

School Bus Safety Advocates

Reduced Traffic Fatalities
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
Proposed School Bus Seatbelt Solutions
By David DeVeau

Mission Statement:

Reducing All Traffic Fatalities Must Include The Addition Of Seatbelts On All Our Nation's School Buses.

As School Bus Safety Advocates we apply our engineering skills and regulatory knowledge to support our nation's leaders in this critical goal.



Summary:

- From 2009 to 2019 there were on average 26,000 crashes per year in our nation that involved School Buses.
(National Highway Traffic Association)
- There were 71 child fatalities in crashes from 2009 to 2019.
(National Safety Council)
- There were 77,000 child injuries from 2009 to 2019.
(National Safety Council)
- The most common injuries sustained are shoulder, head, neck, and the cervical spine on school buses.
(National Center for Biotechnology Information)
- On average approximately 2.5% of injuries from bus crashes result in permanent crippling injuries, about 200 children are crippled per year in school buses without seatbelts.
(School Bus Safety Advocates)

- In states where seatbelts are required on school buses such as California, Florida, Nevada, New Jersey and New York results are proven very successful at all levels.
 - Examples:
 - Child Fatalities and Injuries are undeniably greatly reduced even in the most extreme types of crashes.
 - Children are very compliant to continue lessons learned from their parents and guardians to use their seatbelts.
 - Children restrained in seatbelts are better behaved and much easier to control by bus drivers and chaperones.
 - Older children help younger children to buckle-up and even unbuckle and further help each other after a crash.

References:

49 CFR § 571.209 - Standard No. 209; Seat belt assemblies

Wherein seatbelt design is defined and contains **No Exceptions** for seatbelts in any type of vehicle in the United States.

49 CFR § 571.207 - Standard No. 207; Seating systems

Wherein exceptions to seatbelts on buses are being considered to be removed in Federal Register proposal **NHTSA-2021-0088-0002**.

NHTSA-2021-0088-0003 - School Bus Safety Advocates

Wherein this Petition changes GVWR specified in this Final Rule for **FMVSS-227** to include all buses on our roads including school buses for Structural Improvements that will support the addition of improved seating systems with seatbelts.

School Bus Safety Act of 2021 - S.2539 and H.R.3381

Presently in the 117th Congress wherein the proposal for improved school bus safety technology includes the addition of seatbelts as specified in Code of Federal Regulation:

Title 49 CFR § 571.209 - Standard No. 209; Seat belt assemblies.

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School Bus Crash Examples: No Seatbelts

In Chattanooga, Tennessee on November 21, 2016 a school bus carrying 37 children flipped onto it's side and slammed into a tree, splitting the bus apart. There were 5 children killed on site of the crash, 6 critically injured, 6 admitted for non-critical injuries, and 20 treated and released from local hospitals.

In Houston, Texas on September 15, 2016 a school bus carrying 4 children was struck by an oncoming truck on the wrong side of the road in a sharp turn and pushed the bus through the guardrail onto the road below. There were 2 child fatalities on the scene and 2 injuries of which both children were hospitalized but later released with non-life threatening injuries.

In Martinez, California on May 21, 1976 a school bus carrying 52 passengers crashed through an off-ramp guardrail in the turn and dove nearly 30 feet to the road below, landing overturned, which crushed its roof, killing 1 adult chaperone and 28 children on site. All the surviving passengers were mostly critically injured.

To learn more; search for "School Bus Crashes with Fatalities"

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Conclusion:

Even though the National Safety Council (NSC) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommend seatbelt use, children are not required to wear them on school buses. The NSC and the NHTSA only require seatbelt use on school buses that are GVWR less than 10,000 pounds, which accounts for only about 20% of the school buses throughout the country.

Although the NHTSA proclaims that riding in a school bus remains one of the safest means of transportation, the head of the NHTSA is presently looking into the possibility of a Federal Mandate to Require Seatbelts on All School Buses and is being supported by the 117th Congress with the School Bus Safety Act of 2021.

Seatbelts are especially life saving on buses in side impacts and rollover conditions. The cost of installing seatbelts is prohibiting many states from voluntarily equipping the buses. The cost of new school buses would increase between \$3,000 and \$8,000 for the seatbelt assemblies and stiffened floor structure.

About 35 Billion for grants would need to be a part of the 1.2 Trillion Infrastructure budget to update all of our nation's school buses to new with all the latest safety systems as defined in the School Bus Safety Act of 2021.

The public feels there is no price too costly to protect children passengers.

There is no better feeling than to know our children are safe.

Please help support this effort to reduce traffic fatalities and protect our children on all school buses throughout the United States.



School Bus Safety Advocates Engineering and Regulatory Support for Seatbelts

School-Bus-Safety-Advocates-Seatbelts.pdf

<http://www.DEVCO-Design.com/design/dot/school-bus-safety-advocates/seatbelts.htm>