

AIR BAGS AND SAFETY BELTS SAVE LIVES

During the year 2002, the proper use of seat belts is estimated to have saved the lives of over 14,000 people over the age of 4. Air bags saved an estimated 2,200 people and child restraints saved nearly 400 children. It is estimated that an additional 7,000 lives could have been saved had all vehicle occupants over the age of 4 worn safety belts.

Consider the Following Statistics

- ▶ According to the National Safety Council, motor vehicle accidents in 2003 accounted for:
 - 44,800 deaths
 - 2.4 million disabling injuries
 - 10 million accidents resulting in property damage and non-disabling injury



- ▶ Annual costs relating to motor vehicle accidents were estimated at over \$240.7 billion (Includes: wage and productivity losses, medical expenses, administrative expenses, motor vehicle property damage, and employer costs.)

- ▶ In the Human Service field, motor vehicle accidents are the leading type of claims reported. For human service providers, the impact of a severe auto loss can be devastating. Motor vehicle accidents can cause serious injury or death to employees and the consumers they are entrusted to care for.

Knowing all of this, providers should give the proper use of air bags and safety belts a high priority. The District of Columbia and all US states, except for New Hampshire, have either a primary (Law enforcement can stop a vehicle and issue a citation whenever a violation of the safety belt laws are seen.) or secondary (Law enforcement can issue a citation only after a vehicle is stopped for some other traffic violation.) When used properly, vehicle restraints can significantly reduce the severity of loss should a motor vehicle accident occur.

By just using shoulder/lap belts:

Fatal injury can be reduced by 45 percent. Moderate to critical injury can be reduced by 50 percent.

By using the combination of seat belts and airbags:

Fatal injury can be reduced by an additional 12 percent.

By using the child safety seats:

Fatal injury can be reduced by 71 percent for infants (less than 1 year old) and by 54 percent for toddlers (1-4 years old).

AIR BAGS AND SAFETY BELTS SAVE LIVES

**Someone in America
is killed in a motor
vehicle accident every
12 seconds!**

Safety belts offer the greatest protection against occupant injury. Air bags are a supplemental form of protection; most are designed to deploy in moderate to severe frontal impact crashes. They are meant to limit head and chest injuries.

Air bags supplement lap/shoulder belts; they never replace them. Air bags inflate in less than 1/25th of a second. During the pre-crash braking, the drivers and passengers who are unrestrained or wearing only a lap belt, can be thrown against the dashboard and/or windshield area and can receive serious or fatal injuries from the deploying air bags.

Air Bag and Seat Belt Safety Tips

- ▶ Move the front seat back. Driver and front passenger should be moved as far back as reasonably possible, particularly people of small stature.
- ▶ Wear lap belts and shoulder belts. The shoulder strap should cross the collarbone and the lap belt should fit low and tight. The shoulder strap should never be slipped behind the back or under the arm. If the lap belt and shoulder belt do not reach around a person, extenders can be used.
- ▶ All occupants of the vehicle are required to use lap and shoulder belts.



- ▶ Properly secure children in the rear seats of the vehicle. Infants should never ride in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger air bag. All children age 12 and under should ride buckled up in the rear seat of the vehicle. Young children and infants should ride in child safety seats appropriate to their age and size.
- ▶ When transporting passengers who use wheelchairs, it is preferable to transfer them to a regular seat and buckle them in. When this is not possible, three sets of securement should be used: person to wheelchair; person to vehicle; wheelchair to vehicle.

Remember that safety belts and air bags can save lives, but only when they are used properly!



****Statistics are from the 2004 Edition of the National Safety Council's Injury Facts.****

For additional information on vehicle safety or any other topic, contact your Risk Management Client Services Specialist at or visit our website at www.siegelagency.com. *Irwin Siegel Agency, Inc. accepts no legal responsibility for the correctness of this material or its application to specific factual situations. It cannot be assumed that every acceptable safety procedure is contained herein or that abnormal or unusual circumstances may not warrant or require further or additional procedures.*