



# seatbelts

Wearing a seatbelt is one of the most important ways for drivers — and passengers — to protect themselves. Your chances of surviving a vehicle crash increase dramatically if you're wearing a seatbelt properly. Seatbelts reduce the risk of occupants striking the interior of the vehicle, colliding with other passengers, or being ejected. Wearing seatbelts in B.C. is also the law. Every seat used in your vehicle must have a seatbelt.

## How seatbelts protect you

On impact or during emergency braking, the seatbelt locks up — holding you in place. If you have an airbag-equipped vehicle, your belt system keeps you safely away from deploying airbags if you're buckled up correctly.

## Seatbelt tips

- Always wear a lap/shoulder belt system when available. Position the lap belt low over your hips and the shoulder belt over your shoulder and across your chest. Never place the shoulder belt under your arm or behind your back.
- Never recline your seat while wearing a seatbelt in a moving vehicle.
- Remove all slack from the lap and shoulder belt.
- Aftermarket seatbelt adjusters that change the path of the shoulder belt can be unsafe and should not be used. If a seatbelt adjuster is necessary, choose one that doesn't affect the path of the seatbelt or the seatbelt's ability to retract.
- During pregnancy, women should wear the lap belt snug and low over the pelvic bones (below the baby) and the shoulder belt snug against the chest. The baby will be safer if the mother is protected in a crash.

## Do you have good fit?

"Good belt fit" means positioning the seatbelt so that the force of impact during a crash will be distributed over the bony structures of the pelvis and chest.

"Poor belt fit" is when the lap belt is placed over the soft abdomen area or when the shoulder belt is under the arm or behind the back or when loose.

## British Columbia seatbelt law

Seatbelt use has been mandatory in B.C. since 1977. Section 220 of the Motor Vehicle Act includes the following provisions:

- A seatbelt assembly includes a pelvic restraint, an upper torso restraint or both.
- A person must not sell or operate a motor vehicle unless it is equipped with at least two seatbelt assemblies in the front seat.
- A person must not operate a motor vehicle that has had the seatbelts removed or rendered inoperative.
- A seatbelt assembly must be worn when a motor vehicle is being operated.

The fine for not wearing a seatbelt is \$167. Each unrestrained occupant risks a violation ticket. The driver is responsible for ensuring that passengers under 16 years of age are properly restrained.



## Child car seat safety tips

- Buckle up all children, 12 and younger, in the back seat in an age/weight appropriate restraint system.
- Never place a rear-facing infant restraint in a passenger seat that has an active airbag.
- Never carry a child in your arms while riding in a motor vehicle.
- Never restrain two children in one seatbelt. The forces of a crash will throw them violently together as their bodies attempt to occupy the same space.

There are four stages of child seating and restraint systems. Children at each age and stage are required, by law, to be restrained in the proper child passenger seat.

- Stage 1:** Infant/toddlers are to be secured in a rear-facing infant seat away from an active frontal air bag until at least 12 months old and a minimum of nine kg (20 lbs.).
- Stage 2:** Toddler/preschool children at least one year old and nine kg (20 lbs.) to at least 18 kg (40 lbs.) must be secured in a child seat.
- Stage 3:** Children under nine must be placed in a booster seat, using a lap/shoulder belt when they are a minimum of 18 kg. (40 lbs.) until they are at least nine years old or 145 cm (4'9"), whichever comes first.
- Stage 4:** Children 12 and under who are too old or large for a booster seat should always sit in the back seat, and wear a properly adjusted seatbelt.



Make sure you correctly use a Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (CMVSS)-approved child safety seat. Seats purchased outside of Canada, including online from non-Canadian vendors will not comply with Canada's safety regulations.

Research shows that a correctly used child safety seat reduces the risk of fatality by 71 per cent and the risk of serious injury by 67 per cent. A child who's not properly restrained can be ejected from the vehicle or thrown around the vehicle, resulting in significant injuries or death.

### Did you know?

- At just 55 km/h, a person not wearing a seatbelt in a crash has the same experience as falling from a three-storey building.
- In an 80 km/h crash, unbelted passengers of average size fly forward with a force of 3,000 pounds — enough to cause serious injury or death. Passengers in the backseat are just as vulnerable as those in the front.
- Unbelted passengers can potentially kill other vehicle occupants on impact. Studies show that drivers and front-seat passengers are at a five times greater risk of dying in a car crash if the rear passengers are not wearing seatbelts. This is particularly the case in head-on collisions.

The good news, we're seeing fewer fatal victims identified as not wearing a restraint (seatbelt, lap belt, infant and child restraint system or booster seat).

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
85	66	89	51	46

Set an example for your children and other drivers by making smart driving decisions on the road. Start by always wearing your seatbelt and make sure that everyone else in your vehicle does, too.

For more specific information on seatbelt and child seat safety, check out road safety/safer drivers and passengers/seatbelts on [icbc.com/road-safety](http://icbc.com/road-safety) or the Transport Canada website at [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca)



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