



Seat Belt Safety

More people are killed or injured in motor vehicle accidents than by any other type of incident, both on and off the job. Motor vehicle accidents represent nearly half of all accidental fatalities. The statistics are staggering:

- ◆ Someone dies from a motor vehicle accident every 11 minutes.
- ◆ Someone is injured in a motor vehicle accident every 18 seconds.
- ◆ In 1994, the cost of lost wages and lost productivity due to motor vehicle deaths and injuries amounted to 60.6 billion dollars.



Even with these numbers, some people still cling to unfounded myths and use the same old excuses, to resist wearing them. For example:

Myth: *"My seat belt will trap me in the car if my vehicle catches fire or sinks underwater."*

Fact: Only about one-half of one percent of accidents involve car fires or water. But even if you do have such an accident wearing a seat belt makes it more likely that you will remain conscious, and able to get out of the car.

Myth: *"Without a seat belt on, I'm more likely to be thrown clear of harm in an accident."*

Fact: You are more likely to be thrown out of the car if you're not wearing a seat belt - - but this is not good news. You are 25 times more likely to be *killed* if thrown from the vehicle.

Excuse: *"They're Uncomfortable"*

Excuse: *"I want to be able to move quickly"*

Excuse: *"I was injured in one wreck while wearing a seat belt"*

The fact of the matter is: **No one has found a good excuse for not wearing a seat belt!** In fact seat belts have saved more than 20,000 lives in the past decade and prevented nearly a half-million injuries. Here are just a few reasons why drivers and occupants of vehicles should always wear their seat belts.

◆ IT'S THE LAW!

- ◆ As the driver of the vehicle, you must take the lead role by requiring any passengers to use their belts also.
- ◆ No matter how safe you are driving, you never know about the other driver. You could be struck by another vehicle without warning. It is best to drive "defensively" at all times by looking out for the other driver.
- ◆ Seat belts hold you in your seat and reduce the chances of colliding with the windshield, dashboard, steering wheel, ceiling, doors, windows, or other passengers. Don't fool yourself by thinking you are strong enough to brace yourself and avoid being thrown about. Research studies have shown that attempting to brace yourself is rarely successful.
- ◆ If you are in a collision, it could be essential for you to remain at the controls in order to continue with braking or to turn the steering wheel in order to avoid serious situations such as striking a power pole.
- ◆ If you are thrown from the vehicle, your chance of serious injury increases and your chance for survival will diminish. You could be run over by your own vehicle or by another vehicle. Your body could hit a tree, guardrail, sign, barricade or other stationary object.

Putting on a seat belt should become as routine every time you enter the vehicle. The driver of the vehicle should do it with the same consistency as turning the key in the ignition and releasing the parking brake. The question you have to ask yourself is: **Are you willing to take the risks associated with failure to wear your seat belt?**

So, buckle up and drive as if your life depends on it. It DOES!