



## Effects of Strengthening Belt Laws (since 1996)

Secondary Belt Law States	Passenger vehicle driver deaths 1996-2003	Lives that could have been saved since 1996
*Alaska	326	23
Arizona	3,347	234
Arkansas	2,914	204
Colorado	2,646	185
Florida	10,889	761
Idaho	1,158	81
Kansas	2,373	166
*Kentucky	4,027	282
Maine	838	59
Massachusetts	1,776	124
Minnesota	2,771	194
*Mississippi	4,314	302
Missouri	5,459	382
Montana	1,070	75
Nebraska	1,345	94
Nevada	1,226	89
North Dakota	465	33
Ohio	6,309	441
Pennsylvania	6,644	465
Rhode Island	336	23
*South Carolina	4,436	310
South Dakota	699	49
Utah	1,216	85
Vermont	372	26
Virginia	4,200	294
West Virginia	1,759	123
Wisconsin	3,454	242
Wyoming	675	47
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77,084</b>	<b>5,390</b>

\* Alaska, Kentucky, Mississippi, and South Carolina now have primary laws.

The national safety belt use rate can also reduce the economic costs associated with crashes. Increasing the 2005 national belt use rate from 82 percent to 90 percent would save approximately \$7.2 billion annually due to reduced productivity losses, property damage, medical costs, rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, emergency services costs, insurance administration costs, funeral costs, traffic delay, and costs to employers.

## Public Support for Safety Belt Use Laws

In 2003, NHTSA surveyed approximately 6,000 people 16 and older in the U.S. to determine attitudes, knowledge, and experience with safety belt laws and their enforcement. Ninety-five percent of the public agreed with the statement, "If I were in an accident, I would want to have my seat belt on." The vast majority of the public (88%) also favored safety belt laws for front seat occupants.

## Responding to Objections to Primary Belt Laws

While primary enforcement saves lives, saves money, and prevents injuries, some still oppose it. If people do not know the facts, politically sensitive issues, such as infringement of individual rights and harassment, may become obstacles in passing primary laws. Thus, it is important that State and local law enforcement leaders provide public assurances that belt use laws will be enforced uniformly in all segments of the population. More specifically, they should be encouraged to review and reaffirm their departmental policies and training programs to ensure people's rights are not violated. All steps should be taken to educate the public that enforcement leaders take these issues seriously and have policies and procedures in place to address it.

*Primary Enforcement Saves Lives: The Case for Upgrading Secondary Safety Belt Laws* presents the overwhelming evidence that safety belt use saves lives, reduces injuries, and reduces economic costs associated with motor vehicle crashes. The booklet can be distributed to garner support, to develop speeches, make presentations, to write fact sheets, and to write news releases.

## How to Order

To order *Primary Enforcement Saves Lives: The Case for Upgrading Secondary Safety Belt Laws* (58 pages), write to the Office of Occupant Protection, NHTSA, NTI-110, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590, fax 202-366-7096, or download from [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov). Jennifer Warren, MPH was the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative for this project.



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