



NTSB

SAFETY ALERT

National Transportation Safety Board

★ Primary Seat Belt Laws

Tougher enforcement of seat belts laws saves lives

The grim facts

- In 2007, almost 29,000 people died as occupants in auto crashes, 54 percent of whom were unrestrained.
- Lap/shoulder belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent.
- When adults are buckled up, 87 percent of children are buckled up, but when adults are not buckled up, only 58 percent of children are buckled up.
- NHTSA estimates that seat belts saved 15,383 lives in 2006. Had all passenger vehicle occupants over age 4 used seat belts, an additional 5,441 lives could have been saved.
- Nearly three-quarters of all crash costs are paid by those not directly involved in crashes. In 2000, those not directly involved in crashes paid over \$170 billion.

Effective actions in primary seat belt laws

- Mandate primary enforcement for seat belt laws. According to the 2008 National Occupant Protection Usage Survey, seat belt use in primary enforcement law States was 88 percent, while seat belt use in secondary enforcement law States was only 75 percent.
- Apply seat belt laws to all vehicle seating positions. When used properly, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger vehicle occupants by 45 percent and rear seat passenger vehicle occupants by 44 percent. From 1975 through 2006, seat belts saved more than 226,000 lives nationwide.
- Repeal existing legal provisions that insulate people from the financial consequences of not wearing seat belts.

What can you do to save lives and reduce injuries?

- Make sure seat belts or child restraints are worn by everyone in your vehicle.
- Talk or write to your State and local lawmakers and urge them to support NTSB recommendations for State belt use laws.

Need more information?

- Visit the NTSB Web site: www.nts.gov