
Clinton Presidential Records

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This marker identifies the former location of a 3.5 floppy diskette. The files from this diskette have been processed and are available on compact disc.

The compact disk will be placed in a folder located at the end of this collection in the Electronic Records section.

Collection/FOIA: 2015-0274-S

Diskette Title: MD and DC Primary Safety Belt Laws

Folder Title: Seat Belts



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

Region III
Delaware, District of Columbia
Maryland, Pennsylvania
Virginia, West Virginia

10 South Howard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
(410) 962-0077 Voice
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October 28, 1997

Honorable Bruce N. Reed
Assistant to the President for
Domestic Policy and Director
of the Domestic Policy Council
Office of Policy Development
Room 216
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. Reed:

On January 23, 1997, President Clinton directed the Secretary of Transportation to prepare a plan to increase the use of seat belts nationwide. As a part of this plan, national goals have been set and a four point action plan was outlined (See enclosure). You and your employees are key components of our national strategy by providing the essential unified Federal leadership to our many public and private sector partners. We invite you to join with us in the Presidential initiative and ask for your assistance in providing all Federal employees with information about the national plan and recent changes to safety belt laws.

Both Maryland and the District of Columbia are leading the way in supporting the President's initiative by recently upgrading their safety belt laws. The new laws now permit police officers to stop and cite motorists **solely** for not wearing a safety belt, and have removed the "secondary" enforcement restriction. Other states which have upgraded their laws in a similar manner, increased seat belt usage by 10-15%. We expect similar results to occur in Maryland and the District of Columbia, helping us to reach the national goals.

The new laws will impact Maryland and District of Columbia residents as well as commuters from nearby states who work in the metropolitan District of Columbia and Maryland areas. Along with a printed summary (attached) of the changes to both laws, we are providing the information on a diskette in Word Perfect 6.1 software format which can be easily distributed as an e-mail attachment to employees or incorporated into agency publications or newsletters.

Thank you for joining us in this collaborative effort which will enhance the quality of life for our Federal employees and their families. If we can be of any assistance, please contact me at (410) 962-0077. We would also be interested in receiving information on any actions you take so we may appropriately credit your agency's accomplishments in our progress report.

Sincerely,

Eugene Peterson
Regional Administrator



AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE
(800) 424-9393
Wash., D.C. Area 366-0123

Seat belts

*Tom -
Spread the
word: Buckle Up
BR*



Beginning October 1, 1997, Maryland will have a PRIMARY SEAT BELT LAW. This new law means that police officers will be able to ticket drivers and/or adult front seat passengers for not wearing a seat belt.

Other Vital Facts About The Law

Covers all motor vehicles:

- Registered in Maryland as a Class A (passenger), Class E (truck), Class F (truck tractor), Class M (multipurpose), or Class P (passenger bus) vehicle or the same types of vehicles registered in another state; and
- Required to be equipped with seat belts under federal motor vehicle safety standards.

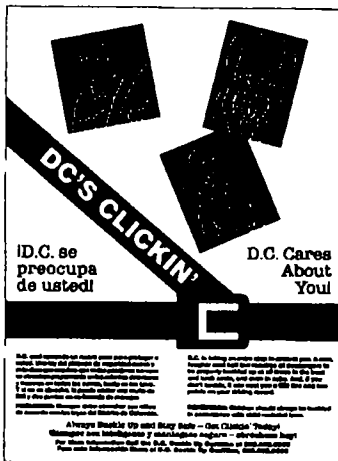
Covers the driver and the front seat passenger next to the door, each or both of whom may receive a ticket for not wearing a seat belt. To further explain who will receive a \$25.00 fine for not wearing a seat belt:

- In the case where neither the driver nor the adult front seat passenger are buckled up - each of them will receive a ticket.
- In the case where neither the driver nor the front seat passenger (15 years of age or younger) are buckled up, the driver will receive a ticket for both.

Not covered by the law are:

- Those who have a written certificate from their doctor stating a medical reason for not using their seat belt.
- Drivers and passengers of Class L (historical) motor vehicles.

Children younger than 16 years of age, in all seating positions, in all vehicles, already are covered by Maryland's Child Passenger Safety Law.



In October 1997, police officers will begin enforcing DC's recently amended seat belt law.

New Requirements of DC's Amended Seat Belt Law

- ▶ Police officers can now stop motorists **solely** for not using safety belts. (The requirement to first stop motorists for some other type of traffic violation was removed from the law).
- ▶ The **driver and all passengers** are now required to wear a properly fastened safety belt. (An exemption for passengers is provided if all seating positions with seat belts are occupied by other persons, provided the driver shall insure that children 16 years of age and under shall have preference to seating positions with seat belts.)
- ▶ The fine for violations has been increased from \$15 to \$50.
- ▶ Two points are assessed to the driving record of a driver found in violation.
- ▶ The driver of the vehicle (except the operator of a passenger vehicle for hire, such as a Taxi) is made responsible for ensuring that passengers comply with DC's seat belt law.
- ▶ Seat belt use signs are required to be displayed on passenger vehicles for hire, such as Taxis.

Executive Summary

The National Strategy to Increase Seat Belt Use

"If there is one thing we can do to save thousands of American lives, it is to increase seat belt use nationwide."

President William J. Clinton, December 28, 1996

In a weekly radio address to the nation on December 28, 1996, President Clinton asked all Americans to always wear seat belts as a first line of defense against traffic injuries and fatalities and always to keep children, ages 12 and under, buckled in the back seat where they are safest. On January 23, 1997, the President directed the Secretary of Transportation to prepare a plan to increase the use of seat belts nationwide. The President directed the Secretary to work with Congress, the states, and other concerned Americans, including the automobile and insurance industries and safety and consumer groups, to develop the plan. He further directed that the plan address: 1) state laws that require the use of seat belts; 2) assistance from the Department of Transportation (DOT) to improve these state laws; and 3) a comprehensive education campaign on behalf of the public and private sectors to help the public understand the need to wear seat belts.

This report presents the Administration's findings and recommendations to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce the associated medical care costs of traffic crashes through the proper use of seat belts and child safety seats. It presents new national goals for seat belt and child safety seat use and a national strategy to reach these ambitious goals.

It's Everyone's Problem

Every 14 seconds, someone in America is injured in a traffic crash. Every 12 minutes, someone is killed in a crash. Traffic-related injuries are the leading cause of all injury deaths in America and the leading cause of death for people ages six through 27. They cost \$150.5 billion a year, including \$17 billion in medical care costs. In 1995, almost 41,800 persons were killed in motor vehicle-related crashes, over 3.4 million were injured in police-reported crashes, and an even greater number utilized hospital emergency rooms.

The current seat belt use rate in America is 68%. Seat belt use rose as 49 States passed seat belt laws. But since then, seat belt use has risen slowly and some states have been struggling to maintain use rates at current levels. In addition, half of the children under age five who die in traffic crashes are not secured in child safety seats. In observational

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for Americans ages 6-27. Someone in America is injured in a traffic crash every 14 seconds; every 12 minutes, someone is killed.

"One of our greatest responsibilities: taking care to protect ourselves and our children... on the road."

President Clinton

studies, nearly 80% of child safety seats in use were not being used correctly.

We must do better. *Seat Belts Work:* Seat belts are the most effective means of reducing fatalities and serious injuries in traffic crashes. They are estimated to save 9,500 lives in America each year. Research has found that lap/shoulder belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants by 45% and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50%. For light truck occupants, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60% and moderate-to-critical injury by 65%. *Child Safety Seats Work:* They are the most effective occupant protection devices used in motor vehicles today. If used correctly, they are 71% effective in reducing fatalities in children under the age of five and 69% effective in reducing the need for hospitalization. *Primary Belt Laws Work:* In most states, seat belt laws are enforced only when a driver is stopped for some other reason. (so-called "secondary" laws). But 11 states have adopted "primary" seat belt laws, which allow for ticketing solely for failure to use a seat belt, and Maryland just passed this legislation. Seat belt use in the 11 states is fully 15% higher. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that enactment of primary belt laws by the other 38 states would make similar gains.

A National Strategy to Increase Seat Belt Use

This National Strategy sets new national seat belt use goals and presents a collaborative, simple, four point plan in which everyone can participate to achieve the goals. The plan emphasizes personal responsibility to buckle up and to properly secure all children while riding in motor vehicles.

New National Goals:

- **Increase national seat belt use to 85% by 2000 and 90% by 2005**
- **Reduce child occupant fatalities (0-4 years) 15% by 2000 and 25% by 2005**

Reaching 85% seat belt use would result in preventing an estimated 4,194 fatalities, 102,518 injuries, and save \$6.7 billion annually. Reaching 90% seat belt use would result in preventing an estimated 5,536 fatalities, 132,670 injuries, and save \$8.8 billion annually.

The Nation Can Achieve These Goals By:

- **Building partnerships** between government and the private sector to help America reach its potential of saving lives and preventing injuries through the use of seat belts and child safety seats;

The plan to increase seat belt use has four elements that, when implemented together, have proven to be effective in raising seat belt use rates.

- **Enacting state laws** for primary (standard) seat belt enforcement and comprehensive child passenger safety;
- Conducting **active, high visibility law enforcement** of state seat belt and child safety seat laws; and
- Expanding well-coordinated, **effective public education** programs.

Urging Everyone's Participation

Everyone in America can participate in this national effort to save lives and prevent injuries by buckling up properly on every trip. While it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual to buckle up and to ensure that all children in a motor vehicle are properly restrained, there is also a role for government at all levels and for many groups and organizations, both public and private, to provide the tools that will help get seat belt non-users and part-time users to buckle up.

The National Strategy recommends actions are for many partners, including:

Key Administration Actions

President Clinton has proposed legislation to provide strong financial incentives for states to increase seat belt use and, specifically, to pass primary seat belt laws.

- President Clinton proposed legislation in March, 1997, to provide states with financial incentives for improving their occupant protection programs and seat belt use rates, and to pass primary seat belt enforcement laws.
- President Clinton will propose legislation that further strengthens states' incentives to increase seat belt use. States that do not achieve 85% belt use or pass primary seat belt laws by October, 2002, would have to transfer 1.5% of their federal highway construction funds to their highway safety programs.

In addition:

- President Clinton is issuing an Executive Order that: directs Federal agencies to require on-the-job seat belt use for all Federal employees; directs the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Park Service to institute programs and policies to increase seat belt use on DoD installations and in national park areas; encourages Tribal Governments to adopt

Everyone has a role in raising America's seat belt use rate:

President Clinton

Private Citizens

Federal agencies

Congress

States

Communities

National

organizations

& coalitions

Business

Law enforcement

Health care

professionals

Educators

Prosecutors

& judges

Media

Sports participants

& organizations

The National Strategy to Increase Seat Belt Use

programs and policies for highways on Tribal lands; and encourages government contractors, subcontractors, and grantees to institute on-the-job seat belt use programs and policies for their employees.

Key Partner Actions

The National Strategy also urges:

- States to support active, highly visible occupant protection law enforcement, and support and coordinate seat belt and child information and education programs
- National organizations to assist in educating their constituencies on the importance of correct, full time seat belt and child safety seat use
- Business to implement employee seat belt programs and to join with other businesses and organizations to advance seat belt and child safety seat legislation, enforcement, and education
- Communities to seek leadership and participation from mayors, councils, boards, and other public officials, and to support traffic enforcement as one of their best investments in public safety
- Private citizens to buckle up every time and on every trip, and to properly secure every child in a vehicle in a child safety seat or seat belt -- in the back seat, the safest place for children

Individuals must take responsibility for themselves and for their child passengers by making certain everyone in the vehicle is properly buckled up – every time, every trip.

The goals, plans, and actions described in this report, if implemented by a broad base of individuals and groups, will increase proper seat belt and child safety seat use in America. The results will save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce the associated medical care costs of traffic crashes.