
SAFETY BELT FACT SHEET

February 2010

- Iowa crash data for 1987-2009 supports the motto "Safety Belts Save Lives."
- Iowa safety belt usage averaged 93% in 2009, the highest use rate in the State's history. Iowa has the highest belt use rate among the five states in NHTSA's Region 7 and 8th highest in the Nation. Safety belt use averaged 84% nationally in 2009.
- During 2005-2007, 61% of all Iowa vehicle occupants killed in night time crashes were unbelted, while 43% of day time victims were not using safety belts.
- During the 1987-2009 period over 4,300 unbelted persons died in Iowa traffic mishaps; while just over 2,900 belted people were killed.
- Figures for 2009 show 150 unbelted persons were killed in Iowa traffic crashes while 140 belted persons lost their lives.
- Based on observational studies conducted at 100 locations across the state, use of available safety belt systems has increased five-fold. In August of 1985 only 18% of Iowans were buckling up while 93% were using belts by July of 2009.
- The Iowa DOT "Life Toll" for July, 1986 – February 2010 lists the names of 6,230 people who were spared death or life threatening injuries in Iowa because they buckled up.
- A study by Dr. Tim Peterson in 1988 with 16 Iowa hospitals showed unbelted persons brought to emergency rooms were 3 times more likely to be hospitalized, 8 times more likely to suffer head injuries and incurred 3 times more medical costs than belted persons.
- In an article published in the September 1993 issue of Crash Analysis and Prevention, researchers from the National Centers for Disease Control concluded that Iowans are saving at least \$69 million annually due to the safety belt law.
- The Iowa Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Iowa's safety belt law in a ruling issued May 17, 1989, State vs. Hartog, 440 N.W.2d 852 (1989).
- Law enforcement officers have found the measure to be enforceable, having issued nearly 50,000 citations in 2008.
- In July 1987, the Iowa Insurance Division ordered insurance companies to cut auto liability premiums 5% because the state's safety belt law had reduced insurance losses. The change saves Iowans an estimated \$11 million per year in insurance premiums.

Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau



Iowa Department of Public Safety

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