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| |  | | --- | | So long as they are aware of the dangers involved, adults should not be legally bound to use seat belts.  Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position. | |

Public safety measures have been enforced by multiple governments around the world, to ensure general safety of the public. Whether such a measure must be legally mandatory or the individual's responsibility has been a fairly contested topic in the past. Engineers and lawmakers have worked hard on developing traffic safety rules/equipment to ensure that the roads are safe, and in my opinion, I mostly agree with the stated claim, since the seat belt is one of these kinds of equipment. To detail my full opinion, there are two main points to consider.

When seat belts were introduced in the 1960s, as a way to prevent severe injury due to accidents (that the driver may not even be responsible for). They were not intended as the 'end-all be-all' of car safety, and were added to cars so as to protect its passengers against other, say, law-breaking drivers that may cause an accident by colliding with them. There were a lot of protests by groups who, much like the 'anti-vax' (anti-vaccination) group of today, claimed that this was a mode of government control, and that the State was overreaching into the lives of its people. Many conspiracies spread around, and only after multiple fatal accidents did most of these voices die down. Public consensus became more and more in favour of the seatbelt, since the people learnt of the consequences of not wearing a seatbelt when driving. But did it have to be this way? The lesson learnt was immeasurably valuable in terms of car safety, but was it worth the lives lost? If seat belts were legally enforced earlier, then a lot of these cases could have been avoided.

Awareness of danger is not enough, especially when the danger is preventable. Consider the case of CB Mall, a South Korean shopping mall that was very well-known for its range of shops and amenities. The mall was built in a manner that reduced the cost of construction, ignoring multiple safety measures and checks that the government had put in place. Money was passed around among powerful people to allow the mall to be operational, even though its defeciencies were well-known. Heavy air-ventilation pumps were kept on the top of the building, and cracks gradually developed under where it was placed over the span of a few weeks. At one point, the mall even taped off the section of the mall that had the cracks claiming that it was 'under repair,' while also not closing the entire mall, allowing normal life to carry on. When the cracks expanded and broke, the building crumbled down, and many lives were lost. The builders, and moreso the owner, knew of the mall's foundational problems, but they failed to act on it, due to the levels of profit they had from its shops. If the government had strictly enforced the existing laws for building structures, this could have been avoided, and the mall could have been built in a way that was beneficial to everybody. Hence, awareness is not sufficient. Legal enforcement is necessary to ensure that laws meant for public safety are dutifully adhered to.

In conclusion, adults should be legally bound to wear seat belts when driving, irrespective of the level to which they acknowledge and know the dangers involved of not wearing one, simply out of public interest. One may argue that when enforcement of seat belts is done, people may be arrested for not wearing them, or they may be subject to the sometimes unlawful behaviour of police, especially when there is a 'power struggle' at hand. Some of the police forces in countries like the United States have been found to go over boundaries to 'enforce' the law, when they are obligated to simply help maintain it. The fears of having to face unlawful actions by police is a valid one, but it still does not discount the social trust that one must keep intact by wearing a seat belt. In fact, in some ways, this is also an argument in favour of wearing a seat belt. Fears against injustice are valid, but when these fears exist along with blatant social irresponsibility, it would be morally wrong to argue against the seat belt. People who believe otherwise do so at their own peril.