

Seat Belts Save Lives – Does Your Organization Have a Seat Belt Policy?



Seat belts are the single most effective safety device to prevent death and injury in a motor vehicle crash.

Seat belts restrain occupants in the vehicle's designed protective space, giving them room to live in the event of a crash and prevents them from colliding with other occupants in the vehicle. A seat belt also keeps the driver correctly positioned behind the wheel to help maintain control of a vehicle.

The failure to wear a seat belt results in more motor vehicle fatalities in North Dakota than most other factors.

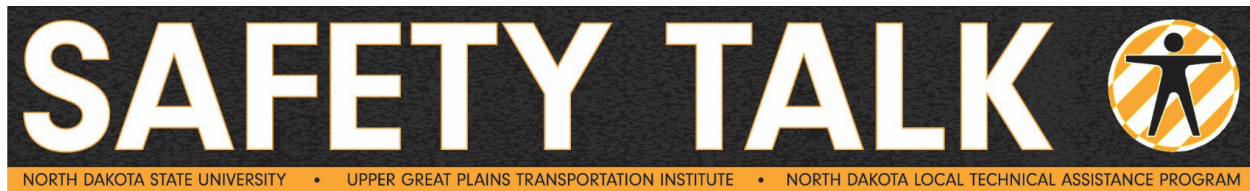
Most people who drive and ride in motor vehicles in North Dakota understand how important it is to wear a seat belt. An annual survey of observed seat belt use in North Dakota in 2019 showed that 8 out of every 10 people wear a seat belt. But it is those who do not wear seat belts who are much more likely to lose their life in a crash.

The top three reasons North Dakotans will wear a seat belt are fear of losing a loved one, not wanting to be killed in a crash, and preventing injury to one's own passengers in a crash. It's important to remember that whether you do it for yourself or a loved one, everyone needs to buckle up every trip, every time. It's your best defense in any motor vehicle crash. (NDDOT 2017 Resident Survey)

The risk of getting into a serious motor vehicle crash is just as great on a short trip. The majority of motor vehicle crashes occur within 25 miles of home and in areas where the speed limit is 40 mph or less. In fact, did you know that a crash at only 12 mph can be fatal?

Here are just a few reasons why drivers should always wear their seat belt:

No matter how safe you are driving, you never know about the other driver. You could be struck by another vehicle without warning. It is best to drive "defensively" at all times by looking out for the other driver.



Seat belts hold you in your seat and reduce the chances of colliding with the windshield, dashboard, steering wheel, ceiling, doors, windows, or other passengers. Don't fool yourself by thinking you are strong enough and quick enough to brace yourself and avoid being thrown about. Research studies have shown that attempting to brace yourself is rarely successful.

If you are in a collision, it could be essential for you to remain at the controls in order to continue with braking or to turn the steering wheel and avoid serious situations such as striking a power pole.

If you are thrown from the vehicle, your chance for serious injury increases and your chance for survival will diminish. You could be run over by your own vehicle or by another vehicle. Your body could hit a tree, guardrail, sign, barricade, or other stationary object.

We've all heard the common excuses for not wearing seat belts. . . they're uncomfortable, I want to be able to move quickly, I was injured in one wreck while wearing a seat belt, etc. The fact of the matter is: **NOBODY HAS FOUND A GOOD EXCUSE FOR NOT WEARING A SEAT BELT!**

Putting on your seat belt should become a routine every time you enter the vehicle. The driver should do it with the same consistency as turning the key in the ignition and releasing the parking brake. Are you willing to take the risks associated with failure to wear your seat belt?

Action Items:

- Develop a Seat Belt Policy for your organization. [Sample Seat Belt Policy](#) Make all employees aware of the policy.
- Review your Seat Belt Policy at least annually.

Resources and References:

Vision Zero

<https://visionzero.nd.gov/>

Minnesota Safety Council

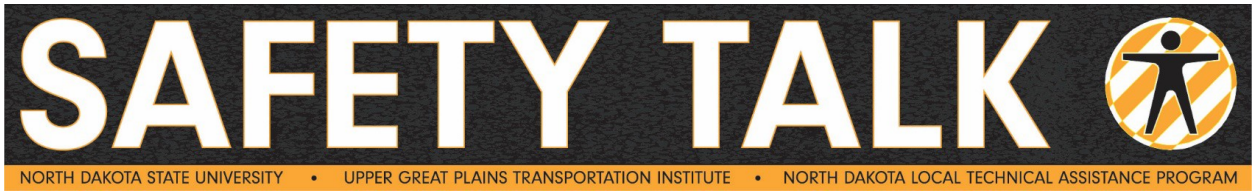
<https://minnesotasafetycouncil.org/home.cfm>



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Safety Talk Sign-in Sheet Topic: Seat Belts

Agency: _____

Crew: _____

Supervisor/Talk Leader: _____

Date: _____

Print Name

Signature

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