



Training notes from the woods & the classroom

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50th Anniversary of the Three-Point Safety Belt

By Paul Schultz

Last year marked 50 years since the introduction of the three-point safety belt, an invention that has saved more lives than many other features. The three point safety belt is now a required safety feature in all motor vehicles. FMCSR 396.16 requires drivers to wear a safety belt while in operation of a Commercial Vehicle. More than 37 percent of those killed in traffic crashes are not buckled up.

In 2008 the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) conducted a Seat Belt Usage Study and found that 72 percent of heavy-duty commercial vehicle drivers use safety belts. This figure marks an increase of 7 percent, up from 65 percent in 2007 and 54 percent in 2005.

Other key findings in the 2008 Seat Belt Usage Study include:

- ✓ A rise in safety belt use among passengers of commercial motor vehicles to 61 percent.
- ✓ Professional truck drivers for major regional or national fleets showed higher usage at 75 percent, versus 62 percent for independent owner-operators.
- ✓ Regionally, safety belt usage rates for truck drivers and their occupants were highest at 81 percent in the West compared to 77 percent in the South, 60 percent in the Midwest, and 56 percent in the Northeast.
- ✓ Safety belt usage for both drivers and occupants was higher at 80 percent in States that had primary belt use laws than 64 percent in States with secondary belt use laws.
- ✓ Commercial motor vehicle drivers and their occupants had higher safety belt usage rates on weekend days over week days, higher usage rates in urban areas over suburban or rural areas, and higher usage rates in faster traffic over slower traffic.
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Buckle Up!

“Government's view of the economy can be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.” - Ronald Reagan

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