



August 2018

Buckle Up! It Could Save Your Life!

This is the message that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is sending out to all drivers. NHTSA believes the consequences of not wearing or improperly wearing a seatbelt are clear. Of the 37,461 people killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2016, 48% of passenger vehicle occupants killed were unrestrained.ⁱ

What can we do? According to NHTSA:

- Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash. The NHTSA offers the following guidelines to properly wear your seat belt:
 - o The lap belt and shoulder belt are secured across the pelvis and rib cage, which are better able to withstand crash forces than other parts of your body
 - o Place the shoulder belt across the middle of your chest and away from your neck
 - o The lap belt rests across your hips, not your stomach
 - o NEVER put the shoulder belt behind your back or under an armⁱⁱ
- Airbags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them

Special Note for Law Enforcement Officers:

Law Enforcement Officers are at relatively high risk of back pain and other musculoskeletal disorders. The risk is exacerbated by the poor accommodation provided by their vehicles and the required body-worn equipment.ⁱⁱⁱ See the J.A. Montgomery Law Enforcement March 12, 2018 Bulletin on seat belts for additional information on seat belts, body worn equipment, and vehicle designs.

In New Jersey failure to wear a seatbelt may result in a summons being issued to the vehicle operator and passengers. Title 39:3-76.2 provides details on the law and how it applies to persons under the age of 18 years.

Public employees, law enforcement officers, firefighters and EMS personnel are not exempt from this statute.

The consequences of failing to wear your seatbelt can lead to serious bodily injury or death. The Safety Director offers the following recommendations:

- Develop a policy on the use of seat belts that complies with Federal and State Law
- Identify the consequences
- Educate personnel and provide strong policy guidance
- Lead by example and take enforcement action when personnel fail to follow the law and or your policies.

ⁱ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Jones, M, Ebert, S. & Reed, M. - "UMTRI-2015-21" - "A Pilot Study of Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) Anthropometry with Applications to Vehicle Design for Safety and Accommodation." (2015).