

The University of Louisiana at Monroe Quarterly Safety Meeting -- Louisiana Seat Belt Laws

The law applies to any “passenger car, van, or truck having a gross weight of ten thousand pounds or less” (pickup truck) manufactured after January 1, 1981.

- The driver of the car must have the seat belt on anytime the car is in forward motion.
- A front seat passenger must also have a seat belt on if the manufacturer of the vehicle has provided a seat belt.

Exceptions:

- Rural letter carrier while on duty.
- Farm vehicle within 5 miles of the farm.
- Newspaper delivery person while delivering a regularly published newspaper.
- Medical or mental disability that prevents the use of a seat belt.

A law enforcement officer can issue a ticket based solely on his clear vision of the violation. However, he cannot search a car, driver or passenger based solely on the violation of the seat belt law.

Penalties:

- Upon conviction of first offense, the fine shall be twenty-five dollars which shall include all costs of court.
- Upon conviction of second offense, the fine shall be fifty dollars which include all costs of court.
- Upon conviction of a third offense and any subsequent offense, the fine shall be fifty dollars plus all costs of court.

And what is the difference between the penalty for a second offense and a third offense?

- Court costs, which can be many times more than the fine in some areas.

Child Restraints:

- Every resident of this state who transports a child or children under the age of thirteen years in a motor vehicle which is equipped with safety belts at the time of manufacture or assembly, or is currently equipped with safety belts, shall have the child properly secured in accordance with the manufacture’s instructions in an age or size appropriate passenger restraint system which meets the applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards in effect.”
- Child restraint system” means a lap belt, a shoulder harness, or any age or size appropriate child safety seat.