

## Advice on seat belts and the law

A decade of advertising preceded the introduction of a new law making the wearing of front seat belts compulsory in 1982. Soon after the law came into effect there was 90 per cent wearing by car drivers and front seat passengers. These high rates of wearing in the front seats of cars have remained high. In 1991 when it became compulsory for adults to wear seat belts in the back of the car, there was an immediate increase from 10 per cent to 40 per cent in observed rear seat wearing.

What are the seat belt wearing rules in mini-buses, buses and coaches?

Seat belt wearing is already compulsory in minibuses under 2.54tonnes unladen weight. If available, an appropriate child seat must be used in these vehicles but there passengers that seat belt wearing is compulsory.

Seated passengers aged 14 years and above must use seat belts where they are fitted in all buses and coaches. Children up to 13 years should use a child car seat if one is available and suitable. If there is no suitable child car seat they should use the belt provided. The operator is not required to provide a suitable child seat.

Vehicle operators must notify passengers of the legal requirements to use seat belts.

The regulations require notification by any of:

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(a) an official announcement, or an audio-visual presentation, made when the passenger joins the bus or with a reasonable time of his or her doing so; (b) a sign prominently displayed at each passenger seat equipped with a seat belt.

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an "official announcement" means one by the driver, by a conductor or courier or by a group leader of any passengers on the vehicle.

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A sign that takes the form of a pictorial symbol.

For more information, go to <http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/>