

May 2023

Traffic Safety Newsletter Occupant Protection

9 OUT OF 10 PEOPLE WEAR SEAT BELTS



One of the safest choices drivers and passengers can make is to buckle up. **Ensuring that all passengers are buckled up is the driver's responsibility.** The national seat belt use rate in 2022 was 91.6%. Of the 23,824 passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2020, 51% were not wearing seat belts — a 4% increase from 2019. Among young adults 18 to 34 killed while riding in passenger vehicles in 2021, more than half (59%) were completely unrestrained — one of the highest percentages for all age groups. In 2017, seat belts saved 14,955 lives in the United States. It could have been over 2,500 more if everyone had buckled up.

In Delaware:

- The statewide seat belt use rate in 2022 was 90.4%, which is promising — but roadway users can do better.
- 2022 saw a 7% increase from 2021 in unrestrained fatal and severe injury crashes in Delaware.
- Over the past 5 years (2018-2022), younger adults were the most likely to be involved in unrestrained crashes, with the highest number of unrestrained occupants involved being under 30 (48%), and in that group, occupants 19 and under were involved in the most crashes.
- In May of 2022, 85% of drivers/passengers involved in a collision wearing a seat belt had no injury.

How and Why Seat Belts Work

Seat belts keep occupants in the vehicle. Lap-and-shoulder seat belts offer three points of protection because they contact the body in three places: two points at the hip and one point at the shoulder. Having three points of contact helps to direct crash forces to the strongest parts of the body. Seat belts also keep the head and upper body away from the interior surface of the vehicle, which helps protect the head, neck, brain, and spinal cord. Airbags alone aren't enough to protect you; in fact, the force of an airbag can seriously injure or even kill you if you're not buckled up correctly. Airbags and seat belts work together to protect the occupant. Remember to be the example: Children whose caregivers buckle up are much more likely to buckle up themselves.

[Learn More](#)

Proper Seat Belt Positioning

WHEN YOU LEARN HOW IT FEELS
TO **CRASH** WITHOUT ONE ...



**Why are so many people
comfortable wearing a seat belt?**

When you learn that crashing at 30 mph without a seat belt feels just like getting rammed by a 3.5-ton charging rhino, it just clicks.



**CLICK IT
OR TICKET DE**

ArriveAliveDE.com/Buckle-Up

Always place the shoulder belt across the middle of your chest and away from your neck, and place the lap belt across your hips, not your stomach. You should never put the shoulder belt behind your back or under your arm; doing so causes you to lose upper body protection. If you drive an older or classic car with lap belts only, check with your vehicle manufacturer about how to retrofit your car with today's safer lap and shoulder belts.

Wonder how it feels to crash without a seat belt?

- At 20 MPH it's like a knockout punch from Mike Tyson
- At 30 MPH it's like getting rammed by a 3.5-ton charging rhino

- At 40 MPH it's like falling from a six-story building

Learn
More

Myth Busters: Seat belt Edition



Crime/Crash Clock 2020 Values

Crime

- 1** murder every **24.4** minutes
- 1** violent crime every **24.7** seconds
- 1** property crime every **4.9** seconds
- 1** burglary every **30.5** seconds



Crash

- 1** traffic fatality every **14** minutes
- 1** traffic injury every **14** seconds
- 1** property damage crash every **9** seconds
- 10** law-enforcement-reported crashes every minute

Data Sources:
Crime – Federal Bureau of Investigation's 2020 Crime Clock Statistics, Crime in the United States (10/16/2021)
Crash – NHTSA 2020 Crash Report Sampling System (CRSS)

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Crashes happen a lot more often than people think! Take a look at the crime/crash clock to see how frequently they are occurring. With crashes happening so frequently, it's especially important to buckle up every trip, every time. There are a few common myths that some people will use as a rationale for not wearing a seat belt. Let's bust some of those myths!

- Myth #1: "It's better to be ejected from the vehicle. I'll be thrown clear of the crash."
 - Unrestrained occupants are 17.7 times more likely to be ejected from their vehicles compared to restrained occupants (which is almost always deadly). Remember, the vehicle will keep moving until it comes to a complete stop. Being thrown from the vehicle often puts ejected occupants directly in the path of that vehicle, which they then can not avoid.
- Myth #2: "If my car catches on fire or lands in water, I won't be able to get out."
 - Even in the very rare chance of a vehicle catching fire or landing in the water, a properly belted person is more

likely to be uninjured and conscious, so they are able to exit from the vehicle. Crashes involving fire or water account for only one-half of one percent of all crashes.

- Myth #3: "I drive a pickup truck. It'll protect me better than a smaller car could."
 - The numbers say otherwise: 61% of pickup truck occupants who were killed in 2021 were not buckled. That's compared to 47% of passenger car occupants who were not wearing seat belts when they were killed. Regardless of vehicle type, seat belt use is the single most effective way to stay alive in a crash.

Click on the crime/crash clock image to bust more myths. Visit us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) and follow [#ArriveAlive](#).

Click It or Ticket



WHEN YOU FIND OUT IT
INCREASES YOUR ODDS OF
SURVIVING
BY ALMOST 50% ...



From May 22-June 4, 2023, state and local law enforcement agencies across the nation are conducting enforcement efforts for motorists who aren't wearing their seat belts. **Click It or Ticket isn't about citations; it's about saving lives.** In 2020, there

were 10,893 unbuckled passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes in the United States. To help prevent crash fatalities, we need to step up seat belt enforcement, day and night. Click the image below to learn more about Click It or Ticket.



Traffic Safety Spotlight

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) is an independent, nonprofit scientific and educational organization dedicated to reducing deaths, injuries, and property damage from motor vehicle crashes through research and evaluation and through education of consumers, policymakers, and safety professionals. In 1992, IIHS opened the Vehicle Research Center. This facility, located in Virginia, is where IIHS performs crash tests. In the video below, IIHS conducted a sled test simulating a 35 MPH frontal crash. The driver was belted and the rear passenger was unbelted. Too many people wrongly believe they are safe in the back seat unrestrained. Nationally, 49% of all front-seat passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes in 2021 were unrestrained, but 57% of those killed in back seats were unrestrained.

Tools For Employers

Are you a Delaware employer looking to raise seat belt usage amongst your employees? Download and distribute a copy of the free resources from the links below (in English and Spanish) to provide a quick, one-page read on the top five things everyone should know about buckling up. If you need more resources like this, please contact our office.

**Top 5 Things Flyer
(English)**

**Top 5 Things Flyer
(Spanish)**

Thank You

The Delaware Office of Highway Safety would like to extend our gratitude and thanks to all of our corporate partners!

We would love to highlight partners who share our traffic safety mission or have a similar traffic safety mission. Who are we missing? Share groups that we need to connect with to aubrey.klick@delaware.gov.

[Join Our Mailing List](#)



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For more information and tools, please visit arrivealivede.com or call our office at 302-744-2740.

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