

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association

Safety Belt Myths and Facts

Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Safety Belt Use

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetybelt>

Myth: There is no compelling reason to buckle-up. If I am in a crash I won't be ejected. My vehicle is so large and high off the ground, I won't be hurt.

Fact: Safety belts prevent injuries and fatalities by: preventing ejection, shifting crash forces to the strongest parts of the body's structure, spreading forces over a wider area of the body, allowing the body to slow down gradually, and protecting the head and spinal cord. In 2002,

- 588 drivers of large trucks died in truck crashes
- 311 drivers of large trucks who died in truck crashes were not wearing safety belts
- 134 driver of large trucks who died in truck crashes were ejected

Myth: Wearing a safety belt is a personal decision and doesn't affect anyone else.

Fact: First, it is the law. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) require commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers to wear safety belts. Section 392.16 of the FMCSRs (49 CFR 392.16) states, "A commercial motor vehicle which has a safety belt assembly installed at the driver's seat shall not be driven unless the driver has properly restrained himself/herself with the safety belt assembly."

The consequences of not wearing a safety belt can greatly affect your family and loved ones. What would the effect be on your loved ones if you are killed or seriously injured in a crash as a result of not buckling up?

It is your responsibility to maintain control of your vehicle. Safety belts are your best chance of remaining in control of your truck in a crash or emergency situation.

CMV driver deaths as a result of not wearing a safety belt cost society billions of dollars each year.

Myth: A safety belt will trap me inside my vehicle. I won't be able to get out of the cab if it catches fire or is submerged in water.

Fact: Your best chance of survival is remaining conscious and in place behind the wheel of your truck. Wearing your safety belt greatly reduces your chance of sustaining injuries, and increases your chances of survival. In rollovers, drivers are 80% less likely to die when belted.

Myth: The safety belt is too small and restricts my movement.

Fact: Safety belt extenders are available on most domestic vehicles for a small fee. The parts department of your local truck dealer should be able to assist you in locating the correct safety belt extender for your vehicle.

Myth: In the old days, we just had a lap belt that seemed to work fine. I feel trapped in the two-part lap and shoulder belts.

Fact: The lap and shoulder belt design has been proven to hold a driver securely behind the wheel in the event of a crash, greatly increasing the driver's ability to maintain control of the vehicle and minimizing the chance for serious injury or death. Wearing only a part of the safety belt greatly reduces your protection.

Facts

- The overall safety belt usage rate for commercial vehicle drivers is 48% (source: 2003 FMCSA Safety Belt Usage By Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers Study).
- 588 drivers of large trucks died in truck related crashes in 2002 (Source: 2002 FARS).
- 311 drivers of large trucks died and were not using their safety belts in 2002 (Source: 2002 FARS).
- 134 drivers of large trucks were ejected and were not using their safety belts in 2002 (Source: 2002 FARS).
- Truck drivers have more work-related fatalities than any other occupation, accounting for approximately 14% of all job-related fatalities (Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries).
- 60% of truck occupant fatalities in large trucks involve a rollover (Source: NHTSA – National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).
- Rollover in a large truck increases the likelihood of fatality 30 times (Source: Univ. of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, Center for National Truck Statistics).
- 68% of the truck drivers surveyed report that they had been involved in an accident in their truck at some point in their career (Source: 2002 Mid-America Truck Show Survey).
- 65% of truck drivers think that safety belt usage in large trucks should be required by law (Source: 2002 Mid America Truck Show Survey).