Seatbelts Save Lives

(Safety Brief)

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PACIF has developed Safety Briefs to help municipal highway supervisors maintain a high level of safety and hazard awareness among employees. We recommend using these short "tailgate trainings" on a regular basis – and **at least once a month**. If you need a particular safety topic, please contact us at losscontrol@vlct.org.

Information for Supervisors

Seatbelt use by municipal highway departments varies significantly. Some departments strictly enforce seatbelt use, while others "look the other way" when seatbelts are not used. To be clear, seatbelt use is not an option. It is the law.

The State of Vermont requires the use of seatbelts in all motor vehicles. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requires that seatbelts be used in all commercial motor vehicles. VOSHA can issue citations for not wearing seatbelts. Most importantly, using seatbelts does prevent serious injury or death when a serious motor vehicle accident occurs.

Talking Points for Training

Each year, PACIF receives around 300 auto claims from municipal members, with more than half of those coming from public works and highway departments. Imbedded within those claims are a few motor vehicle accidents (MVAs) with serious injury potential. After reviewing those accidents, it is clear that seatbelt use has saved lives, or greatly reduced the severity of injury when they were used. To help you improve and reinforce seatbelt use within your operations, consider sharing the following stories and discuss any related experiences that your driver might have:

- A dump truck plowing a paved road abruptly came to a stop when its plow dug into soft gravel as the vehicle transitioned between the pavement and dirt road.

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The driver indicated that he would have been thrown through the windshield, had he not been wearing a seatbelt. The truck was totaled. The driver had a minor shoulder strain and was glad he was belted!

- A driver was hauling gravel on a paved road and came into contact with the guardrail on a narrow bridge. This eventually pulled the vehicle off the road and caused a rollover which crushed the passenger side of the truck. The driver indicated that the seatbelt kept him in his seat and prevented him from sliding into the area that was crushed.
- A dump truck was sanding a section of icy back road when the driver lost control, slid off the road and rolled over. The truck was moderately damaged but the driver was thrilled that he wore his seatbelt because he was not thrown to the passenger side of the vehicle when the rollover occurred.

Aside from the real life stories, try and get your drivers to commit to seatbelt use and to think about the following:

- The impact on their family if they are injured or worse. Isn't it reasonable to commit to wearing a simple safety device? Think about the potential impacts on their career, income, etc. Wearing a seatbelt is really a commitment to your family!
- Make sure your drivers know that seatbelt use is not an option and that you will monitor and enforce usage!

Safety Training Attendance Roster

Trainer:	Training Date:
1.	9.
2.	10.
3.	11.

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4.	12.
5.	13.
6.	14.
7.	15.
8.	16.

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