

Transportation Safety

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

Policy: 100.0110

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The Department makes every effort to ensure the safety of staff and the children and families served during Departmental transportation. Department staff and staff of service providers are required to conform at all times with Rhode Island General Law 31-22-22, which mandates that all motor vehicle operators and passengers wear safety belts or be properly restrained in federally approved restraint systems as determined by the age, height and weight of the passenger. Department staff and providers also protect the health and safety of children and youth during transports by ensuring appropriate supervision, securing the vehicle, reporting any run away and complying with law and regulations regarding confidentiality.

Related Procedure

[Transportation Safety](#)

Related Policy

[Confidentiality](#)

Transportation Safety

Procedure from Policy 100.0110: Transportation Safety

- A. Departmental staff and contracted providers comply with state law and policy relating to the use of seat belts and child restraint systems during all transports:
 - 1. All Departmental and contracted provider staff use safety belts at all times.
 - 2. All passengers riding in any vehicle operated by Department staff or contracted providers wear safety belts or are properly restrained in approved child restraint systems at all times.
 - 3. Seating position and use of safety belts or restraint systems are determined by the age, height and weight of the passenger.
 - a. Child(ren) under the age of eight, less than 57 inches in height and less than 80 pounds, must be transported in the back seat of the vehicle in a child restraint system appropriate for child's age and size.
 - b. Child(ren) under the age of eight, but at least 57 inches in height or at least 80 pounds, must be transported in the back seat of the vehicle in a child restraint system appropriate for child's age and size or properly wearing a safety belt and/or shoulder harness.
 - c. Child(ren) aged thirteen and under must be transported in the back seat of the vehicle, unless other children already occupy all seats in the rear. Child(ren) must be wearing a safety belt and/or shoulder harness.
 - d. Youth thirteen years of age or older may sit in the front or back seat and must properly wear a safety belt and/or shoulder harness.
 - 4. The following exceptions to 1 and 2 above apply:
 - a. Possession of written verification from a licensed physician that the Department or provider staff or passenger is unable to use a seat belt for physical or medical reasons.
 - b. Motor vehicles not required by federal law to have seat belts.

- B. Departmental staff and contracted providers follow procedures listed below to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the children and families receiving Department services:
 - 1. Any child in care, regardless of age, is never left alone in an automobile.
 - 2. The child is received directly from and returned to his/her caretaker unless primary service worker and placement provider have identified and agreed upon an alternative, appropriate adult.
 - 3. All doors are locked before the transport begins.
 - 4. Transporting staff immediately notifies the local police department if a child or youth runs away while being transported.
 - a. During standard working hours, notification is made to the primary service worker and/or supervisor.
 - b. During non-standard working hours, notification is made to Child Protective Services.
 - 5. Family members or friends do not accompany staff while transporting clients or while involved in agency business at designated client locations because of liability and confidentiality issues.
 - 6. Smoking is prohibited in any vehicle used by Department staff or contracted providers to transport children.