

9. Rural letter carriers for the U.S. Postal Service. (This exemption only applies between the first delivery point after leaving the post office and last point before returning.)
10. A person possessing a written certification from a physician/chiropractor (Form #432017, Iowa Medical Safety Belt Exemption, provided by the Iowa Department of Transportation) stating that the person is unable to wear a safety belt or harness due to physical or medical reasons. There are no categorical, specific or routine medical grounds for granting a medical exemption. Each case is determined on its own merit. The certification must specify a time period not to exceed 12 months. The certification can be renewed at the end of the specified time period, if necessary.
11. Children certified by a physician as having a medical, physical or mental disability making use of a child safety restraint system, safety belt or safety harness inadvisable.
12. A back-seat occupant of a motor vehicle for whom no safety belt is available because all safety belts are being used by other occupants or cannot be used due to use of a child restraint system in a seating position for which a belt is provided. [Note: This exception does not apply to a young driver operating on a restricted driver's license. These drivers may not have more passengers in the vehicle than number of seat belts.]

Q. Do nonresidents of Iowa have to buckle up when using Iowa's roadways?

A. Yes.



Q. How do seat belts help save lives?

A. In a motor vehicle crash, seat belts keep you where it is proven you are safest, inside your vehicle. This means the vehicle, not you, takes the force of the crash.

- In a head-on collision, seat belts keep your head from going through the windshield.
- In a side collision, seat belts keep you from going out the side window.
- In a crash involving fire or submersion (less than 1/2 of one percent of all serious accidents), seat belts keep you conscious so you can unbuckle your seat belt and escape quickly.
- In a slide, seat belts keep you in place and help you maintain control of your vehicle.

Q. What is Iowa's seat belt usage rate?

A. In 2009, Iowa recorded its highest ever seat belt usage rate of 93.1 percent. The 0.2 percent increase over 2008 represents an additional 5,000 motor vehicle drivers and passengers wearing seat belts in Iowa.

Despite the impressive numbers, some drivers and passengers are still taking an unnecessary risk with their lives or the lives of children by not buckling up.

Few people believe they are going to be involved in a crash, but one occurs every eight and one-half minutes in Iowa. No matter how good a driver someone may be, no one can predict when dangerous situations may happen on the road. Even on short trips and at low speeds, a crisis can come

out of nowhere – a slick road, an erratic driver, or a child or animal darting into traffic.

There is no time to put on a safety belt once a crash begins. To protect yourself and loved ones –

Curb it-Click it!



For more information, visit:

www.iowadot.gov/CURBITCLICKIT

Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way • Ames, IA 50010
515-239-1101 • Fax: 515-817-6508
www.iowadot.gov

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Iowa's Seat Belt Laws



Questions and Answers



Questions and answers about Iowa's seat belt laws

Q. What are Iowa's seat belt laws?

A. Iowa has two seat belt laws, which have been amended several times since the original law took effect July 1, 1986. The most recent changes, effective July 1, 2010, were made during the 2010 legislative session by Senate File 2381. The two laws are:

1. Iowa Code § 321.445 (2011) – Safety Belt and Safety Harness-use required.
2. Iowa Code § 321.446 (2011) – Child Restraint Devices.

These laws require:

- 1966 model year and newer motor vehicles (except motorcycles and motorized bicycles) to be equipped with safety belts and safety harnesses that conform to federal motor vehicle safety standards.
- The driver and front-seat occupants to be properly restrained any time the vehicle is in forward motion on a street or highway.
- A child under one year of age and weighing less than 20 lbs. being transported in a motor vehicle, except a school bus or motorcycle, to be secured during transit in a rear-facing child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- A child under six years of age who weighs 20 lbs. or more being transported in a motor vehicle, except a school bus or motorcycle, to be secured during transit by a child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- A child at least six years of age, but under age 18, to be secured in a child restraint system, safety belt or safety harness used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.



The provisions requiring a child to be secured apply whether the child is in the front or back seat of the motor vehicle.

In addition to Iowa's seat belt laws, Iowa's graduated driver's licensing program requires that a young driver operating on a restricted

driver's license (i.e., instruction permit, intermediate license, minor school license, or nonhigh school graduate license) may not have more passengers in the vehicle than number of seat belts.

Q. What is a child safety restraint system?

A. A child safety restraint safety system is a specially designed seating system, including a belt-positioning seat or booster seat that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards.



Q. Why were the safety belt and child passenger restraint laws enacted?

A. The safety belt and child passenger restraint laws were enacted to protect motorists from needless death and injury, and reduce taxpayer and health costs resulting from traffic crashes. It is estimated that seat belts will save 100-150 lives each year in Iowa, and the number of injuries will be greatly reduced if seat belts are used by everyone.

Q. Who may be cited for a violation of these laws?

A. Citations may be written to:

1. The owner of a 1966 or newer vehicle, if the vehicle is not equipped with safety belts, or if the safety belts are not usable.
2. The driver of a vehicle for improper or nonuse of a safety belt or safety harness.
3. The front-seat passengers for improper or nonuse of safety belt or safety harness.
4. A driver who violates Iowa's Child Restraint Devices law by not restraining or improperly restraining a child. [Note: A driver shall not be charged for a violation committed by a passenger who is 14 years old or older, unless the passenger is unable to properly fasten the seat belt due to a temporary or permanent disability.]
5. The parent, legal guardian or other responsible adult traveling with a child being transported in a taxicab in a manner that is not in compliance with the Child Restraint Devices law.

6. A young driver operating on a restricted driver's license that has more passengers in the vehicle than number of seat belts.
7. A teen passenger (at least 14 years of age and under age 18) riding in a back seat of a motor vehicle for improper or nonuse of a safety belt or safety harness, unless the individual is unable to properly fasten the seat belt due to a temporary or permanent disability.

A person who is first charged for a violation of the Child Restraint Devices law that requires children under age six to be secured in a child restraint system, and who has not purchased or otherwise acquired a child restraint system, shall not be convicted, if the person produces in court, within a reasonable time, proof that the person has purchased or otherwise acquired a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Q. What is a primary enforcement law?

A. Iowa's seat belt laws are classified as primary enforcement. Primary enforcement laws permit a law enforcement officer to stop a vehicle and issue a citation for a safety belt or safety restraint system violation, even if this is the only violation the officer observes.

Q. What is the fine for not buckling up?

A. A person convicted of violating the Safety Belts and Safety Harnesses law is guilty of a simple misdemeanor, punishable as a scheduled violation of Iowa Code § 805.8A (14)(c)(1) (2011), which carries a scheduled fine of \$50, plus a \$17.50 surcharge and \$60 in court costs, for a cost of at least \$127.50.

A person convicted of violating the Child Restraint Devices law is guilty of a simple misdemeanor, punishable as a scheduled violation of Iowa Code § 805.8A (14)(c)(2) (2011), which carries a scheduled fine of \$100, plus a \$35 surcharge and \$60 in court costs, for a cost of at least \$195.

Q. Will a violation go on my driving record?

A. Although not considered a moving violation, a conviction for violating a seat belt law will go on a person's driving record.

For those holding an unrestricted full license, the violation **will not** be considered when determining whether their driver's license should be suspended, revoked or cancelled.

For young persons who hold a restricted license, the violation **will be** considered when determining whether their driver's license should be suspended, revoked or cancelled.

Q. Can two people be buckled in the same safety belt?

A. No. Safety belts, safety harnesses and child restraint systems are not designed by the manufacturer to restrain two bodies. Therefore, this is improper use of the safety equipment and a violation of the law.

Q. Are there any exceptions as to who must buckle up?

A. Yes, there are several exceptions:

1. The driver and front-seat occupants of a motor vehicle who are actively engaged in work that requires them to get in and out of the vehicle at frequent intervals (such as a delivery vehicle), providing the vehicle does not exceed 25 mph between stops.
2. Occupants of a motor vehicle manufactured prior to 1966.
3. Motorcycle and motorized bicycle operators and passengers.
4. Passengers on a bus, including children riding a school bus.
5. Front-seat occupants of an authorized emergency vehicle while they are being transported in an emergency. (The exemption does not apply to the driver of the emergency vehicle.)
6. Children being transported in authorized emergency vehicles.
7. Children transported by law enforcement officers acting on official duty.
8. Children riding in motor homes, except if riding in the front passenger seat, where they must be securely restrained.

