

# **Off the Job Safety**

Seat Belt Safety

## **Thousands of people die from not wearing their seat belt every year**

One of the safest choices drivers and passengers can make is to buckle up. Seat belt use in passenger vehicles saved an estimated 14,955 lives in 2017. It is the first and best way to secure everyone in the vehicle and protect them from severe or fatal harm. An accident at any speed can cause injury or death if you do not buckle up. Short trips are no different than long trips you should always wear a seatbelt when you are driving or are a passenger in a moving car. Most accidents happen on short trips within 25 miles. Buckling up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas not buckling up can result in being totally ejected from the vehicle in a crash, which is almost always deadly.

**50% OF PASSENGER VEHICLE OCCUPANTS KILLED IN 2021 WERE UNRESTRAINED**

# Proper Use of Seatbelts

## ADULTS

- The lap belt and shoulder belt are secured across the pelvis and rib cage, which are better able to withstand crash forces than other parts of your body.
- Place the shoulder belt across the middle of your chest and away from your neck.
- The lap belt rests across your hips, not your stomach.
- NEVER put the shoulder belt behind your back or under an arm.
- Before you buy a new car, check to see that its seat belts are a good fit for you.
- Ask your dealer about seat belt adjusters, which can help you get the best fit.
- If you need a roomier belt, contact your vehicle manufacturer to obtain seat belt extenders.
- If you drive an older or classic car with lap belts only, check with your vehicle manufacturer about how to retrofit your car with today's safer lap/shoulder belts.

# Proper Use of Seatbelts

## Infants and Children

A child's developmental stage, weight and height can help determine what type of child car seat is best suited for them:

Type of car seat	Stage	Weight of child	Height requirement
Rear-facing child car seat	Baby/infant	Up to 9 kg (20 lb)	None
Forward-facing child car seat or Rear-facing child car seat, if the manufacturer recommends its use	Toddler	9-18 kg (20-40 lb)	None
Booster seat	Under the age of 8	18-36 kg (40-80 lb)	Under 145 cm (4 ft 9 in) tall

Your child can use a seatbelt alone when they reach any of the following milestones:

- turns 8 years old
- weighs 36 kg (80 lb)
- reaches a height of 145 cm (4 ft 9 in) or more

# If You're Pregnant: Seat Belt Recommendations for Drivers and Passengers

If you're pregnant, make sure you know how to position your seat and wear a seat belt to maximize your safety and the safety of your unborn child.

## I'm Pregnant. Should I Wear a Seat Belt?

- **YES**—doctors recommend it. Buckling up through all stages of your pregnancy is the single most effective action you can take to protect yourself and your unborn child in a crash.
- **NEVER** drive or ride in a car without buckling up first!

## What's the Right Way to Wear My Seat Belt?

- The shoulder belt away from your neck (but not off your shoulder) and across your chest (between your breasts), making sure to remove any slack from your seat belt with the lap belt secured below your belly so that it fits snugly across your hips and pelvic bone.
- **NEVER** place the shoulder belt under your arm or behind your back.
- **NEVER** place lap belt over or on top of your belly.

## Should I Adjust My Seat?

- **YES**—Adjust to a comfortable, upright position
- Keep as much distance as possible between your belly and the steering wheel
- Comfortably reach the steering wheel and pedals
- To minimize the gap between your shoulder and the seat belt, avoid reclining your seat more than necessary.
- Avoid letting your belly touch the steering wheel.

# Common Myths

## **If your car has air bags you still need to wear seat belt. Myth or Real Deal?**

- **Real Deal.** - Airbags are an augmentation for safety not a replacement for seat belts

## **Seat belts can trap you in a fire or under water. Myth or Real Deal?**

- **Myth.** Incidents involving fire or water account for ½ of 1% of all crashes. But more importantly, you can't escape such dangers unless you're conscious. Wearing a seat belt gives you a much greater chance of being conscious and able-bodied.

## **If you're not going far or not traveling fast, seat belts are unnecessary. Myth or Real Deal?**

- **Myth.** Seemingly routine trips can be deceptively dangerous. Most fatal crashes happen within 25 miles from home and at speeds of less than 40 mph.

## **You're safer in a pickup truck, so wearing a seat belt is unnecessary. Myth or Real Deal?**

- **Myth.** For occupants in SUVs, pickups, and vans, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to the driver and front seat passenger by 60%.

## **Your seat belt can hurt you in a crash. Myth or Real Deal?**

- **Real Deal.** In a crash, everything in your car can cause bodily harm, but your seat belt is one of the few things that can actually save you.

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