

# Integrated seatbelt/ suspension seat

## Retrofit Guidelines For Truck Owners

### Why Retrofit Integrated Seatbelt/ Suspension Seats?

#### Seatbelts Save Lives

It's estimated that 40 unbelted heavy vehicle drivers lose their life every year. This could be reduced substantially if seatbelt wear rates were improved. Currently, only 50 percent of drivers wear seatbelts (NSW Roads & Traffic Authority 2003) and driver discomfort is often cited as a contributory factor.

#### Driver comfort

Suspension seats are designed to dampen vibration over rough roads and improve driver comfort. However, if the seatbelt is anchored to the truck's side column (B-Pillar) and floor, the seat's vertical travel over rough roads can cause the belt to lock and tighten across the driver's neck, throat, chest and abdomen.

Some drivers resist wearing B-Pillar anchored seatbelts with suspension seats because they are considered uncomfortable. This combination is fitted to about 30 percent of trucks sold (ERG Truck Tracker 2004) and is commonplace in the Australian heavy vehicle fleet.

In contrast, the integrated seatbelt/suspension seat allows the driver's relative position to remain constant with the seat and seatbelt. This option is often available at a small cost premium to the truck's retail price and can also be retrofitted to many existing vehicles.

*Note: wearing a seatbelt in any configuration is better than not wearing a seatbelt at all and is required by law.*





## What Can Vehicle Owners Do?

Installing an aftermarket integrated seatbelt/suspension seat can overcome drivers' comfort arguments and save lives. These guidelines aim to outline a clear process in retrofitting integrated seatbelts and suspension seats.



### **Retro-fitting is easy**

Most B-Pillar anchored seatbelts can be retro-fitted with an integrated seatbelt/suspension seat replacement; however, some vehicles require engineering and cab modification. The driver's seat is typically replaced up to three times over the vehicle's life.

A reputable seat supplier will inspect your vehicle to ensure the structural integrity of the cab and report any deficiencies. Market research indicates that integrated seatbelt and suspension seat configurations can be installed in heavy vehicles up to 20 years of age.

Installation of an integrated seatbelt/suspension seat through a reputable seat manufacturer is easy - they can supply the kit, all the paperwork and professional installation. Other alternatives include: the vehicle manufacture or a reputable heavy vehicle engineer (request an engineering certificate).

### **Certification and verification**

To certify the retrofit installation of an integrated seatbelt/suspension seat in a vehicle, you should obtain appropriate documentation from the seat manufacturer and installer. This will provide assurance that the seat and seatbelt conforms to *Vehicle Standards Bulletin 6 Heavy Vehicle Modifications* and local jurisdiction requirements.

### **More information on vehicle standards at:**

<http://www.dotars.gov.au/transreg/vsb/index.aspx>

**Protect a Precious Resource:  
Encourage Seatbelt Use in Trucks**