

# **Seat Belt Use Rates by State**



**August 2-3, 2022**

**Presented at  
Florida Occupant Protection Statewide  
Coalition Meeting  
Gainesville, FL**

# **Florida Occupant Protection Action Plan**

- **Objective 1C: Policies and Best Practices**
  - **Review literature for states above the national average safety belt use rate**
  - **Identify innovative strategies and best practices**

# Methods

- Review literature
  - NHTSA Traffic Safety Fact Sheet 2014-2021
  - CDC Fact Sheets, IIHS
- Synthesize data to identify target states
- Select states with the highest use rates
  - 5 & 10-year average
    - Excluding 2020 in 5-year\*
    - 22 states reported use rate in 2020

State or U.S. Territory	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
California	95.00%	97.40%	97.10%	97.30%	96.50%	96.20%	95.90%
Georgia	92.00%	95.50%	97.30%	97.20%	97.20%	97.10%	96.30%
Hawaii	93.00%	91.00%	93.50%	92.80%	94.50%	96.90%	97.80%
Oregon	96.80%	98.20%	97.80%	95.50%	96.20%	96.80%	95.80%
District of Columbia	92.40%	87.50%	93.20%	95.50%	94.10%	93.60%	95.10%
Washington	96.90%	94.50%	94.50%	94.60%	94.70%	94.80%	93.20%
Illinois	93.60%	93.70%	94.10%	95.20%	93.00%	93.80%	94.60%
Michigan	93.60%	93.00%	93.30%	92.80%	94.50%	94.10%	93.40%
Iowa	92.40%	91.90%	92.80%	93.00%	93.80%	91.40%	93.90%
Indiana	93.60%	91.60%	90.20%	91.90%	92.40%	93.00%	93.40%
New Jersey	88.30%	91.00%	87.60%	91.40%	93.40%	94.10%	94.50%
New York	90.40%	91.10%	90.60%	92.20%	91.80%	93.40%	92.90%
Guam	81.40%	93.80%	90.10%	91.50%	90.10%	91.00%	92.20%
No. Mariana Islands	NA	90.50%	91.40%	95.60%	92.30%	92.20%	89.30%
Minnesota	93.60%	91.80%	94.70%	94.00%	93.20%	92.00%	92.40%
Delaware							
Nevada							
Connecticut							
South Carol.							
Alaska							
Texas							
New Mexico							
Maryland							
North Carol.							
Nationwide							
Florida							
Tennessee							



DOT HS 813 241  
December 2021

# Seat Belt Use in 2021 – Overall Results

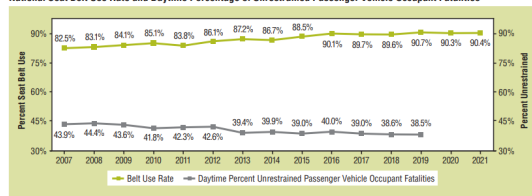
The national estimate of seat belt use by adult front-seat passengers in 2021 was 90.4 percent, not statistically different (at the 0.05 level) from 90.3 percent observed in 2020. The seat belt use rate estimate represents the percentage of occupants who are belted during an average daylight moment.

Figure 1 displays an increasing trend of seat belt use over a 15-year period, contrasted with a declining trend in the percentage of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities during daylight. The 2021 survey found no significant changes in seat belt use from 2020 to 2021 for any of the occupant categories listed in Table 1. Seat belt use continued to be higher in the west region compared to the other regions of the country (Figure 2). Seat belt use also continued to be higher in the States in which vehicles can be pulled over solely for occupants not using seat belts ("primary law States") compared to the States with weaker enforcement laws ("secondary law States") or no seat belt laws for adults (Figure 3).

The 2021 data collection occurred during the usual timeframe of early June, immediately following the *Click It or Ticket* campaign. The 2020 data collection occurred in August, two months later than usual, and without the *Click It or Ticket* campaign preceding it due to the coronavirus pandemic. The number of occupants observed in the 2021 survey rebounded by 9 percent following a decline in 2020.

These results are from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), the only survey that provides nationwide probability-based observed data on seat belt use in the United States. The NOPUS is conducted annually by the National Center for Statistics and Analysis of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Figure 1 National Seat Belt Use Rate and Daytime Percentage of Unrestrained Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities



Source: NOPUS, FARIS 2007-2016 Final File, FARIS 2018 A19F

<sup>1</sup> The FARIS 2020 and 2021 data on the percentages of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities during daylight will be available in early 2022 and 2023.

NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590

2019	2020	2021	2020-2021 Change
84.9%	85.0%	83.9%	0.9%
89.7%	NA	89.8%	NA
87.5%	NA	85.7%	NA
88.9%	NA	91.8%	NA
90.4%	89.9%	91.4%	1.5%
81.6%	NA	77.5%	NA
94.4%	NA	92.6%	NA
89.4%	NA	92.4%	NA
8.6%	79.3%	80.0%	0.7%
7.7%	86.1%	88.0%	1.9%
8.9%	89.9%	92.2%	2.3%
7%	80.6%	81.2%	0.6%
1%	NA	93.2%	NA
1%	72.4%	75.9%	3.1%
1%	NA	93.9%	NA
1%	NA	89.6%	NA
1%	NA	93.2%	NA
87.1%	89.6%	2.5%	
83.7%	81.9%	-1.8%	
NA	84.1%	NA	
NA	84.4%	NA	
94.6%	94.9%	0.3%	
88.9%	89.5%	0.6%	
NA	89.4%	NA	
NA	90.1%	NA	
68.3%	86.9%	18.6%	
NA	90.1%	NA	
NA	89.8%	NA	
NA	88.2%	NA	
1.8%	89.2%	0.4%	
NA	81.7%	NA	
0%	94.2%	1.2%	
NA	88.1%	NA	
1%	88.1%	-1.1%	
1%	80.2%	-2.3%	
1%	96.4%	6.1%	
1%	88.2%	3.5%	
1%	93.1%	NA	
1%	93.9%	NA	
1%	96.4%	NA	
1%	72.3%	4.1%	

# TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS

Crash Stats

A Brief Statistical Summary

DOT HS 813 307

## Seat Belt Use in 2021 — Use Rates in the States and Territories

In 2021, seat belt use in the United States ranged from 72.3 percent in the U.S. Virgin Islands to 97.2 percent in California. Twenty-three States, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands achieved seat belt use rates of 90 percent or higher. These results are from probability-based observational surveys conducted by the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories.

**Background**  
In 2011, NHTSA established new uniform criteria for observational surveys. States conduct and report out from their annual surveys of seat belt use in accordance with the **Uniform Criteria for State Observational Surveys of Seat Belt Use** (per 23 CFR Part 1340). Compliance with the criteria is verified annually by NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis.

**Results**  
Seat belt use rates in the States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, other U.S. Territories, and nationwide from 2014 to 2021 are listed in the table below. Rates in

jurisdictions with primary seat belt enforcement during the calendar year of the survey are shaded in the table. However, the law might not have taken effect when the survey was being conducted. The 2021 State and Territory survey results include the following:

- Twenty-three States, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands achieved belt use rates of 90 percent or higher. Jurisdictions with stronger seat belt enforcement laws continue to exhibit generally higher use rates than those with weaker laws.

**National Seat Belt Use Rate**  
The nationwide seat belt use rate was 90.4 percent in 2021, as measured by NHTSA's National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS). NOPUS is a national probability-based survey, independent from State belt use surveys. NOPUS provides NHTSA's official measure of nationwide seat belt use in the United States and other related information. Due to a difference in survey methodology, NOPUS provides a different measure of nationwide use than would be obtained by combining the use rates from the States and Territories.

State or U.S. Territory	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2020-2021 Change	
Alabama	86.7%	89.3%	88.0%	92.0%	91.6%	92.2%	NA	91.3%	NA	
Alaska	87.2%	86.6%	88.0%	86.1%	85.9%	86.6%	NA	88.8%	NA	
Arizona	74.4%	77.7%	75.1%	81.0%	78.0%	81.8%	NA	84.2%	NA	
Arkansas	82.4%	85.4%	84.0%	80.3%	86.3%	86.3%	NA	89.6%	0.3%	
California	95.1%	90.4%	94.1%	93.6%	90.6%	90.9%	NA	94.3%	NA	
Colorado	91.9%	90.4%	89.6%	97.2%	96.3%	97.1%	97.8%	NA	82.9%	NA
Connecticut	93.7%	89.4%	87.2%	86.9%	81.4%	84.3%	84.3%	NA	93.5%	NA
Delaware	88.8%	87.3%	84.0%	81.7%	84.6%	84.6%	84.6%	89.2%	-2.9%	
Dist. Of Columbia	97.3%	92.8%	82.9%	93.6%	93.4%	93.4%	93.4%	93.2%	0.2%	
Florida	93.6%	91.1%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.4%	93.4%	93.4%	0.0%	
Georgia	80.2%	81.7%	82.4%	83.0%	84.6%	84.6%	84.6%	84.6%	0.0%	
Hawaii	94.1%	95.2%	92.4%	93.0%	93.4%	93.4%	93.4%	93.4%	0.0%	
Idaho	90.2%	91.9%	92.4%	91.4%	93.9%	93.9%	93.9%	93.9%	0.0%	
Illinois	92.8%	93.0%	93.8%	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	0.0%	
Indiana										
Iowa										

This document is:  
dated (2022, May), Seat Belt Use Rates and Territories  
Report No. DOT HS 813  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

For questions regarding the information presented in this report, please contact [NCSARequests@dot.gov](mailto:NCSARequests@dot.gov). This Crash\*Stats and other general information on traffic safety can be found at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/>.

# Findings

## Top States 2012-2021

- California
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Oregon
- D.C.
- Washington
- Illinois
- Michigan
- Iowa
- \*Minnesota
- \*Indiana

# Findings

## Comparison in Ranking 5-year\* to 10-year\* average

- American Samoa -8
- Guam -7
- Connecticut -7
- New Jersey -5
- Utah -5
- Wisconsin -4
- Montana -4
- Indiana -3
- New York -3

# **Findings**

## **Comparison in Ranking 5-year\* to 10-year\* average**

- **Minnesota +6**
- **New Mexico +6**
- **Alabama +5**
- **Puerto Rico +5**
- **Nevada +4**
- **Ohio +4**
- **Texas +3**
- **Maryland +3**
- **Kentucky +3**
- **Oklahoma +3**
- **North Dakota +3**

# Comparison Florida 2012-2021

- **Florida +2**

- **5- year  
Average**

- **Rank 27**

- **10-year  
Average**

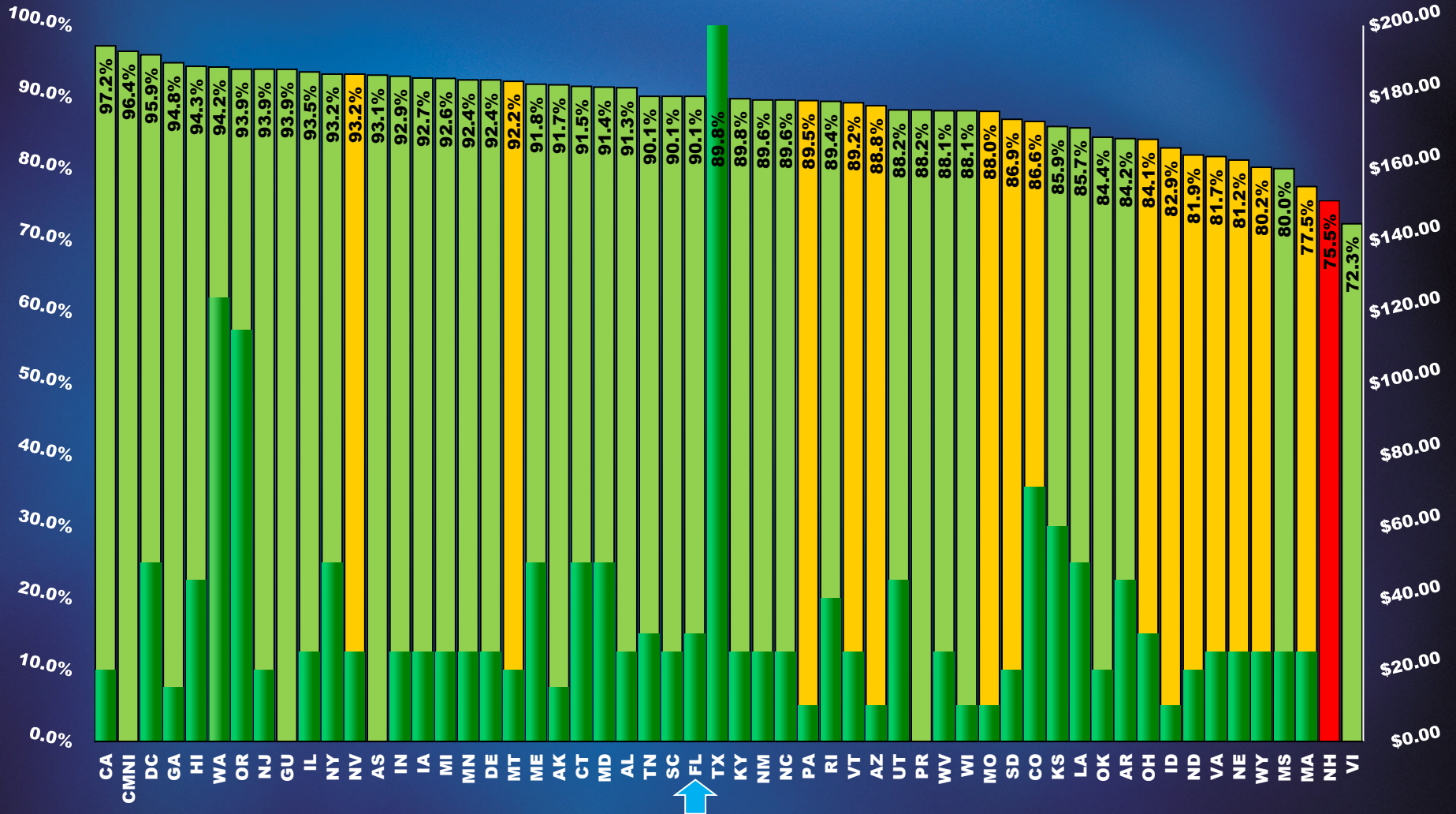
- **Rank 25**



# 2021 Seat Belt Use Rates

## By Law Type and State

■ Primary
 ■ Secondary
 ■ No Adult Seat Belt Law
 ■ Fine



State surveys conducted in accordance with Section 402 FAST Act; Source: IIHS (fine)

# CDC Fact Sheets 2009-2018 Top 10 States

## IN CALIFORNIA:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 16 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN WASHINGTON, D.C.:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 16 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN GEORGIA:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, front seat passengers aged 18 and older, and passengers aged 8-17 in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN WASHINGTON:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 16 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children less than 57 inches tall be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN OREGON:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 16 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN NEW JERSEY:

- Seat belt laws are primary for drivers and front seat passengers and secondary for rear seat passengers. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 8 and older and younger passengers who are more than 57 inches tall, in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

# CDC Fact Sheets 2009-2018

## IN ILLINOIS:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 16 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN NEW YORK:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 16 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN NEVADA:

- Seat belt laws are secondary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 6 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 5 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN INDIANA:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 16 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

# CDC Fact Sheets 2009-2018

## IN HAWAII:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 8 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN MICHIGAN:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers and front seat passengers aged 16 and older.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN MINNESOTA:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 8 and older and younger passengers who are more than 57 inches tall, in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN INDIANA:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers aged 16 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 7 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

## IN IOWA:

- Seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers and front seat passengers aged 18 and older.
- Child restraint laws require that all children aged 5 and under be buckled in a car seat or booster seat.

# Summary

- **Primary Seat Belt Law**
- **Increased Penalty Fines**
- **High Visibility Enforcement**
- **Nighttime Seat Belt Enforcement Programs**

# **Next Steps Needed**

- **Case Study Interviews**
- **Law Enforcement**
  - **Mobilization Efforts**
- **Media & Campaigns Spending**
- **Education & Encouragement**
  - **Diversion Programs**
- **Demographics**

**Thank you!**

