

Since the inception of ICRMP in 1985, our most frequent cause of Property/Casualty claims has been auto claims. No other claim category comes close. The bad news: auto crashes are frequent and severe for Idaho local government agencies. The good news is that auto crashes can be reduced by focusing on safe driving!

Seat Belt Use

Wearing a seat belt is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, seat belts saved more than 13,000 lives nationwide in 2008. During a crash, being buckled up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas being completely thrown out of a vehicle is almost always deadly. Seat belts are the best defense against impaired, aggressive, and distracted drivers.

Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them. In fact, if you don't wear your seat belt, you could be injured by being thrown forward into a rapidly opening frontal air bag, a movement of such force could injure or even kill you.

Make sure the belt fits across your hips below the stomach, and the shoulder belt is across the middle of your chest and away from your neck. Why? These areas are more able to withstand crash forces than other parts of your body.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Idaho Law – Seat Belts and Shoulder Straps

Idaho law requires all occupants to wear safety belts and/or shoulder straps when riding in a motor vehicle equipped with these devices by the factory. Safety belts also help drivers maintain control of their car on winding or rough roads or when trying to avoid a collision.

Source: From Idaho Drivers Manual (2014)

Why don't some folks wear their seatbelt? In the most recent national poll conducted by Mason-Dixon for *Drive for Life*, 37% admit they forget and 22% feel the trip is just too short to buckle up. However, the facts show nearly 70% of all crashes occur within 10 miles of home, so the idea that driving a short distance without risk is just not true.

Why should you be forced to wear a seatbelt?

1. Think of your family and friends and those who count on you the most, those who would assume the burden of care if you were permanently injured.
2. Your children will follow your example.
3. Your choice to go unbelted increases health care costs and raises both vehicle and health insurance premiums for the rest of us. It is not just about you.

Sources: National Mason-Dixon Poll conducted June 8-12, 2005 for Drive for Life, Washington Post interview with NHTSA mathematical statistician, Donna Glassbrenner, Ph.D., April 28, 2005

Discuss:

1. What % of the time do you wear your seat belt? Under what circumstances don't you wear your seat belt?
2. Have you or someone you know had a "close call"?
3. Review your agency's vehicle use policy.