

What you need to know about wearing seat belts

In Ontario, all drivers and passengers must wear a seat belt which is properly adjusted and securely fastened.

Using a seat belt is the single most effective way to reduce the chance of injury or death in a motor vehicle collision. The seat belt legislation has been law since 1976, however 8 percent of the population still choose not to comply with the law. That 8 percent represents over 600,000 people. It's easy to see the difference wearing a seat belt makes ? for every one percent increase in seat belt use five lives are saved.

At all times, limit the number of occupants in your vehicle to the number of seat belts. Unbelted occupants can become projectiles during a collision and can seriously injure themselves, other passengers or the driver.

You must wear a seat belt whenever you travel in a motor vehicle, including a taxi. It is the taxi driver's responsibility to ensure that the seat belt is available and in good working order. Taxi drivers are responsible for ensuring that passengers under the age of 16 are wearing seat belts. The law does not require the taxi driver to provide a child car seat. When travelling in a taxi with a child, you may provide your own child car seat or booster seat.

When a seat belt is worn correctly, it will apply most of the collision or stopping forces across the chest and pelvis, which are better able to withstand collision forces. 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.

Wearing a seat belt loosely or placing the shoulder belt under the arm or behind your back instead of across the chest, could, in the case of a collision or sudden stop, result in an injury-producing impact with the vehicle interior, or ejection from the vehicle. Wearing a lap belt across the stomach, instead of low across the hips, allows collision forces to be applied to the soft tissue of the body, increasing the chance of injury.

The fine for not wearing a seat belt is \$240 and two (2) demerit points. Additionally, drivers are responsible for ensuring that all passengers under the age of 16 years are properly belted. Police officers may request that passengers who appear to be at least 16 years of age provide their name, address and date of birth. These passengers may face a fine for not using or wearing a seat belt properly.