

Timeline of Travel Safety Laws & Inventions

1. 1863 – First Underground Railway (London)

The London Underground begins service, introducing tunnel ventilation and fire safety concepts that would later shape global transit safety.

2. 1869 – Westinghouse Air Brake Patented

Invented by George Westinghouse for trains, this automatic brake system dramatically improved railway safety by allowing faster and more reliable braking.

3. 1914 – First Electric Traffic Light Installed in the United States (Cleveland, Ohio)

Regulated car movement and significantly reduced automobile collisions at intersections.

4. 1926 – Air Commerce Act of 1926 – Requires Aircraft Safety Belts

Basic lap belts were introduced in airplanes to protect pilots and passengers during turbulence.

5. 1903 – First Driving License Laws in U.S.

States begin requiring driving licenses to ensure motorists understand basic safety and road rules.

6. 1946-51 – Introduction of Radar for Air Traffic Control

Helps prevent mid-air collisions and improves navigation and spacing between planes.

7. 1952 – Invention of the Airbag

Inventor **John W. Hetrick** patented the first automotive airbag system, calling it a “safety cushion assembly.”

8. 1955 – Introduction of Seatbelts in American Cars

In 1955, seatbelts began to appear as optional features in some American cars, most notably in models by Ford and Chrysler. While rudimentary seatbelt designs had existed earlier, this marked one of the first times they were offered to the general public in consumer vehicles.

9. 1958 – Federal Aviation Act (USA)

Establishes the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to regulate aviation safety, aircraft certification, and pilot training.

10. 1966 – U.S. National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act

Mandates vehicle safety standards—like seatbelts, impact protection, and crash testing.

11. 1967 – Introduction of the Black Box Flight Recorder

All commercial aircraft in the United States are required to carry a flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder to aid in crash investigations.

12. 1979– First U.S. Child Car Seat Law (Tennessee)

Aimed at protecting infants and young children during car travel, this law led to nationwide adoption by 1985.

13. 1984 – New York became the first U.S. state to require seatbelt use by law.

Federal law previously required **all new cars** (except buses) sold in the U.S. to be equipped with lap and shoulder belts in front seats but wearing them was optional.

14. 1985 – International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (IMO)

Formalizes rescue zones and cooperation between nations for ship-related emergencies.

15. 1990 – Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Requires accessible transit systems (buses, trains, airports) for people with disabilities.

16. 2001 – Post-9/11 TSA and Enhanced Airport Security

After the terrorist attacks, the U.S. creates the Transportation Security Administration and implements rigorous airport screening protocols globally.

17. 2008 – Positive Train Control Mandated (USA)

An advanced GPS and wireless system to automatically stop or slow trains to prevent collisions.

18. 2011 – International Maritime Organization (IMO) Bans Asbestos on New Ships

Strengthens global shipbuilding safety standards for crew and passengers.

19. 2020 – COVID-19 Pandemic Leads to Global Travel Health Protocols

Introduces widespread use of masks, temperature checks, health declarations, and contactless boarding procedures across all forms of travel.

20. 2023 – Credential Authentication Technology-2 (CAT-2) Added to TSA

TSA Deploys Facial Recognition in over 250 airports