



# SAFETY ALERT

November 2019

## SEATBELT EXTENDER WARNING

This safety alert has been issued by the NZ Transport Agency following investigation and testing of seatbelt extenders that are likely to fail in the event of a crash.

The NZ Transport Agency are advising all drivers and passengers who currently use or are looking to purchase seatbelt extenders to check that the seatbelt extender is fitted with a manufacturer's identification tag stating it has been tested to a safety standard.

**Seatbelt extenders should not be used unless they can be verified as having been tested to comply with approved safety standards.**

Testing conducted by the Transport Agency has shown that seatbelt extenders readily available online and without markings showing compliance with acceptable standards will, or are highly likely to, fail at loads below a safe standard.

BE CAUTIOUS of purchasing a seatbelt extender online as some can also have counterfeit labels – the presence of a label is NOT A GUARANTEE of a safe product.

Unsafe seatbelt extenders often appear to be high quality and very similar to approved safe seatbelt extenders, but do not rely on the appearance or feel of a seatbelt extender to determine its safety and quality. There can be a large difference in safety and performance between two similar looking products.

Cheaper products online may be attractive but buying from a local retailer who sells verified products can help ensure that the extender is safe and correctly fits for your vehicle before you make a purchase. It can also be easier to get redress if there are problems. However you choose to make a purchase make sure the retailer has all the relevant information about your vehicle – make, model and year.

While the focus of this alert is primarily on seatbelt extenders already in use, wholesalers, retailers, online marketplaces and auto repairers should ensure no more of these are sold or equipped into vehicles.

The Transport Agency did find that extenders from APV and HEMCO passed the testing and achieved the minimum required load, and were labelled as compliant with a safety standard on their identification tag.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

- Check your seatbelt extender has a certification label
- If it doesn't have a certification label DO NOT USE it.
- If the seatbelt extender's tongue isn't the same size as the one on the original seatbelt in your vehicle, DO NOT USE it.
- Only purchase a seatbelt extender from a retailer who sells verified products and who can ensure it fits the seatbelt tongue and buckle in your vehicle.



Example of a seatbelt extender available online



The scary result of poor quality



Example of the label on a counterfeit extender

Note: The highest level of safety is always achieved by using the original seatbelt designed and fitted to the vehicle. Seatbelt extenders should **ONLY BE USED** when absolutely necessary and should be removed when not required.

### CONTACT THE NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY

For queries relating to this safety alert email the Transport Agency at [vehicles@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:vehicles@nzta.govt.nz) with 'Seatbelt extenders' in the subject line.