



Alabama Trucking Association
Workers Compensation Fund

alliance

An OSHA Cooperative Program

A Newsletter For Our Members Where Safety Is Our Primary Concern!

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Safety belts save lives - It's that simple!!!!

According to the FMCSA, safety belt usage among bus and medium-to-heavy duty truck drivers is up six percent from 78 percent in 2010 to a new high of 84 percent in 2013. It's a fact that when drivers and passengers buckle-up, their odds increase dramatically for surviving a crash. Seat belt use has shown an increasing trend since 1995, accompanied by a steady decline in the percentage of unrestrained occupant fatalities. More truck drivers are getting the message, but obviously there are still thousands of drivers who do not buckle up.



Here are some startling statistics about seat belt usage:

- FMCSA regulations require commercial motor vehicle drivers to wear safety belts.
- 1 in 6 drivers of large trucks don't use a seat belt and one-third of long-haul drivers have been involved in one or more serious crashes during their careers.
- Most drivers and passengers killed in crashes are unrestrained. 53% of drivers and passengers killed in crashes were not wearing restraints.
- Seat belts reduce the risk of death by 45%, and cut the risk of serious injury by 50%.
- Drivers not wearing a seat are 30 times more likely to be ejected from a vehicle during a crash. More than 3 out of 4 people who are ejected during a crash die from their injuries.

Here are some Myths and Facts about Safety Belts for Truck Drivers:

Myth: Safety belts are uncomfortable and restrict movement.

Fact: Most drivers find that once they have correctly adjusted their seat, lap and shoulder belt, discomfort and restrictive movement are not a problem.

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Myth: Wearing a safety belt is a personal decision that doesn't affect anyone else.

Fact: Not wearing a safety belt can certainly affect your family and loved ones. It can also affect other motorists since wearing a safety belt can help you avoid losing control of your truck in a crash. It's the LAW!!!!

Myth: Safety belts prevent your escape from a burning or submerged vehicle.

Fact: Safety belts can keep you from being knocked unconscious, improving your chances of escape. Fire or submersion occurs in less than 5% of fatal large truck crashes.



Myth: Good truck drivers don't need to wear safety belts.

Fact: Good drivers usually don't cause collisions, but it's possible that during your career you will be involved in a crash caused by a bad driver, bad weather, mechanical failure, or tire blowout. Wearing a safety belt prevents injuries and fatalities by preventing ejection, and by protecting your head and spinal cord.

Seat belts protect drivers from needless death and injury. But whether it is because they are in a hurry, distracted, or they simply forget, people don't wear their seat belts and thousands each year die as a result. Remember that

if the front of your vehicle hits something and you neglected to wear a seatbelt, you keep moving forward at the same speed for the first tenth of a second until you are stopped by an object _ your windshield, your steering wheel or your dashboard. This is all it takes for you to hit them _ one tenth of a second.

Here is what happens to a driver in a car if traveling at 55 mph were to crash into a fixed object, i.e. another vehicle, tree, etc...

1/10 SECOND: The front bumper and grill collapse. On impact, your brain crashes against the inside of your skull, and then rebounds and smacks into the other side of your skull. At minimum, you have a huge headache or a concussion. At worst: brain swelling and death.

2/10 SECOND: The hood crumbles as it rises, smashing into the windshield. Spinning rear wheels lift from the ground. The fenders begin wrapping themselves around the object and the car frame stops, but your body continues to move forward at 55 mph. This is 20 times the normal force of gravity and your body travels forward with the force of 3,200 pounds.

3/10 SECOND: The plastic and steel frame of the steering wheel actually starts to bend under your terrible death grip. The steering column is now pointing straight at the driver's chest. Suddenly both of your legs instinctively stiffen against the crash, and they snap at the knee joint.

4/10 SECOND: The front two feet of the vehicle is wrecked, while the rear end still moves at 35 mph. The driver's body is still travelling at 55 mph. If your heart swings too violently into the back of your breastbone, it can tear off the aorta _ the largest artery in the body, and you'll bleed to death. It's similar to the injury that killed actor John Ritter.

5/10 SECOND: The steering column punctures the driver's chest, and blood rushes into the lungs. A lot of people gasp just before impact. Filling their lungs, and making lung ruptures more likely.

6/10 SECOND: The driver's shoes, despite being tightly laced, are ripped off his feet. The brake pedal shears off at the floorboard as the chassis bends in the middle and shears the body bolts. The driver's head smashes through the windshield at 55 mph. The rear wheels, still spinning, fall back to earth.

7/10 SECOND: Hinges rip loose, doors fly open and the seats break free, striking the driver from behind. In 7/10 of a second, **YOU ARE DEAD.**

If the driver had been secured with his seat belt, he would not be hurling toward the steering column at dangerously high speeds and thus remain safe. Hopefully, that description will not only stop you from multi-tasking behind the wheel, but also make you buckle up your seat belt. It is no accident that seat belts are also called "safety" belts!

