

## **NHTSA: Seat belts in school buses won't be U.S. requirement**

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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The previous post covered the story about a recent Alabama school bus accident. One student was killed in the accident and multiple other students suffered injuries. The sheriff in the town where the [auto accident](#) took place sees the tragedy as support for why school buses should have seat belts installed in them.

He's not the only person who believes that seat belts in school buses would prevent student fatalities and should, therefore, be a U.S. safety requirement. At least two other groups, including the Center for Auto Safety and the National Coalition for School Bus Safety, brought the school bus safety argument to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Safety advocates believe that the restraints could protect kids in accidents but also prevent bus drivers from becoming distracted by unrestrained students.

The NHTSA ruled late last month that it wouldn't approve the enactment of a country-wide school bus seat belt requirement. It doesn't say that local governments can't take it upon themselves to choose to require seat belts. The decision reportedly came down to cost versus necessity.

Challengers of requiring seat belts in school buses claim that school buses are actually safer than other vehicles. They are larger, and the seats are designed to protect passengers if a crash were to take place. Adding seat belts could provide some further injury prevention, but the supposedly minor improvement would cost as much as \$600 per seat. Because that is a big expense, the NHTSA felt better about leaving the decision in the hands of local governments.

What do you think about the important safety issue? Would you feel better about your child's safety if he or she were required to buckle up while on the bus? Would the cost be worth it you? Do you see any potential problems with Alabama requiring seat belts in buses?

### **Source**

The Washington Post: "[Feds reject request to require seat belts on school buses](#)," Ashley Halsey III, Aug. 25, 2011