



Fact Sheet/Talking Points

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Primary (standard) safety belt enforcement begins in Wisconsin

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- Starting June 30, law enforcement officers in Wisconsin may stop and ticket drivers and passengers who are not wearing safety belts even if the officers do not observe another traffic or vehicle equipment violation.
- The state's safety belt law, which has been in effect since 1987, will now be enforced just like any other traffic safety law.
- Although primary enforcement will be a valuable tool for officers, we're not striving to write more tickets. Our goal is to save lives and prevent injuries by increasing voluntary compliance with the safety belt law.
- Currently, Wisconsin's safety belt use rate is approximately 74 percent, which is one of the lowest in the nation and well below the national average of 83 percent.
- States that have upgraded to primary enforcement typically have increased their safety belt use rate by about 10 percent.
- In Wisconsin, a 10 percent increase in safety belt use would save about 44 lives and prevent 650 injuries each year.
- A 10 percent increase in safety belt use would also save state residents about \$147 million annually in medical and other expenses due to unbuckled motorists in crashes. We all indirectly or directly pay for nearly 75% of the costs of needless deaths and injuries in crashes, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.
- The change to primary enforcement will not increase the cost of a safety belt citation, which is still \$10 with no demerit points assessed on a driver's license.
- By enacting primary enforcement by July 1, Wisconsin is now eligible to receive at least \$15.2 million in federal funding for an array of traffic safety improvements.