Wear Your Seatbelt Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

People die each day in vehicle accidents because they were not wearing a seatbelt. According to the laws of physics, if a vehicle is traveling at 30 miles per hour, its contents and passengers are also moving at 30 miles per hour.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

THE DANGERS OF NOT WEARING A SEATBELT

People are a vehicle’s most valuable content and seatbelts keep them in place. In a crash, unbelted passengers will fly toward the point of impact, colliding with anything in their path, like the dashboard, windshield, or steering wheel, with several pounds of moving force. While it’s dangerous to smash into a dashboard or windshield, it can be deadly to be “thrown clear.” Thrown clear of what? Telephone poles, trees, or oncoming traffic? Thrown through what? The windshield or door? Airborne objects maintain momentum as they sail, without the option of where or how they land. In a collision, passengers launched from a vehicle are 25 times more likely to die.

Possible consequences of not wearing a seatbelt:

1. **Death** – Not wearing a seatbelt can cause fatal injuries. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, seatbelts save lives. They reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passengers by 45 percent and light-truck occupants by 60 percent. Wearing a seatbelt saves you from being thrown out of the vehicle and colliding with another vehicle, person, or object.
2. **Injury** – If you don´t use a seatbelt or don´t use it properly, this can result in serious injuries far greater than if you use a seatbelt. These may include injuries to

the head, chest, abdomen, neck, and spine and can cause internal bleeding, muscle and skeletal injury, fractures and broken ribs, pneumothorax (collapsed lung), whiplash (a forced movement of the head and neck) and traumatic brain injury (an external force causing brain malfunction).

3. **Stress** – Car accidents resulting in serious injuries or fatal consequences are stressful and devastating. It is stressful for you and the passengers. It also becomes stressful for your family and friends. Overall, you end up affecting others, not just yourself. Furthermore, stress, anxiety and depression can affect a person´s life.
4. **Costs** – Besides the highest price you could pay which is your own life and the lives of others, there are also costs associated with car damage, property damage, physical damage, and medical expenses. Whoever is considered responsible for any vehicle damages in a car accident, either you or the other person involved in the car accident, is required to cover all costs through car insurance.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

WEAR A SEAT BELT CORRECTLY

- Wearing a seat belt is one of the most important steps you can take to reduce and prevent serious injuries. You also need to make sure that you are wearing it correctly. You can think of your seat belt as two separate pieces when buckled up—the shoulder belt and the lap belt.
- Your shoulder belt should rest securely across your rib cage in the middle of your chest. If the shoulder belt resting too high, it could hurt your neck during a collision.
- Your lap belt belongs in your lap, resting across your pelvis rather than your stomach. Your stomach cannot withstand the force of a crash as well as your pelvis, so placing your lap belt too high may cause damage to your internal organs during a collision. Pregnant women should consult with their doctors for the proper placement and seat belt safety.
- Never place your shoulder belt under your arm or behind your

back. It is not designed to be worn this way and, again, could do far more harm than good in a car accident.

- Don’t give up if you are struggling to find the correct fit for your seat belt. Try adjusting your seat or even contacting your car’s manufacturer for a seat belt extender if needed. Using a seat belt extender made specifically for your vehicle is much safer than purchasing one from a third-party.

Today’s 3-point seat belts are also a vast improvement over their first iteration. Per its name, a 3-point seat belt has three points of attachment and spreads the force of an impact across more of your body. This minimizes how strong the crash force is in just one area, which reduces the severity of car accident injuries.

A 2-point seat belt (also called a lap belt) is no longer the standard, as it has only two points of attachment around each hip. During a crash, a 2-point seat belt localizes the force of the collision to just one place—your pelvis.

WHY WEAR A SEATBELT

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), seat belts reduce one’s risk of suffering injuries or death by about half. In fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seat belts save more than 15,000 lives every year in the United States.

#1. Saves Lives

In the event of a car crash, a seatbelt is designed to keep passengers in a static motion, even when a sudden stop or change in momentum happens. A car moves with inertia (when something that is in motion keeps moving unless stopped or changed by an external force). With that said, when a car is in motion and crashes with another vehicle or object, people inside the vehicle can still be in motion, thus thrown about or out of the vehicle.

#2. Prevents Injuries

Many people who survive a car crash often sustain an injury. Whether the injury is minor or catastrophic, without a seatbelt, the injury could be far worse. Wearing a seatbelt can reduce the severity or reduce the risk of these injuries.

#3. Keeps Passengers from Projection

When being thrown around inside of a vehicle or out of a vehicle with such a strong force, it’s nearly impossible to avoid a severe injury. All passengers should wear seatbelts, even if you are sitting in the back seat.

#4. Airbags Can’t Work Alone

Airbags can’t protect you alone. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the force of an airbag can seriously injure or even kill you if you are not wearing a seatbelt.

#5. You’ll Avoid a Traffic Ticket

Most if not all jurisdiction if you don’t buckle up – you’ll have to pay up. Keep your money in your pocket and stay safer on the road by wearing your safety belt while driving.

FINAL WORD

Worn properly, seat belts are designed to spread crash forces across the stronger bony parts of the body, including the shoulder, rib cage and pelvis. Seat belts also prevent occupants from being ejected from the vehicle, an event associated with high risk of injury and death.