

Seatbelts

Why You Should Use Them

Who hasn't heard the phrase "Buckle Up"? Everyone has and everyone realizes (or should) that it is the best way to protect yourself from serious injury or death in a motor vehicle accident. The cost of unbuckled drivers and passengers goes beyond those killed and the loss to their families. We all pay for those who don't buckle up in higher insurance costs, higher health care expense and lost productivity.



It doesn't matter if you drive a sedan, van, truck or a GEM, it is important for drivers of any vehicle to wear their seatbelts. On-campus or off-campus, safety is important for staff, faculty and students and the community as well. If you see your co-worker not wearing their seatbelt, remind them. Everyone is responsible for the safety of our most valuable resource, Our Employees!

Important Facts

- ✓ Seat belt use, reinforced by effective seat belt laws, is a proven life saver.
- ✓ Approximately 60 percent of passengers killed in traffic crashes were not wearing seat belts, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).
- ✓ Seat belts save an estimated 9,500 lives in the United States each year.
- ✓ Safety belt use in the United States increased to 79 percent in 2003, from 58 percent in 1994. (Source: NHTSA)

To understand the value of safety belt use, it's important to understand some of the dynamics of a crash. There are at least 3 different collisions that occur when you are involved in an accident:

The Car's Collision: The first collision is known as the car's collision, which causes the car to buckle and bend as it hits something and comes to an abrupt stop.

The Human Collision: The second collision occurs as the car's occupants hit some part of the vehicle. At the moment of impact, unbelted occupants are still traveling at the vehicle's original speed. Just after the vehicle comes to a complete stop, these unbelted occupants will slam into the steering wheel, the windshield, or some other part of the vehicle interior. Another form of human collision is the person-to-person impact. Many serious injuries are caused by unbelted occupants colliding with each other.



The Internal Collision: This third collision is the internal collision and often causes serious or fatal injuries. Even after your body comes to a complete stop, the internal organs are still moving forward hitting other organs or the skeletal system.

What's Your Reason For Not Wearing One?

"I'm only going a short distance." Actually, this is the best time to wear a safety belt, since 80% of traffic fatalities occur within 25 miles of our original destination under 40 miles an hour.

"I won't be in an accident. I'm a good driver." Your good driving record will help you avoid accidents, but a bad driver may still hit you.

"I'll just brace myself." Even if you had the split-second timing to do this, the force of the impact would shatter the arm or leg you used to brace yourself.

"I'm afraid the belt will trap me in the car." Statistically, the best place to be during an accident is in your car. If you're thrown out of the car, you're 25 times more likely to die. If you need to get out of the car in a hurry you can get out a lot faster if you haven't been knocked unconscious inside your car.

Wear It Right

A properly worn safety belt keeps that second collision - the human collision - from happening. "Properly worn" means with both straps snugly fitted to transfer the impact of the collision to the parts of your body that can take it - your hipbones and shoulder bones. With just the shoulder strap on, you can still slide out from under it and be strangled, while the lap belt alone doesn't keep your face from hitting the steering wheel.



As a driver of a University vehicle, you have the responsibility of using every safety precaution possible too avoid accidents. Seatbelt use is crucial to insuring your safety.

- J. Dickson

**PLEASE,
REMEMBER TO BUCKLE UP!**