

HIGHWAY SAFETY

What Instantly Turns 60 Pounds Into 2,700 Pounds?

(NAPSA)—Force = Mass x Acceleration. While that may be an oversimplification, the fact is, the laws of physics are unyielding.

Consider this: A 60-pound, unbelted child in the back seat of a car traveling at a mere 30 miles per hour, involved in a sudden collision, can weigh as much as a young elephant—about 2,700 pounds. That means the child can, during a frontal accident, hit the windshield—or the front seat occupant—with deadly force.

Accidents will happen, but they don't have to become tragedies. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, an estimated 4,193 children's lives were saved from 1975 to 1998 by the use of safety belts and child restraints.

According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, 75 percent of all crashes occur within 25 miles of home—and most of those take place on roads with maximum speed limits of 40 mph or less. Meanwhile, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that motor vehicle crashes account for one in three injury deaths among children.

"People are just full of reasons for not belting back-seat passengers," says Christer Gustafsson, Senior Safety Engineer for Volvo Cars, Sweden. "But in the end, if we don't belt our children—or, for that matter, any rear-seat occupant—we're setting them up for injuries or death."

A car's seat belt keeps doing its job of helping to retain the occupant within the safety structure of the cabin after the initial impact



Children riding in the back seat need to be properly buckled in—for their safety.

has occurred. Accidents might involve secondary impacts and roll-overs; it is the seat belts that help keep the rear-seated occupants strapped safely inside the vehicle until the energy of the accident has dissipated.

Volvo pioneered the in-car use of the three-point front-seat belt system in 1959. Rear-seat outboard three-point belts became standard Volvo fare in 1967, 23 years before they were required by U.S. law. Today, all the company's vehicles are equipped with three-point seat belts at all seating positions.

Small children who have outgrown their toddler seat should use a booster cushion to help properly position the three-point seat belt. Volvo offers the integrated child booster cushion for children 40 to 80 pounds who need to be comfortable and properly restrained.

So do your part for car safety. Help protect that most precious cargo of all—buckle them up. No one wants an elephant in the back seat.