

**YOU OWE
YOUR FAMILY
SAFETY
SEAT BELTS**

(Continued)

Cornell University's automotive crash-research experts, using data from California, have proved that proper use of safety belts reduces chances of death or serious injury in auto accidents by 35 percent.

The occupant of the "death seat"—the person on the driver's right, who usually gets the worst of it in an accident—is benefited most by safety belts. That, sir, may mean your wife or child. But safety belts also save many drivers, as previous examples show. And though the back seat is safer than either place in front, belts more than earn their way there, too. That's why Dr. John O. Moore, outstanding safety expert now with the Flight Safety Foundation, has eight belts in his family car—one for his wife, one for each of his six children, one for himself, and they're always strapped up whenever the car is in motion.

Belts keep passengers from being thrown free in a crash; the chances of death or serious injury are five times higher when a person is thrown from a car. But belts also offer other advantages and accomplish more than all other safety devices designed for autos. Padded instrument panels, dished steering wheels, stronger door locks are all worthwhile. But safety belts are it—making as much sense for those using automobiles as hookup belts do for window washers.

No wonder they are endorsed by the National Safety Council, the U. S. Public Health Service, and the American Medical Association. Yet only 2 to 3 percent of passenger cars—mostly in police or commercial fleets—are equipped with safety belts.

A FEW YEARS AGO, the automobile industry made a strong effort to interest car buyers in safety belts, which cost about \$30 for the minimum two front-seat installations. A large magazine offered approved belts at bargain rates. Both campaigns were duds.

As this is written, a renewed effort to convert the public seems to be starting well. Safety councils and other safety-minded civic groups in such places as Oakland, Calif., and Fort Wayne, Ind., report encouraging progress with special programs reaching both employee groups and individuals. But apathy is still widespread.

Nobody knows just why. The usual excuses for passing up safety belts are obviously flimsy:

Excuse: "I'm afraid of being strapped in a car on fire or under water."

Answer: All approved safety belts release at a finger-flick. In any case, only one of 200 highway accidents involves either fire or submersion. In the other 199 accidents, a safety belt is a mighty healthy thing to be wearing.

Excuse: "I'm afraid of being strapped into my convertible in a turnover."

Answer: Most serious accidents, whether in convertibles or conventional cars, are not turnovers. This fear plays the odds the wrong way.

Excuse: "Safety belts give a driver false confidence, making him take worse chances than ever."

Answer: Sheer guesswork, probably false. If it were true, would car-owning companies install belts and thus en-

courage reckless driving among their employees?

An added effect of safety belts on drivers, as any user can testify, is to reduce long-trip fatigue for both driver and passengers. Their backs are

held in proper relation to the seat, and they do not have to fight sideways on curves. This means that the man at the wheel drives more safely, and the others enjoy themselves more. I'd want safety belts for comfort alone, even if

the safety factor was totally absent.

But as I said before, I'm a missionary for safety belts, and no doubt sound like it. I won't apologize, though, for trying to save lives.

I will offer a few more tips:

Buy the right belts for your car. Some on the market may be too weak for optimum protection. You can be sure you're getting the best when the belts are marked "SAE-SBA-4," meaning they have been made to the high standards of the Society of Automotive Engineers.

Once you buy the belts, don't let a mechanic anchor them only to the seat structure. They must be bolted with their own hardware to the steel floor-board or through it to the car frame.

And get one for each passenger. Maybe they'll never be tested in an accident. But if they are, you'll join me in preaching on behalf of safety belts for every vehicle on the highway!



**My Solution to the
Safety-Belt Dilemma**

By DAVE GARROWAY

I'm a car bug, aficionado, fan, perfectionist, collector, and have been for 30 years now. But I've never seen a car like—or, rather, I've never heard a car like—the one I have now. I say this because if you don't know how to drive it, the horn blows continuously. Why? Let me explain.

The National Safety Council says that if safety belts were used in all cars—not just installed, but used—more than 10,000 lives a year would be saved in this country. The trouble is that only a few percent of all automobiles have safety belts and only about half of those have their belts used regularly.

Why? People forget, I guess—or don't want to think about the possibility of an accident even though they see one almost every day. We still suffer from that happy illusion that "it can't happen to me—only to somebody else." Of course, that's nonsense.

I've solved that problem, I think, in my car by electrically connecting the two halves of the safety belt so that only when they're joined will the horn stop blowing after the ignition is turned on. Forgetters get awfully tired of the horn in about five seconds, so they put the belt on, the horn stops, and off we go in peace and quiet.

It is very simple to do, and it might save your life—the only one you have this year, you know.



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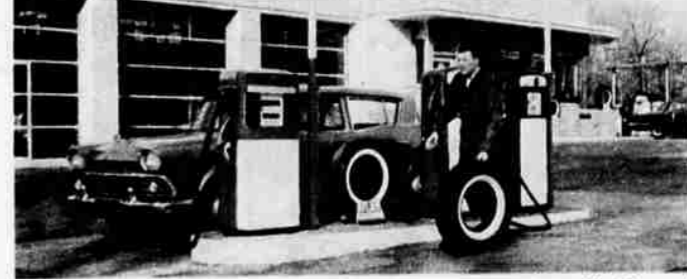
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