Three Point Seat Belts On School Buses

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Benefits

• Protection against catastrophic accident – side impact and rollover

• Student safety
  • Students are seated in a safer position, fully utilizing compartmentalization
  • Very effective for younger children – keep children seated
Perceived Drawbacks

• Possible weapon – REALITY: NOT TRUE
• Time to put on – REALITY: Has not been a problem in Helena
• Students refuse to wear them – REALITY: It’s the Law
Implementation

Process Started in 2011: What are the benefits of seat belts?

• How effective is compartmentalization?
  • Only effective if students are sitting in a correct manner
  • Difficult for driver to maintain

• What do 3-pt belts protect against?
  • Rollovers, side impact, student management
Implementation

Cost concerns

• About 7 cents a day on a new contract

• The real question: What is a child’s life worth?
Implementation

Process

• Benefits of seat belts reinforced by all (NHTSA, public awareness, parents, medical profession, etc.)

• Community and school board support
Implementation

Specified 3-pt seat belts in rebid process

• 80 buses

• 100% 3-pt seat belts

• 5 Year contract with a 2 year extension

• About 7 cents a day on a new contract
1) Students are assigned seats.

2) Drivers are required to use a Check-On & Check-Off sheet.

3) All buses are tracked with GPS and Cellular Video Connections.

4) Enforced usage policy.
...Wearing the seat belt is not just a bus rule that must be followed, it is also the law. Parents must understand that children that intentionally/blatantly disregard wearing their seat belt constitutes automatic suspension from the bus.
Summary

• Seat belts are a no brainer
• Results were better than expected
• Age old problem is cost
• What’s more expensive: Seat belts or a child’s life?