



## PRESS RELEASE

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I. DATE AND TIME OF PRESS RELEASE: April 2, 2010 @ 7:30 a.m.

II. TYPE OF INCIDENT/SITUATION/ANNOUNCEMENT:  
Occupant Protection Traffic Safety Topic for April

III. FACTUAL INFORMATION:

The Livermore Police Department will be focusing its traffic enforcement efforts during the month of April on occupant protection violations. Officers will be looking for drivers and passengers who are not properly restrained in their vehicles. Even though Livermore's last seatbelt use rate was 99% we still issued 1,651 seat belt citations and 224 car seat citations in 2009. We still continue to investigate injury collisions in town where we find that drivers, and or passengers, have been injured due to not being properly restrained in their vehicle.

The Livermore Police Department hopes that by continually educating the public on the importance of being properly restrained while traveling in a motor vehicle we can reduce the number of injuries and deaths resulting from traffic collisions in our community.

Did you know the #1 killer of children, teens and adults are motor vehicle crashes? The Livermore Police Department would like to provide the following helpful tips to keep you and your family safe in a vehicle.

Adults and older teens-

For best protection, adults and older teens should be using a 3-point seat belt (lap and shoulder) and seated in an active air bag position. For drivers, the vehicle seat should be locked in place as far back as possible with the driver still being able to safely operate the pedals. Drivers should be approximately 12" away from the air bag. Passengers' seats should be placed all the way back in the seat tract. The head-rest should be placed directly behind occupants' heads to provide protection from whiplash.

The Livermore Police Department wants to stress to drivers and passengers that wearing the shoulder portion of the seat belt under their arm or behind their back, is not only illegal but very unsafe. Wearing your seat belt under your arm, places the shoulder belt over vital organs, not strong bones as intended. During a collision, you will have more upper body and head excursion (forward movement) with the belt placed incorrectly. Wearing the seat belt behind your back, during a collision will cause your head and upper body to strike whatever is in front of you i.e. the dashboard, windshield and/or air bag., and the force of the collision will be distributed by the seatbelt across vital organs, possibly causing severe or fatal injuries.

If your seat belt is uncomfortable to wear properly, there are many solutions available. Many vehicles have a seat belt adjustment guide located on the door frame. To adjust it, simply slide it up or down. This will raise or lower where the seat belt comes in contact with your body. Refer to your vehicle's owner manual for more detail. Additionally, you can purchase a fuzzy sleeve to place over the seat belt, or for passengers, try another seating

you a seat belt extender.

#### Children under 13 year's old-

All children under the age of 13 should be properly restrained in the back seat, regardless if the vehicle is equipped with an air bag. 60% of crashes are front-end impacts, so by being placed in the back seat, children are 40% safer than riding in the front seat. Most children ages 6-8 (and small 9-10 year olds) may still need to use a booster seat. These children are too small for seat belts. Seat belts are meant to fit adults.

#### Children ages 2-5 years old (forward facing)-

Children ages 2-5 are best protected by being placed in a 5-point restraint system (just like race car drivers). The 5-point systems distribute the crash forces over the strong bones of the body. The car seat should be installed tightly, so there is no more than 1" of movement from side to side and front to back. Check your vehicle's manual to see how to lock your seat belts. Fasten the car seat tether (located on the back of your child's car seat). This can minimize head excursion up to several inches. Make sure the harness around your child is snug (no slack) and the straps are at or above their shoulders in the re-enforced position. Consult your car seat owner's manual.

#### Children ages birth-2 years old (rear facing)

Rear facing is the safest way to transport your child in a vehicle. Your child should stay rear facing until they have reached one of the following: They have reached the maximum weight rating on their convertible car seat or their head is 1" below the top of the shell of the car seat. Hopefully they can stay rear facing until their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

It is crucial that your child's car/booster seat is installed correctly, that's why the Livermore Police Department offers free car seat checks. For an appointment call Officer Traci Rebiejo at (925) 371-4858.

The Livermore Police Department is committed to traffic safety and the safety of our citizens. We appreciate our partnerships that we share with the community and the Office of Traffic Safety toward this goal. Please buckle up and buckle up your family when traveling in a motor vehicle.

The Livermore Police Department will be conducting several seatbelt and car seat enforcement operations during the month of April.

If you have any questions regarding occupant safety contact Officer Traci Rebiejo at the Livermore Police Department Traffic Division at 925 371-4850.

Steve Sweeney  
Chief of Police

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