



## TRAFFIC NEWS FEBRUARY 2013



METROPOLITAN NASHVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

TRAFFIC SECTION NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2013

As you travel on the interstates in Tennessee you are likely to see different statistics/messages displayed on the TDOT message signs. One statistic that I saw the other day was, “57% of fatalities were not wearing seat belts.” Davidson County’s percentage for 2012 is lower but not by much. Almost half of the people (45%) killed during 2012 in car crashes in Davidson County were not wearing seat belts. This Davidson County percentage was higher than the previous year. While some of the crashes were so severe and the damage so extensive that even a seat belt would not have prevented death, there were multiple crashes where there was very minimal damage to the driver/passenger compartment and a seat belt very likely could have saved a life. Unfortunately this year we have already had one fatal crash involving a young woman who was not wearing her seat belt at the time of the crash. Not only does not wearing your seatbelt put you at a higher risk for being killed or seriously injured but it is against the law as well.

It is important that all people wear their seat belts but even more so for parents, caregivers, and people transporting children to wear their seat belt. Children learn from what they observe their role models doing. Even if you buckle your child up when they are young, if they see you not following the law then they are more than likely going to follow your example when they are old enough to drive. Be a positive role model to your child by buckling up each and every time you are in a vehicle regardless of your seating position.

There are plenty of reasons people choose not to wear their seatbelts but most of these reasons are not supported by facts only by myths. I have listed the most common reasons that people choose not to wear a seatbelt and the explanation of why these are not valid excuses on the next page. Maybe these are just statistics to you or maybe you have your reasons for not wearing a seat belt, but I challenge you to read the following questions and answers. It just might save your life.

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# Seat Belts Save Lives

## 1. Can't seat belts actually cause injuries?

Yes. It is possible that wearing a seat belt could cause an injury during a crash. The most common injuries with seatbelts are bruising and broken ribs. These injuries are far more manageable than those experienced when you are not restrained. To ensure that seat belts cause the least damage possible they must be worn properly. Lap belts must be worn low and snug on the hips; wearing them on the stomach can cause internal injuries. Shoulder belts must be worn across the shoulder and chest. Placing the shoulder belt behind your back or under your arm makes the seat belt less effective. Your head will still go forward and possibly strike the dashboard, windshield, or steering wheel. "Pregnant women should wear the lap belt below the abdomen and the shoulder belt above the belly."<sup>1</sup> If you are too large to fit in the seat belt there are seat belt extenders made for most domestic vehicles. You will need to obtain an extender from the car manufacturer; these extenders are vehicle specific.

## 2. Shouldn't wearing a seat belt be a personal choice?

No. Choosing not to wear a seat belt can affect not only yourself, but others as well. Unbelted drivers often have less control over a vehicle during a crash, therefore commonly making the crash more severe. Unrestrained passengers are often thrown around in the vehicle colliding with other occupants and causing serious injury not only to themselves but others in the car.

## 3. If my car catches on fire, can't I be trapped inside?

According to the Tennessee Department of Transportation "only one-half percent of all crashes ends in fire or submersion." You are far more likely to be ejected from your vehicle not wearing a seat belt than you are being trapped inside during a fire or submersion while wearing a seat belt. Also, if you are ejected from your vehicle you are four times more likely to die than occupants remaining in the vehicle.

"Every hour, at least one person in this country dies because he or she did not buckle up. Failure to use seat belts contributes to more fatalities than any other single traffic safety-related behavior."<sup>1</sup> Please think about this information the next time you sit in a vehicle and remember, if someone refuses to buckle up in your vehicle, they are not only risking their life, but yours as well.

<sup>1</sup> Tennessee Department of Transportation





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**METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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Special Operations Division, Traffic Section



The Special Operations Division, Traffic Section of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department strives to make our streets the safest streets in the country for traveling and local motorists. One way we are able to improve the safety of our roadways is through education and information sharing. If you have a topic you need information on, chances are someone else does too. Feel free to e-mail me at Erika.Bowden@nashville.gov with your traffic related questions. I will answer your questions and may also include a section covering that topic in future newsletters. You can now also find us on facebook under Metro-Nashville Police Department Traffic Section.



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**CRIME STOPPERS**

Crime Stoppers - 862-7463 - Crime Stoppers can refer you to a specialized crime unit if needed (i.e. - Gang Unit, Vice, Gambling and Prostitution, etc.)

Traffic/ Hit & Run - 862-7713 & 862-7738

You can also provide tips and witness information at our website :  
<http://www.police.nashville.org/>

Call 74-CRIME OR

Text the word CASH and your message to Crimes (274637)

ALL THREE WAYS ARE ANONYMOUS AND SECURE.