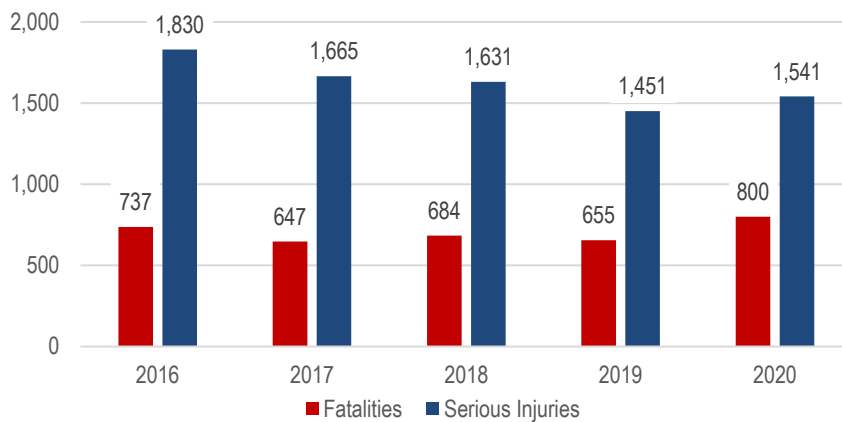


Why a Focus on Occupant Protection?

Despite impressive gains in safety belt usage, efforts to reduce the number of traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries involving unrestrained vehicle occupants in Florida continues to be a challenge in reaching our goal of zero traffic-related fatalities. In 2020, 800 people who died on Florida's roadways weren't wearing a safety belt and 1,541 were seriously injured.

Occupant Protection (2016-2020)



The Florida Occupant Protection Coalition (FOPC) was established in March 2017 to address key recommendations made based on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Uniform Guidelines. The coalition is comprised of individuals who have expertise and familiarity with Florida-specific occupant protection needs. This includes members of agencies and organizations at the national, state, and local level, as well as law enforcement, educators, and public health officials.

The Florida Occupant Protection Strategic Plan calls out four areas that the Coalition will focus on over three years to reduce unrestrained or improperly restrained fatalities and serious injuries. These areas include:

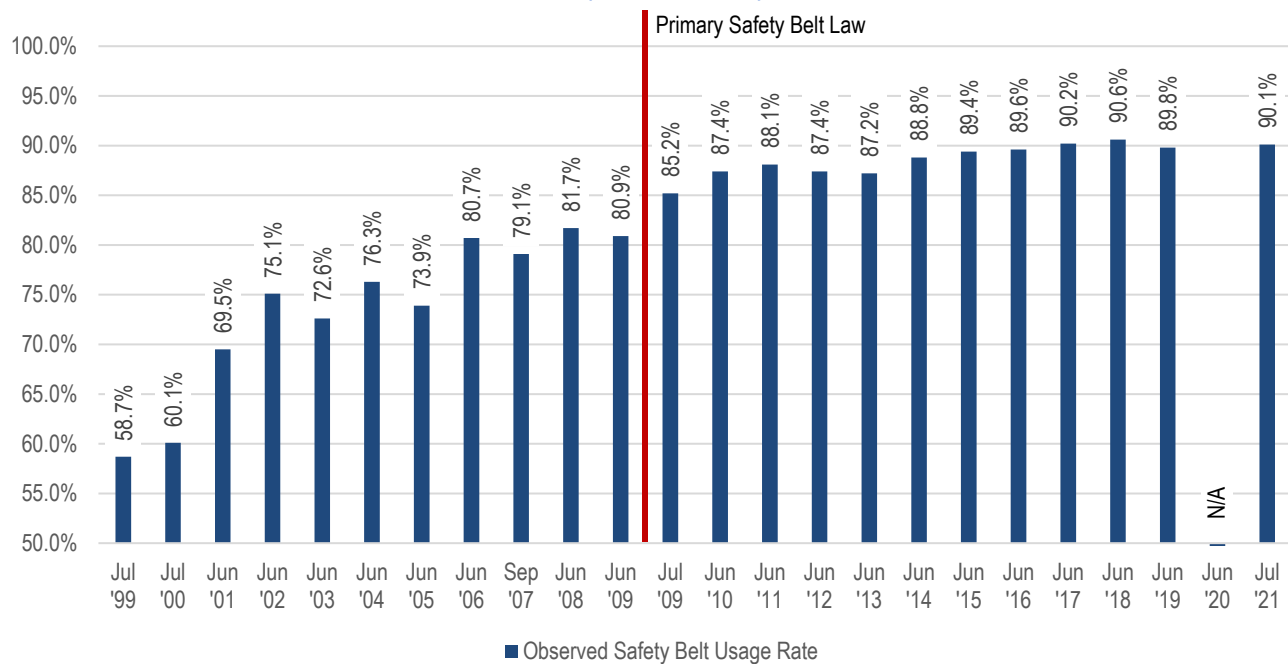
- Program Management;
- Law Enforcement;
- Child Passenger Safety (CPS); and
- Occupant Protection for Low-Use Groups.

Florida Occupant Protection Coalition Members

- CarFit
- DeMond Kolb and Associates
- Florida A&M University, Construction/Civil Engineering Technology
- Department of Health
- Department of Transportation
- Florida Highway Patrol
- Florida Law Enforcement Liaison Program
- Florida Police Chief's Association
- Florida Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)
- Gainesville Fire Rescue
- Goodbaby International
- Golisano Children's Hospital
- Hendry County Public Safety
- Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital
- National Safety Council
- Okeechobee County Fire Rescue
- Orange County Sheriff's Office
- Orlando Police Department
- Preusser Research Group
- Safe Kids
- Santa Rosa County Development Services
- Seminole Police Department
- South East American Indian Council
- St. Joseph's Children's Hospital, Child Advocacy Center
- Tallahassee Community College
- Tampa Police Department
- The Children's Hospital of South Florida, Child Advocacy Program
- Trauma Agency, Health Care District Palm Beach County
- University of Florida
- University of North Florida
- Wolfson Children's Hospital

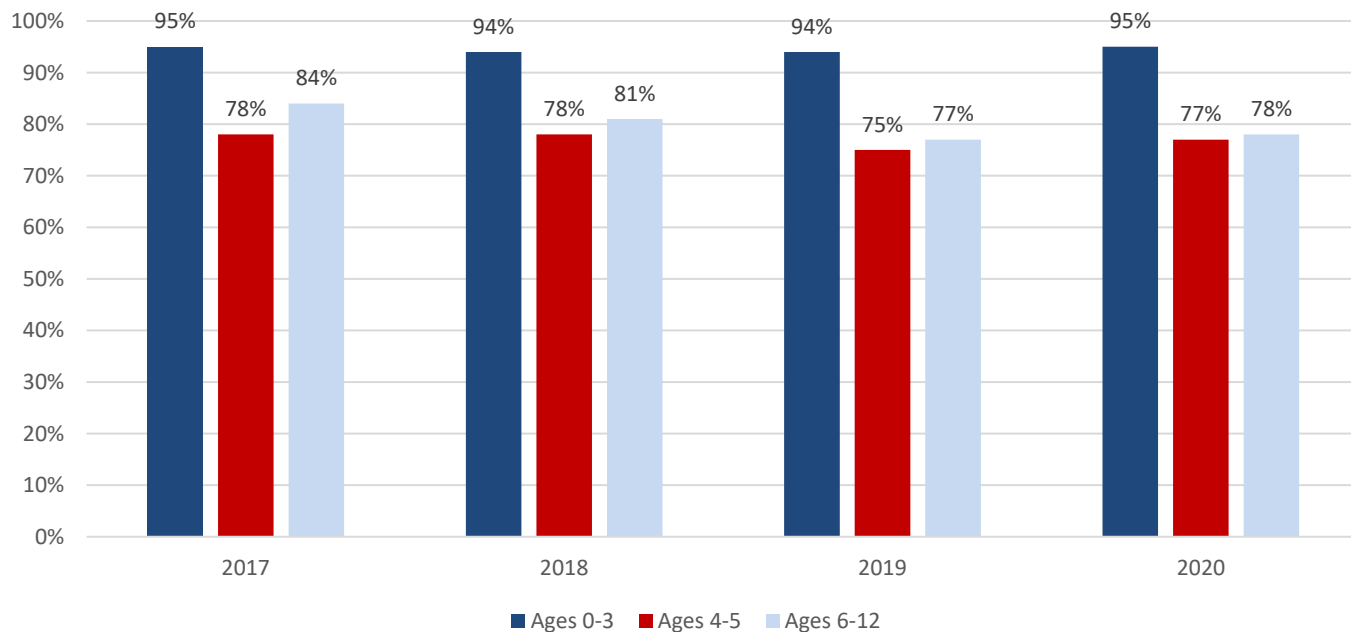
Florida conducts an annual survey¹ of safety belt usage and has done so since 1999. Since survey efforts began, Florida has seen an increase of more than 30 percentage points and reached more than 90 percent of occupants observed wearing their safety belt for the first time in 2017. In 2021, Florida’s observed safety belt usage rate was 90.1 percent, just 0.5 percentage points short of the state’s all-time high observed safety belt usage rate. More information about Florida’s annual observational safety belt survey can be found in the [Safety Belt Use In Florida 2021 Final Report](#).

Observed Safety Belt Usage Rate (1999-2021)

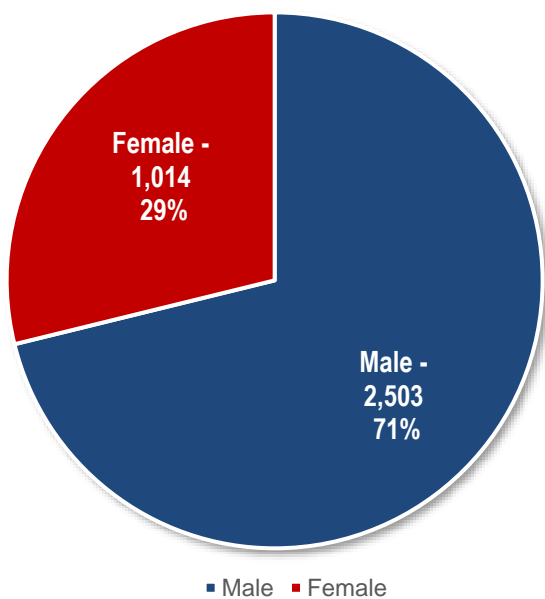


¹ Florida did not conduct an observational survey in 2020 due to COVID-19 challenges.

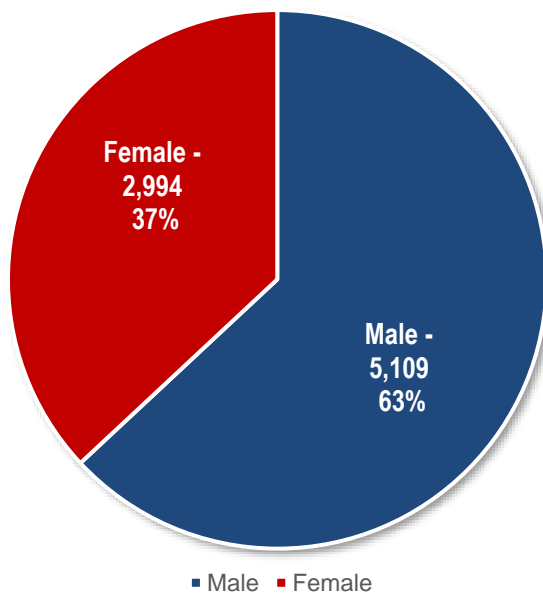
Observed Child Restraint Usage by Age Category (2017-2020)



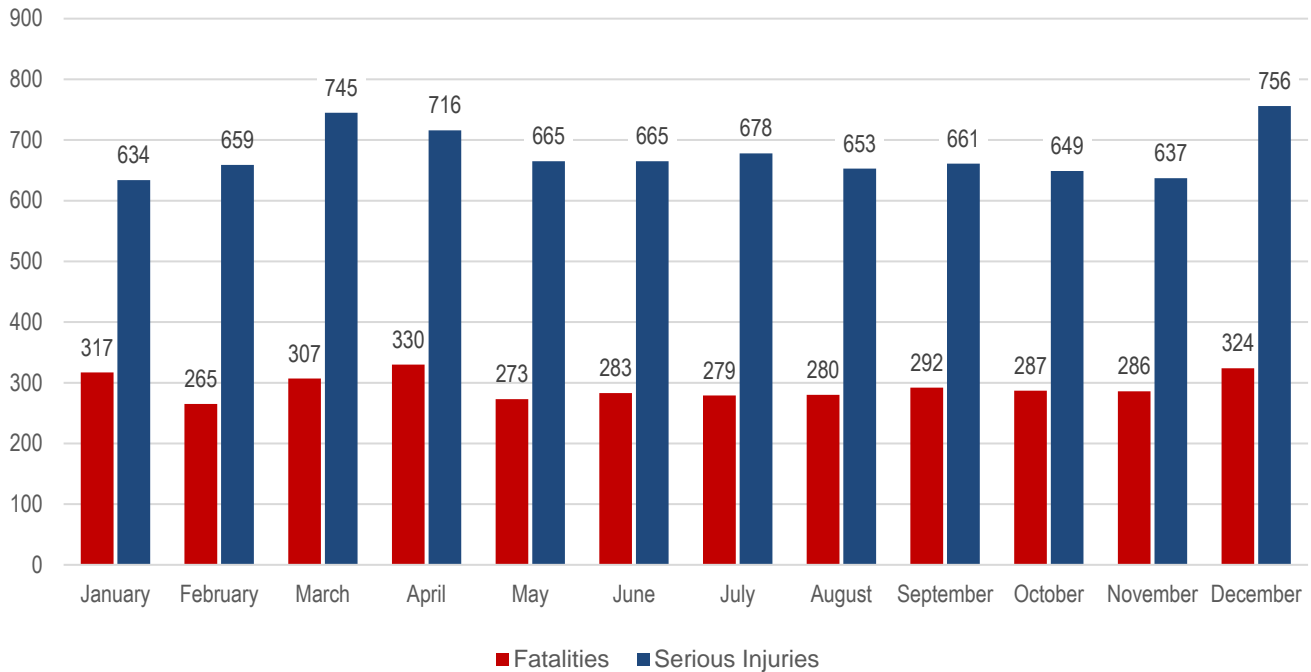
Unrestrained Occupant Fatalities (2016-2020)



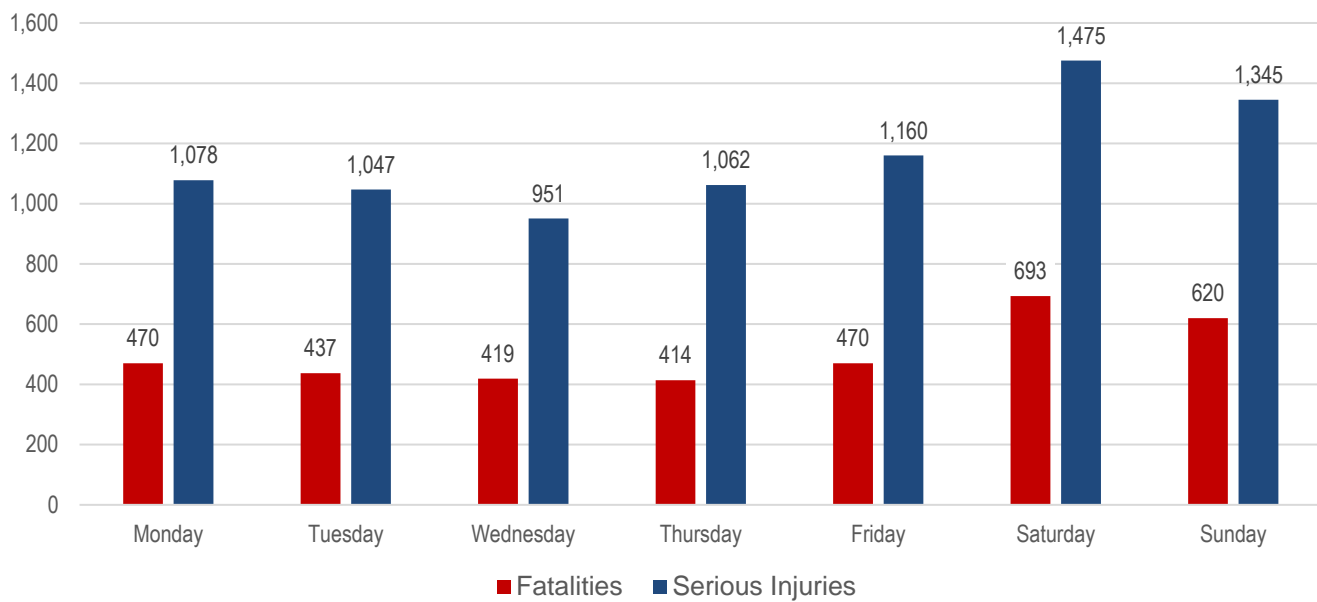
Unrestrained Occupant Serious Injuries (2016-2020)



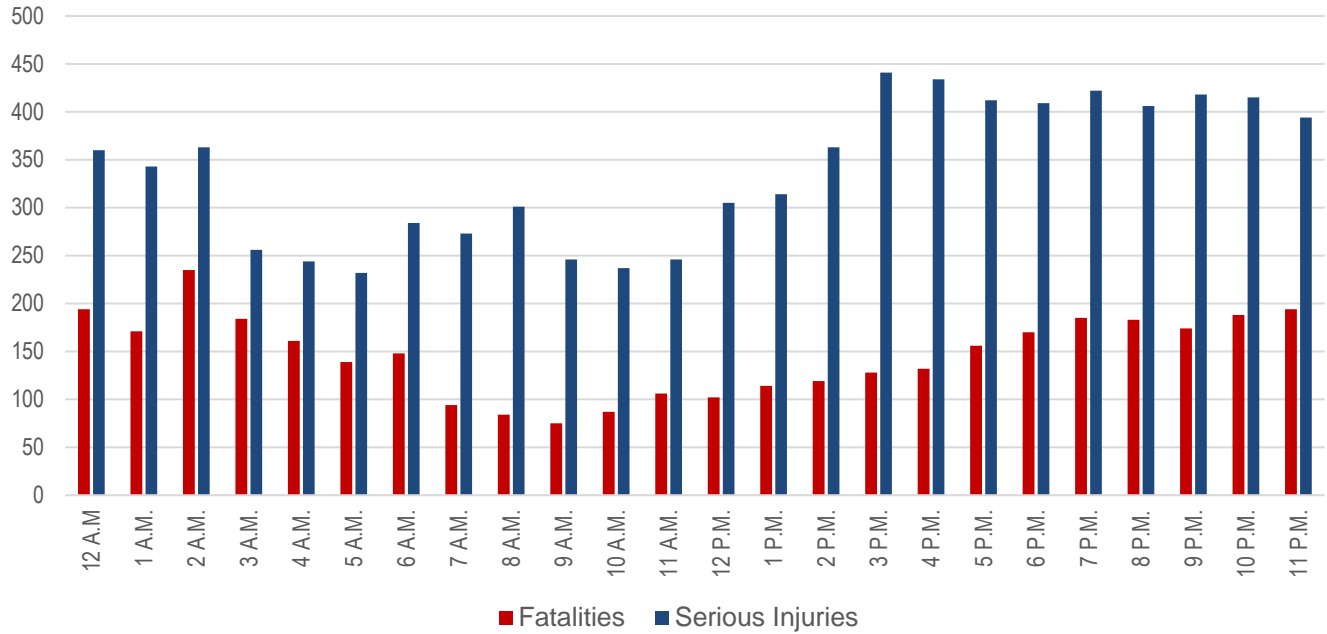
Unrestrained Occupant Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Month of Year (2016-2020)



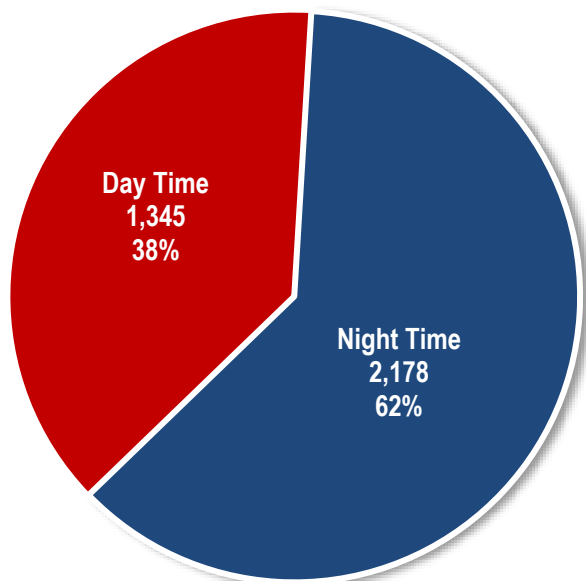
Unrestrained Occupant Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Day of Week (2016-2020)



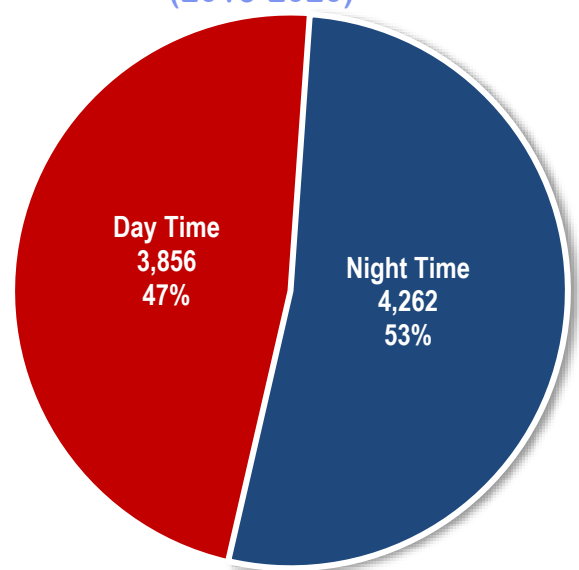
Unrestrained Occupant Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Time of Day (2016-2020)



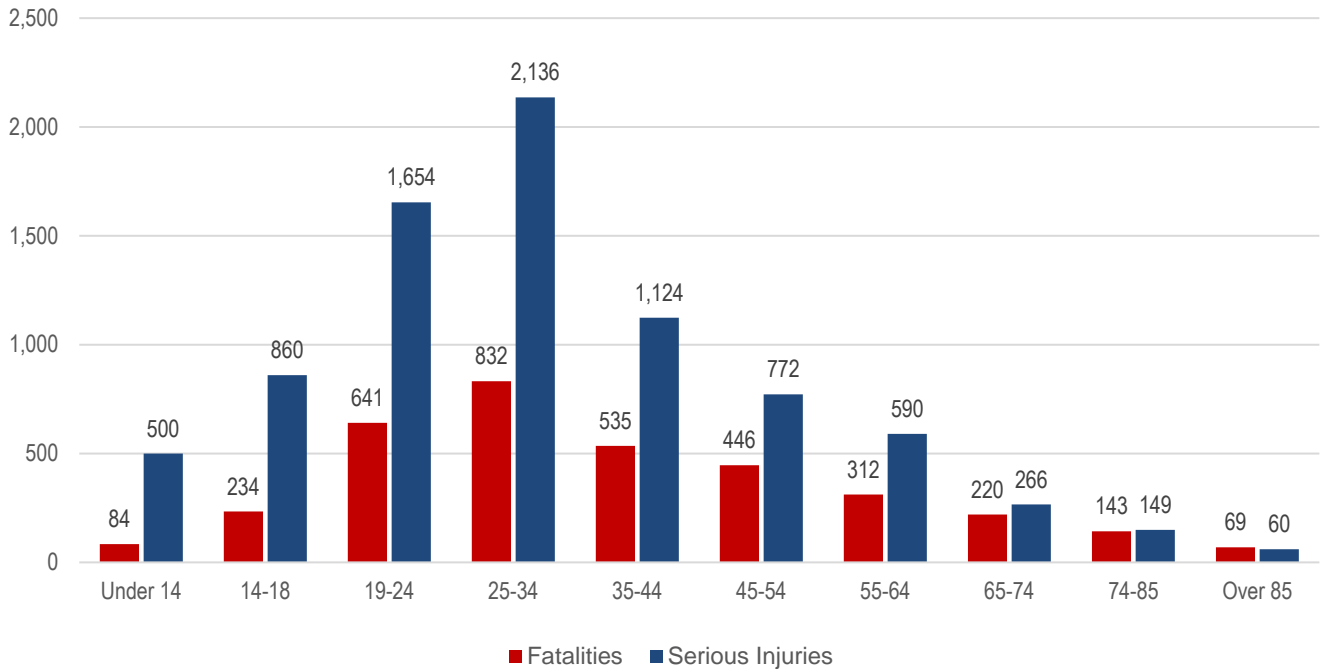
Unrestrained Occupant Fatalities (2016-2020)



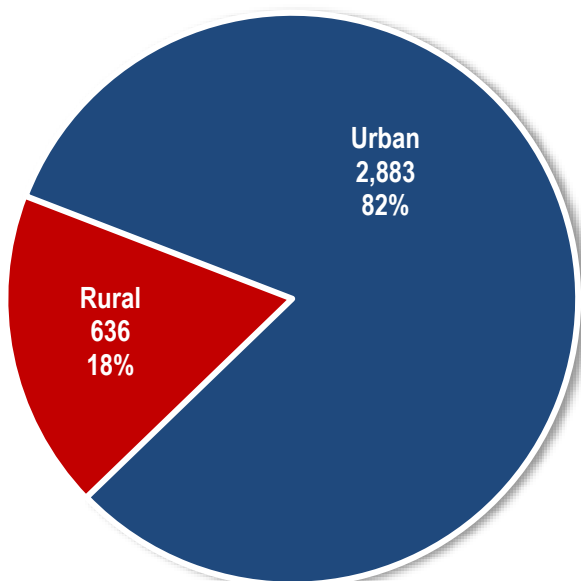
Unrestrained Occupant Serious Injuries (2016-2020)



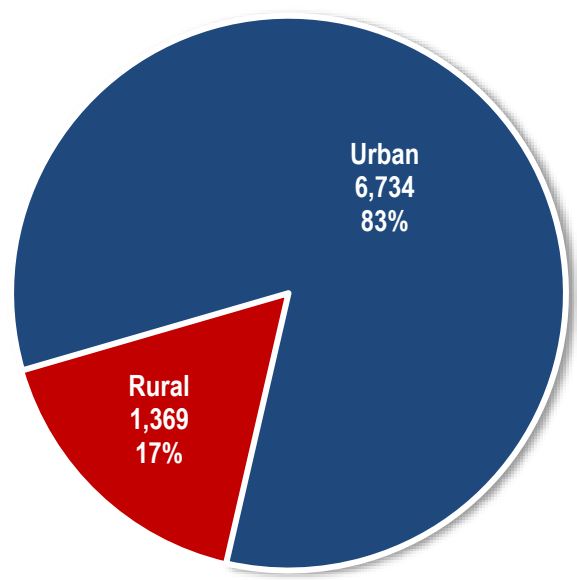
Unrestrained Occupant Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Age (2016-2020)



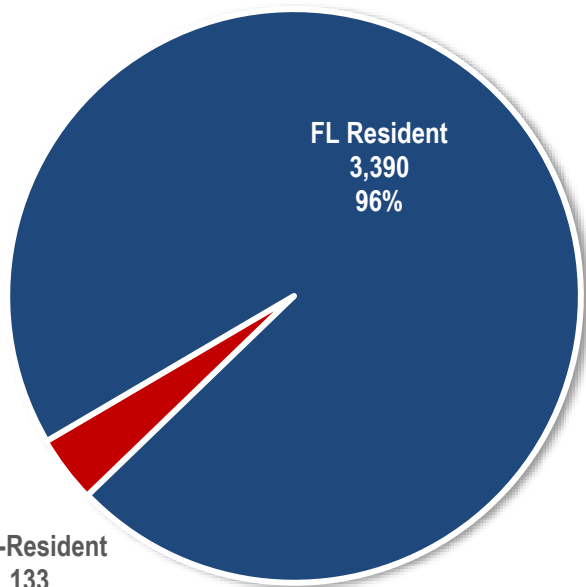
Unrestrained Occupant Fatalities (2016-2020)



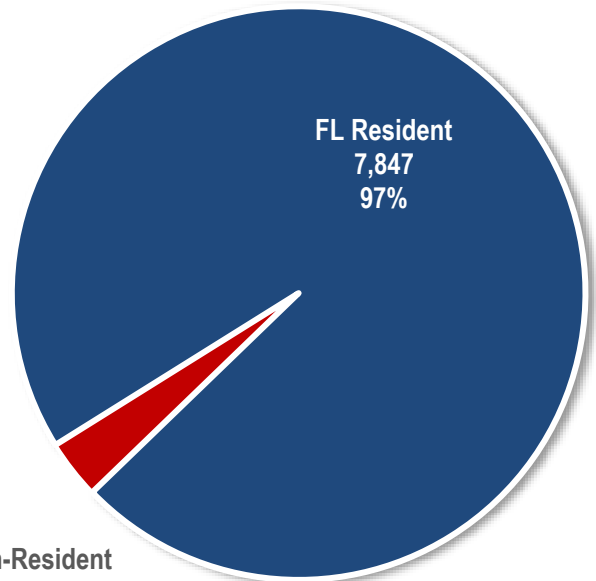
Unrestrained Occupant Serious Injuries (2016-2020)



**Unrestrained Occupant Fatalities
(2016-2020)**



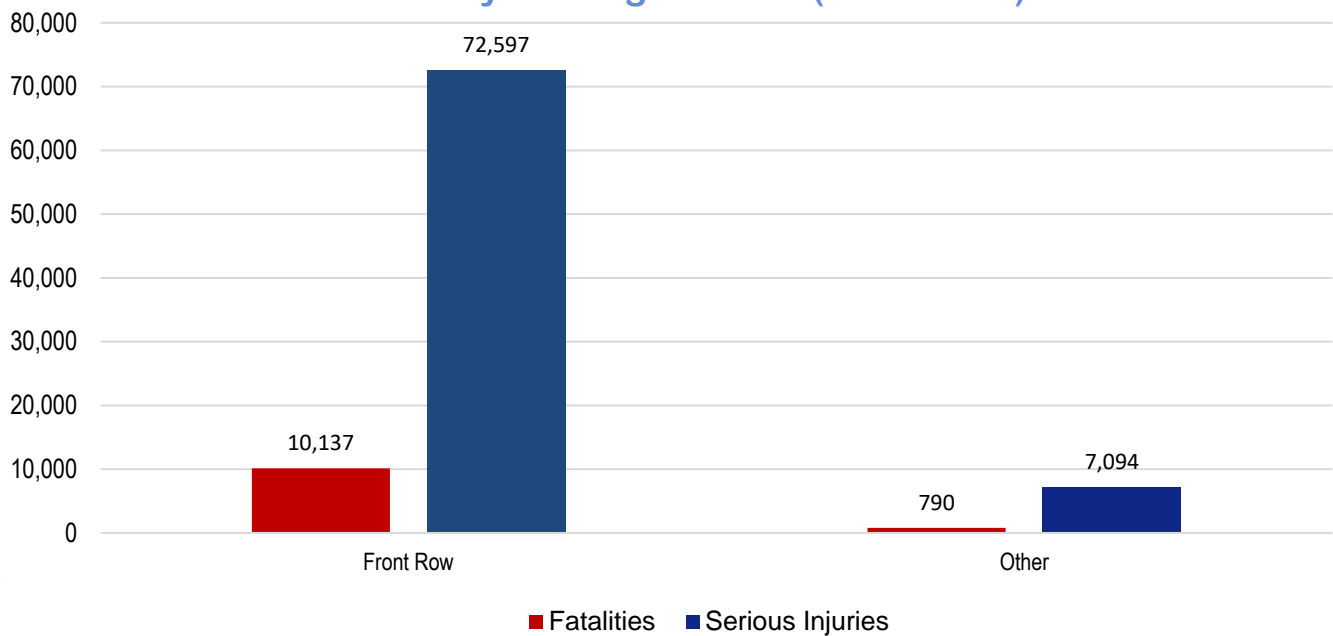
**Unrestrained Occupant
Serious Injuries
(2016-2020)**



Non-Resident
133
4%

Non-Resident
271
3%

**Unrestrained Occupant Fatalities and Serious Injuries
by Seating Position (2016-2020)**



Addressing Occupant Protection

The FOPC and their organizations are working to implement the following strategies to reduce fatalities and serious injuries related to a lack of proper seat belt use.

Program Management

- Conduct FOPC meetings and track action plan progress.
- Analyze, track, and report occupant protection data and related trends.
- Identify and prioritize occupant protection policies and best practices.
- Maintain a robust and active FOPC membership.
- Research and track best practices related to emerging technologies impacting occupant protection strategies.

Law Enforcement

- Improve law enforcement awareness of important occupant protection challenges.
- Expand law enforcement tools and resources.

Child Passenger Safety (CPS)

- Expand, improve, and retain CPS technicians and instructors.
- Expand CPS digital and print resources and materials.
- Support mandatory diversion programs for first-time child restraint offenders.
- Support enhancement of Florida's CPS laws and policies.

Low-Use Groups

- Focus paid media activities on low-use groups.
- Expand digital and print resources and materials for low-use groups.
- Support the expansion of programs that encourage and support occupant protection for low-use groups.
- Support enhancement of Florida's safety belt laws and policies.