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All Backseat Passengers Must Buckle Up

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New legislation that went into effect July 1, 2011 makes it mandatory for everyone in a vehicle to wear a seat belt, including adults riding in the back seat. Illinois State Police issued 37,572 seat belt violations halfway through 2011 compared to 96,246 seat belt violations for all of 2010; with the new law many more tickets are expected.

Illinois law already requires all front seat passengers and “children” under age 19 to wear seat belts. The new law requires any person, child or adult, riding in the backseat to buckle up. Police officers can stop a vehicle if they see someone in the backseat without a seat belt. Fines start at \$25, the same as other seat belt violations. Previously, adults not driving or riding in the front passenger seats didn’t have to buckle up.

Illinois becomes the 15th state to make wearing a seat belt mandatory for everyone in a vehicle. Illinois’ first seat-belt law was enacted in 1985; when it was first passed only two out of every three people used a seat belt. In the 26 years since then, 90% of passengers now wear seat belts. Governor Quinn said “We can save lives through the use of a seat belt.”

In the months to come you will see a public education campaign about this law that will make it easier for local and state police to pull a car over if they suspect that people in the backseat aren’t wearing seat belts.