

# Safety Door Locks, Seat Belts Said To Save Thousands in Auto Collisions

Editor's note: Following is the second of five articles dealing with the problem of auto accidents on the nation's highways.

BY ROBERT J. SERLING  
United Press Correspondent

New York—(U.P.)—Thousands of American motorists have been saved from serious injury or death by two safety devices which the automobile industry began to install on new cars last year.

One—now standard equipment on all new cars—is the so-called "safety door lock." These locks are designed to keep doors from popping open in accidents. They cost about 50 cents a door.

The other, offered as optional equipment on new cars, is the seat belt.

Have these two items—belts and door locks—saved lives and prevented injuries?

"Yes" is the answer from a group which should know—Cornell University Medical College's auto crash research injury project. For months, the project has been studying detailed accident reports filed by police officials in twelve states. These reports provide a contrast between accidents in cars equipped with the new safety features, and accidents of comparable severity in cars without these features.

This is what the record shows:

### Seat Belts

1. Occupants in cars with safety belts had 60.4 per cent fewer injuries of all degrees.

2. Occupants with belts had 60 per cent fewer injuries in the moderate-to-fatal injury grade category.

3. Occupants with belt had fewer dangerous-to-fatal grade injuries, but the difference was "not statistically significant due to insufficient data."

### Door Locks

1. Reduced the risk of doors opening during impact by as much as 33 per cent in non-rollover accidents and somewhat less in rollovers.

2. Decreased the risk of occupant ejection through open doors by up to 49 per cent.

3. Reduced the risk of dangerous and fatal injuries by 29 per cent—primarily the result of retaining passengers in the protective shell of the car.

Both belts and door locks are aimed primarily at preventing ejection from cars. Ejection as a major cause of automotive crash injuries came as a surprise to many experts who figured that what happened inside the car was the biggest factor in causing injuries.

But the Cornell project since 1953 has studied more than

8,000 separate accidents. It found that ejection is one of the most frequently reported causes of injury, accounting for 20 per cent of injuries and deaths. The other major injury-causing components:

Instrument panel—12 per cent  
Steering wheel—11 per cent  
Windshield—11 per cent  
Door components—six per cent.

Some safety experts have criticized seat belts, claiming that they can cause as many injuries as they prevent and they are not of appreciable value in preventing occupants from being thrown forward. The Cornell findings appear to refute such charges.

Boris Tourin, supervisor of technical operations for the Cornell project, says critics of belts "ignore that their prime responsibility is to keep occupants from being thrown out of the car."

### Lack of Logic

"When someone says belts are not good because they're only 60 per cent effective," adds Tourin, "that's like condemning a serum because it cures only 50 per cent of the patients. We saw one report denouncing a belt that didn't hold when the car hit a parked steamroller at 40 miles an hour. Actually belts are less effective in accidents involving collision with fixed objects, but such collisions represent less than 15 per cent of highway accidents."

According to Tourin, some published reports on the alleged ineffectiveness of belts have involved inferior belts, manufactured far below the minimum standards set by scientific tests.

"Many inferior belts on the market are giving all belts a bad name," says Tourin. "A good belt will do the job expected of it except in unusually severe accidents at terrifically high speeds. One of the things we may have to study is whether it wouldn't be a good idea to have a 'breaking force' in a belt—allowing it to snap at a certain forward force to prevent the belt itself from causing injury."

### Faulty Belts

The Cornell project, in its studies of belt performance in actual accidents, bluntly reports it has found "increasing evidence of irresponsibility both in belt manufacture and installation." Project director John O. Moore believes all belt manufacturers should be forced to adhere to minimum standards for belt construction, just as electrical equipment manufacturers now comply with industry-established standards.

Moore also recommends:

1. Research to determine whether stronger belts are needed.

There is evidence to indicate that deceleration forces in an automobile accident are greater than those in a light plane crash. Many car belts are patterned after CAA aviation belt standards for private planes.

2. Some kind of auxiliary device for pre-1956 cars, to keep doors from opening on impact. Belt can be attached to any car,

but only 1956 and '57 models have the new-type door locks deemed essential to passenger protection.

The next dispatch in this series will discuss a controversy over automobile structure. Is the modern car too flimsy? Is the popular hardtop style really safe? Have manufacturers thinned corner posts and roof structure so much as to make cars as week-skinned as an egg?

## Measure To Set Up Community Colleges Introduced in House

Salem—(U.P.)—Two-year community colleges could be set up in many areas of the state under terms of a bill introduced in the Oregon House yesterday by 26 representatives and 17 of the state's 30 senators.

The bill—house bill 593—provides that school districts or several adjacent districts whose cash value exceeds \$20 million and who have 500 students or more in grades 9 to 12 can set up a community college with approval of the State Board of Education and a vote of local people.

### Survey Called for

A two-year survey of the entire state by the Board of Education to determine community college needs and possible college district boundaries is called for by the bill. Results of the survey would be presented to the 1959 legislature.

Rep. Pat Dooley, Portland, speaker of the house, said the bill would be assigned to a committee today.

Proposed colleges would share in state basic school support funds except for re-imbursing for busing or boarding students.

Ten per cent of the voters of a school district could initiate action in starting a community college. Their request would be investigated by the superintendent of public instruction before approval would be given.

### Representative Named

Signing the bill were Reps. Ole Grubb, Bend Democrat; George Analla, Hood River Democrat; Carl Back, Sixes Democrat; Clarence Barton, Coquille Democrat; H. H. Chindgren, Molalla Republican; Vernon Cook, Gresham Democrat; Robert Dun-

can, Medford Democrat; Ben Evick, Madras Democrat; Richard Eymann, Mohawk Democrat; William Grenfell Jr., Portland Democrat; W. H. Holmstrom, Gearhart Democrat; Norman Howard, Portland Democrat; Guy Jonas, Salem Democrat; W. O. Kelsay, Roseburg Democrat; John Kerbow, Klamath Falls Democrat; Thomas McClellan, Neotsu Democrat; Katherine Musa, The Dalles Democrat; Grace Peck, Portland Democrat; Jess Savage, Albany Republican; R. E. Schedeen, Gresham Democrat; Keith Skelton, Eugene Democrat; Glen Stadler, Eugene Democrat; Allen Tom, Rufus Republican; Sam Wilderman, Portland Republican; and Carl Yancey, Klamath Falls Democrat.

### Senate Signers Named

Also signing were Sens. Harry Boivin, Klamath Falls Democrat; R. F. Chapman, Coos Bay Democrat; Ward Cook, Portland Democrat; Alfred Corbett, Portland Democrat; Dan Dimick, Roseburg Democrat; Carl Francis, Dayton Republican; Warren Gleason, Portland Democrat; Dwight Hopkins, Iber Democrat; Jean Lewis, Portland Democrat; Ben Musa, The Dalles Democrat; Boyd Overhule, Madras Democrat; Walter Pearson, Portland Democrat; Leader Quiring, Hermiston Republican; Monroe Sweetland, Portland Democrat; Daniel Thil, Astoria Democrat; and Anthony Yturri, Ontario Republican.

## Cop Killer Added To FBI's 'Wanted' List

Washington—(U.P.)—The FBI has added the name of George Edward Cole, an ex-convict sought in the "cold-blooded slaying" of a San Francisco policeman, to its list of 10 most wanted fugitives.

The FBI warned that Cole is armed with a powerful .357 Magnum pistol and is extremely dangerous. He has said he would shoot any officer who tried to capture him.

"Violent crime is nothing new to this 29-year-old gunman," the FBI said. Cole's crime career began when he went AWOL from the Army in 1945. He served a sentence for first degree robbery at San Quentin prison from 1948 to 1951.

Cole is wanted in connection with the killing of an off-duty police officer in a tavern in San Francisco's "Tenderloin" district on Dec. 30, 1956.

Washington—(U.P.)—President Eisenhower has nominated Amory Houghton, chairman of the board of the Corning, N.Y., Glass Works, as new ambassador to France.

## Court Records

**MUNICIPAL COURT**  
Alphonso Chavez, no operator's license, \$5.  
Clarence B. Black, failure to yield right of way, \$10.  
Donald Parker McNeil, failure to yield right of way, \$5.  
Russell Lee Howard, violation of basic rule, \$10.  
William Nels Dahlstrom, following too close, \$10.  
James Walter Gordon, violation of basic rule, \$10.  
Glenn Dimmett Martin, failure to stop at stop sign, \$5.  
Michael James Kaiser, no tail light, \$5.  
Richard Earl Sprague, violation of basic rule, \$10.  
Herzog Herbert, failure to stop at traffic signal, \$5.  
James W. Liek, violation of basic rule, \$10.  
Hernald I. Mooney, permitting unlicensed operator to operate vehicle, \$10.  
Lloyd Keller, failure to stop at stop sign, \$5.  
Maxine Estelle Yates, failure to stop at red light, \$5.  
Don Blankenship, violation of basic rule, \$10.  
Orval Lawrence Butler, failure to stop at red light, \$5.

**DISTRICT COURT**  
Dale Allen McCay, one headlight, \$10, bail forfeited.  
David Dale Boatwright, defective tail light, \$5; defective horn, \$5.  
Ralph Floyd Champion, operating a vehicle in excess of weight limitation, \$123.  
Jim Seith Cunningham, failure to stop at stop sign, \$10.

**CIRCUIT COURT**  
Charles E. Watson vs. Winifred Watson, divorce complaint.

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