatbelt on at all times while inside a vehicle. Officers who do not secure a prisoner with a seatbelt should be prepared to clearly and specifically justify their actions.
1. On vehicles equipped with the standard three point belt, the officer shall place the seatbelt on the prisoner in the traditional manner unless doing so would pose a safety risk to the officer. Once the three point belt has been placed on the suspect, the officer shall then pull the shoulder portion of the belt out until it is fully extended. The officer should hear a “click” from the seatbelt retractor. The shoulder portion will then be allowed to retract across the suspect’s chest until there is no slack and it will not loosen, preventing excessive movement by the suspect. If the officer does not hear the “click”, he or she shall pull the shoulder harness out and repeat this process until it locks correctly. Any seatbelt not in use shall be latched and stored in the same manner, preventing the unused seatbelt from extending.
 2. On vehicles equipped with the lap belt only, the belt will be placed across the prisoner’s lap in the traditional manner. All other lap belts will remain unlatched.
 3. For vehicles that utilize the “Pro-Gard” seatbelt, the Officer shall place the seatbelt across the prisoner’s lap and secure the waist belt. The Officer shall then manually tighten the chest harness so there is no slack in the belt. Any unused “Pro-Gard” seatbelt shall remain latched in the “stored” position.

Department Procedure 6.01 will be updated to include segments of this Training Bulletin.