



Minnesota Crime Prevention Association's Crime Prevention Tips

The MCPA strives to bring current information regarding prevention topics to its members. Please use these prevention tips to promote safety to the citizens of your community. These tips are great for brochures, newsletters, e-mails, etc.

Topic: **Seat Belts and Airbags**

Quick facts and statistics

- ✍ Traffic crashes are the leading killer of people in Minnesota ages 4 to 33 (according to the Center for Disease Control). In addition, they are the leading cause of death in the workplace and the leading cause of death by unintentional injury for all ages.
- ✍ Seat belts are the most effective safety devices in vehicles. In potentially fatal frontal crashes, they increase your chance of survival by 45% in a car and 60% in a light truck.
- ✍ An airbag is a supplemental restraint system; it is meant to work with a seat belt, not by itself. Airbags in your dashboard only work in frontal crashes. If your car is rear-ended, hit on the side or rolls over, the air bag can't protect you -- but your seat belt will.
- ✍ Without wearing a seat belt, a 35 m.p.h. crash is the equivalent of falling from a third-story window.
- ✍ If you are in the back seat and not belted in a crash, your body becomes a lethal flying object. New analysis of federal crash data found that when rear passengers sitting directly behind the driver skip the seat belt, they triple their odds of dying in a head-on crash and double the odds that the driver will be killed.
- ✍ Overall, rollovers affect about three percent of passenger vehicles involved in crashes but accounted for 36% of vehicle occupant fatalities for Minnesota in 2002. Seat belts are 80% effective in preventing deaths in rollovers involving light trucks, and 74% effective in passenger cars. Of those occupants who died in 2002 rollover crashes, 78% were not wearing safety belts.
- ✍ Of the 544 motor vehicle occupants killed in 2002, 62 percent were unbelted. Over half of the unbelted fatality victims were partially or fully ejected from the vehicle. If all unrestrained occupants who died in 2002 had buckled up – 205 could have survived if vehicle and crash type is factored.

Because the majority of crashes occur close to home at speeds 45 miles per hour or less, **wear your belt habitually**. In addition, parents should keep in mind they are setting a good example for their children. The American Academy of Pediatrics published a study that showed a direct correlation between driver seat belt use and child restraint use. When a driver buckles up, child passengers are restrained 87% of the time. However, when a driver chooses not to buckle up, children are restrained only 24% of the time.

Minnesota's Seat Belt Laws

Minnesota has a mandatory seat belt law that was first enacted in 1986. The seat belt law is the only traffic law in Minnesota that is considered "secondary" in nature; meaning that an officer must first witness a moving violation before a citation can be issued for noncompliance. Not complying with Minnesota's belt law can result in a seat belt ticket which can cost you on average between \$70-\$115 (including court fees).