

- Slightly recline the back of the seat. Although vehicle designs vary, many drivers can achieve the 10-inch distance, even with the driver seat all the way forward, simply by reclining the back of the seat somewhat. If reclining the back of your seat makes it hard to see the road, raise yourself by using a firm, non-slippery cushion, or raise the seat if your vehicle has that feature.
- If your steering wheel is adjustable, tilt it downward. This points the air bag toward your chest instead of your head and neck.

[In its published version, the brochure will be 10 inches tall and will indicate that it should be placed between your breastbone and the center of the air bag cover to check your distance.]

Will following these safety tips guarantee that I will be safe in a crash?

There is no guarantee of safety in a crash, with or without an air bag. However, most of the people killed by air bags would not have been seriously injured if they had followed these safety tips.

Are air bags the reason the back seat is the safest place for children?

No. The back seat has always been safer, even before there were air bags. NHTSA conducted a study of children who died in crashes in the front and back seats of vehicles, very few of which had passenger air bags. The study concluded that placing children in the back reduces the risk of death in a crash by 27 percent, whether or not a child is restrained.

THE ON-OFF SWITCH DECISION

Vehicle owners and lessees can obtain an on-off switch for one or both of their air bags only if they can certify that they are, or a user of their vehicle is, in one of the four risk groups listed below:

Two risk groups have a high enough risk that they would definitely be better off with an on-off switch:

- **Infants in rear-facing infant seats.** A rear-facing infant seat must never be placed in the front seat unless the air bag is turned off.
- **Drivers or passengers with unusual medical conditions.** These are people who have been advised by a physician that an air bag poses a special risk to them because of their condition. However, they should not turn off their air bag unless their physician also has advised them that this risk is greater than what may happen if they do turn off their air bag. Without an air bag, even belted occupants could hit their head, neck or chest in a crash.

A national conference of physicians considered all medical conditions commonly cited as possible justifications for turning off air bags. The physicians did not recommend turning off air bags for persons with pacemakers, supplemental oxygen, eyeglasses, median sternotomy, angina, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, emphysema, asthma, breast reconstruction, mastectomy, scoliosis (if the person can be positioned properly), previous back or neck surgery, previous facial reconstructive surgery or facial injury, hyperacusis, tinnitus, advanced age,