

Seat Belts

Through public education and awareness programs, the [California Office of Transportation Safety](#) is dedicated to reducing the number of deaths and injuries that occur in car crashes due to people not wearing their seat belts.

In 1993, California changed from secondary enforcement of seat belt laws to primary enforcement. Primary enforcement laws allow for law enforcement officers to issue citations whenever they observe an unbelted passenger or driver. Because of this change in enforcement, California seat belt usage jumped from a compliance rate of 70 percent in 1982 to 83 percent in 1994.

Facts:

- Wearing a seat belt can reduce chances of being killed or seriously injured in a car crash by 40 to 55 percent.
- In 1994, 1,934 Californians were killed in motor vehicle crashes. Of those killed, 1,049 were not wearing their seat belts. According to CHP officers who responded to these collisions, of those individuals killed, 757 would be alive today had they buckled up.
- In 1993, AB 339 made it legal for law enforcement officers to issue citations whenever they observed an individual not wearing a seat belt.
- Currently 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Territories have safety belt use laws on the books.
- All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Territories have child passenger safety laws on the books.
- California law requires that children must ride in child restraints (car seats) until they are four years of age and also weigh 40 pounds or more. Infants under 20 pounds should be in an infant seat. Toddlers from 20 to 40 pounds should be in a forward-facing convertible seat. Booster seats are for toddlers 40 to 60 pounds or until they are big enough to correctly wear a lap/shoulder belt.
- In a 30 mph crash, a 10 pound infant that is not restrained could be ripped from an adult's arms and crushed between the adult and the windshield or dashboard.
- According the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,, using a child car seat correctly can reduce the risk of death and injuries from crashes up to 70 percent.
- Every year more than 50,000 infants and children are injured or killed in automobile collisions.

For more information on child passenger safety seats, contact:

Safety Belt Safe USA
Box 553
Altadena, CA 91003
(310) 673-2666
(800) 745-SAFE

Operation Baby Buckle
P.O. Box 965308
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The original source for this meeting was [California Office of Transportation Safety](#) .

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