

SAFETY ALERT

Recently the Army experienced a tragic accident involving a variation of the High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) family of vehicles. This vehicle utilized a two-point seatbelt restraint system common to older versions of the HMMWV. What makes this accident especially tragic is that the driver of the vehicle was wearing his seatbelt during the course of the accident. Unfortunately, he was not wearing it correctly.

The Army recognized a significant hazard associated with the standard two-point seatbelt restraint system in the HMMWV. While the seatbelt is retractable, it does not contain an inertial stopping device that most civilian vehicles have as standard equipment. This means that the user must remove all slack from the retractor and tighten the seatbelt snug across the body. Failure to do so prevents the seatbelt from performing as designed and endangers the user. Instructions on proper wear of the seatbelt and warnings about the hazards associated with this seatbelt are posted in TM 9-2320-280-10.

The two-point seatbelt system is currently being phased out. Modification Work Order 9-2320-280-35-2, dated 1 Jun 96, outlines the procedures for installation of the three-point seatbelt restraint system for basic versions of the HMMWV. Until the completion of these modifications, commanders should do the following:

- * Warn personnel of the hazards associated with the two-point seatbelt restraint system.
- * Train personnel on the correct procedures for use of the two-point seatbelt restraint system.
- * Rigidly enforce the requirements of AR 385-55 for mandatory seatbelt use in all vehicles so equipped.

Additionally, commanders should review maintenance and inspection procedures for all vehicles containing the two-point seatbelt restraint system. Ensure all warnings are posted (on the vehicle and in applicable TMs) and adhered to during all types of operations.

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