



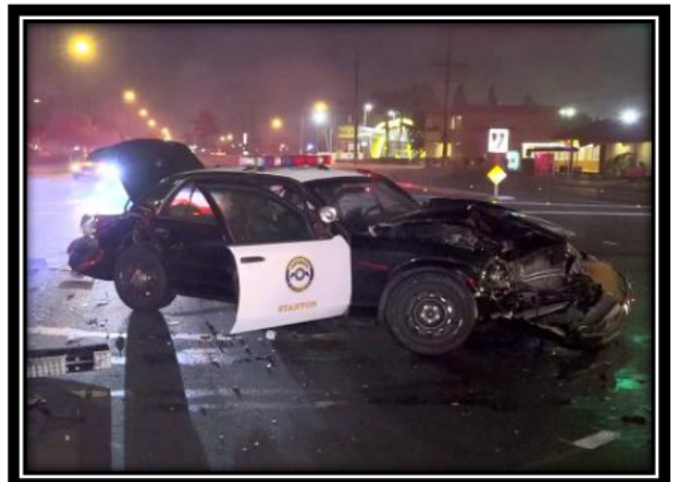
USE OF SEAT BELTS WHILE OPERATING VEHICLES ON DUTY

OCSO POLICY 1022.2 - WEARING OF SAFETY RESTRAINTS

In the second quarter of 2020, data collected for the Traffic Collision Review Board shows that in 33% of preventable collisions department-wide, deputies failed to properly use seat belts. Policy 1022.2 requires all employees to **“wear properly adjusted safety restraints when operating or riding in department-owned, leased or rented vehicles and while operating or riding in privately-owned vehicles while on duty”**.

CONSEQUENCES

Failing to utilize safety restraints while operating a vehicle on duty constitutes a policy violation. That, however, is hardly the most severe consequence. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that, on average, “more than one officer per week has been killed on our nation’s roadways”. The proper use of seatbelts can prevent some of these tragedies. For additional information refer to www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/leo/default.html.



TACTICS

Policy 1022.2 allows for deputies to “dispense with wearing safety restraints in specific tactical situations or when it reasonably appears that, due to unusual circumstances, wearing a seat belt would hinder rather than increase safety” (Policy Manual 1022.2). While these “unusual circumstances” do occur, it is most often the safest choice for members to properly wear seat belts while on duty. It is incumbent upon each department member to calculate the risks responsibly and to encourage others to do the same.

