Code for the Road Fact Sheet #1

Traffic deaths in North Dakota have increased in the past two years. In 2012, North Dakota had more crash fatalities than the state has seen since the 1970s. Seat belt use is lower in rural areas, resulting in more fatalities on rural and secondary roads.

- 2 out of 3 vehicle occupants who died on our roadways last year were NOT belted.
- A seat belt is your best protection against other drivers and unexpected hazards.
- People not wearing a seat belt are 30 times more likely to be ejected from a vehicle during a crash. More than 3 out of 4 people who are ejected during a crash die from their injuries.**
- The chance of injury to a belted person increases 90% if there is an unbelted occupant in the vehicle at the time of the crash.*
- Seat belts keep you positioned where the vehicle is designed to protect you.

For the best protection, position your seat belt correctly.

- The shoulder belt should cross the center of your chest, with no more than one inch of slack. Never under the arm!
- Adjust the strap so it goes over the collarbone, not against the neck or face. (Most cars have a sliding height adjustment on the interior doorpost near your left ear.)
- The lap belt goes low across the hips—never across the stomach.
- Sit upright with your feet on the floor.

Seat belts protect you by:

- Keeping you in the vehicle
- Spreading the force of impact over a large area and the strongest parts of the body
- Allowing your body to slow down gradually, lessening the impact on internal organs
- Preventing impact with the interior of the vehicle
- Preventing collision with other occupants of the vehicle
- Preventing trauma to the brain and spinal cord caused by sudden change in motion

Are you under 18?

North Dakota’s seat belt law is PRIMARY ENFORCEMENT. If a patrol officer doesn’t see that shoulder strap, you can be pulled over and ticketed. If three other occupants of the vehicle aren’t belted either, that’s $100 worth of citations plus a point on your driving record for each citation written.

Using a cell phone while you’re driving? If you are seen texting or talking handheld or hands-free, you can be pulled over and ticketed. Once you are stopped, you’re caught. You’ll also pay the price for any other problems, like lack of insurance or alcohol.

**Influence of the Unbelted Rear-seat Passenager on Driver Mortality, “The Backseat Bullet.” Janet Mayrose, PhD, Dietrich Jehle, MD, Marc Hayes; BS, Dylan Tinnesz, MD, Gina Piazza, DO, Gregory E. Wilding, PhD