

**John Graham**

Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, Minister for Jobs and Tourism

**Jenny Aitchison**

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

## Media Release

### Seatbelt cameras reveal alarming rate of offences

**Sunday, 4 August 2024**

Drivers and passengers across NSW are being urged to make the simplest, life-saving choice when getting inside a vehicle: Wear a seatbelt and wear it correctly, every time.

The NSW Government issues the warning today after early data from seatbelt enforcement cameras revealed many more people than expected are flouting the seatbelt law.

In the first 21 days of camera enforcement of seatbelt usage, more than 11,400 penalties have been issued – about three-quarters of which were for incorrect use of a seatbelt, which still attracts the full \$410 fine and three demerit points.

The rate of non-compliance is about two-and-a-half times more than was expected before the mobile phone detection camera network began enforcing seatbelt offences on July 1.

In three weeks, more seatbelt offences have been detected by the cameras than the total number of seatbelt fines issued by NSW Police in 2023.

While the vast majority of the 6.9 million drivers in NSW and their passengers buckle up properly every trip, the small percentage still refusing to obey the law are putting themselves at serious risk. Not wearing a seatbelt doubles the chance of death for anyone involved in a crash.

In the five years up to the end of 2023, 149 people died on NSW roads not wearing a seatbelt – about 15 per cent of all vehicle occupant deaths.

So far, more than 8.3 million vehicles have been checked, with about one in every 700 of those checked resulting in a fine.

Pictures taken by the camera network have revealed some very unsafe incidents, including babies being held and fed in the front seat completely unrestrained, multiple children unrestrained sharing the front seat with adults and a variety of ways in which a seatbelt can be worn incorrectly.

At the current rate, more than 100,000 fines will be issued by seatbelt cameras in the first 12 months.

Motorists are reminded the lap portion of a seatbelt should lie low and firmly over your hips and the sash should be across your chest and mid shoulder.

Seatbelt enforcement by cameras is part of a string of new road safety measures launched by the NSW Government, including:

- Removing a loophole to force all motorists driving on a foreign licence to convert to a NSW licence within six months

- The demerit return trial that rewarded more than 1.2 million drivers for maintaining a spotless driving record during the initial 12-month period up to 16 January 2024
- Doubling roadside enforcement sites used for mobile speed cameras, with the addition of 2700 new locations where a camera can be deployed. Enforcement hours will remain the same
- Hosting the state's first Road Safety Forum of international and local experts

Every dollar raised by seatbelt cameras will go back into road safety.

B-roll and images can be [downloaded here](#).

**Minister for Roads John Graham said:**

"I'm surprised the numbers are so high. We knew there was a problem with seatbelt compliance among a small section of motorists and passengers, but the reality is it is worse than expected and we need this to serve as a wake up call.

"I want to send the strongest message possible today that if you don't do it to save yourself a \$410 fine and three demerit points, do it for the safety of your loved ones by buckling up every time, and make sure everyone in the car does too.

"The vast majority of the 6.9 million drivers on NSW roads wear a seatbelt every time, but the sad fact is that the small percentage of those who do not are twice as likely to die in a crash and are needlessly making up 15 per cent of all fatalities on our roads.

"We have a rising road toll in NSW and the straightforward act of putting a seatbelt on could save dozens of lives a year."

**Minister for Regional Roads Jenny Aitchison said:**

"I'm shocked and saddened by what's emerged after just one month of seatbelt enforcement cameras coming into effect.

"Five decades since it became law, there are still too many people putting their lives and the lives of their loved ones at risk because they won't wear a seatbelt.

"Whether you're in the bush or a big city, on a quiet country road or a major motorway, there is never any excuse not to put on a seatbelt. Many of us grew up being told to 'click clack front and back' it's a message we're repeating in the wake of these frightening issues.

"I also urge everyone to wear their seatbelts properly because we know from tests conducted by the Centre for Road Safety that the impact of wearing a seatbelt under your arm in a crash at 60km/h can cause injuries to the liver, spleen or abdomen which could prove fatal.

"Make sure the lap portion of your seatbelt lies across the bony section of your hips and the sash falls across your chest and mid shoulder. Always make sure the belt is firm and lays flat.

"And if you're a driver, remember it's your responsibility to make sure all your passengers are buckled up correctly so please check everyone is wearing their seatbelt before you turn on the ignition."

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