



“Location is the Key”

AIR BAGS

What you don't know could hurt you

“Drivers should sit at least 10 to 12 inches from the hub of the steering wheel to avoid possibility of injury. This allows the airbag room to inflate completely before the driver's body moves forward.”

- William Smock, University of Louisville School of Medicine, *Washington Post*, 1997.

In order to increase your distance from the airbag, you can...

1. Move your seat to the rear as far as you can while still reaching the pedals comfortably.
2. Slightly recline the back of the seat.
3. If your steering wheel is adjustable, tilt it downward. This points the airbag toward your chest instead of your head and neck.

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- Air bags are considered supplemental protection. Most are designed to inflate only in a moderate-to-severe frontal crash.
 - When an airbag is combined with a lap/shoulder belt, risk of head injury in a crash can be reduced by 75 percent. When seat belts are used alone, the risk is reduced by 38 percent.



- Infants (less than 1 year of age) should never be seated in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side air bag.
- Children seated in the front seat without a seat belt can be thrown backwards by an inflating air bag.
- In cars without airbags, children are 35 percent safer riding in the back seat.

Information provided by
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1998

“Location is the Key”



SAFETY BELTS

“In Virginia in 1996, 148 lives were saved by safety belt use.”

- Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, 1998

ADULTS

In the United States...

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of passenger vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes in 1996 were unrestrained.
- If all passenger vehicle occupants over the age of 4 wore safety belts, an additional 9,754 lives could have been saved in 1996.
- A study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that the average inpatient costs for crash victims who were not wearing safety belts were 55% higher than for those who were belted.
- When safety belts are used correctly they reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passengers by 45% and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50%.

CHILDREN

In the United States...

- If a driver is not wearing a safety belt, 70% of the time children riding in that vehicle will not be wearing a safety belt either. If a driver is belted, 94% of the time children will be belted as well.
- Never use pillows or cushions to boost your child; they may cause the child to slide under and out of the safety belt in a crash.
- Children who have outgrown booster seats should use a lap/shoulder belt. The lap belt must fit across the child's hips, not across the stomach. The shoulder belt should fit across the chest, not across the face or neck.

Information provided by
Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, 1998
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1998



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CHILD SAFETY SEATS

They offer protection *only* when used correctly

Child safety seats have been found to reduce fatal injury by 69 percent for infants (less than 1 year of age) and by 47 percent for toddlers (1-4 years of age).

According to the Virginia Department of Health...

- From birth until the age of 12 months (approximately 20 pounds), infants should be in a rear-facing infant or convertible child safety seat.
- Children 1 to 4 years of age (approximately 20 to 40 pounds) are safest in a forward-facing child safety seat.
- Children between 4 and 8 years of age (approximately 40 to 80 pounds) are safest when in booster seats with a safety belt.

FOR CONSUMERS

- Only buy a child safety seat with a certification label that shows it meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 213.
- Ask the local hospital, health department, police department, or social service agency about a discount, loaner, or giveaway program for child safety seats.
- Never use a child safety seat that has been involved in a crash. Even if it looks intact, it may be structurally damaged.
- Attend a safety seat examination session to be sure that your safety seat is properly installed; check with the local police department to learn if a session is scheduled.
- Call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Auto Safety Hotline (1-800-424-9393) to see if any recalls or safety notices have been issued on your child safety seat.

Information provided by the
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1998

VIRGINIA STATE LAW
Effective July 1, 1997

- Children under 4 years of age must be restrained in a child safety seat which meets federal standards.
- All children between 4 and 16 years of age must wear a safety belt no matter where they are seated in the vehicle.
- The driver is responsible for all children in the vehicle.
- Police officers can stop a vehicle for not having children properly restrained.
- The law applies to persons who drive in Virginia and vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1968 that are driven in Virginia.

According to 1996 figures, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles reports that in the state of Virginia...

- A traffic crash occurs every 4.15 minutes.
- 225 Virginians are injured every day in traffic crashes.
- 148 lives were saved and 16,330 injuries were prevented by safety belt use in 1996.

For further information, please contact:

Center for the Advancement of Public
Health
George Mason University
MS 1F5
Fairfax, VA 22030-4444
(703) 993-3697 FAX (703) 993-3763

Check out our safety web site at:

www.safety.gmu.edu

For local information, please contact:

Your local Police Department
or Sheriff's Office

Northern Virginia:

Bob Weakley

Community Traffic Safety Programs

6308 Grovedale Drive

Alexandria, VA 22310

(703) 313-9443

Shenandoah Valley:

Doug Stader

DMV Harrisonburg

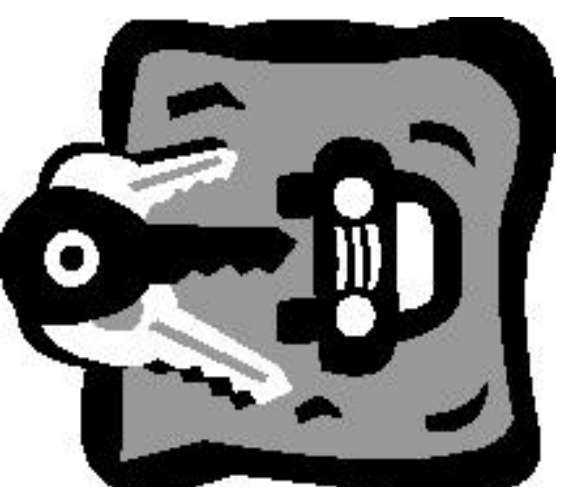
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**When it comes to
passenger safety...**



**LOCATION
IS
THE KEY**

Location is the Key to decreasing risk of injury during a motor vehicle crash. The location of the driver and passengers, the location of the child safety seat, and the location of the safety belt are all important factors in protecting motor vehicle occupants. **“Location is the Key”** is designed to provide helpful information for citizens to protect themselves in a motor vehicle crash.

“Location is the Key” focuses on three areas of passenger safety:



Location of the motor vehicle occupants



Location of the safety belt



Location of the child safety seat

1996 Facts and Figures

- An average of 115 persons died each day in motor vehicle crashes – one every 13 minutes.
- An average of 8 children (0 to 14 years of age) were killed and 980 injured *every day* in motor vehicle crashes.
- Of the 653 child occupant fatalities in 1996, 52% were totally unrestrained.

LOCATION OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANTS

- The rear seat is the safest place for children of all ages.
- All back seat passengers should wear safety belts.

“In a 55 mile per hour crash, an unbelted back seat passenger of average size would fly forward with a force of 3,000 pounds --- enough to seriously injure or even kill other passengers.”

- Janet Dewey, Executive Director of the Air Bag Safety Campaign, 1997.

LOCATION OF THE SAFETY BELT

- The lap belt should be worn below the abdomen. Sitting upright against the seat back keeps the lap belt below hip bones.

- The shoulder belt should come over the collar bone away from the neck and cross over the breast bone.

- For child safety seats, harnesses should be snug against the child with the harness retainer clip at armpit level.

- For children in safety seats in cold weather, put the harness on the child first *before* putting on any blankets or covering.

LOCATION OF THE CHILD SAFETY SEAT

- Child safety seats should never be placed in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side air bag.
- From birth until 1 year of age, infants should be in a rear-facing infant or convertible child safety seat.

- Children 1 to 4 years of age should be in a forward-facing convertible child safety seat.

- Children 4 to 8 years of age should be in booster seats with a safety belt.

CHILD SAFETY SEAT TIPS

1. Send in the registration card that comes with your new seat. It will make it easier to be advised of a recall.
2. Infant seats that double as carriers should have the handle back during transport. If the handle is left in the carrying position, it will interfere with the designed motion of the seat in a crash.

Call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Auto Safety Hotline (1-800-424-9393) to see if any recalls or notices have been issued on your child safety seat.