



ST. JOHNS COUNTY  
**SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

DAVID B. SHOAR, SHERIFF

## Buckle Up for Safety

### **Buckle Up – A Habit Worth Doing, Repeatedly**

It should not be taken for granted that you or your family will not be involved in an automobile crash. We should all make sure that our relatives, friends and neighbors know that to allow a child or other passenger to ride unrestrained is illegal. The consequences of sustaining a life long injury, or death, are never worth the risk.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 59% or 32,598 of the passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes in 2002 were unrestrained. Buckling up is the single most effective way to reduce injuries and save lives from motor vehicle crashes in the US.

However, many adults and children still ride unrestrained or unknowingly use child restraints improperly. According to data collected by certified technicians from fitting stations and child safety seat check up events, over 96% of child safety and booster seats inspected are found to be improperly installed. It is important to buckle up and correctly install the appropriate child safety seat in the vehicle.

### **Remember these important tips:**

- Infants must ride rear-facing from birth to 1 year of age and weigh at least 20 pounds, and must NEVER ride in the front seat of an air bag equipped vehicle.
- Toddlers at least 1 year of age and who weigh over 20 pounds should ride in a forward facing child safety seat.
- Children 4 to 8 years old and up to 4' feet 9" inches tall should use a belt-positioning booster seat because the adult safety belt doesn't fit this age group correctly.

The 2003 Child Passenger Safety Summit found that children 8 to 15 years old are less likely to buckle up. This accounts for higher fatality rates. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death of children 4 to 14 years of age. More than 50 percent of all children under 15 killed in automobile crashes were completely unrestrained. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2003)

Many drivers just don't believe they will be in a crash so they do not wear vehicle safety belts nor do they make sure children are properly restrained for every ride. Adult vehicle safety belt use is an important predictor of restraint use among children. Observations conducted in 2002 showed that when a driver wore a safety belt, children were restrained 92 percent of the time. However, if a driver was unbuckled, children were restrained only 72 percent of the time. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2002)

It is our goal to make certain that families understand the necessity of using the proper restraint, **EVERY TIME, FOR EVERY TRIP. Buckle yourself. Buckle your children. EVERY TRIP!!!**