
If you had a say
in saving a life,
wouldn't you
speak up?

**A Guide To Changing
Missouri's Safety Belt Law**



**ARRIVE
ALIVE**

Our Opinion Deadly Negligence

Monday brought somber news. Three area teenagers died in two separate accidents...None were wearing a seat belt...

Holts Summit Woman Injured In Auto Accident

She was wearing a seat belt, the patrol said.

Teen Driver Charged In Death Millstadt

A teenager was charged Wednesday with reckless homicide ...
...led to the death of a high school baseball player who was thrown from the car's back seat.
.... was not wearing a seat belt.

Ashland Man Injured In Collision

Both drivers were wearing seat belts, the report said.

Camdenton Man Killed In One Car Accident

...was not wearing a seat belt, the patrol report said.

St. Charles County

One-car Crash Kills Hillsboro Man

He was not wearing a seat belt.

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*Missouri Coalition
for Roadway Safety*



68 percent of the people who die in Missouri traffic crashes are not wearing a safety belt.

Missouri's 2006 safety belt use rate of 75 percent is below the national average of 82 percent.

If you had a say in saving a life, wouldn't you speak up?

The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety,

a diverse group representing the engineering, business, enforcement, education, advocacy and emergency medical services areas, was created in 2004 to reduce traffic fatalities on Missouri's roads. The goal: 1,000 or fewer deaths on our roads by the end of 2008. One of the group's strategies for achieving this goal is passage of a primary safety belt law in Missouri.

A primary safety belt law:

- Would save approximately 90 lives a year and prevent more than 1,000 serious injuries;
- Would save Missourians approximately \$231 million a year;
- Would reduce Medicaid costs in Missouri by approximately \$103 million over a 10-year period;
- May qualify Missouri for an additional \$16 million in federal funds for transportation; and
- Would reduce the costs to employers who face lost productivity, higher insurance premiums and workers' compensation and medical costs when employees are injured in traffic crashes.

The Primary Safety Belt Partners, a task force formed under the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, is working to inform Missourians about the importance of having a primary safety belt law and saving 90 lives a year.

Primary Safety Belt Partners Steering Committee

AAA

DaimlerChrysler

Federal Highway Administration

Ford Motor Company

General Motors

State Farm Insurance

Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD)

Missouri Department of Transportation

Missouri Hospital Association

Missouri Insurance Coalition

Missouri Safety Center

Missouri Safety Council

Missouri State Medical Association

National Safety Council

What is Missouri's current law, and what change is being proposed?

For 20 years Missouri has had a safety belt law that requires front seat passengers to buckle up, but a citation can only be issued if the officer makes a traffic stop for another violation (secondary enforcement). Missouri's law is an infraction that carries no points on the license, no court costs and has a \$10 fine. A primary enforcement law will allow officers to stop vehicles when they observe safety belt violations - like all other Missouri traffic laws.

Primary enforcement – why is it such an issue?

It has taken extensive education and enforcement efforts to raise Missouri's safety belt use rate from barely 61 percent in 1999 to 75 percent in 2006. A

A primary safety belt law would:

- Save approximately 90 lives a year and prevent more than 1,000 serious injuries;
- Save Missourians approximately \$231 million a year;
- Reduce Medicaid costs in Missouri by approximately \$103 million over a 10-year period;
- Possibly qualify Missouri for an additional \$16 million in federal funds for transportation; and
- Reduce the costs to employers who face lost productivity, higher insurance premiums and workers' compensation and medical costs when employees are injured in traffic crashes.

Properly worn safety belts and functioning air bags can reduce the risk of death in a vehicle crash 63 percent.

Of the more than 500 Missouri traffic offenses, the state's safety belt law is the **ONLY** one restricted to secondary enforcement.

primary safety belt law has the potential to save about 90 lives each year! Of any single piece of traffic safety legislation, a primary safety belt law has the greatest potential for saving the most lives.

To whom would primary safety belt enforcement apply?

Missouri law already allows for primary enforcement when children under 16 years aren't properly restrained. Changing Missouri law would expand this to include adults (16 and over). However, people driving or riding in motor vehicles for agriculture work-related activities would be exempt.

Why are safety belts so important?

According to the U.S. Government Accounting Office, 93 percent of the factors contributing to motor vehicle crashes are human factors. One of your best defenses when riding in a motor vehicle is to wear your safety belt. It affords protection from being ejected and keeps the driver and passengers from smashing into steering columns, dashboards, windshields and other passengers in a crash. In fact, drivers involved in traffic crashes last year had a one in 32 chance of being killed if they weren't wearing a safety belt. If the driver wore a safety belt, the chance of being killed dropped overwhelmingly to only one in 1,017.

How do Missourians feel about wearing safety belts?

With a 2006 safety belt use rate of 75 percent, about three-fourths of Missouri's motoring public is buckling up already.

Who will benefit from a primary safety belt law?

All Missourians!

Missouri lives will be saved

A primary safety belt law has the potential to save 90 lives a year.

Missouri taxpayers will save dollars

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that Missouri's potential savings due to increased safety belt use would be about \$231 million if the state would pass a primary safety belt law. According to a National Safety Council study, Missouri could have saved \$103 million in Medicaid costs over a 10-year period if a primary safety belt law had been implemented in 2004.

In addition, Missouri could receive an additional \$16 million in federal funds for transportation if the state had a qualifying primary safety belt law. That's \$16 million that could be used on projects to make our highways safer, such as guard cable, more reflective signs, wider stripes and shoulders and improvements in high accident locations.

Missouri employers will save dollars

Businesses incur massive economic costs each year from traffic crashes through lost productivity, workers compensation and medical costs, and higher insurance premiums. According to the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS), regardless of when, where, or why an employee is behind the wheel, when an auto injury occurs, there is a devastating impact on

"While my wish would be that you never again have to do a story regarding a traffic fatality, I know that's not likely. On those occasions, I encourage you to point out when the people involved were not wearing their safety belts. By doing so, you help emphasize the importance of always buckling up, which could be a life or death decision."

*MoDOT Director
Pete Rahn in a
letter to Missouri
newspaper editors*

26 states including Washington, D.C., have primary safety belt laws. Twenty-four states have secondary enforcement laws. New Hampshire has no safety belt law.

Missouri's 2006 Child Safety Seat Survey indicated that when the driver was wearing a safety belt, 94 percent of the children were also restrained; conversely, when the driver was not belted, 42 percent of the children were not restrained.

the work place. Recent statistics show that the average cost of a motor vehicle crash to an employer is \$16,500 regardless of whether it was an on-the-job or off-the-job crash. In 2005, traffic crashes cost employers \$60 billion. In Missouri, crashes cost employers more than \$800 million annually, and about \$310 per employee.

Common Safety Belt Myths

I can brace myself with my hands. The force of a crash at 40 mph is like hitting the ground after falling off a 50-foot cliff.

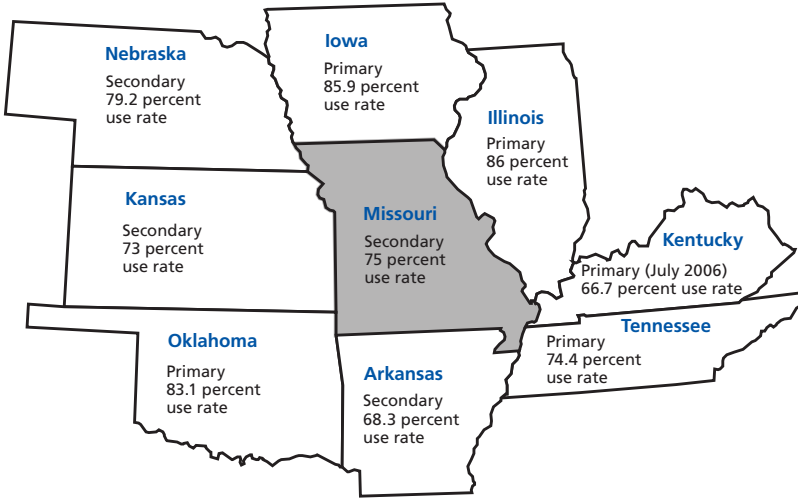
When I don't wear my safety belt, I'm not hurting anyone but myself. An unbelted person flies around inside a vehicle during a crash. Even if others in the car are belted, you could crush them with the force of your body or head on impact when you collide.

A safety belt could prevent me from escaping if the vehicle is on fire or submerged in water. Fire and water are involved in less than one percent of all crashes. Being in a safety belt increases the likelihood that the occupant will be conscious and able to get out of the vehicle.

If I get hurt, I'm only hurting myself. Medical costs are 55 percent higher for unbelted crash victims. Tax dollars pay for an estimated 25 percent of the medical costs of people injured in motor vehicles. When someone is killed or injured in a crash, family and friends suffer, too.

A primary safety belt law will encourage racial profiling. Law enforcement officers are required to complete a racial profile report on every motor vehicle stop – regardless of the reason (roadblocks and sobriety checkpoints are exempt).

Safety Belt Use State Comparison



Primary enforcement = motorists can be stopped and ticketed solely for not wearing a safety belt.

Secondary enforcement = motorists can be cited for not wearing a safety belt only if the driver is first pulled over for another offense.

Use rates - 2006 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data.

Twenty-six states (including Washington, D.C.) have primary safety belt laws.

Twenty-four states have secondary safety belt laws.

New Hampshire does not have a safety belt law

Missouri's Safety Belt Use Rate

Overall	75%	Cars	79%
Teens	58%	Vans	81%
Pickups	66%	SUVs	81%

Medical costs are 55 percent higher for unbelted crash victims.

How You Can Help

We need your help. To pass primary safety belt legislation, our state lawmakers need to know this issue is important to you and other citizens they represent. Here's what you can do:

- Contact your state legislators and ask them to vote for this vital, life-saving law.
- Educate others and ask them to contact their legislators.
- Publicly speak out and promote changing Missouri's safety belt law to allow for primary enforcement and support your community's efforts to do the same.
- Always wear your safety belt.
- Visit www.saveMOlives.com for more information.

Tips For Contacting Your Elected Officials

You can find contact information for your state representative and senator by visiting www.moga.mo.gov. When contacting them by telephone, letter or e-mail, clearly state why primary safety belt legislation is important to you. If you have a personal survivor story, share it, but keep it simple and to the point.

Sample Letter:

Dear Representative/Senator _____:

As a constituent of yours, I believe you should know I support changing Missouri's safety belt law to allow for primary enforcement. That is why I'm calling upon you to do all you can to ensure Missouri's safety belt law is modified in the 2007 session to allow for primary enforcement.

With a primary safety belt law, we could save 90 lives each year. Ninety lives – picture your best friend or your neighbor's child saved by a safety belt.

Missouri's current safety belt law is the only traffic law in the state that requires a law enforcement officer to witness another offense before being able to make a stop and issue a citation for not wearing a safety belt.

(Personal story here if applicable)

Please let me know how you plan to vote on this issue. We have a chance to save 90 lives a year by allowing primary safety belt enforcement. Won't you speak up?

Sincerely,

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Telephone number

E-mail address

“Doing what is right isn't always easy, but it is always right. We are losing an obscene number of Missourians to traffic crashes. A primary safety belt law will save lives and it is the right thing to do.”

MoDOT Director Pete Rahn, 2006 State of Transportation Address

Primary safety belt
enforcement – if not for you,
for those you love.



**This driver was wearing a safety belt
and survived.**



**This driver was not wearing a safety belt,
was ejected and died.**

Missouri Coalition
for Roadway Safety



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