

SAFETY BELTS AND AIR BAGS FACT SHEET

Most cars and pickup trucks are equipped with safety belts in every seating position. Wearing them is the best way to protect yourself in a crash, regardless of where you sit. If your car has only a lap belt in the rear seat, wear it. It will help to prevent injury by preventing ejection from the vehicle during a crash.

Beginning in December 1989, new passenger cars (except convertibles) were required to be equipped with rear seat lap/shoulder belts as standard equipment. Beginning in model year 1992, this requirement was extended to cover new pickups, vans, sport utility vehicles and convertibles. If your vehicle does not have rear seat lap/shoulder belts, retrofit kits are available for sale through most dealerships.

Lap belt must be worn:

- ♥ Low on the hips, not across the abdomen. The pelvic bones help to distribute the force of the crash; the soft abdomen cannot protect internal organs and the spinal column from injury.
- ♥ Snug, not slack. Slack allows room for movement before or during the crash, increasing the risk of spinal cord or head injury.
- ♥ Flat, not twisted. A twisted belt concentrates the stress on a small body area, increasing the likelihood of injury.
- ♥ With seat back upright, not reclined. If the seat is reclined, the occupant may slide under the belt, striking the dashboard or front seat and increasing the possibility of abdominal injuries.
- ♥ Occupant should sit with buttocks against seat back.

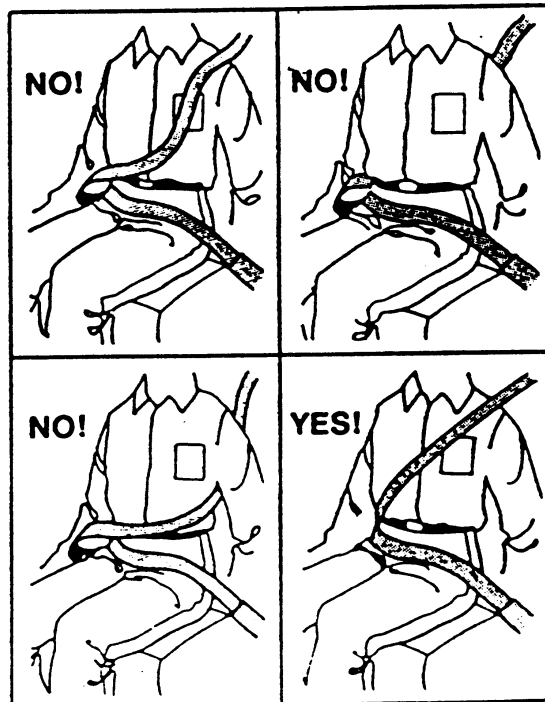
Shoulder belt must be worn:

- ♥ Snug, not slack. Too much slack could result in facial and chest injuries.
- ♥ Over the shoulder, across the collarbone, and diagonally across the chest.
- ♥ Not under the arm. The collarbone is strong enough to distribute the crash forces but the ribs are likely to break and puncture the lungs, heart, liver, or spleen that lie beneath them.
- ♥ Not in front of the face or neck
- ♥ With the seat back upright, not reclined.

Air bags are supplemental:

- ♥ Safety belt is required to hold occupant back from the inflating air bag.
- ♥ Air bags provide a cushioning benefit and prevent the belted passenger from striking the steering wheel, dashboard, windshield, etc.
- ♥ Occupant must sit back from the steering wheel hub where the air bag is deployed (if driver is short or stooped, adaptive vehicle equipment may be required to allow adequate distance between driver and steering wheel).
- ♥ Air bag is designed to cushion as it deflates.

**Wear
it
right!**



Shoulder belts should be snug. Don't allow more than 1 inch of slack. Never wear the belt behind your back or under your arm. The correct position is over the shoulder, snug across the chest, and low on the lap.



U.S. Department of Transportation
**National Highway Traffic
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