

VISION ZERO

Zero fatalities. Zero excuses.

Seat Belt Myths—Excuses Don't Work

MYTH: I don't wear seat belts anymore, now that I have a car equipped with air bags.

FACT: Air bags are designed to work TOGETHER with your seat belt to keep you in a safe position in the event of a crash. Seat belts are designed to keep you in position for the vehicle's other safety systems to work.

MYTH: I buckle up most of the time, but not if I am just going a few blocks to the store.

FACT: The risk of getting into a serious crash is just as great on a short trip. The majority of motor vehicle crashes occur within 25 miles of home and in areas where the speed limit is 40 mph or less. A crash at only 12 miles an hour can be fatal.

MYTH: I don't want to be trapped if the car catches fire or goes under water.

FACT: Less than one-half of one percent of crashes involves fire or submersion. Using seat belts prevents occupants from being knocked unconscious or into other passengers so that you can actually get out of the vehicle with the least amount of injury. Without a seat belt you are likely to be knocked out or too severely injured to leave the vehicle.

MYTH: Wearing a seat belt wrinkles my clothes.

FACT: Are you kidding? Wrinkles can be removed. The pain and suffering that accompany a serious crash cannot be easily ironed out. If wrinkles matter, change clothes at your destination.

MYTH: I want to be thrown clear to get out of harms way in the event of a crash.

FACT: Your chances of being killed are four times greater if you are thrown out of the vehicle. If you are ejected, you're more likely to be killed by the trip through the windshield, by striking the ground or other surface 150 feet away, or by the vehicle rolling over you, than by the initial collision.

MYTH: Seat belts are too uncomfortable.

FACT: In a car crash—without your seat belt—you would smash into the steering column, slam into the dashboard or crash through the windshield; this is probably uncomfortable too.

MYTH: We'll never have a crash—My mom/dad is a good driver. I'm a good driver.

FACT: Good drivers can be hit by bad drivers, intoxicated drivers, aggressive or inattentive drivers. Wildlife or other sudden hazards may be impossible to avoid. Few people intend to have crashes.

MYTH: An adult's arms provide the best protection for a very small baby.

FACT: In a 30 mph crash, a 10-pound baby can suddenly be ripped from a belted adult's arms with a force of over 300 pounds and launched into the dashboard. No matter how strong you are, you cannot hold on to a baby in a crash.

MYTH: I knew someone who died in a motor vehicle crash because they were wearing their seat belt.

FACT: If a person was killed in a crash, it was not because they wore their seat belt. The crash was most likely so severe and devastating, that only not being in that vehicle at that moment would have prevented a fatality. A lap and shoulder belt worn properly, snug across the chest and pelvis, is the most effective injury prevention device you have at your command.

*Sources:
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia*

NDDOT
North Dakota
Department of Transportation