

72% and Rising

More Truck Drivers Are Using Safety Belts Than Ever Before

Safety belt usage among drivers of medium and heavy duty commercial vehicles rose to 72% in 2008 according to the most recent Seat Belt Usage Study commissioned by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Other key findings include:

- A rise in safety belt use among passengers of commercial motor vehicles to 61%
- School bus drivers had the highest safety belt usage rates at 89%
- Professional truck drivers for major regional or national fleets showed higher usage at 75% versus 62% for independent owner-operators
- Regionally, safety belt usage rates for truck drivers and their occupants were highest at 81% in the West compared to 77% in the South, 60% in the Midwest and 56% in the Northeast
- Safety belt usage for both drivers and occupants was higher at 80% in states that had primary belt use laws than 64% in states with secondary belt use laws. (Primary belt use laws allow police to stop motorists solely for being unbelted where secondary safety belt laws permit police to ticket unbelted motorists only if they are stopped for other reasons such as speeding.)
- Commercial motor vehicle drivers and their occupants had higher safety belt usage rates on weekend days over week days, higher usage rates in urban areas over suburban or rural areas, and higher usage rates in faster traffic over slower traffic.

FMCSA conducts annual surveys to assess the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Belt Program—a program that provides states with guidelines, educational resources, outreach materials, and public service announcements to execute their own safety belt campaigns. Several states have already implemented one of the program's public outreach campaigns, Be Ready. Be Buckled. to promote safety belt usage among truck drivers and other occupants. The program is supported by the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Belt Partnership comprised of more than 20 private-sector organizations committed to saving lives and reducing injuries among truck drivers. For more information about the Safety Belt Program, please visit www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetybelt.

Did You Know?

- Nearly 40% of unbelted driver fatalities could be prevented with safety belt use.
- Up to 70% of moderate injuries to drivers could be reduced or eliminated by the proper use of a safety belt.
- In a rollover, a truck driver is 80% less likely to die when wearing a safety belt.
- 81% of drivers who die as a result of being ejected from their vehicles were not wearing safety belts.
- Fire or submersion in water occurs in less than 5% of fatal large truck crashes.

Safety Belt Tips

Always take time to buckle up.

It takes less than three seconds to buckle up. Even at 20 times a day, that's less than a minute.

Remember, wearing a safety belt isn't an option; it's the law.

Federal regulations require commercial vehicle drivers to buckle up.

Don't think because you are in a large truck you have enough protection.

Safety belts are proven to prevent serious and fatal injuries among truck drivers and their occupants when involved in a crash.

Wear safety belts, even when driving at a slow speed.

In a crash at 30 mph, an unbelted person will hit the windshield at the same velocity of a person falling to the ground from the top of a three-story building.

Improve your chances of survival in the event of a crash.

Should your vehicle crash, safety belts can keep you from being knocked unconscious, improving your chances of escape.

Safety belts prevent you from being ejected from your vehicle.

Drivers and occupants are four times as likely to die when thrown from a vehicle.

Good drivers always wear safety belts.

Good drivers know that crashes can happen to anyone; wearing a safety belt means you are always ready for the unexpected.

Use your safety belt 100% of the time.

Crashes can happen to anyone at any time; wearing a safety belt means you will always be ready for the unexpected.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetybelt

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