

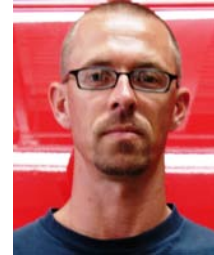
SAFETY CORNER

Public Safety Newsletter

TOPIC: **Seat Belt Usage**

Written By: Ben Vanden Hoek – Firefighter/Paramedic

Date: November 14, 2008



There is not a “better” time of year for this week’s Safety Corner subject, it’s a year round issue that needs to be thought of and stressed. For your personal safety, as well as family and friends, seat belts do save lives, and it’s the law. Following you will find information to answer some questions regarding seat belts and child safety seats/booster seats. Be responsible, be safe.

Wearing a seat belt costs you nothing; not wearing a seat belt could cost you everything!!

-As of July 1, 2001 – It is the drivers’ responsibility that all occupants in a vehicle, who are under 18 years of age and at least 5 years of age, **must** have a seat belt in place. Also the driver and front seat passenger must have seat belts secured.

-A driver cannot be stopped for not having a seat belt in place, there has to be another violation for the stop to take place, and then the ticket for the lack of seat belt may be given.

-Operators and passengers between the ages of 14 & 17 are responsible for being seat belted in themselves, which means passengers also may be ticketed.

-Drivers are responsible for the vehicle and all who are with them. Drivers may be ticketed for not having children, ages 0-17, properly restrained.

-There are vehicles that do not have seat belts, these vehicles and the operators are exempt. If there are seat belts, they need to be securely in place.

-Children under 5 years of age and under 40 lbs are **required** to be in an approved child safety seat, in all seating positions.

-A driver can be stopped, with no other violations, for having a child or children not restrained in their vehicle.

Note on booster seats: There is no specific state law covering booster seats for older children, but they are strongly recommended to help protect a smaller child. Seat belt systems are typically designed for someone who is at least 4’9” and at least 80 lbs. A booster seat will help in lifting the child into a more proper position so the seat belt can be properly fitted and protected.

City of Mitchell employees: All employees and his/her passengers shall be required to use seat belts when driving any City owned or leased vehicle, or while driving personal vehicles on official City business. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

References: South Dakota Codified Law 32-38 and 32-37
City of Mitchell Employee Handbook: Seat Belt Policy 3.11

If you would like to learn about certain topics please email cindy@mitchelldps.com and reference Safety Corner.

