97-005 Transporting Juveniles in Child Passenger Restraint Systems

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services

TRANSPORTING JUVENILES IN CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINT SYSTEMS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Field Operations Directive is to provide guidance to deputy personnel when transporting juveniles in child passenger restraint systems.

OVERVIEW

In order for a child passenger restraint system (child safety seat) to be installed into a vehicle properly, it must be forced down into the seat cushion of the vehicle and then locked in with the vehicle's safety belt. This procedure insures the child safety seat is secure and will not move. A problem arises when personnel install a child safety seat into the rear seat of a patrol unit. The patrol unit's rear seat (in most cases) is made of a hard molded plastic. CHILD SAFETY SEATS CANNOT BE PROPERLY INSTALLED IN PLASTIC REAR SEATS. The only alternative is to install the child safety seat into the patrol unit's front passenger seat. Unfortunately, this is not an option as most patrol units now have front passenger side air bags. Air bags have proven to be dangerous, and in some cases deadly, to juveniles in car seats.

PROCEDURE

Deputy personnel who must transport juveniles under the age of four (4) and/or under forty (40) pounds in weight, must transport said juvenile in a properly installed child passenger restraint system (child safety seat). Child safety seats cannot be properly installed in patrol units with hard plastic rear seats, therefore, such cars shall not be used. Due to safety hazards, personnel shall not install child safety seats in the front passenger side of any vehicle with a passenger air bag.

Deputy personnel who must transport juveniles in child passenger restraint systems in the rear seat of their patrol unit shall only do so if the patrol unit has a cushioned rear seat (not hard plastic).

Deputy personnel who must transport a juvenile in a child passenger restraint system in the front passenger seat of their patrol unit shall only do so if there is no passenger side air bag.

Deputy personnel who must transport juveniles in a child passenger restraint system and cannot do so in their patrol unit shall request another patrol unit where child passenger restraint systems can be used (cushioned rear seats, no passenger air bag).

If deputy personnel cannot locate another patrol unit which is safe to place a child passenger restraint system in, they shall attempt to locate and have one of the station's solid color sedans (all solid sedans have cushioned back seats) respond to their location.

When deputy personnel cannot locate a Department solid sedan, they shall immediately notify their station desk. Desk personnel shall attempt to locate and have another Department patrol station send either a patrol unit suitable for the use of a child passenger restraint system or a Department solid sedan.