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# Some facts...

**When used properly, a seat belt, headrest and airbag can save your life.**

Seat belts reduce the risk of death or severe injury in a crash by half. How? Seat belts hold you in place in the event of an accident.

When combined, a seat belt and airbag reduce the risk of severe head injury in a crash by 75%.

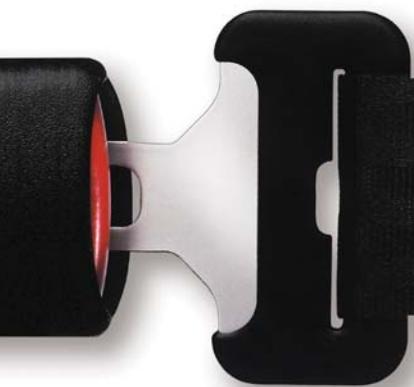
In rear-end or head-on collisions, a properly adjusted headrest reduces the risk of a neck sprain by over 25%.

**When an automobile strikes an obstacle at 50 km/h, the impact multiplies the weight of a person or an object by 20.**

In other words, an individual who weighs 70 kg becomes a 1,400 kg projectile.

The person is then projected against the front seat, the dashboard, the windshield, another passenger, or even ejected from the vehicle.

At 50 km/h, the impact of a crash is equivalent to an automobile falling from a four storey building. At 90 km/h, the impact is identical to a fall from a ten storey building!



# Seat belts **hold you in place!**

Today, nine out of ten Quebecers automatically buckle up when they get into a vehicle. That figure is still too low! More than 30% of passenger vehicle drivers and occupants killed in an accident in recent years were not wearing a seat belt.

Many accidents occur close to home, and more than half in zones where the speed limit is 50 km/h or less.

## **THE LAW**

You are required to buckle up in a vehicle. If you do not, you are liable to a fine of \$200 à 300 and three demerit points. Other fees may be added to the fine provided under the *Highway Safety Code* (contribution to the IVAC crime victims compensation program, registry fees, etc.).

Starting at age 14, a person who does not wear a seat belt (or who violates other sections of the *Highway Safety Code*) faces a fine and demerit points. These demerit points could prevent that person from obtaining a licence to drive a road vehicle for the two subsequent years.

## **PROPERLY ADJUSTING A SEAT BELT:**

- The lap belt must always cross over the pelvis, not over the abdomen.
- The shoulder belt must always cross over the collar bone, not over the neck.
- The seat belt should be snug, with no slack.

## **IN TAXIS**

When riding in a taxi, if there is no child safety seat, children must wear a seat belt, except if they are too young to maintain an upright position on their own. In the latter case, you should first buckle your seat belt, and then hold the child in your arms. Do not buckle the child in with you because your weight could crush him or her in the event of an impact or sudden braking.

Taxi drivers are required to wear a seat belt when travelling on a numbered public road, i.e. a highway. On other roads and in the exercise of their duty, taxi drivers are exempt from this requirement.

## **ARE YOU PREGNANT?**

To properly protect the fetus, you need to protect the life of the woman carrying it. It has been proven that in almost all road accidents involving a pregnant mother, it was the death of the mother that caused the death of the fetus, not pressure exerted by the seat belt.

*Pregnant women should consult a physician if they have been involved in a collision, even a minor one.*

## **Watch out for objects!**

Firmly secure all objects inside the vehicle, otherwise they could become a projectile during a collision and strike occupants.

# Headrests **protect your head!**

## **To ensure maximum protection:**

- there should be no more than 7 cm between your head and the headrest;
- the centre of the headrest should be level with your eyes or the upper tips of your ears.

# Airbags

## **cushion the impact!**

**Airbags work best in combination with a seat belt.**

It is worth noting that injuries that can result from deployment of an airbag are generally minor, usually little more than abrasions or bruises, but are nothing compared to the serious injuries airbags can prevent!

Injury risks can be reduced if a distance of 25 cm is maintained between the airbag cover and the middle of your chest.

**You may have to adjust your normal driving position by:**

- moving your seat back while still maintaining easy access to the pedals;
- slightly tilting your seat back.

# Children

**Children age 12 or younger should always sit in the back seat of a vehicle.**

A child sitting in the back seat is less at risk of being seriously injured or killed in a crash than a child sitting in the front seat.

**Before letting a child use only a seat belt, check for the following:**

1. The child has a sitting height of at least 63 cm (from the buttocks to the crown of the head). However, as of April 18, 2019, a new provision of the *Highway Safety Code* will come into effect. Under that provision, the child will have to be at least 145 cm tall or at least 9 years of age.
2. The child's back is resting against the back of the seat and the knees are bent at the front edge of the seat. The child should be able to remain in this position comfortably for the entire trip.
3. When a seat belt is buckled, the strap comes over the middle of the shoulder (over the collar bone) and across the hips. It should not rest on the neck or stomach.

If these conditions cannot be respected, children should continue to use a booster seat, even if they have reached a sitting height of 63 cm.

For more information about child safety seats, visit [childcarseat.qc.ca](http://childcarseat.qc.ca).



For more information,  
contact the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec:

Québec area: 418-643-7620

Montréal area: 514-873-7620

Elsewhere: 1-800-361-7620 (Québec, Canada, U.S.A.)

Website: [saaq.gouv.qc.ca/seatbelts](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/seatbelts)

*Original text in French.*

**Société de l'assurance  
automobile**

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