



Seat Belt Use in 2012—Use Rates in the States and Territories

In 2012, seat belt use in the United States ranged from 66.5 percent in South Dakota to 96.9 percent in Washington. These results are from probability-based observational surveys conducted by 50 States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories. These surveys are conducted in accordance with criteria established by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to ensure reliable results. Compliance with the criteria is verified annually by NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis.

In 2011 NHTSA established new uniform criteria (23 CFR Part 1340) for observational surveys. In the transitional period, NHTSA allows the States and Territories the option to use either the old or new criteria for 2012 surveys. In 2012, twenty-six States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands used surveys that conformed to the new uniform criteria. From 2013 and beyond all State and Territory observational surveys will be based on the new criteria. Seat belt use rates in the States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, other U. S. Territories, and nationwide from 2005 to 2012 are listed in the following table. 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 2012 State and Territory survey results include the following:

- Sixteen States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico achieved seat belt use rates of 90 percent or higher. These States are Washington, Oregon, California, Texas, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Hawaii, Iowa, Georgia, New Mexico, Maryland, Nevada, South Carolina and New York, in descending order.
- 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 was 86 percent in 2012 as measured by NHTSA's National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS). NOPUS is a national probability-based survey, which is 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.

Table: Seat Belt Use in the States, U. S. Territories, and Nationwide, 2005–2012

State or U.S. Territory	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2011–2012 Change
Alabama	81.8%	82.9%	82.3%	86.1%	90.0%	91.4%	88.0%	89.5%	1.5%
Alaska*	78.4%	83.2%	82.4%	84.9%	86.1%	86.8%	89.3%	88.1%	-1.2%
Arizona	94.2%	78.9%	80.9%	79.9%	80.8%	81.8%	82.9%	82.2%	-0.7%
Arkansas*	68.3%	69.3%	69.9%	70.4%	74.4%	78.3%	78.4%	71.9%	-6.5%
California*	92.5%	93.4%	94.6%	95.7%	95.3%	96.2%	96.6%	95.5%	-1.1%
Colorado*	79.2%	80.3%	81.1%	81.7%	81.1%	82.9%	82.1%	80.7%	-1.4%
Connecticut*	81.6%	83.5%	85.8%	88.0%	85.9%	88.2%	88.4%	86.8%	-1.6%
Delaware*	83.8%	86.1%	86.6%	91.3%	88.4%	90.7%	90.3%	87.9%	-2.4%
Dist. Of Columbia*	88.8%	85.4%	87.1%	90.0%	93.0%	92.3%	95.2%	92.4%	-2.8%
Florida*	73.9%	80.7%	79.1%	81.7%	85.2%	87.4%	88.1%	87.4%	-0.7%
Georgia	89.9%	90.0%	89.0%	89.6%	88.9%	89.6%	93.0%	92.0%	-1.0%
Hawaii*	95.3%	92.5%	97.6%	97.0%	97.9%	97.6%	96.0%	93.4%	-2.6%
Idaho	76.0%	79.8%	78.5%	76.9%	79.2%	77.9%	79.1%	79.0%	-0.1%
Illinois	86.0%	87.8%	90.1%	90.5%	91.7%	92.6%	92.9%	93.6%	0.7%

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Table: Seat Belt Use in the States, U. S. Territories, and Nationwide, 2005–2012

State or U.S. Territory	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2011–2012 Change
Indiana	81.2%	84.3%	87.9%	91.2%	92.6%	92.4%	93.2%	93.6%	0.4%
Iowa*	87.1%	89.6%	91.3%	92.9%	93.1%	93.1%	93.5%	92.4%	-1.1%
Kansas*	69.0%	73.5%	75.0%	77.4%	77.0%	81.8%	82.9%	79.5%	-3.4%
Kentucky	66.7%	67.2%	71.8%	73.3%	79.7%	80.3%	82.2%	83.7%	1.5%
Louisiana*	77.7%	74.8%	75.2%	75.5%	74.5%	75.9%	77.7%	79.3%	1.6%
Maine*	75.8%	77.2%	79.8%	83.0%	82.6%	82.0%	81.6%	84.4%	2.8%
Maryland*	91.1%	91.1%	93.1%	93.3%	94.0%	94.7%	94.2%	91.1%	-3.1%
Massachusetts	64.8%	66.9%	68.7%	66.8%	73.6%	73.7%	73.2%	72.7%	-0.5%
Michigan	92.9%	94.3%	93.7%	97.2%	98.0%	95.2%	94.5%	93.6%	-0.9%
Minnesota*	83.9%	83.3%	87.8%	86.7%	90.2%	92.3%	92.7%	93.6%	0.9%
Mississippi	60.8%	73.6%	71.8%	71.3%	76.0%	81.0%	81.9%	83.2%	1.3%
Missouri	77.4%	75.2%	77.2%	75.8%	77.2%	76.0%	79.0%	79.4%	0.4%
Montana	80.0%	79.0%	79.6%	79.3%	79.2%	78.9%	76.9%	76.3%	-0.6%
Nebraska*	79.2%	76.0%	78.7%	82.6%	84.8%	84.1%	84.2%	78.6%	-5.6%
Nevada*	94.8%	91.2%	92.2%	90.9%	91.0%	93.2%	94.1%	90.5%	-3.6%
New Hampshire	NA	63.5%	63.8%	69.2%	68.9%	72.2%	75.0%	68.6%	-6.4%
New Jersey*	86.0%	90.0%	91.4%	91.8%	92.7%	93.7%	94.5%	88.3%	-6.2%
New Mexico	89.5%	89.6%	91.5%	91.1%	90.1%	89.8%	90.5%	91.4%	0.9%
New York	85.0%	83.0%	83.5%	89.1%	88.0%	89.8%	90.5%	90.4%	-0.1%
North Carolina*	86.7%	88.5%	88.8%	89.8%	89.5%	89.7%	89.5%	87.5%	-2.0%
North Dakota*	76.3%	79.0%	82.2%	81.6%	81.5%	74.8%	76.7%	80.9%	4.2%
Ohio*	78.7%	81.7%	81.6%	82.7%	83.6%	83.8%	84.1%	82.0%	-2.1%
Oklahoma*	83.1%	83.7%	83.1%	84.3%	84.2%	85.9%	85.9%	83.8%	-2.1%
Oregon	93.3%	94.1%	95.3%	96.3%	96.6%	97.0%	96.6%	96.8%	0.2%
Pennsylvania	83.3%	86.3%	86.7%	85.1%	87.9%	86.0%	83.8%	83.5%	-0.3%
Rhode Island	74.7%	74.0%	79.1%	72.0%	74.7%	78.0%	80.4%	77.5%	-2.9%
South Carolina	69.7%	72.5%	74.5%	79.0%	81.5%	85.4%	86.0%	90.5%	4.5%
South Dakota*	68.8%	71.3%	73.0%	71.8%	72.1%	74.5%	73.4%	66.5%	-6.9%
Tennessee*	74.4%	78.6%	80.2%	81.5%	80.6%	87.1%	87.4%	83.7%	-3.7%
Texas	89.9%	90.4%	91.8%	91.2%	92.9%	93.8%	93.7%	94.0%	0.3%
Utah*	86.9%	88.6%	86.8%	86.0%	86.1%	89.0%	89.2%	81.9%	-7.3%
Vermont	84.7%	82.4%	87.1%	87.3%	85.3%	85.2%	84.7%	84.2%	-0.5%
Virginia*	80.4%	78.7%	79.9%	80.6%	82.3%	80.5%	81.8%	78.4%	-3.4%
Washington	95.2%	96.3%	96.4%	96.5%	96.4%	97.6%	97.5%	96.9%	-0.6%
West Virginia	84.9%	88.5%	89.6%	89.5%	87.0%	82.1%	84.9%	84.0%	-0.9%
Wisconsin	73.3%	75.4%	75.3%	74.2%	73.8%	79.2%	79.0%	79.9%	0.9%
Wyoming*	NA	63.5%	72.2%	68.6%	67.6%	78.9%	82.6%	77.0%	-5.6%
Nationwide**	82%	81%	82%	83%	84%	85%	84%	86%	2%
Puerto Rico*	92.5%	92.7%	92.1%	92.8%	92.3%	NA	91.9%	90.2%	-1.7%
American Samoa	NA	NA	NA	55.7%	60.0%	73.0%	77.0%	75.0%	-2.0%
Guam	NA	NA	81%	85.0%	80.0%	85.0%	81.0%	81.4%	0.4%
N. Mariana Islands	NA	NA	80%	89.8%	84.6%	80.9%	93.7%	NA	NA
U.S. Virgin Island*	NA	80.2%	NA	82.3%	85.6%	86.4%	85.6%	77.9%	-7.7%

Note: Rates in jurisdictions with primary belt enforcement during the calendar year of the survey are shaded.

NA: No rate reported.

*2012 rates in jurisdictions are based on survey with new criteria.

**The “nationwide” rates are from NHTSA’s National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS).



U.S. Department of Transportation
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This issue of Crash•Stats was written by Yuan Yan Chen, a mathematical statistician in NHTSA. For questions regarding the information presented in this document, please contact NCSAWEBSITE@dot.gov. Internet users may access this Crash•Stats and other general information on traffic safety at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/cats/index.aspx>.