

SEAT BELTS IN NEW SCHOOL BUSES

Students Are At Risk!

There have been at least 62,000 pupil injuries in reported school bus accidents in the period 1991 to 1996. There were at least 59 passenger fatalities. (Accident Facts, National Safety Council 1992-97 editions; Fatal Accident Reporting System)

Research done by CNN shows that school bus passenger injuries have risen by 94% between 1985-96 nationally.

Improved Safety!

Research shows that high back padded seats and seat belts together provide greater safety for school bus passengers in an accident. Seat belts are most effective in side impact and roll over accidents where high back seats alone are least effective in preventing injuries. Seat belts and high back seats work together to increase passenger safety.

Studies: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7

It Can Be Done!

The states of New York and New Jersey and many school districts require all new school buses to be equipped with seat belts and high backed seats. Neither state reports any safety problem with belts.

Districts with strong seat belt use, education and enforcement policies report significant compliance at all grade levels.

Studies: 1, 2, 4

Cost!

A 65 passenger bus can be equipped with seat belts for an additional \$1,100. This figure is from a manufacturer's price quote.

Evacuation!

The use of seat belts does not significantly increase evacuation time.

Current seat belt buckle design coupled with education on easy use of a cutting tool helps ensure that no child of school age will be trapped in a bus by their seat belt.

Seat belts will hold students in their seats during an accident. This means they will be more able to evacuate the bus quickly.

Studies: 1, 2

Medical Community Support!

Seat Belts in school buses are endorsed by:

American Medical Association
Physicians for Automotive Safety
American Academy of Pediatrics
College of Preventive Medicine
American Association of Oral and Maxillo Facial Surgery
American Society for Adolescent Medicine
American College of Emergency Physicians

Why High Back Seats? Because...

The original 1967 UCLA recommendation was for a 28' seat back with seat belts because they greatly increase the compartmentalization of passengers.

They cushion the heads of both seat belted and non-seat belted passengers in frontal impacts.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a 28' seat back.

Other Benefits!

Availability and use of seat belts on school buses will reinforce the important safety habit of buckling up.

Seat belts will reduce the number of fatal actions such as putting arms and heads out of windows.

Studies: 1, 4

Students who are properly belted in are less distracting to the school bus driver. This could easily lead to fewer accidents.

Studies: 1, 2, 4

Studies Referenced

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3. Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, Special Report No. 222, 1989
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5. Increasing School Bus Safety for New York State's Children Through Seat Belts and the Elimination of Standees!, 1986, New York State Legislative Commission on Critical Transportation Choices
6. School Bus Safety in New York State ... Children at Risk?, 1985, New York State Legislative Commission on Critical Transportation Choices
7. School Bus Passenger Protection, Severy, Brink and Baird, UCLA, 1967', 1972