



St. Johns County Sheriff's Office

"Taking Care of People"

Driving Safety

Buckle Up – It's the Law

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 lifelong injury, or death, are never worth the risk.

Wearing your seat belt in Florida became a primary offense with The Dori Slosberg and Katie Marchetti Safety Belt Law (effective June 30, 2009). The law requires that all drivers, all front seat passengers and all passengers under the age of 18 fasten their safety belts. ([section 316.614, Florida Statutes](#))

Drivers and passengers 18 or older can be cited if they, or any passenger under the age of 18, are not properly strapped in. Drivers will be charged with a seat belt violation if any passenger under the age of 18 is not restrained with a seat belt or child restraint device

Since 2013, the percentage of fatalities in which the person was not wearing a seatbelt has gone down six percent, but there is still a long way to go.

Seat belts save lives, but only if worn correctly *every* time you are in a motor vehicle. In a crash, your seat belt keeps you:

- From being ejected from the vehicle;
- From being thrown against other passengers, the steering wheel or the windshield;
- Behind the wheel where you can control the vehicle.

Wear your lap belt around your hips and wear your shoulder belt across your chest. The seat belt will not work if it is tucked behind you. Airbags are no substitute for seat belts.

In Florida, on average, 41 percent of those who were killed in crashes in vehicles where seat belt use is required chose not to wear their one. That means hundreds of people who died on Florida roads had the option to wear a seat belt but didn't. Men were more than twice as likely to be killed in a crash not wearing a seat belt than females.

To make the message click, parents must model safe driving habits for their children. Teach your kids that we are never too old, never too cool and never too busy to buckle up. No matter how short the trip, there is no substitute for seat belts.

Every time you get in a vehicle, no matter where you are sitting, buckle up. That click reduces your risk of being injured or killed in a crash by almost 50 percent.

Florida law requires the use of safety belts for all drivers and passengers in all motorized vehicles, except:

- A person certified with a physician as having a medical condition that causes seat belt use to be inappropriate or dangerous. (Keep a copy of certification while driving/being driven).
- Employee of a newspaper home delivery service while delivering newspapers.
- School buses purchased new prior to December 31, 2000.
- Buses used for transportation of persons for compensation.
- Farm equipment.
- Trucks of a net weight of more than 26,000 pounds.

A seat belt (without a booster seat) may only be used for children 4-5 years of age when the driver is not a member of the child's immediate family and the child is being transported as a favor or in an emergency.

- Florida law requires children aged 5 and under to be secured by properly using a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device.
- Florida law requires children aged 4 and 5 to be secured in a separate carrier, an integrated child seat or a child booster seat.
- Follow your car seat manufacturer's instructions and your vehicle owner's manual on how to install and properly use the car seat.
- Make sure the car seat is the right fit for your child and the vehicle and that it can be installed and used correctly every time.