


HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL		
Issue Date February 2021	Review Date February 2022	Directive Number 6.4.4
Accreditation Index:		Rescinds: Directive 6.4.4 of November 2019
Chapter: Six – General Procedures		Section: Four – Vehicle Operations
Chief of Police: <i>John F. Viola</i>		

SUBJECT: SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM USEAGE

I. PURPOSE

This directive is established to insure maximum driver and passenger safety, and to minimize the possibility of death or injury as a result of motor vehicle crashes. This policy shall apply to all personnel driving or riding in vehicles owned by the Township of Haverford.

II. POLICY

Research clearly indicates that the use of safety restraint systems has a significant effect upon reducing the number of deaths and the severity of injuries resulting from traffic crashes. A law enforcement officer’s chance of being involved in a motor vehicle crash is approximately two to ten times greater than that of the general public. The use of safety restraint systems reduces this risk of death or serious injury and assists officers in maintaining proper control of their vehicle in emergency high-speed driving.

To assure the safety of all occupants, safety restraint systems shall be worn at all times by drivers and passengers in all vehicles owned, leased or rented by the Township of Haverford. This policy also applies to the operation of privately owned or leased vehicles if used while on-duty or while conducting official business.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. Department personnel shall use the safety restraint system installed by the vehicle manufacturer properly adjusted and securely fastened when operating or riding in any vehicle so equipped while on-duty.
- B. Lap belts shall be properly secured in those vehicles equipped with automatic safety restraint systems that require the lap portion of the belt to be manually secured.
- C. The driver of the vehicle is responsible for ensuring compliance by all occupants of the vehicle. Approved child safety restraint systems shall be used for all children of age, size, or weight for which such restraints are prescribed by law.
- D. No person shall operate a Township vehicle in which any safety restraint system is inoperable in the drivers seating position. No person shall be transported in a seating position in which the safety restraint system is inoperable.
- E. No person shall modify, remove, deactivate or otherwise tamper with the vehicle safety restraint system except for vehicle maintenance and repair. These types of repairs shall be performed by the Township mechanic or an authorized vehicle mechanic.
- F. Personnel who discover an inoperable restraint system shall report the defect to the appropriate supervisor. Prompt action shall be taken to replace or repair the system.
- G. Any person(s) under arrest and being transported in Township vehicle(s) should be, when reasonably practical and officer safety permits, secured in the vehicle by a safety restraint system in all seating positions for which safety restraints are provided by the vehicle manufacturer.
 - Caution:** Prisoners handcuffed in front may have the opportunity to release the handcuffs using the safety restraint latch plate.
- H. An exemption from this policy may also be granted if a prisoner to be transported is violent, combative, or otherwise would be hazardous to seatbelt into the vehicle.
- I. An officer operating in an undercover capacity may be exempt **ONLY** if the officer believes the use of the safety restraint system will compromise his/or her identity.
- J. When arriving at an emergency call or making a vehicle traffic stop, the operator may remove the safety restraint system just prior to stopping for quick exit. Caution should be exercised to ensure that the violator is in fact going to stop.

IV. NONCOMPLIANCE

- A. In the event that negligence or noncompliance with this directive is displayed corrective or disciplinary action may be initiated as violations of the appropriate sections of the Code of Conduct or the Code of Discipline.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE