



Seat Belt Safety

Ideas, Perceptions, and the Facts

I buckle up most of the time, but not if I am just going to the corner store a few blocks from my house.

Fact

The risk of getting into a serious crash is just as great when you need to take a quick trip to the store as it is on a longer trip. We know that 75 percent of all serious motor vehicle crashes occur within 25 miles of a person's home and 80 percent of deaths and serious injuries occur in cars that are traveling under 40 miles per hour. Being thrown against a dashboard in a 30 mile-per-hour crash is like striking the ground after falling from a third-floor window. Even a crash at only 12 miles per hour can be fatal.

I don't wear safety belts because I feel that I would be trapped if the car caught fire or if I were to drive into a body of water and become submerged.

Fact

Less than one-half of one percent of crashes involve fire or submersion. Using safety belts prevents occupants from being knocked unconscious or into other passengers so that you can actually get out of the vehicle with the least amount of injury. Without a seat belt you are likely to be knocked out or too severely injured to leave the vehicle.

I want to be thrown clear of my car to get out of harm's way in the event of a crash.

Fact

Your chances of being killed are four times greater if you are thrown out of the vehicle. If you get thrown from the vehicle, you're more likely to be killed by the trip through the windshield, or by your collision with the ground 150 feet later, than by the initial collision with another vehicle or any other object. It is also true that occupants may be crushed by the rolling vehicle after they are ejected. The best way to avoid harm is to buckle up and stay within the vehicle's safety cage.

I knew someone who died in a car crash because they were wearing their seat belt.

Fact

If a person was killed in a car crash, it was not because they wore their seat belt, but most likely due to the devastating severity of the collision forces.



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It's my personal choice to NOT wear a seat belt.

Fact

True, we all have the right to make our own decisions when it comes to many things in life. However, it is a law in Montana for all occupants to wear a seat belt when in a moving vehicle. If you choose not to wear a seat belt, you are in fact, breaking the law. Either a primary or secondary seat belt law requires seat belt use for every trip.

A primary law will give law enforcement officers more power to pull me over and search my vehicle.

Fact

Officers can pull people over for any number of primary offences, from equipment failure to traffic violations if the goal is to make contact with a driver.

Montana already has a seat belt law and we don't need to change it to a primary law.

Fact

Montana currently has a secondary seat belt law that requires all occupants to use a properly positioned seat belt when riding in or driving a vehicle. Unfortunately, far too many individuals ignore the law and make the choice not to use their seat belt. Enacting a primary law will increase seat belt use by about ten percent, which means a lot more Montanan's buckling up and a lot more lives being saved.

Putting on my seat belt is not part of my driving routine.

Fact

A safe driving routine includes ensuring your vehicle is in working order and buckling your seat belt every trip. Incorporating seat belt use into your driving routine could save your life and possibly save you from paying costly hospital bills and for on-going medical care.

Buckling up is the single MOST effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.

In 2008, seat belts saved more than 13,000 lives nationwide. From 2004 to 2008, seat belts saved over 75,000 lives - enough people to fill a large sports arena.

During a crash, being buckled up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas being completely thrown out of a vehicle is almost always deadly. *Seat belts are the best defense against impaired, aggressive, and distracted drivers.*

Montana Seat Belt Work Group ~ Buckle Up Every Trip, Every Time. It's the Law.