

WHY ARE THERE NO SEAT BELTS ON SCHOOL BUSES?

If I had a dollar for every time I was asked this question, I could retire early! Even though I have heard it asked many times this is still a great question and from someone not familiar with school buses and their specialized construction, this is a very legitimate question. Hopefully I can shed some light on this issue and give you, the parent, some assurance that even without seat belts the yellow school bus is still, by far, the safest mode of transportation in the United States.

School buses use what is called a "passive restraint system" also known as compartmentalization. There are several factors involved with compartmentalization and why it works so well. They are as follows:

- Construction. School buses are constructed with a 60% joint strength and a rollover protection cage. School buses are built like an Army tank.
- Direct line of impact. In passenger cars, a passenger sits approximately 30" off the ground which is in the direct line of impact of most accidents, and in a school bus, students sit above the point of impact.
- Seat Construction. Seat frame design with high and thick padded seat backs.

The passive restraints system design in school buses has proven to be a safe and effective restraint system. After many studies, crash tests and reports, the "National Highway Safety Administration" made a recommendation that seat belts NOT be placed on school buses and that they would add no improvements to school bus safety. The actual use of seat belts on a bus would almost be impossible for a driver to monitor to make sure that all students were using the seat belts. Emergency evacuation situations would pose even more of a challenge. With 50-60 students on a school bus, a driver could not help evacuate students effectively if they were wearing seat belts and needed assistance from the driver. The "passive restraint system" plus all of the features from the specialized construction standards for school buses helps solidify the fact that the yellow school bus is the safest mode of transportation for your child.