

## FIX-N-FAX #2a

### CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

Number 2a

**Equipment Standard**

**Mandatory Compliance**

Date: October 2005

#### **AUTOMOTIVE AIR BAG SUPPLEMENTAL RESTRAINT SYSTEM**

The majority of light vehicles currently owned or operated by CDF are equipped with driver and/or front passenger air bag supplemental restraint systems. Some newer vehicles may additionally be equipped with driver and passenger side impact air bag supplemental restraint systems.

The air bag supplemental restraint system is designed to be used in conjunction with seat belts to provide increased vehicle occupant protection in the event of frontal or near frontal collision (or side impact collision, if so equipped).

Collision statistics have shown that air bags provide an incremental reduction in severity of injury and death over seat belt usage alone. Although air bags have demonstrated their effectiveness in saving lives, they may pose a safety hazard if certain precautions are not taken.

**CAUTION!** Objects placed in the deployment zone(s) or path of the air bag(s), regardless of size, **will** become a projectile that may cause injury or death. This includes clip boards, handy talkies and any other loose item(s) placed on top of the dash or within the air bag deployment zones.

It is CDF policy that all supplemental restraint systems provided by the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) be maintained as delivered from the OEM.

**Modifications of any kind shall not be made to alter the operation of the air bag supplemental restraint system.**

**AIR BAG OFF SWITCH.** Some vehicles are equipped from the OEM with the ability to deactivate the front passenger side air bag. This switch should only be turned to the OFF position if the person in the right front passenger's position is a member of a passenger risk group identified by the United States Government as follows:

**Infant.** An infant (less than 1 year old) must ride in the front seat because

- the vehicle has no rear seat;
- the vehicle has a rear seat too small to accommodate a rear facing infant seat; or

- the infant has a medical condition which, according to the infant's physician, makes it necessary for the infant to ride in the front seat so that the driver can constantly monitor the child's condition.

**Child age 1 to 12.** A child age 1 to 12 must ride in the front seat because:

- the vehicle has no rear seat;
- although children ages 1 to 12 ride in the rear seat(s) whenever possible, children ages 1 to 12 sometimes must ride in the front because no space is available in the rear seat(s); or
- the child has a medical condition which according to the child's physician, makes it necessary for the child to ride in the front seat so the driver can constantly monitor the child's condition.

**Medical Condition.** A passenger has a medical condition which, according to his/her physician:

- causes the passenger air bag to pose a special risk for the passenger; and
- makes the potential harm from the passenger air bag in a crash greater than the potential harm from turning off the air bag and allowing the passenger, even if belted, to hit the dashboard or windshield in a crash.

**For no other reason shall the air bag switch be turned to the off position.**

**EQUIPMENT AND WEAPON INSTALLATION GUIDELINES.** Careful attention must be given to insure that CDF or vendor installed equipment is not located, mounted or carried within the deployment zone(s) of the air bag supplemental restraint system.

Prior to the installation of communications equipment, laptop computers, weapons or any other equipment in a CDF owned or operated vehicle with an OEM equipped air bag supplemental restraint system, guidelines from the OEM must be obtained and followed to ensure that all mountings and installations are outside of the vehicle's air bag deployment zone(s).

The Unit Fleet Manager shall have oversight and approve all installations and mountings. The Unit Fleet Manager may request advice, assistance and resource information from the Region Fleet manager.

Any deviation from this policy will be considered a **vehicle modification** and must have prior written approval as directed in the Mobile Equipment Management Procedures Handbook Section 6820.