

Occupant protection

QFleet driver safety fact sheet

Drivers and passengers travelling unrestrained in a vehicle are 18 times more likely to be killed in a road crash than those wearing a seatbelt.

Seatbelts

Unfortunately, the failure to wear a seatbelt is still the major contributing factor in more than 20 per cent of fatal crashes. All occupants of a vehicle must wear a seatbelt at all times.

Seatbelts must always be worn correctly. A seatbelt worn incorrectly could cause neck, chest or abdominal injuries in a crash and won't protect occupants as it is designed to do.

When a seatbelt is worn properly:

- the belt is flat and not twisted
- the lap belt fits snugly and passes over the wearer's pelvis and hips and not across the stomach
- in the case of pregnant women:
 - the lap belt sits over the thighs, across the pelvis and under the unborn child
 - the shoulder belt should pass above the stomach and between the breasts
- the shoulder belt passes over the chest and shoulder bone and does not contact your neck or face.

Many seatbelts in the front seats of vehicles now have height adjustable sash guides. The height adjuster allows positioning of the shoulder belt so that it does not contact the neck. Use the

height adjuster to help to correctly position the shoulder belt across the chest and shoulder as described above.

To ensure the seatbelt has the best chance of performing properly, the seat back should be in an upright position and the wearer must sit straight. The seatbelt will have reduced effectiveness if worn:

- loosely or not correctly
- with the seat back reclined
- with the wearer's back away from the seat
- with the wearer's legs curled underneath them.

Seatbelts are only to be used to restrain people and are not to be used to restrain goods and luggage. Do not route the seatbelt straps across sharp edges or across hard items contained in your clothing such as spectacles and pens.

The majority of front seatbelts are now fitted with additional high tech safety features such as pretensioners and load limiters. These features are invisible and improve the performance of the seatbelt in the event of a crash.

Seatbelts should be treated with care and checked regularly for safety and serviceability by looking for:

- frayed or damaged belts
- damaged or faulty buckles and fittings
- faulty retractor mechanisms.

If there are any concerns about the serviceability of a vehicle's seatbelts, book the vehicle into the nearest service agent for inspection and/or repair.

Airbags

Airbags are an important safety feature fitted to nearly all new vehicles sold in Australia. They are very effective in reducing injury to vehicle occupants in a crash. Although airbags are often hidden from view as they are concealed in the steering hub, the passenger side of the dash board, in the front seats and in the side pillar trims, the safety benefits associated with airbags should not be overlooked or underestimated.

The optimum safety outcomes will be achieved by observing these precautions:

- Comply with the vehicle manufacturer's recommendation for seating. There is a risk of injury if the driver or passenger is seated too close to the airbag when it deploys. The minimum distance is usually 25 - 30 centimetres.
- Do not fix decals, notepads, mobile phones, phone and radio brackets, clocks, religious medallions, dash mats, drink holders or any other object to the steering hub or dash panel of a vehicle fitted with driver and passenger front airbags.
- Do not fit:
 - non-compatible seat covers to a vehicle fitted with seat mounted side airbags
 - bull bars which are not air bag compliant and not approved by the vehicle manufacturer.
- Take the vehicle to a dealership for diagnosis and repair if the airbag warning light remains illuminated.
- Windscreens support front airbags when they deploy. If a replacement windscreen is fitted there may be restrictions on the vehicle's use to allow time for the windscreen adhesive to cure properly. Observe the windscreen fitter's advice about this.

Drivers

- Never drive with hands on the steering wheel hub. Hands should grip the steering wheel rim at either the '10 to two' or 'quarter to three' position.
- Do not turn corners with arms crossed. It is safer to use a push/pull steering technique.

- Never touch an airbag after it has deployed – it will be hot.

Children

- Children should always be restrained in accordance with child restraint guidelines and legislation.
- Always restrain children in an approved child restraint.
- Placing children the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger front airbag should be avoided.
- It is safer to place children in the back seat, particularly if the vehicle is fitted with a passenger front airbag.



Passengers

- Passengers should avoid placing their feet on the dash of a vehicle or leaning against the vehicle's door or side pillar if the vehicle is equipped with passenger or side curtain airbags.

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