



GROUP 6

CALIFORNIA WING - CIVIL AIR PATROL

60-second Safety Briefing

Don't recline in car seats

(The Group 6 safety program thanks to CAP's Edwards Air Force Base Squadron 84 safety officer Lt. Ginger Myers, and Commander Capt. Connie McCullough for contributing this article. It is adapted from the U.S. Air Force Safety Center.)

Recently the Air Force lost another valued member while riding as a passenger in a government motor vehicle on-duty. What was significant about this fatality was that the member was wearing his seatbelt! Unfortunately, he had the seat reclined four inches -- rendering the effectiveness of the seatbelt negligible.

The National Transportation Safety Board conducted a study in 1988 that confirmed the danger of reclined seats. Results showed that three-point restraints offer good protection only if worn properly. An occupant who wears a seat belt while reclined is not "centered" in the belt, rendering it ineffective for spreading crash forces over the body. The NTSB stated that the protection offered by any type of seatbelt is compromised when the seat is reclined, presenting a "potentially dangerous combination in a moving vehicle." The study also noted that although some vehicle owner's manuals warn of the dangers of reclined seat backs in moving vehicles, the warnings do not state specifically what degree of recline is dangerous. The NTSB reported that as little as one inch of slack in the shoulder harness increases the chance of injury. The greater the slack, the greater the likelihood of injury.

All Civil Air Patrol members operating or riding in any motor vehicle are reminded that seats should be in the upright position, and that their seatbelt should be securely fastened across their chest with no slack to ensure maximum effectiveness of their seatbelt.

(Neither the Aircrew Safety Briefing nor the 60-Second Safety Advisor are meant to be top-down. Comments, criticisms, suggestions and contributions are welcome and may be included in future issues. Send comments to cbagdikian@bak.rr.com.)



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