

SEAT BELT SAFETY

WHY SHOULD I?

When it comes to reducing the chances of death or injury in an accident, there is nothing more effective than the seat belt. The National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration reports that wearing a seat belt can reduce the risk of injury by 45%. During a crash, a seat belt restrains a passenger from leaving the vehicle through ejection or having a violent impact inside the vehicle itself.

BY THE NUMBERS

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that up to 40% of all workplace fatalities are due to motor vehicle accidents, making it the most common workplace fatality. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, non-fatal accidents cause more than \$45 billion in medical and work loss costs per year. But even knowing these facts, the National Department of Transportation found that only 54% of commercial truck drivers wear their seat belts.

IT'S THE LAW

As of 2019, 34 states and the District of Columbia have a primary seat belt law, meaning you can be pulled over solely for not wearing your seat belt. In 15 states, it is a secondary law, meaning if you are pulled over for a different infraction and are not wearing your seat belt, it will add to the fine. Federal law requires any driver of a commercial vehicle in which the vehicle has a seat belt installed to wear the seat belt at all times.

CORRECT USAGE

Wearing a seat belt incorrectly often can cause brutal internal injuries. The seat belt should always lay across the hips, not across the stomach, as this can injure internal organs. Additionally, the seat belt should always lay across the collar bone and never under the arm. The seat belt should be kept below the neck at all times.

HEAVY MACHINERY

While a passenger car is the most common place for a seat belt, it is not the only place where seat belts make a difference. Employees operating many different forms of heavy machinery, such as fork lifts, backhoes and bulldozers, benefit from seat belts. In 2014, more than 600 fatalities involved heavy machinery and of those, 25% were caused by a lack of seat belt use.

COMPANY POLICIES

The vast majority of companies have safety policies in place that require employees to wear their seat belts at all times. Many companies follow a zero tolerance policy, meaning if you are caught one time without your seat belt, you will lose your privileges to drive and may even lose your job. In order to educate employees about the risks of the road, some employers have created driving safety programs within their companies. Your Encova safety and loss consultant can help you develop policies and programs to teach employees about seat belt safety and other federal and state laws applicable to your company.