

Safety Belts and Teens: Why Use Safety Belts?

In 2005 there were a total of 43,443 vehicular deaths nationally and 2,699,000 total injuries related to vehicular crashes.

Over your lifetime, chances are that you may be involved in a vehicular crash.

So Why Use Safety Belts?

To understand the value of safety belt use, it's important to understand some of the dynamics of a crash. Every motor vehicle crash is actually comprised of three collisions.

The Car's Collision

The first collision is known as the car's collision, which causes the car to buckle and bend as it hits something and comes to an abrupt stop. This occurs in approximately one-tenth of a second. The crushing of the front end absorbs some of the force of the crash and cushions the rest of the car. As a result, the passenger compartment comes to a more gradual stop than the front of the car.

The Human Collision

The second collision occurs as the car's occupants hit some part of the vehicle. At the moment of impact, unbelted occupants are still traveling at the vehicle's original speed. Just after the vehicle comes to a complete stop, unbelted occupants will slam into the steering wheel, the windshield, or some other part of the vehicle interior. This is the human collision.

Another form of human collision is the person-to-person impact. Many serious injuries are caused by unbelted occupants colliding with each other.

In a crash, occupants tend to move toward the point of impact, not away from it. People in the front seat are often struck by unbelted rear-seat passengers who have become high-speed projectiles.

The Internal Collision

Even after the occupant's body comes to a complete stop, the internal organs are still moving forward. Suddenly, these organs hit other organs or the skeletal system. This third collision is the internal collision and often causes serious or fatal injuries.

Why Safety Belts?

During a crash, properly fastened safety belts distribute the forces of rapid deceleration over larger and stronger parts of the person's body, such as the chest, hips and shoulders. The safety belt stretches slightly to slow your body down and to increase its stopping distance.

The difference between the belted person's stopping distance and the unbelted person's stopping distance is significant. It's often the difference between life and death.

126 teenagers died in 2006 in Virginia
93 or 74% were not wearing seatbelts

SEATBELTS SAVE LIVES!

Thanks to NHTSA for the excerpts from "Sudden Impact", 1992.

A FEW MORE TIPS.....

[Virginia's seat belt laws](#) require that all passengers in the front seats must wear a safety belt. The penalty for violating this statute is only \$25, but the costs to your health and safety can be much greater. Despite the fact that car accidents kill thousands of people a year, **one in every five Virginia drivers do not wear the safety belts.** *The bottom line is that seatbelts save lives. So buckle up Virginia!*

Traffic accidents are responsible for 3,800 deaths a year of teens age 15-20. Another 326,000 young drivers are injured each year. **Virginia also requires all children under the age of 16 to wear seatbelts, regardless of where they are sitting in the car.** The fine for driving with a minor who isn't wearing their seatbelt is \$50. *The bottom line is that seatbelts save lives. So buckle up Virginia!*