Who Is Held Responsible?

- It is the driver's responsibility to ensure the safety of these children. There is a fine and court cost for those who do not comply.
- A violation of the child passenger restraint/booster provisions is an infraction and the fine is $50 plus court costs. The fine for violating the safety belt provision of the law is $10. Charges for violating the child passenger restraint and booster seat provisions shall be dismissed or withdrawn if the driver provides evidence that he or she acquired a child passenger restraint system or booster seat prior to or at his or her hearing.
- Failure to comply may also result in criminal charges if injury is sustained by the child or if the manner in which the vehicle is being driven shows disregard for the child's safety.

What Are The Exemptions?

The law does not apply to public carriers for hire or to students four years of age or older who are passengers on a school bus designed for carrying 11 passengers or more and which is manufactured or equipped pursuant to Missouri Minimum Standards for School Buses (Sections 307.178 and 307.197 RSMo.).

Graduated Driver's License Permit And Intermediate License Holder

Seat belts must be worn by the driver and all passengers when the driver is operating the vehicle under a driving permit or intermediate license.

Noncompliance with the seat belt law by a permit or intermediate driver is a violation of the graduated driver's license restrictions, Section 302.178 RSMo., and could result in fines, court costs, and license suspension.

Rollover Simulator & Convincer

The Missouri State Highway Patrol can graphically demonstrate the importance of wearing seat belts to your class or group with its rollover simulator.

In addition to the rollover demonstration, the Missouri State Highway Patrol has seat belt convincers. The convincer demonstrates the importance of wearing a seat belt by allowing the rider to experience a five mph head-on collision. The demonstration is designed for those age 14 and up. The convincers were purchased by the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety.

This brochure could not provide all of the information available on seat belt or child restraint use. If you would like additional information about seat belts and/or child safety restraints or would like to schedule a program in which a rollover simulator or convincer is demonstrated, please contact the public information and education officer in your nearest troop headquarters or contact the Public Information and Education Division in Jefferson City, at (573) 526-6115.

For the Missouri State Highway Patrol troop headquarters nearest you, consult your local phone directory.

Road Conditions
1-888-275-6636

Emergency Assistance
1-800-525-5555
or cellular *55

Sex Offender Registry
1-888-767-MSHP
(6747)

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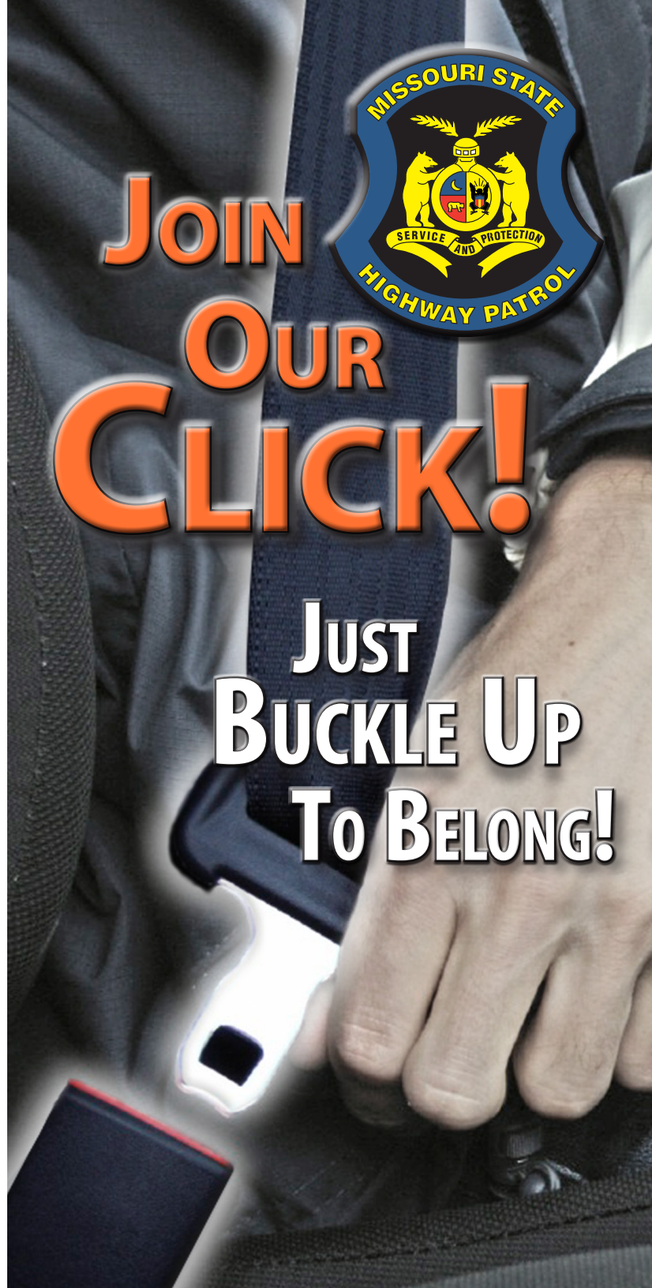

Driving or riding in an automobile can be dangerous. Nationally, motor vehicle crashes kill tens of thousands of drivers and passengers, and injure nearly two million each year. The chance of being in an auto crash in your lifetime is virtually 100 percent. On average, you'll be in a traffic crash every 10 years, and you have a one in 50 chance of being killed. No matter how safely you drive, you can't control other drivers. Seat belts are your best protection against drivers who are careless or have been drinking. It takes about three seconds to fasten your seat belt when you get into a car or truck to travel. Using lap/shoulder belts cuts your chances of being killed or seriously injured in a crash 45-50 percent.

Seat Belts

- An unbelted occupant of a 30 mph car crash hits the windshield or other interior surfaces with the same impact as a fall from a three-story building.
- People without seat belts have been killed at speeds as low as 12 mph.
- The effectiveness of an air bag system drops 40 percent when a seat belt is not used.
- Nationally, traffic crashes kill about five people every hour and, in Missouri, one person every nine hours.
- Seat belts would have saved the lives of more than one half of the car passengers killed each year.
- A driver's chance of being killed in a traffic crash if not wearing a seat belt is 42 times greater than that of a driver who is buckled up.

Use Your Seat Belt Properly

- A seat belt can only protect you if it's used and used properly.
- Provide enough seat belts for each person traveling in your vehicle. Each person needs his/her own seat belt. Make sure all seat belts are working properly.
- Adjust your seat belt so it fits snugly over your hip bones. It should cross your lap low on the hips, not high across your stomach.
- Wear your seat belt as low on the hips as possible, so the impact force will be spread over the stronger hip bones. Seat belts should be worn snugly and with no slack.
- When you are pregnant, wear your seat belt underneath the abdomen. The best way to protect the fetus is to protect the mother.
- A shoulder belt should go over your shoulder and across your body diagonally. It should never be worn under your arm.

Seat Belts

Who must be secured?

- Everyone riding in the front seat in automobiles and trucks with a licensed gross weight of less than 12,000 pounds must wear seat belts.
- Children ages four through 15 must wear seat belts regardless of the type of vehicle in which they are riding or where they are seated (front or back). Like the child restraint law, this is a primary law, meaning you can be pulled over for noncompliance.
- Persons less that 18 years of age operating or riding in trucks (regardless of gross weight for which licensed) must wear seat belts.
- No person under age 18 is allowed to ride in the unenclosed bed of a truck with a licensed gross weight of less than 12,000 pounds on lettered highways, federal and state maintained highways, and within city limits. There are exemptions for agricultural purposes, special events, and parades.

Who Is Responsible?

- It is the driver's responsibility to ensure passengers under the age of 16 are buckled up safely. Those 16 and over are responsible for themselves.
- Violators may be subject to a fine and court costs for not properly using seat belts.

What Are The Exceptions?

- A physical condition that prevents use of a seat belt with a doctor's exemption letter;
- Occupants of automobiles manufactured prior to 1968;
- Postal carriers delivering mail from a vehicle;
- Vehicles designed to carry more than 10 people, trucks, and cycles;
- Vehicles engaged in agricultural, work-related activities; and,
- U.S. Postal Service workers.

Child Safety Seats

A rear-facing infant seat should not be used in a front passenger seat equipped with an air bag. The back of the rear-facing safety seat is located very close to the dashboard, where the air bag is housed. The air bag could hit the back of the safety seat very hard, and this could seriously injure the baby's head and brain.

- The worst possible place for a child to ride is in the arms of an adult. An unrestrained adult can literally crush a child against the dashboard.
- A child safety seat holds onto your child in a crash and keeps the child from hitting dangerous objects or from being thrown out of the vehicle.
- All 50 states and the District of Columbia have child passenger protection laws.
- The safest place for a child under 13 years of age to be secured is in the rear seat.

To make sure the child safety seat meets Federal Safety Standard 213, look for labels on the side of the seat.

Infant seats are designed for children up to 20 pounds in which the infant is placed facing rearward in a semi-reclined position. Some newer infant seats have higher weight limits.

Convertible seats are in most cases designed for children up to 40 pounds. They recline, face rearward in infant position, and convert to sit upright and face forward for toddler position. More and more convertible seats have higher weight limits.

Booster seats are designed for children who have outgrown other safety seats and can be used with an adult lap and shoulder belt.

Lap/Shoulder belts are designed for children age eight or older or 80 pounds or more. Make sure the lap belt stays low and snug across the hips without riding up over the stomach, and the shoulder belt does not cross the face or front of the neck.

Child Restraints

Who must be secured in a child safety seat?

1. Less than 4 years old—Missouri law requires children less than four years old, regardless of weight, use an appropriate child passenger restraint system.
2. Less than 40 pounds—Missouri law requires children weighing less than 40 pounds, regardless of age, to be secured in a child passenger restraint system appropriate for the child.
3. Less than 8 years old/80 pounds or under 4'9"—Children (ages 4-7) who weigh at least 40 pounds, but less than 80 pounds, and are less than 4'9" tall, must be secured in a child passenger restraint system or a booster seat appropriate for that child.
4. Greater Than 80 Pounds Or Taller Than 4'9" — Children who are at least 80 pounds or children taller than 4'9" tall must be secured by a vehicle safety belt or booster seat appropriate for that child.