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Safety Shorts

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Buckle up!

You know you should, despite the litany of excuses: the shoulder belt wrinkles my clothes, it's uncomfortable, it's restrictive, I'm only going a few miles... It goes on and on, but here are two real scenarios that demonstrate why buckling up is the right thing to do:

A BUSY INTERSTATE IN OREGON

A woman is trying to enter onto a highway. She's going along at 70 mph, a tad over the speed limit, keeping up with traffic and perhaps ready to slow down a bit once she gets on the highway. A car suddenly cuts her off. In an instant, she swerves right to avoid rear-ending the car in front of her. And just as suddenly as she'd been cut off, she loses control and goes over the side of the entrance ramp. The car rolls twice. She was wearing her seatbelt and walks away with nothing worse than bruises on her chest.

HEADING TO THE MOUNTAIN

Two men leave their home around 4:00 AM, heading to Mt Hood for a weekend of snowboarding. Weather and visibility deteriorate en route, and it begins snowing like crazy. At about 6:00 AM, the driver loses

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SEATBELT TIPS

Your seatbelt should:

- Fit snugly
- Be worn low and tight across the hips

The shoulder strap should come over the collarbone, away from the neck and cross over the breastbone.

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control when the road curves left. Their truck spins counterclockwise, leaves the road and flips. It rolls over three times, flattening a fence and stops on its wheels. Both men were wearing their seatbelts and shoulder harnesses, and both walk away uninjured. They show up to work on Monday, not even stiff or sore.

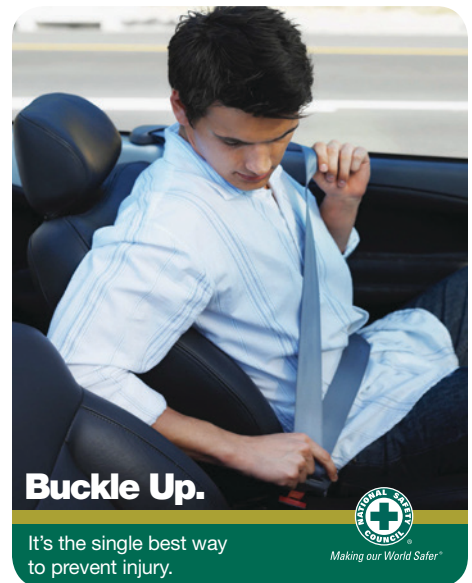
Wearing a lap belt and shoulder harness isn't a commentary on your driving ability or lack thereof. Buckling up is insurance against whoever, or whatever might be out there. Consider these possible situations:

What if you were sharing a two-lane highway with another driver and a bee flies in through his window and down his shirt? Trying to get rid of it, he becomes distracted and runs into the guard rail. He could have just as easily been driving toward you in the opposite lane.

Or maybe you are blissfully driving down the road, not knowing that you are sharing the road with a drunk driver. He crashes into a tree on the other side of the road, narrowly missing several other cars. He broke some bones and blew a 0.13; imagine if he had hit you instead of the tree.

Bad drivers range from merely incompetent to criminally negligent, and they are out there – everywhere. Buckling up will give you a fighting chance.

- John Zakariassen, CIS Senior Risk Management Consultant



The Oregon Department of Transportation's Safety Division offers tips for using safety belts and child safety seats properly.