



Study examines benefits of school bus seat belts for kids

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A soon-to-be-completed University of Alabama study of seat belts in school buses notes an increase in positive public perception concerning their installation and use, and growing acceptance among the students using them.

The study, which was commissioned by the state government after a school bus accident in Huntsville, Ala. killed four students and injured 30, assessed the impact of installing lap-shoulder seat belts on Alabama school buses. It includes a review of national experiences and trends, alterations needed in the buses if seat belt use is adopted, analysis of school bus crash data in the state, and a cost-benefit analysis. Detailed results will not be released until the study is completed later this year.

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Federal law requires seat belts on small school buses (weighing less than 10,000 lbs.). However, larger buses, which make up about 80% of the nation's school bus fleet, are governed by state, not federal, guidelines, and only a handful of states – California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York and Texas – require seat belts in school buses. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association, an average of 19 school-age children die in crashes involving school buses each year.

The school buses used in the study were outfitted with four ceiling-mounted video cameras allowing the research team to gather data on the level of restraint use, review the percentage of students using the belts and the percentage of students using the belts properly, and investigate if using the belts keeps students from moving into the aisle and out of the protective compartment provided by the seats. The camera data will also reveal the benefit of having a bus aide to monitor students and will monitor time devoted to buckling at each stop.

The study is the first to assess the benefits of installing seat belts in school buses, and officials from the National Transportation Safety Board, the National Highway Safety Administration and other national agencies are awaiting final results to determine whether or not the adoption of seat belts in school buses should be instituted across the U.S.

Source: Some of the information in this post came from [here](#).

You'll find more information about the University of Alabama schoolbus seat-belt study [here](#).

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