



2024 NEWS RELEASE

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Yamhill, OR—

OREGON SAFETY BELT OVERTIME BLITZ January 29 – February 11, 2024

- Beginning Monday, January 29 and extending through Sunday, February 11, law enforcement agencies throughout Oregon will use federally funded overtime to educate the public about safety belt and child seat laws including a law passed in 2017 increasing safety for children under age two.
- ODOT crash data for 2021 shows lack of safety belt or child restraint use was a factor in 32% or 119 of a total 377 motor vehicle occupant fatalities.
- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading nationwide cause of death for children ages one through twelve years old. In 2021, 1,475 children under twelve were injured in Oregon traffic crashes, 16 percent were reported not using a child restraint system. It is estimated that car seats may increase crash survival by 71% for infants under one year old and by up to 59% for toddlers aged one to four. Booster seats may reduce the chance of nonfatal injury among four to eight year old's by 45% compared to safety belts used alone.
- Of the 26,325 passenger vehicle occupants killed in the United States in 2021, 50% were not wearing seat belts.
- In 2017 safety belts saved an estimated 14,955 lives nationally. For drivers and front-seat passengers, using a lap and shoulder belt reduces the risk of fatal injury by 60 percent in an SUV, van or pickup and by 45 percent in a car. (IIHS)
- In 2017 an Oregon law was passed requiring children to ride in a rear-facing safety seat until

they are at least two years old. A child over age two must continue to ride in a car seat with harness or in a booster until they reach age eight or 4' 9" in height and the adult belt fits them correctly.

- The 2017 law, which extends the rear-facing requirement from the previous age one to age two, will better protect the child's head, neck, and spine from potential crash injuries. This is because a rear-facing seat spreads crash forces evenly across the seat and child's body while also limiting forward or sideways motion of the head.
- For help selecting or installing child car seats, consult the seat manufacturer's instructions, your vehicle owner's manual, or visit a local child seat fitting station listed at:
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats#inspection-inspection>