



BROOME COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD

NEWSLETTER *Dec. 2011/Jan. 2012*

Broome County Health Department 225 Front St. / Binghamton, NY 13905

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Seat Belts Save Lives

From 2004 to 2008, seat belts saved over 75,000 lives

The holiday season is one of the heaviest traveled times during the year. This can also be a dangerous time for motorists on the road, especially unbuckled ones. Wearing a seat belt provides the best defense against crash-related injuries and fatalities. Research has shown that when lap and shoulder belts are used properly, the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants is reduced by 45 percent, and the risk of moderate to serious injury is reduced by 50 percent. There are many misconceptions about crash forces including being able to hold yourself back in a crash. Physically a human does not have the strength to do so and it all comes down to physics. Sir Isaac Newton's Theory of Motion states an object in motion will continue to remain in motion at its original speed until acted on by an outside force. That object in motion in a crash could be an unbuckled occupant or anything loose in your vehicle. Crash forces are determined by multiplying weight x speed. If an unbuckled vehicle occupant weighing 100 pounds crashes at 60 miles per hour, that occupant will continue to move at 60 miles per hour until something stops it. According to the crash force formula, it would take 6,000 pounds of force to restrain that occupant from moving forward. Seat belts act as that outside force to keep us from moving and they provide tremendous safety benefits.

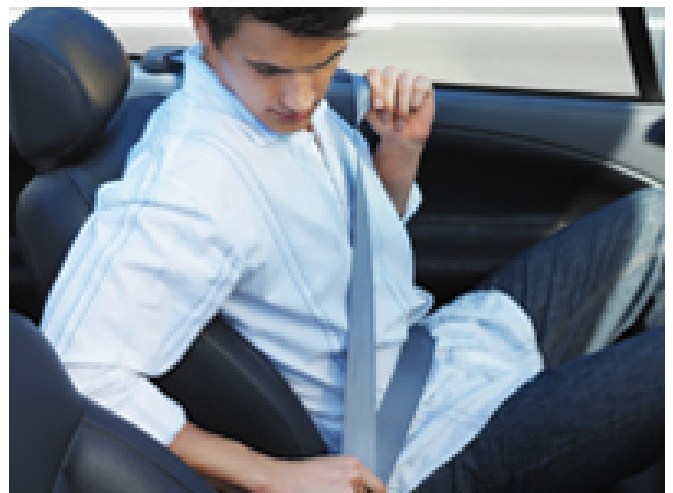
Five Ways Seat Belts Offer Protection

- They are designed to keep you in the vehicle – where you are safer. An unbuckled occupant has a higher risk of being ejected out of the vehicle in a crash. In fact, if you are ejected out of the vehicle you are four times more likely to be killed.
- Seat belts contact your body at its strongest parts – your hips and shoulders. When a seat belt is worn incorrectly, for example the lap portion is placed high on the belly you are more likely to damage your internal organs.
- Seat belts spread the crash forces over a wide area of the body. When crash forces are concentrated in one area, injury results. That is why it is so important that there are no twists in the webbing on your seat belt; otherwise, crash forces will be concentrated in that area.
- Seat belts help the body “ride-down” the crash, slowing the body down.
- Seat belts protect the head, neck and spinal cord by keeping them in line during a crash. You are less likely to hit your head on the interior of the car if properly buckled.

New York State Occupant Restraint Law

- All front seat occupants must wear their seat belt.
- All back seat occupants under the age of 16 must wear their seat belt.
- All children must use an appropriate child restraint system until their 8th birthday.

New York has a primary enforcement seat belt law which allows police to pull over and ticket a motorist solely for that violation.



Safe Winter Driving

Driving during the winter season can be challenging for motorists. Weather conditions can be unpredictable which places extra demands on your vehicle and your driving skills. Staying alert, slowing down and staying in control are the three key elements of safe winter driving. However there are other things motorists can do that are essential in keeping safe on the road. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation offers these important tips on traveling safely during the winter season.



Is Your Vehicle Ready?

- **Maintenance check-up** – Be sure your vehicle is in good condition *before* winter. Have your mechanic check your battery, belts, hoses, radiator, oil, lights, brakes, tires, exhaust system, heater/defroster, wipers and ignition system. In regards to tires, remember to check your air pressure frequently, as it decreases in cold weather.
- **On the road** – Keep your fuel tank sufficiently full, at least half a tank is recommended. Make sure your windshield washer fluid reservoir is full and is rated a minimum of -40°C temperature range. Keep an extra jug in the vehicle as well. Always clear snow and ice from all windows, lights, mirrors and the roof to ensure good visibility.
- **In your vehicle** - It is a good idea to keep a winter survival kit in your vehicle. If you become stranded the supplies below can provide comfort and safety for you and your passengers. Recommended items include:



- Ice scraper/snowbrush
- Shovel
- Sand or other traction aid
- Tow rope or chain
- Booster cables
- Road flares or warning lights
- Candle and a small tin can
- Matches
- Gas line antifreeze
- Flashlight and batteries
- First aid kit
- Fire extinguisher
- Small tool kit
- Extra clothing and footwear
- Blanket
- Non-perishable energy food

What to do in a Winter Emergency...

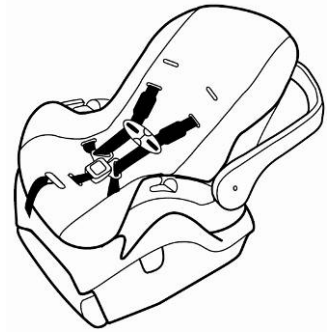
If you are stopped or stalled in wintery weather:

- Stay with your car and don't over exert yourself.
- Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light turned on.
- To avoid asphyxiation from carbon monoxide poisoning, don't run your car for long periods with the windows up or in an enclosed space. If you must run your vehicle, clear the exhaust pipe of any snow and run it only sporadically just long enough to stay warm.
- Always keep abrasive materials in your vehicle such as kitty litter or sand in case you get stuck in the snow.
- Remember if you do happen to skid, always steer into the skid and ease off the gas to realign your vehicle.



Shopping for Child Safety Seats

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends these simple tips when purchasing your car seat:



- No one seat is the “best” or “safest.” The best seat is one that fits your child’s size, is correctly installed, fits well in your vehicle, and is used properly every time you drive.
- Don’t decide by price alone. A higher price does not mean the seat is safer or easier to use.
- Avoid used seats if you don’t know the seat’s history. Never use a car safety seat that
 - Is too old. Look on the label for the date it was made. Check with the manufacturer to find out how long they recommend using the seat.
 - Has any visible cracks on it.
 - Does not have a label with the date of manufacture and model number. Without these, you cannot check to see if the seat has been recalled.
 - Does not come with instructions. You need them to know how to use the seat.
 - Is missing parts. Used car safety seats often come without important parts. Check with the manufacturer to make sure you get the right parts.
 - Was recalled. You can find out by calling the manufacturer or by contacting the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236. You can also visit the NHTSA web site at www.safercar.gov.
- Do not use seats that have been in a moderate or severe crash. Seats that were in a minor crash may still be safe to use, but some car safety seat manufacturers recommend replacing the seat after any crash, even a minor one. The NHTSA considers a crash minor if all of the following are true:
 - The vehicle could be driven away from the crash.
 - The vehicle door closest to the car safety seat was not damaged.
 - No one in the vehicle was injured.
 - The air bags did not go off.
 - You can’t see any damage to the car safety seat.

Child Passenger Safety Technician Update Class

Sponsored by The Chenango County Child Care Coordinating Council

Earn Up to 6 CEU’s

Date: March 3rd, 2012

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Morrisville State College
20 Conkey Avenue
Norwich, NY 13815



Enrollment is limited to the first 25 registrants.

This Technical Update class is open to currently certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. A \$5 contribution towards pizza for lunch would be greatly appreciated. You will still need your child seat check sign offs by an instructor and your community event hours to complete your recertification. Sign-offs for your car seat installations will **NOT** be available during this training.

Contact Melanie Manwarren at (607) 336-2809 for registration assistance or with questions.

Broome County Traffic Safety Events

Child Passenger Safety Programs

Broome County Fitting Stations provide **FREE** child safety seat inspections for families and caregivers as well as provide education and guidance on child passenger safety. We also provide **FREE** replacement child safety seats in the event a seat is expired, recalled or deemed unsafe.

Fitting Station:

December 20 th , 2011	1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
January 17 th , 2012	1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
February 21 st , 2012	1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
March 20 th , 2012	1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Located at:

Broome County Sheriff's Office
155 Lt. Van Winkle Drive, Binghamton, NY
Upper garage area, look for large yellow sign

Please bring:

- Your vehicle
- Your child
- Your car seat
- Car seat manual
- Vehicle manual.



Appointments can range anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour depending on the number of car seats we are checking and the compatibility of your seats with your vehicle.

Inspections are done on an appointment basis.

**Please call Christine Muss at (607) 778-2807
to schedule an appointment.**

Broome County Traffic Safety Board Meeting

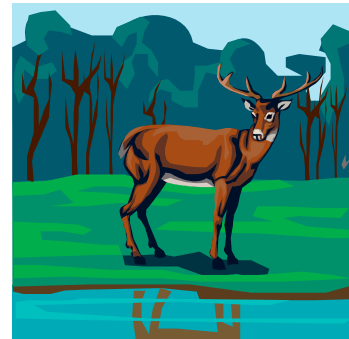
Wednesday, December 7th

Broome County Health Department
Conference Room C - 4 p.m.

Tips for Avoiding Collisions with Deer

The Department of Environmental Conservation shares the following list of precautions motorists can take to reduce their chances of striking a deer.

- Use extreme caution if driving at dawn and dusk, when deer are most active and visibility is poor. This means deer are often most active during peak commuter traveling times.
- The risk of deer/vehicle collisions is greatest during Autumn and early Winter. Two thirds of these crashes occur in October, November, and December when deer movements peak due to the onset of the breeding season.
- Slow down when approaching deer standing near roadsides. Deer may "bolt" or change direction at the last minute.
- If you see a deer cross the road, slow down and use extreme caution. Deer often travel in groups – if you see one, expect more.
- Use flashers or a headlight signal to warn other drivers when deer are spotted on or near the road.
- Use caution and be alert when passing through areas marked with deer crossing signs. These signs are placed in areas that have shown a high incidence of deer/vehicle collisions in the past.



Patrick Brennan, Broome County Executive

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