

Seat Belt Safety for DSP Drivers

Seat belts are proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to drivers.

It's critical that DSP drivers know the seat belt safety protocols and procedures, and commit to diligent safety practices to reduce their risk.

Seat belts are essential safety equipment that can save lives and reduce the risk of fatal injuries in a crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 40,990 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in the United States in 2023.¹ For drivers and front-seat passengers, using a lap and shoulder belt reduces the risk of fatal injury by 60% in an SUV, van or pickup and by 45% in a car.²

The law requires motor vehicle operators wear a seat belt because they uniquely protect drivers and passengers from needless death and injury. Despite compelling evidence in support of seat belt use, many drivers and passengers don't wear seat belts, and thousands die as a result.

Whether motor vehicle operators are in a hurry, distracted, or simply forget, it is important to remember to buckle up each and every time you get behind the wheel.

DO YOU NEED TO USE A SEAT BELT?

The short answer is, of course, yes, even if:

- You are only driving a short distance.
- You have a good driving record. A good driving record can certainly indicate you have a greater chance of avoid accidents. But even good drivers encounter circumstances beyond their control on the road that can cause an accident.
- You brace yourself right before impact. Misconceptions about the extent to which a person can protect themselves from injury/fatal injury contribute to reasons drivers do not consistently engage their seat belt. Even if a driver has the split-second timing to do brace themselves, the force of the impact can shatter the arm or leg used to brace the body.

- You are worried the belt will trap you in the vehicle. Statistically, the best place to be during an accident is in your vehicle. If you're thrown out of the vehicle, you're 25 times more likely to die.³
- If you need to get out of the vehicle in a hurry, such as in the event you are in an accident involving fire or submergence in water. Getting out of your vehicle more quickly in this rare circumstance is not reason to avoid the use of a seat belt that protects you from higher frequency situations such as collisions.

PROCEDURES

- Keep your seat belts in good condition.
- Be sure to alert your employer/manager if the seat belt is too worn or old. Wearing a seat belt is pointless if it's so worn it doesn't work.
- Wear the seat belts correctly.
- Always buckle up before driving or riding in a vehicle. This goes for everyone in the vehicle, whether you're sitting in the front or the back.
- Wear the lap belt low across the hips and below your stomach.
- Wear the shoulder belt over your collarbone, away from your neck. It should cross over your chest.

CONCLUSION

Accidents can happen whenever motor vehicles are involved, but simply wearing a seat belt can prevent serious injuries and death. Not only do these rules apply to your own personal vehicles but seat belt use is required for all DSP drivers.

Taking just a few seconds to buckl your seat belt can save your life.

- ¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 2023.
² Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), 2023. <https://www.iihs.org/topics/seat-belts>
³ Driving University, 2024. <https://www.drivinguniversity.com>

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