

## In NY State, All Passengers Must Buckle Up!

By: Keith T. Kerman and Nate Koszer

The NYC Rules for Fleet Operators have long required drivers and all passengers to buckle up. Effective November 1, all passengers must also now buckle up throughout NY State. NY State was the first state to enact a seat belt law back in 1984 and has now taken this next important step toward safety. Front seat, back seat, middle seat, age group, gender, politics, it makes no difference: buckle up!


Previous state law left it to the discretion of those over 16 whether to buckle up in back seats. No longer and for good reason. Studies have shown that rear-seat passengers, of any age, are far more likely to die or be seriously injured in crashes if not wearing seatbelts. An unbelted rear-seat passenger also places the driver at greater risk in the event of a crash, even if the driver has a seatbelt on. The new law applies to personal cars as well as all taxis and rideshare services.

Through our Fleet Office of Realtime Tracking (FORT), seatbelt use for fleet units is monitored. All operators are expected to buckle up and check that passengers have done so as well. If there is any problem with any seatbelt, report the issue to your garage or transport coordinator immediately.

As we enter into the winter, the days are shorter and nighttime driving is more prevalent. According to NYC DOT, serious collisions involving pedestrians increase nearly 40% during the early-evening hours of late fall and winter. Earlier sunsets are believed to contribute to this problem. Additionally, lower visibility during the dark hours of the colder months leads to twice as many crashes involving turns. As part of Vision Zero, NYC recently announced the fifth Dusk and Darkness campaign to draw attention to the increased risks of nighttime driving.




## Slow Down




People who drive 25 MPH or slower are better able to avoid crashes.

## Don't Cut Corners





Turns faster than 5 MPH put pedestrians at risk. On foot? Watch for turning cars.

## Look Closely



More pedestrians are hurt in crashes around sunset than any other time.

The COVID-19 crisis has also increased safety risks on the road. On one hand, there has been a documented increase in bicycle use. On the other, there has been backsliding in safe driving practices. It is critical for all fleet operators to recommit to safe driving at all times, especially at night. We want everyone safe from the pandemic and on the roads.

**What to do:**

- Buckle up!
- Drive cautiously and take turns slowly, very slowly.
- Obey the speed limit.
- Do not tailgate, leave a safe distance from other cars.
- Concentrate on the road at all times. No distractions.
- Respect pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Avoid driving when you can, especially in bad weather.

We all have a lot to do to make Vision Zero a reality. Please make this a safe winter on the roads.

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