

# AVOIDING THE "SECOND COLLISION"

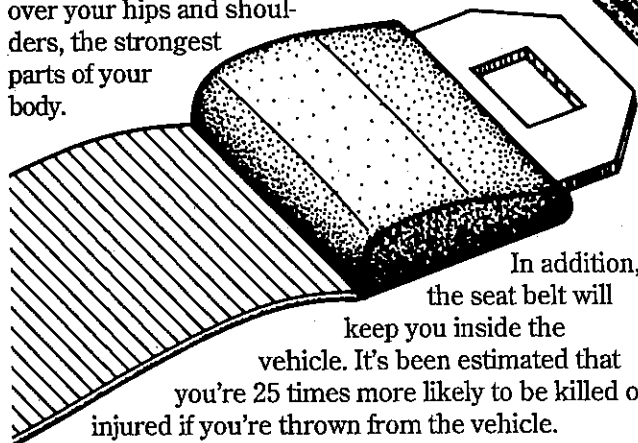
## *Use Your Seat Belts*

Seat belts are among the most important safety elements in your vehicle. It's essential that you wear them at all times to protect yourself from serious injury or death. In fact, it's against the law in most states to drive without fastened seat belts.

### How You're Protected

Many injuries and deaths occur when a vehicle crashes and its occupants collide with the steering wheel, dashboard, windshield or roof. This is often referred to as the "second collision."

A safety belt holds you in place. It stops you from moving after the vehicle has stopped, so the force of the second collision is diminished. It spreads the force of the impact over your hips and shoulders, the strongest parts of your body.



In addition, the seat belt will keep you inside the vehicle. It's been estimated that you're 25 times more likely to be killed or injured if you're thrown from the vehicle.

There's also a much better chance that you'll remain conscious if you're saved from interior surfaces of your vehicle. That means you can release yourself from the restraint in an instant and proceed to help yourself and others.

### Lap-Shoulder Belts

Nearly all vehicles now have lap-shoulder combination systems. Never hook up a shoulder harness without connecting the lap belt. You could slide under the

shoulder harness and be choked by it.

Wear your belts as snugly as you can without feeling discomfort.

Some are equipped with plastic comfort clips on the shoulder belt webbing. These can be adjusted to leave a bit of slack but won't prevent the belt from doing its job in a crash.

Never put the shoulder belt under your arm or behind you. Not only will this reduce its efficiency, but it can cause serious injury.

Belt extenders, consisting of about nine inches of webbing with attachments on both ends, can be attached to the system if your belt won't reach around you.

### A Simple Answer

Seat belts offer effective and simple insurance against serious injury or death in an accident. Make sure they're always in working order and make it a habit to buckle up every time you drive. Do it before you start the engine.

It's a small safety precaution with a big payoff.

