Why buckle up? So, we can see you again. It’s also our law.

According to the 2017 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Montana high school students report always wearing a seatbelt 69% of the time while driving and 52% of the time while riding as a passenger in a vehicle.

Of teens aged 14-18 who were involved in a motor vehicle crash and sustained severe injuries, 71% were not wearing a seatbelt. How many of those teens would be alive today if they had buckled up?

Montana law places the responsibility on the driver to ensure each occupant is properly buckled or in a child safety seat (MCA 61-13-103). In the event of a crash, an unbuckled occupant can seriously injure or kill other occupants in the vehicle.

The Montana Seatbelt Use Act requires the use of seatbelts by the driver and each occupant of each vehicle. State law also requires child safety restraint systems for children under the age of 6 and weighing less than 60 pounds.

Seatbelts and air bags are meant to work together to keep drivers and passengers safe. The presence of air bags in a vehicle does NOT mean seatbelts are unnecessary.

Whether a person is belted or not often becomes the difference between life and death. While researchers may differ by a few percentage points either way, figures from seatbelt studies reveal:

- Seatbelts can reduce the number of serious injuries by 50 percent.
- Seatbelts can reduce fatalities by 40 to 60 percent.

Information courtesy of Montana Department of Justice: https://doj.mt.gov/driving/driving-safety/

You care about your family and your friends. They care about you. Make it a habit, on short trips and long trips. Buckle Up every time, every trip, everybody.