

:: Seatbelts ::

Seatbelts save lives!

So what's the big deal about seat belts? **THEY WORK!** It's just that simple. People who wear seatbelts have a 50 percent better chance of suffering no severe injuries in a traffic accident.

When you are in a collision, seatbelts protect you by absorbing the forces of the crash. Instead of smashing into the dashboard or windows, you are restrained in your seat by your seatbelt.

Even though seatbelt use is the law in many states, folks still do not buckle up. If you don't regularly use your seatbelts what's your excuse?

"I'm strong enough to brace myself if I stop suddenly."

– Really? Do you think you could catch a 300 pound barbell if it was dropped on you from 20 feet above? That's the force of impact of a collision at just 30 miles per hour.

"I want to be able to escape in a hurry."

– Oh. So you'd rather be forcibly ejected from your car by flying through the windshield? Or dragged along the ground if you can't escape all the way? The chance of injury is 25 times greater if you are thrown from your car.

"I guess I just don't think seatbelts really work."

– Maybe the problem is they work too well! During a collision, your seatbelt restrains you and holds you in your seat. While your car is crashing into a hard surface you are crashing into a fabric belt. Which would you rather do?

Facts

- Three out of five people killed in vehicle accidents would have survived their injuries had they been wearing seat belts.
- Seat belts save an estimated 9,500 lives in the U.S. each year.
- Every 12 seconds someone is killed in a traffic accident.

Tips to ensure your seatbelts provide safety

- Always wear your seatbelt and insist that your passengers do the same.
- To ensure the proper distribution of force, the lap belt should be positioned across the upper thighs and the diagonal belt across the chest.

- Never slip the diagonal belt behind your body; the lap belt alone cannot prevent you from being thrown forward and out of the vehicle. The lap belt must also be used at all times.
- Make sure your belt fits snugly against your body.
- If your seat belts don't seem to operate correctly or you cannot adequately adjust them, return the car to the dealership or qualified repair shop for assistance.
- If your vehicle is fitted with only lap belts (pre-1974 models), contact a dealership for an upgrade to a three-point harness.
- Always use rear-facing child seats for children under 20 pounds and one year of age.
- Use forward-facing child seats for children between 20 and 40 pounds and more than one year old.
- Always attempt to place children 12 years and younger in the back seat.

Seat belts are designed to apply the most amount of stopping force to the rib cage and pelvis, which are relatively sturdy parts of the body, but seatbelts won't work if you're not using them. It takes less than a minute to buckle your seat belt, but it could take the rest of your life to recuperate from injuries received in an auto accident.

If you have questions or need additional information on seatbelts contact your local safety professional or the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.