



## Seatbelt Usage Myths

Fewer than 58% of commercial truck drivers wear their seatbelts, compared to 90% usage rate for all motorists. The major reason for the truck drivers' reluctance to belt up seems to be that they feel invincible due to the size of their rigs.

Here are a few truck driver seatbelt myths and facts from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

**Myth:** There is no compelling reason to buckle up. If I am in a crash, I won't be ejected. My vehicle is so large and high off the ground; I won't be hurt.

**Fact:** Seat belts prevent injuries and fatalities by prevention ejection, shifting crash forces to the strongest parts of the body's structure, spreading forces over wider area of the body, allowing the body to slow down gradually, protecting the head and spinal cord.

In 2020:

- 608 drivers of large trucks died in truck crashes
- 322 drivers of large trucks that died in truck crashes were not wearing seat belts
- 138 drivers of large trucks that died in truck crashes were ejected.

**Myth:** Wearing a seat belt is a personal decision and doesn't affect anyone else.

**Fact:** First of all, it's the law. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations require commercial motor vehicle drivers to wear seat belts.

NHTSA says its good to point out to drivers how the consequences of not wearing a seat belt can greatly affect their family and loved ones. What would be the effect on your loved ones if you are killed or seriously injured in a crash as the result of not buckling up?

It is a driver's responsibility to maintain control of the vehicle. Seat belts are the best chance of remaining in control of a truck in a crash or emergency situation. Truck driver deaths as a result of not wearing a seat belt cost society-and trucking companies billions of dollars each year.

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**Myth:** 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.

**Fact:** Rollover in a large truck increases the likelihood of fatality 30 times. Drivers are 80% less likely to die when wearing a seat belt during a rollover situation. A driver's best chance of survival is remaining conscious and in place behind the wheel of the truck.

**Myth:** The seat belt is too small and restricts my movement.

**Fact:** Seat belt extenders are available.

**Myth:** In the old days we just had a lap belt that seemed to work fine. I feel trapped in the two-part lap and shoulder belts.

**Fact:** The lap and shoulder safety belt design has been proven to hold a driver securely behind the wheel in the event of a crash, greatly increasing the driver's ability to maintain control of the vehicle and minimizing the chance for serious injury or death. Wearing only part of the safety belt greatly reduces your protection.

**The bottom line is:**

You, the power unit operator, have a **legal** and **personal** duty to wear your seatbelt to protect yourself. Your decision will be reflected in your consequences.