



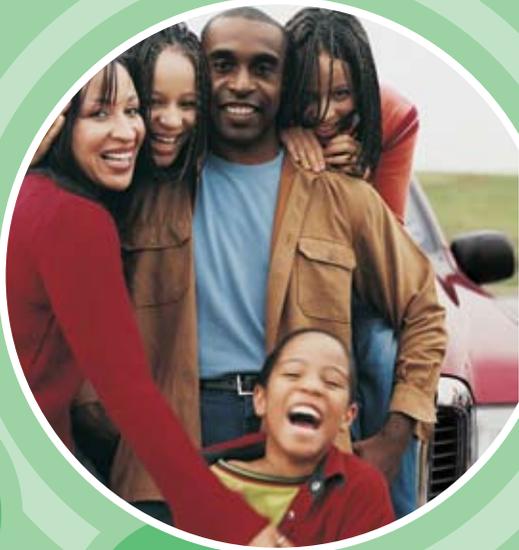
You're  
In the Driver's  
Seat!



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DO YOU WEAR YOUR SAFETY BELT?



Every day, we hear about the enormous risks to African-American youth – HIV/AIDS, violence, and drugs.

But one of the greatest dangers rarely makes the news. It's a quiet, continuing threat we repeatedly expose ourselves to. We allow it to needlessly destroy thousands of promising young lives each year.

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1

- A child who is age 8 and 4' 9" or taller can use a safety belt. The lap belt should rest low and fit snugly across the child's upper thighs. The shoulder belt should be centered on the shoulder and across the chest. The child should also be able to sit all the way back against the vehicle seat back with his or her knees bent comfortably over the edge of the seat.
- LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children) is a system for installing child safety seats (not booster seats, car beds, or vests) without safety belts.

Attachments on LATCH-equipped child safety seats fasten to anchors in LATCH-equipped vehicles. Most child safety seats and cars, minivans, and light trucks **manufactured after September 1, 2002**, are required to have LATCH. If your child's safety seat is not LATCH-equipped, **it is still safe if:** it has been correctly installed using a safety belt; it hasn't been recalled; and it hasn't been damaged in a crash. Child safety seats that are not LATCH-equipped should be installed using safety belts, even in LATCH-equipped vehicles.

If your vehicle is not LATCH-equipped, you can still use a safety belt to install **any** child safety seat, even one that is LATCH-equipped. Be sure to follow the instructions in your vehicle owner's manual and in the child safety seat instruction booklet. You can also call the toll-free DOT Vehicle Safety Hotline at **888-327-4236**.

For a child safety seat inspection by a certified technician, call 866-732-8243 (866-SEAT-CHECK) or visit [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org).

- **Remember: All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat.**

Log onto NHTSA's Web site at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) to learn more about safety belts and child safety seats.



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6



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**S**afety belt use among African-Americans increased from 69 percent in 2000 to 78 percent in 2005 – a 9 percentage-point increase in five years. While this trend is positive, **approximately one in four African-Americans still does not buckle up on every trip. Much more must be done.**

3

## DID YOU KNOW?

- When parents travel without their safety belts, their children's restraint use drops by 36 percentage points.
- In 2004, 55 percent of those killed in passenger vehicles were not wearing safety belts.
- Safety belts are effective in preventing total ejections; only 1 percent of the passenger vehicle occupants reported to have been using restraints in fatal crashes were totally ejected compared with 29 percent of the unrestrained occupants.
- Motor vehicle crashes in 2000 cost a total of \$230.6 billion. This equals \$820 for each person living in the United States.
- The general public pays nearly three-quarters of all crash costs, primarily through insurance premiums, taxes, delays, and lost productivity.
- The African-American population is expected to increase by 13 percent by 2010, which will significantly increase its exposure to traffic crashes.



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4

## BUCKLE UP THE RIGHT WAY

- Teenagers and adults of all ages should always wear their safety belts, even on short trips. The lap belt should fit snugly across the upper thighs and not ride up on the stomach. The shoulder part of the belt should fit across the collarbone and chest and not cut into the neck or face.
  - Safety belts also provide the best protection for expectant mothers and their unborn children. Pregnant women should place the shoulder belt across the chest – between the breasts – and away from the neck. The lap belt should fit across the hips/pelvis and below the stomach. Never place the shoulder belt behind the back or under the arm. Never place the lap belt on or above the stomach.
    - The safest place in a vehicle for children to sit is in the back seat.
    - Use rear-facing child safety seats for infants from birth to at least 1 year, and at least 20 pounds. Infants in rear-facing child safety seats must never ride in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side airbag.
    - Use forward-facing child safety seats for children who are over age 1 and 20 pounds, to about age 4 and 40 pounds.
    - Children from age 4 to at least age 8, **and** under 4' 9" tall, who have outgrown forward-facing child safety seats should use booster seats with a lap-shoulder belt. A booster seat raises a child up so that the safety belt fits correctly.



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5

**T**he sad fact of motor vehicle crashes are:

- In 2003, motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for all African-Americans from age 4 through 13.
- Motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for African-American males from age 5 through age 13. Motor vehicle crashes were also the leading cause of death for African-American females from age 3 through age 5; age 7; ages 9 through 12; age 16 through 20; and age 25.

Too many African-American children and young adults are killed and injured each year because they didn't buckle up. Their families and friends are left behind to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives.

*Safety is just a "click" away...*



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2