

# TRUCK TALK

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## Seat Belt Safety

The Department of Transportation and police departments in every state in America are really buckling down on seat belt laws. They have good reason to do this, and wearing a seatbelt is more than just a good idea. It's the law as well as a requirement of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

Some drivers still continue to believe that seat belt safety is mostly just hype, and not as important as other issues, such as raising speed limits. Below are some common myths about seat belt safety, and the truth about why they are wrong:

**"If I don't have a seat belt on, I'll be thrown free of the vehicle and saved".** If you get thrown from the vehicle, you're more likely to be killed by the trip through the windshield, or by the collision you'll make with the ground, than by the initial collision with another vehicle or other object.

**"Wearing a seat belt is a personal decision and doesn't affect anyone else".** First, it is the law. Second, the consequences of not wearing your seat belt can greatly affect your family and loved ones. What would be the effect on your loved ones if you are seriously injured in a crash as the result of not buckling up?

**"My vehicle is so large and high off the ground, I won't be hurt".** Seat belts prevent injuries and fatalities by: preventing ejection, shifting crash forces to the strongest parts of the body's structure, spreading forces over a wider area of the body, allowing the body to slow down gradually, protecting the head and spinal cord.

**"A seat belt will trap me inside my vehicle. I won't be able to get out of the cab if it**

**catches fire or is submerged in water".** The fact is that fatalities in crashes involving fire or submersion occur in less than 1/10 of 1% of crashes. Many people drown in a submerged vehicle because they were **NOT** wearing their seat belt, knocked unconscious by the crash, then drowned. The same goes for burning in a crashed vehicle. Many times the seat belt will keep the driver from sustaining the blunt force trauma of the crash and allow them to stay alert and conscious enough to exit the vehicle.

**"Seat belts can actually hurt you in a crash".** Properly worn seat belts seldom cause injury. The most injury a driver would normally sustain from a seat belt is bruising. This is not a bad injury considering the seat belt spread the force of the impact across all the body, instead of all the force being concentrated in one area, which is usually the head in crashes where no seat belt is used.

**"I knew someone who died in an accident because they were wearing their seat belt".** If a person was killed in an accident, it was not because they wore their seat belt; it was in spite of wearing their seat belt. The accident was most likely so severe and devastating, that only not being in the vehicle at that moment would have prevented that fatality.

**"Good truck drivers don't need to wear seat belts".** Good drivers usually don't cause collisions, but it's possible that during your driving career you will be involved in a crash caused by a bad driver, bad weather, mechanical failure, or tire blow-out.

**"Seat belts are useless, uncomfortable, and a waste of time".** Seat belts save lives, seat belts are the law, and that is not a myth.