

**STATE OF MONTANA  
PRIMARY BELT LAW FACT SHEET  
PRODUCED BY THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC  
SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

**PRIMARY SAFETY BELT LAWS:**

- In States with primary safety belt laws, law enforcement officers may stop a vehicle and issue a citation when the officer observes an unbelted driver or passenger. Officers in States with secondary enforcement safety belt laws may only write a citation after the officer stops the vehicle or cites the offender for another infraction.
- States with primary safety belt laws can expect use rates about 11 percentage points higher than States with secondary enforcement laws.
- **If Montana were to enact a primary law, that will save approximately 25 lives, 183 serious injuries, and \$44 million in costs each year.**

**USAGE DATA:**

- 19 percent of Montana's population – about 174,420 people - are still not buckling up.

**COMPARISON TO OTHER STATES:**

	<b>Montana</b>	<b>Washington</b>	<b>Oregon</b>
<b>Safety Belt Law</b>	Secondary	Primary	Primary
<b>2004 Observed Use Rate</b>	81%	94%	93%

**2003 FATALITY DATA:**

- 228 people died while riding in cars and light trucks in Montana.
- 50 percent of all Montana occupant fatalities occur in light trucks.
- About 30 percent of fatally injured passenger vehicle occupants in Montana were known to be restrained.