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## **Buckle Up! Seat belts save lives**

*Edmonton...* Research and collision investigations show that seat belts increase the chances of survival in a collision by 50 per cent. According to Transport Canada, almost 40 per cent of drivers and passengers killed in collisions were not wearing their seat belt at the time of the crash.

Using a seat belt is the most effective way to reduce the risk of injury or death in a collision. A seat belt keeps drivers and passengers from striking the interior of the vehicle, colliding with other passengers or being ejected from the vehicle, where the risk of being killed is five times greater.

In Alberta, every person travelling in a vehicle equipped with a seat belt must wear it or use a child safety seat. The fine for seat belt and child safety seat infractions is \$115. Drivers are responsible for ensuring that passengers under 16 are properly buckled up or using child safety seats when required. If convicted, the driver is responsible for paying the fine of not having a child under 16 properly secured by the seat belt or a child safety seat.

### **Proper use of seat belts**

- A typical seat belt consists of a lap and shoulder belt. The shoulder belt should be worn closely against the body, over the shoulder and across the chest, never under the arm or behind the back. The lap belt should be firm against the body and low across the hips.
- A seat belt should not be worn twisted, as the full width of the belt is required to spread motor vehicle collision forces across the body.
- While a child can start using a seat belt alone at age six or when they weigh over 18 kilograms; it is recommended that the child be in a booster seat until they turn nine or reach a weight of 37 kilograms.
- Pregnant women must wear a seat belt. To wear the lap and shoulder belt properly they should sit as upright as possible. The lap belt should be worn low so it pulls downward on the pelvic bones and not directly against the abdomen.
- Air bags do not replace a seat belt. They do not prevent drivers and passengers from being thrown from the vehicle.

As part of the Traffic Safety Plan Calendar, the focus is on seat belts in October.

For more information, contact the Alberta Office of Traffic Safety at 780-422-8839 or your regional traffic safety coordinator. To find your local coordinator, visit [www.saferoads.com](http://www.saferoads.com) and click on Contact Us, then the [Regional Traffic Safety Coordinator](#) on the left-hand side.

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