



Bureau of Transportation Safety
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NEWS RELEASE

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Primary Seat Belt, a law you can LIVE with

Kansas Gov. Mark Parkinson today signed HB 2130, amending the state's seatbelt law requiring all drivers and front-seat passengers to buckle up.

Law enforcement officers in Kansas will now be able to stop and ticket drivers and front-seat passengers who are not wearing safety belts even if the officers do not observe another traffic violation. Kansas is the 31st state to enact a primary seat belt law. The law goes into effect on June 10, 2010. From that day until June 30, law enforcement will be giving warnings. Beginning June 30, they will be issuing fines.

“The passage of the primary seatbelt bill is a great traffic safety improvement that will positively impact Kansas families and travelers. Law enforcement officers know that many fatalities in the state could have been prevented, had the person simply fastened their safety belt,” said Patrol Superintendent, Colonel Terry Maple. “With the passage of a primary seatbelt law, we expect to see voluntary seatbelt usage increase. We appreciate all of the work put in to pass this life saving legislation.”

The new law makes it a secondary violation for adults in the back-seat, which means they would only receive a ticket if the driver was stopped for another violation. This does not affect the existing law for anyone under 18; it is still a primary offense if they are unrestrained anywhere in the vehicle.

Wearing a safety belt is the simplest thing any of us can do to keep ourselves safe while riding in a car or truck,” said Kansas Department of Transportation Secretary Deb Miller. “If you haven’t been buckling up for yourself or for those who count on you to return home safely every day, do it now because it’s the law.”

When worn correctly, safety belts have proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent – and by 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans. That research becomes significant when coupled with KDOT statistics showing that only 30% of people killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2008 were buckled at the time of the crash. Currently, Kansas’ safety belt use rate is 77 percent, which is one of the lowest in the nation (43rd out of 50 states) and well below the national average of 84 percent.

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