

# WYSBC Seatbelt Safety Fact Sheet

## What is Wyoming's current restraint law?

In Wyoming, seatbelt use is mandated by law. Pursuant to WY Stat 31-5-1402, "Each driver and passenger of a motor vehicle operated in this state shall wear, and each driver of a motor vehicle shall require that a passenger under twelve (12) years of age shall wear, a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt when the motor vehicle is in motion on public streets and highways."



### How would legislation change that law

It would make Wyoming's occupant protection law a primary offense versus a secondary offense, which would increase seatbelt use and reduce fatalities.

- Primary enforcement allows an officer of the law to issue citations to violators independent of any other traffic offense. (Most traffic offenses are primary law.)
- Secondary enforcement means that a police officer may only stop or cite a driver for a seatbelt violation if the driver committed another primary violation (such as speeding or running a stop sign) at the same time.

### Fast Facts:



Approximately 1 in 6 drivers and passengers in Wyoming who are NOT wearing a seatbelt will suffer a severe, and often life-changing, injury.<sup>1</sup>

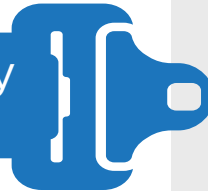


Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death during the first three decades of Americans' lives.<sup>2</sup>



By wearing seatbelts and properly buckling children into age- and size-appropriate car seats and booster seats, people can reduce the risk of serious injury and death in a crash by half.<sup>3</sup>

**35** states have primary seatbelt laws.



### Seatbelt usage

by position (2018)<sup>4</sup>

|                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| <b>Driver</b>        | 86.9% |
| <b>Passenger</b>     | 84.5% |
| <b>All occupants</b> | 86.3% |

### Seatbelt usage

by county (2018)<sup>7</sup>

#### Top 5

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Niobrara</b> | 93.5% |
| <b>Johnson</b>  | 93.2% |
| <b>Teton</b>    | 91.8% |
| <b>Crook</b>    | 91.1% |
| <b>Lincoln</b>  | 91.0% |

#### Bottom 5

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| <b>Fremont</b>    | 78.7% |
| <b>Sheridan</b>   | 76.5% |
| <b>Big Horn</b>   | 73.3% |
| <b>Carbon</b>     | 69.7% |
| <b>Sweetwater</b> | 67.4% |

### Seatbelt usage

by vehicle type + gender (2018)<sup>5</sup>

|                   |        |       |
|-------------------|--------|-------|
| <b>Pickup</b>     | Male   | 80.4% |
|                   | Female | 87.9% |
| <b>SUV</b>        | Male   | 83.3% |
|                   | Female | 94.7% |
| <b>Automobile</b> | Male   | 85.2% |
|                   | Female | 91.2% |

### Seatbelt usage

by vehicle registration (2018)<sup>6</sup>

|                                 |       |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Wyoming Licensed Drivers</b> | 85.5% |
| <b>Passengers</b>               | 82.1% |
| <b>Out-of-State Drivers</b>     | 92.0% |
| <b>Passengers</b>               | 88.2% |

## What can be saved by the switch to a primary law?

**Lives** — Decades of research prove that seatbelts save lives and prevent injuries. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seatbelts reduce a front seat occupant's risk of fatality by 45% in a passenger vehicle and 60% in a light truck. Seatbelts also prevent ejection during a crash, an important factor in preventing fatalities, since 75% of car occupants who are ejected are killed.

**Money** — In 2017, the total economic costs due to motor vehicle crashes\* in Wyoming was \$5,158,707,350. That is \$8,991 for every resident of Wyoming, every year, with roughly three-quarters of the costs paid by residents not involved in the crashes.<sup>8</sup>

### Top 3 counties, by costs incurred:

|                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Laramie County</b>    | = \$627,065,705 |
| <b>Natrona County</b>    | = \$577,169,095 |
| <b>Sweetwater County</b> | = \$414,124,080 |

\* A Reportable Traffic Crash is one which results in bodily injury or death of any person or a total property damage of \$1,000 or more.



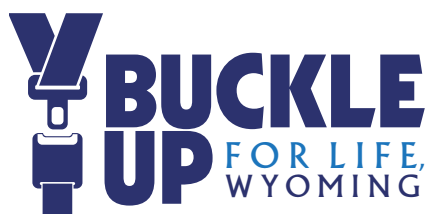
## Strong laws can make a difference

Primary safety belt laws have a proven track record of increasing safety belt use. Primary safety belt laws are much more effective than secondary laws, because people are more likely to buckle up when there is the perceived risk of receiving a citation for not doing so.

## What can I do?

**There are three basic ways to communicate your point of view to your state lawmakers: by letter/email, by phone or by visit.**

- 1** Letters/emails can be written to any legislator, but letters/emails from a constituent will have much greater influence. If you are a constituent, begin your letter/email by saying so. Make clear your position and exactly what you want your legislator to do.
- 2** When talking to a secretary or aide, identify yourself by name, address and hometown. Identify your concern and state the action you want your legislator to take. If you want to discuss the action more fully with your legislator, ask that your call be returned and leave a number where you can be reached.
- 3** One of the most effective ways to “lobby” legislators is a face-to-face visit. Be clear about what your position is and exactly what you want your legislator to do.



Learn more at <https://buckleup4lifewy.org>

<sup>1</sup> Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, “Beat Death. Don’t Cheat Life.” brochure

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017 Report on Winnable Battles, Motor Vehicle Injuries

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Motor Vehicle Safety Report, by State

<sup>4</sup> Survey Analysis of Seat Belt Use in Wyoming 2018

<sup>5</sup> Survey Analysis of Seat Belt Use in Wyoming 2018

<sup>6</sup> Survey Analysis of Seat Belt Use in Wyoming 2018

<sup>7</sup> Wyoming Department of Transportation 2017 Report on Traffic Crashes

<sup>8</sup> Wyoming Department of Transportation 2017 Report on Traffic Crashes. Figures used to determine Economic Loss came from the US Department of Transportation Memorandum, dated June 17, 2015 for the “Treatment of the Economic Value of a Statistical Life in Departmental Analyses.”