

Ask Them
to Wear a Seat Belt

Guidance for Promoting Together for Life Utah's "Ask ... Them to Wear a Seat Belt" Tool



Tremendous progress has been made to increase seat belt use, especially in Utah's rural areas. ***In fact, 9 out of 10 adults in Utah wear a seat belt.***¹

But a few still don't.

Some don't wear a seat belt all the time (especially on short trips close to home), and about 1 in 10 adults rarely or never wear one.²

Recent research reveals that individuals who rarely or never wear a seat belt may resist being told to use one.³

In fact, trying to convince them to wear a seat belt by telling them what to do ("*Buckle up!*") or giving them facts ("*Most crashes occur close to home!*") may make them less likely to wear a seat belt.

Instead, someone who cares about them should ask them to wear a seat belt. For example, "*Would you wear a seat belt for me?*" This shifts the decision from being about "facts" or their own health to being about the relationship. Asking the person to wear it for YOU is an important part of the ask.

Here's how asking them to wear a seat belt might sound:

1. Connect – focus on the relationship. You could say...

- "I appreciate you giving me a ride today."
- "I really enjoy the time we spend driving to/from _____."
- "Thanks for (going with/inviting) me to _____ today."
- Or even, "Gosh, you smell good!"

2. Ask – ask them to wear a seat belt for you.

- "Would you wear your seat belt today for me?"
- "As a favor to me, would you put your seat belt on?"
- "Even though asking is hard for me, would you wear your seat belt for me?"
- "I feel anxious asking, but would you wear your seat belt for me?"

3. *Reconnect*—preserve the relationship regardless of the decision they make.

- If they choose to wear a seat belt, you could say...
 - *“I appreciate you buckling up.”*
 - *“Thanks for wearing your seat belt.”*
- If they choose not to wear a seat belt, you could say...
 - *“Because I care about you, I’m going to ask each time we are in a vehicle together.”*

They may refuse the first time. And the second time. Or even the third time. Avoid arguing and keep it light. When people feel threatened, they may lose sight of the fact that you care about them. Keep the focus on the relationship: *“Would you wear it for me?”*

Communities can promote the “Ask Them to Wear a Seat Belt” tool and continue to increase seat belt use in Utah by

- using the worksheet [“Promoting the ‘Ask Them to Wear a Seat Belt’ Tool”](#) to identify ways to reach organizations and leaders who can promote and distribute the tool,
- using and sharing radio messages developed especially about the “Ask Them to Wear a Seat Belt” tool, and
- contacting your county coordinator for the recently updated Together for Life Utah social media toolkit to distribute messages.

Getting to zero deaths and serious injuries on Utah’s roadways is a goal we can all support. And it will take all of us to get there. Let’s be together for life and always ask others to wear a seat belt.

References:

1. National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2020, April). Seat Belt Use in 2019 — Use Rates in the States and Territories (Traffic Safety Facts Crash Stats. Report No. DOT HS 812 947). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
2. Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2019, 2020). *Utah community survey of adults on seat belt use*. Montana State University. (N=3114, N=673)
3. Otto, J., Finley, K., McMahon, A., Arpin, J., (2021). Guidance on Messaging to Avoid Reactance and Address Moral Disengagement. Montana Department of Transportation. Retrieved from https://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/research/docs/research_proj/tsc/REACTANCE-DISENGAGEMENT/final-report.pdf