

National Sheriffs’ Association Mandatory Seatbelt Wear Policy

1. **Purpose**

 The purpose of this policy is to provide law enforcement officers with mandatory instructions for wearing seatbelts.

The NSA supports mandatory wear policies is conditioned on the following:

1. Failure to comply with the policy should **not** be used by any police agencies or governmental entities as a basis for denying death or disability benefits to officers or their families.

2. The language in some federal and state disability laws states that officers may be denied benefits if their deaths or injuries are caused by their intentional misconduct or gross negligence, or if their actions were a substantial contributing factor to the death or injury.

We believe that this language should be amended to state that the failure to wear a seatbelt does **not** constitute the type of intentional misconduct, gross negligence, or substantial contributing factor that would warrant denial of benefits.

3. Police executives should work closely with their employee associations and unions when developing mandatory wear policies, and officers should be involved in testing and selecting equipment.

4. Law enforcement agencies should provide their officers with up-to-date equipment that meets all applicable safety requirements. This includes ensuring that agency vehicles are in good working condition and making best efforts to provide the newest and best vehicles possible.

5. Police executives and labor leaders should work together to develop strategies for increasing the use of seatbelts among officers. This includes: providing tactical training on safe seatbelt usage; and implementing educational campaigns on the importance of seatbelt use.

1. **Policy**

 It is the policy of this law enforcement agency to maximize officer safety through the use of seatbelts while driving or riding in a city vehicle. City vehicles shall not be placed in motion until the driver and all passengers have been fastened in their seatbelts, including all prisoners.

1. **Procedures**
2. Equipment
3. Officers are to be included in testing and selecting equipment.
4. The law enforcement agency is to provide its officers with up-to-date equipment that meets all applicable safety requirements. This includes ensuring that agency vehicles are in good working condition and making best efforts to provide the newest and best vehicles possible.
5. Discipline for Employees Not Wearing Seatbelts
6. The discipline category for all employees not wearing a seatbelt while driving or riding in a city vehicle as required by state law will begin at a minimum, Category B. This means that the lowest possible discipline that an employee will receive for not wearing a seatbelt is a temporary suspension. Furthermore, if an employee is untruthful about whether or not he or she was wearing a seatbelt, they will face consequences for not wearing a seatbelt and for being untruthful.
7. Failure to comply with the policy does **not** constitute the type of intentional misconduct, gross negligence, or substantial contributing factor that would warrant the denial of death or disability benefits to officers or their families.
8. Training

The training officer is responsible for:

1. Working closely with police executives and labor leaders to develop strategies for increasing the use of seatbelts among officers. This includes providing tactical training on safe seatbelt usage, and implementing educational campaigns on the importance of wearing seatbelts.
2. Maintaining statistics on incidents where seatbelts have or have not protected officers from harm in traffic accidents.