

SAFETY RESTRAINTS

2002

Virginia Safety Restraint Laws

Children under 4 years of age must be restrained in a child safety seat that meets federal standards.

All children between 4 and 16 years of age must wear a seat belt no matter where they are seated in the vehicle.

Police officers can stop your vehicle for not having your children properly restrained.

The driver is responsible for all children in the vehicle.

National Statistics

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of passenger vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes in 1998 were unrestrained. (*NHTSA*)

In fatal crashes, 75% of passenger car occupants who were totally ejected from the vehicle were killed. (*NHTSA*)

Safety belts are effective in preventing total ejections: only 1% of the occupants reported to have been using safety restraints were totally ejected, compared with 21% of the unrestrained occupants. (*NHTSA*)

Among passenger vehicle occupants over 4 years old, safety belts saved an estimated 11,088 lives in 1998. (*NHTSA*)

If all passenger vehicle occupants over age 4 wore safety belts, 20,355 lives could have been saved in 1998. (*NHTSA*)

The reported restraint use rate among all occupants of passenger cars involved in fatal crashes was 58% in 1998. The use rate for drivers was higher (61%), and the highest use rate was reported for children age 4 and under (71%). (*NHTSA*)

When safety belts are used correctly in passenger vehicles, they reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passengers by 45% and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50%.

For light truck occupants, safety belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60% and

moderate-to-critical injury by 65%. (*NHTSA*)

A study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that the average inpatient costs for crash victims who were not wearing safety belts were 55% higher than for those who were belted. (*NHTSA*)

Seat belts are the best defense against aggressive driving. A person is twice as likely to die or sustain a serious injury in a crash if unbelted. (*NHTSA*)

Children:

In 1998, there were 575 passenger vehicle occupant fatalities among children under 5 years of age. Of these 575 fatalities, an estimated 293 (or 51%) were totally unrestrained. (*NHTSA*)

More than half of the 575 passenger vehicle occupant fatalities could have been saved if an adult would have taken a few seconds to ensure that they were wearing seat belts and buckled in their child safety seats. (*NHTSA*)

Among children under 5 years old, an estimated 299 lives were saved in 1998 by child restraint use. Of these 299 lives saved, 244 were associated with the use of child safety seats and 55 with the use of adult belts. (*NHTSA*)

All 50 states have child restraint laws but many children (nearly 40%) still ride unrestrained. (*IIHS*)

If a driver is not wearing a safety belt, 70% of the time children riding in that vehicle will not be wearing a safety belt. If a driver is belted, 94% of the time children riding in that vehicle will be belted as well. (*NHTSA*)