

## UT College of Natural Sciences

### Mandatory Safety Belt Usage in College Vehicles

To help ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and staff while traveling in university vehicles, the following rules concerning the use of safety belts will go into effect immediately.

These rules supplement and extend those of the State of Texas and the University of Texas. The term “safety belts” refers to both lap and shoulder belts furnished as standard equipment with vehicles or added after the purchase of vehicles.

- 1) All passengers in College of Natural Sciences vehicles shall wear safety belts at all times.

Note: This rule is stricter than Texas law, which does not require persons over 17 years old to wear safety belts except in the front seats of vehicles.

- 2) No person shall ride in a part of a vehicle that is not equipped with safety belts. This includes pick-up truck beds, cargo areas, and the outside of vehicles.

Note: This rule should not be overlooked because the vehicle is off-road or the journey is only a few hundred yards.

- 3) The driver of the vehicle shall ensure that passengers are in compliance with the above rules before operating the vehicle.

Note: We recognize a driver may be unaware if a passenger unfastens a seat belt during a trip. Our intent is to ask drivers to remind passengers of safety belt usage before starting the vehicle and to refuse to operate the vehicle if an obviously unsafe condition exists.

- 4) These rules shall be permanently posted in all College of Natural Sciences vehicles.

Note: Appropriate signage might include a sign “All passengers must wear seat belts at all times” located on every seat back, and a sign “Driver: ensure all passengers are wearing seat belts before operating vehicle” located on the dashboard.

- 5) Departments should add a mandatory safety belt usage statement to the field trip release forms signed by students and should ensure that all authorized drivers of college vehicles are familiar with these rules.