Motor Vehicle-Related Injury Prevention: Use of Safety Belts, Primary (vs. Secondary) Enforcement Laws

Task Force Finding

**Intervention Definition**
Primary enforcement safety belt laws allow a police officer to stop a vehicle solely for an observed belt law violation.

**Task Force Finding (October 2000)**
The Task Force strongly recommends these laws over secondary enforcement laws, which allow a police officer to issue a belt law citation only if the vehicle has been stopped for another violation. The strong recommendation is based on the superior effectiveness of primary enforcement safety belt laws in increasing safety belt use and reducing fatal injuries compared with secondary enforcement safety belt laws in the United States. Potential harms and other positive effects considered are similar to those for safety belt laws in general. In addition, although differential enforcement based on race or ethnicity has been reported as a concern, studies that looked for evidence of such differential enforcement found none. No qualifying economic information was identified from the literature.

*From the following publication:

**Publications**


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