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## Passenger safety



# Did you know?

2,278 lives were saved in 2001 by wearing seat belts in the front of cars.

## The Law

- It has been compulsory to fit seat belts in the front of cars built in Europe since 1965.
- Fitting rear seat belts has been compulsory since 1987.
- It has been compulsory in the UK to wear seat belts in the front of a car since 1983.
- It has been compulsory for children under 14 to wear seat belts in the back of a car since 1989.
- It has been compulsory for everyone to wear seat belts in the back of a car since 1991.

## Activity

Look at the history of seat belt legislation (at [www.rosipa.com](http://www.rosipa.com)). It took nearly twenty years from seat belts being fitted in cars to the law requiring people to wear them in the front, and another eight years for seat belts to be compulsory for everyone in the rear of cars.

From 1965 plot the history of seat belt legislation on a timeline, include figures at each time point for the number of casualties killed or seriously injured (KSI) in cars.

## Discussion Points

### What are your views about seat belt wearing?

- Do you think it saves lives?
- Should it be compulsory or a question of personal choice?
- What are the human rights and responsibility issues about compulsory seat belt wearing?

Find out the penalties for not wearing a seat belt and who enforces the law.

Do you think the penalties should be more lenient or more severe?

Discuss your point of view with a partner and listen to their opinion, how does it differ from yours?



## Did you know?

- In a crash at 30mph, an unrestrained person is thrown forward with a force equal to 30 to 60 times their body weight.
- It is estimated that seat belts have saved 50,000 lives since they became compulsory in the UK 20 years ago.
- Up to 15 people in the front of cars are killed every year by an unbelted rear seat passenger being thrown forward into them.



## Activity

Imagine that you are the driver of a car. You put your seat belt on but your three friends (all over the age of 14 years) do not. In pairs, decide what tactics you can use to encourage your friends to put their seat belts on. Think about the arguments that your friends might use for not wearing their seat belt and devise counter arguments. Decide what you would do if they continued to refuse. Would you ask them to get out or would you give them a lift? Explain your decisions, also explaining how you feel about the situation.

Write a short role play (lasting no more than five minutes) based on this scenario, showing what the driver does and says and what the friends do and say. Join up with another pair and take it in turns to rehearse the roles that you have written, then perform them to the whole group.

From all the plays presented, draw up a list of suggested tactics for dealing with this situation. Incorporate it into a factsheet about seat belt wearing (one side of A4) and distribute the factsheet to students, parents and staff.

# 🔍 Did you know?

- Over 90% of people wear seat belts when in the front of a car.
- Only 57% of adults wear seat belts in the rear of cars, even though it is a legal requirement.
- It is the responsibility of any passenger over 14 years old (not the driver) to ensure that they are using the seat belt.
- Research has shown that most young people wear a seat belt in the front seat but make excuses for not wearing them in the back seats, even though they know it is illegal not to wear a belt.



## Activities

Conduct a local seat belt wearing survey.

*Ensure you discuss how to do this survey safely with the teacher.*

Decide on the number of cars you want to count eg: 50, 100. You will need to work in groups, one person counting cars; another checking front seat occupants and another checking back seat occupants.

### Record:

How many drivers not wearing seat belts?  
How many adult passengers not wearing seat belts?  
In rear seat? In front seat?  
How many unrestrained children? In rear seat, front seat?

Create a chart or graph showing the results.

Compare your results with the seat belt wearing rates in the facts and figures section of [www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk).

Discuss why there are differences or similarities between your local results and the national figures  
Explore whether the results are surprising to class members or what you expected.

**Find out about other ways that passengers are protected in cars.**

You could look on car manufacturers' websites or [www.euroncap.com](http://www.euroncap.com)

**Find out why children need to use appropriate child restraints rather than the adult seat belt.**

Invite your local road safety officer, police officer, local councillor or MP to school and interview them. Devise questions to discover their views on seat belt wearing. Find out what campaigns, if any, are being run locally.

Find out whether the seat belt legislation is actively enforced in your area. Are checks on child safety seats provided for parents on a regular basis, etc?

In small groups, devise a local campaign to publicise the importance of wearing a seat belt. Think about the target age group, local issues and how you would make your campaign 'stand out'. You could include a poster, leaflet, and script for a TV advert. Present your ideas to the rest of the group. Use other campaigns and websites for ideas.



Run your campaign either in school or in your local community, make sure that you establish a way to evaluate the success of the campaign. Set a time limit for the campaign, this could be a couple of days or a week or more. You will need to draw up a plan of action to ensure the smooth running of the campaign and resource all the materials that you need to set it up.

Left: Poster campaign produced by The Department for Transport



## Take it further...

The World Health Organisation estimates that over 1 million people are killed in road crashes, and between 20 – 50 million people are injured, across the world each year. 90% of the deaths occur in low-income or middle-income countries.

One of the reasons is that seat belt use is very low in many countries. Create a table showing the situation in different countries. You could pick a selection from different parts of the world or from one continent, such as Europe or Africa.

Compare the number of road deaths and injuries, seat belt laws and rates of seat belt use in these countries. What obstacles do they face when trying to increase

the use of seat belts? How did countries with high seat belt use achieve the high rates?

Produce an Action Plan for countries (or for one particular country) to promote the use of seat belts.

You'll find the following websites useful

- [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/en/)
- [www.etsc.be/](http://www.etsc.be/)
- [www.unece.org/trans/roadsafe/rsabout.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/roadsafe/rsabout.html)
- [www.grsproadsafety.org/](http://www.grsproadsafety.org/)
- [www.wrsn.net/](http://www.wrsn.net/)



## Useful links

[www.highwaycode.gov.uk](http://www.highwaycode.gov.uk)

[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)  
(statistics section)

[www.childcarseats.org.uk](http://www.childcarseats.org.uk)

[www.rospace.com](http://www.rospace.com)  
(young drivers section)

[www.transtat.dft.gov.uk](http://www.transtat.dft.gov.uk)

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

[www.thinkseatbelts.com](http://www.thinkseatbelts.com)

[www.securon.co.uk](http://www.securon.co.uk)

[www.britax.co.uk](http://www.britax.co.uk) (child car seats)

[www.smmmt.co.uk](http://www.smmmt.co.uk)

[www.euroncap.com](http://www.euroncap.com)

[www.roadsafe.com](http://www.roadsafe.com)

[www.trl.co.uk](http://www.trl.co.uk)

[www.mira.co.uk](http://www.mira.co.uk)

[www.safetylit.org](http://www.safetylit.org)

[www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) (Hansard)