
STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

1999 No. 454

**Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use)
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999**

Part II

Construction, Equipment and Maintenance of Vehicles

I—

Protective Systems

Maintenance of seat belts and anchorage points

56.—(1) This regulation applies to a seat belt with which a motor vehicle is required to be provided in accordance with regulation 55 and to the anchorages, fastenings, adjusting device and retracting mechanism (if any) of every such seat belt and also to every anchorage with which a goods vehicle is required to be provided in accordance with regulation 54(5)(a).

(2) For the purposes of this regulation the anchorages and anchorage points of a seat belt shall, in the case of a seat which incorporates integral seat belt anchorages, include the system by which the seat assembly itself is secured to the vehicle structure.

(3) The anchorage points provided for seat belts shall be used only as anchorages for the seat belts for which they are intended to be used or capable of being used.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5)—

- (a) all load-bearing members of the vehicle structure or panelling within 30 cms of each anchorage point shall be maintained in a sound condition and free from serious corrosion, distortion or fracture;
- (b) the adjusting device and (if fitted) the retracting mechanism of the seat belt shall be so maintained that the belt may be readily adjusted to the body of the wearer, either automatically or manually, according to the design of the device and (if fitted) the retracting mechanism;
- (c) the seat belt and its anchorages, fastenings and adjusting device shall be maintained free from any obvious defect which would be likely to affect adversely the performance by the seat belt of the function of restraining the body of the wearer in the event of an accident to the vehicle;
- (d) the buckle or other fastening of the seat belt shall—
 - (i) be so maintained that the belt can be readily fastened or unfastened;
 - (ii) be kept free from any temporary or permanent obstruction; and
 - (iii) except in the case of a disabled person's seat belt, be readily accessible to a person sitting in the seat for which the seat belt is provided;

- (e) the webbing or other material which forms the seat belt shall be maintained free from cuts or other visible faults (as, for example, extensive fraying) which would be likely to affect adversely the performance of the belt when under stress;
 - (f) the ends of a seat belt, other than a disabled person's seat belt shall be securely fastened to the anchorage points provided for them; and
 - (g) the ends of a disabled person's seat belt shall, when the seat belt is being used for the purpose for which it was designed and constructed, be securely fastened either to some part of the structure of the vehicle or to the seat which is being occupied by the person wearing the belt so that the body of the person wearing the belt would be restrained in the event of an accident to the vehicle.
- (5) A requirement specified in paragraph (4) does not apply if the vehicle is being used—
- (a) on a journey after the start of which the requirement ceased to be complied with; or
 - (b) after the requirement ceased to be complied with and steps have been taken for such compliance to be restored with all reasonable expedition.
- (6) Expressions used in this regulation and defined in regulation 55 have the same meaning in this regulation as they have in regulation 55.