

# Driver Zone



## PROTECT YOUR UNBORN BABY WHILST DRIVING

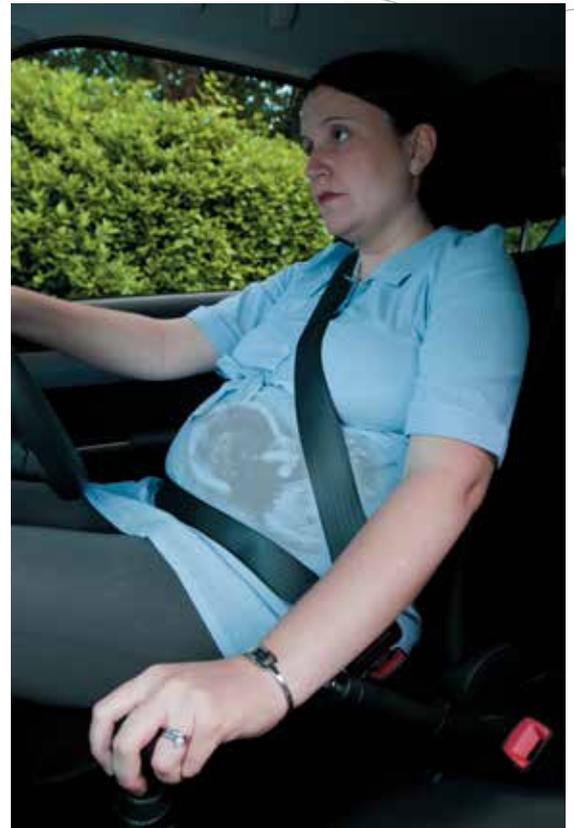
National and international research studies have shown that the pregnant woman and her fetus are at increased risk during a collision if the seat belt is not worn.

It is a legal requirement for all drivers to wear a seat belt and pregnant women are no exception, even though it may seem uncomfortable.

As the fetus grows and women change size and shape, it is important to allow time for making adjustments to the car seat belt and seat in order to increase comfort and reduce possible distractions. Not only is it important to adjust the seat belt to the correct position (see page 2), but also to allow time for adjusting the seat position if necessary.

Pregnant women are advised to sit with as great a distance as possible between their abdomen and steering wheel to reduce the risk of injury in a crash. If the seat has to be moved further rearward, then the view out of the mirrors will also be altered. It is important to always check the view in the mirrors when the seat and steering wheel positions are adjusted.

Pregnant women should also ensure they can still reach the clutch, brake and accelerator pedals properly without stretching – this is important to ensure that reaction times are not affected.



### Baby at risk

The main causes of fetal death are placental abruption (where the placenta is detached from the uterus) and uterine rupture. Injuries to the fetus or fetal death can occur with only minor injuries to the mother.



# Driver Zone



## WEARING A SEAT BELT REDUCES THE INJURY RISK TO THE UNBORN BABY BY UP TO 70%

### WHAT IS THE CORRECT SEAT BELT POSITION FOR A PREGNANT DRIVER?

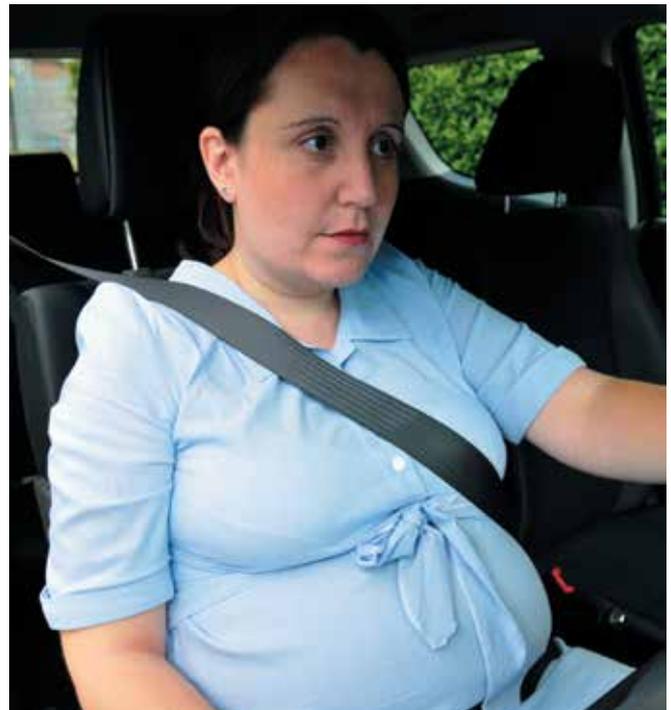
The correct position for the seat belt in pregnancy is with the shoulder section passing across the shoulder, between the breasts, and around the abdomen, and the lap section passing across the hips and underneath the abdomen.

### CAN THE SEAT BELT HARM THE UNBORN BABY?

In the event of a crash the seat belt will actually help to protect the pregnant woman and her unborn baby. Anyone who does not wear a seat belt could injure other people in the car during a crash, including the fetus and any other children.

### WHAT IF THE BELT IS REPOSITIONED FOR COMFORT?

If only the lap belt is used, or if it is incorrectly positioned (either over the abdomen or thighs), then the risk of injury is increased.



**INCORRECT POSITION:**

Lap belt over abdomen



**INCORRECT POSITION:**

Lap belt across thighs

# Driver Zone



Using a specially converted test dummy, Thatcham carried out a series of sled tests which confirmed the importance of using the correct seat belt position.

The sled tests carried out were at 30 mph and represented a frontal impact. The tests compared the lap belt positioned corrected across the hips, against the lap belt positioned incorrectly over the abdomen. It was clear that having the lap belt positioned across the abdomen appears to give a much higher pressure than with it positioned across the hips.

## CHILD SEATS

Once the baby is born, it will need a proper child seat. A baby or child should never be carried on someone's lap, since there is a risk of crushing the child in a crash. A well fitted child seat is essential; rear-facing child seats are the best protection for small babies and children. However, they should never be used in the front of a car with airbags unless the airbags are deactivated.

For more information, go to <https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules>



**BUCKLE UP IN PREGNANCY: ALWAYS ENSURE YOUR SEAT IS IN THE RIGHT POSITION AND YOUR THE SEAT BELT IS FASTENED CORRECTLY BEFORE YOU START YOUR JOURNEY IN ORDER TO PROTECT BOTH YOURSELF AND YOUR UNBORN CHILD.**