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## Buckling Up - The Facts

Minnesota law requires that everybody in every seating position in the vehicle be buckled up or riding in an approved child passenger safety restraint. Law enforcement officers can stop and cite drivers and passengers who are not buckled up.

- Seat belts reduce the risk of serious injury and death by 40% - 60%.
- When crash victims are unbuckled, their medical treatment costs are on average 50 percent higher than those who are securely buckled.
- A seat-belted driver has a better chance of maintaining control of the vehicle during and immediately following a collision, protecting passengers and others on the road.
- Seat belts aren't just for the front seat. If you are in the back seat and not belted, your body becomes a lethal weapon, moving forward with enough force to break the back of someone riding in the front or to cause serious brain injury.

## Air Bags

- Infants should never be placed in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side air bag. Even in a low-speed crash, the air bag can inflate, strike the car safety seat and cause serious brain and neck injury and death.
- Put distance between you and the air bag. Drivers should move as far as possible from the steering wheel to give the air bag room to deploy and dissipate its energy. A space of 10-12 inches is recommended between the chest and the air bag module. Passengers in the front should double this distance due to the size of the passenger airbag.
- Use seat belts! Air bags offer supplemental protection in frontal, and in some newer vehicles, side collisions. Your primary protection in all kinds of crashes is the seat belt. It is the single most effective item of safety equipment in a motor vehicle.
- Grip the steering wheel at nine o'clock and three o'clock, with thumbs on the face of the steering wheel.

## Kids

- All children up to age 13 are safest in the back seat. Child safety seats are not always compatible with all rear seating positions in vehicles. Read the instructions for the child safety seat and your vehicle's owner's manual carefully.
- Children model adult behavior. If adults do not buckle up consistently, children will not either.



MINNESOTA SAFETY COUNCIL

Making Minnesota a Safer Place to Live  
[mssc@minnesotasafetycouncil.org](mailto:mssc@minnesotasafetycouncil.org)

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- By Minnesota law, a child who is both under age 8 and shorter than 4 feet 9 inches is required to be fastened in a child safety seat that meets federal safety standards. Under this law, a child cannot use a seat belt alone until they are age 8, or 4 feet 9 inches tall. It is recommended to keep a child in a booster based on their height rather than their age. Check the instruction book or label of the child safety seat to be sure it is the right seat for your child's weight and height.

**Acknowledgments:**

[Network of Employers for Traffic Safety](#)



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**[mssc@minnesotasafetycouncil.org](mailto:mssc@minnesotasafetycouncil.org)**

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