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Occupant Restraint Use in 2025: Results From the NOPUS Controlled Intersection Study

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16. Abstract
This report presents results from the 2025 National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) Controlled Intersection Study, the only nationwide probability-based occupant restraint use survey. NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis conducts this survey annually. While the 2025 NOPUS found no significant changes for front-seat belt use, it revealed 12 significant increases for rear-seat belt use alongside several persisting historical trends. Specifically for rear seats, belt use significantly increased from 2024 to 2025 among 16- to 24-year-olds (75.0% in 2024 to 83.5% in 2025); occupants of other races (74.8% in 2024 to 82.2% in 2025); occupants driven by 16- to 24-year-olds (54.3% in 2024 to 72.8% in 2025). Rear-seat belt use also significantly increased for occupants traveling on surface streets (80.3% in 2024 to 85.9% in 2025), in slow traffic (75.5% in 2024 to 84.6% in 2025), in light traffic (75.4% in 2024 to 86.0% in 2025), in vans and SUVs (83.2% in 2024 to 88.2% in 2025), in pickup trucks (71.5% in 2024 to 81.2% in 2025) and in the west region (83.6% in 2024 to 97.1% in 2025). Many historical trends persisted for occupants 8 and older: overall seat belt use continued to be lower in rear seats (84.0%) than in front seats (91.3%). Furthermore, front-seat belt use remained lower for males (89.3%) than for females (93.8%), and lower among Black occupants (84.4%) compared to White occupants (91.5%) and members of other races (94.9%).

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Definitions

The National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) Controlled Intersection (CI) Study provides estimates for all occupants in passenger vehicles travelling on the road during a typical daylight moment, not just those at intersections.

NOPUS counts a vehicle occupant as "**belted**" when observers see a shoulder belt across the front of the body. Observers do not record lap belt use because they cannot reliably observe these restraints from the roadside.

NOPUS counts a child as restrained when observers see the child secured in any of the following ways:

- **Rear-facing car seat**: the child appears to sit in a seat placed on top of the vehicle seat, facing the rear of the vehicle, with harness straps across the front of the child.
- **Forward-facing car seat**: the child appears to sit in a seat placed on top of the vehicle seat, facing the front of the vehicle, with harness straps across the front of the child.
- **High-back booster seat**: the child appears to sit on a seat on top of the vehicle seat, with a shoulder belt across the front of the child.
- **Seat belt or backless booster seat**: a shoulder belt is visible across the front of the child, but observers cannot see if the child is in a seat on top of the vehicle seat.

Children who are not secured in any of these ways are classified as **unrestrained**. The survey does not record "unrestrained" in, for example, a forward-facing car seat with the harness in use. NOPUS does not record lap-only belts and does not distinguish between seat belts and backless booster seats because these assessments cannot be reliably made from the roadside.

NOPUS observers record **race** and **age** by visual assessment. Observers place occupants into the race categories "Black," "White," or "Members of other races," and into age groups 8-15, 16-24, 25-69, and 70 and older. These classifications reflect observers' assessment.

"**Expressways**" are roadways with limited access, while "**surface streets**" are all other roadways.

A roadway has "**fast traffic**" during the observation period when the average speed of passenger vehicles passing the observers is over 50 mph. "**Medium-speed traffic**" is 31 to 50 mph, and "**slow traffic**" is 30 mph or less.

A roadway has "**heavy traffic**" during the observation period if the average number of vehicles on the roadway is greater than 5 per lane per mile. "**Moderately dense traffic**" means greater than 1 but no more than 5 vehicles per lane per mile, and "**light traffic**" means 1 or fewer vehicles per lane per mile.

Urban and Rural area classifications come from the National Center for Education Statistics Locale Classification Boundaries (NCES).

- **Urban** areas are sites where the midpoint of the selected road segment lies within territory assigned to a city, suburban, or town locale code (territory inside a Census-define urbanized area or urban cluster).

- **Rural** areas are sites where the midpoint of the selected road segment lies within territory assigned to a rural locale code (Census defined rural territory).

The NOPUS sample design does not allow for State-by-State restraint use estimates; however, NOPUS produces estimates by **region**:

- **Northeast**: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont
- **Midwest**: Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
- **South**: Alabama, Arkansas, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia
- **West**: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

Executive Summary

NOPUS is the only nationwide probability-based survey of seat belt use for occupants 8 and older in both front and rear seats, motorcycle helmet use, child restraint use for children under 8 years old, and driver electronic device use in the United States. NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) conducts NOPUS annually. Two sub-surveys – the NOPUS Moving Traffic (MT) Survey and the NOPUS Controlled Intersection (CI) Study – make up the NOPUS.

In the CI study, passenger vehicles occupants are observed from the roadside at intersections controlled by stop signs or stoplights. Only stopped vehicles are observed to allow ample time to collect a variety of information required by the survey. NOPUS derives its estimates of seat belt use in rear seats, child restraint use, driver electronic device use, and demographic characteristics of vehicle occupants from the CI study. Estimates from this study reflect the population of all occupants on the road at a typical daylight moment, not just those at intersections. The NOPUS sample was redesigned in 2022 and implemented in the 2024 survey. Details about the NOPUS sample design are in the NOPUS Methodology section of this report.

This report presents results of occupant restraint use from the 2025 NOPUS CI Study. NHTSA publishes the driver electronic device use results and the motorcycle helmet use results in separate research notes. Here are the major findings from the 2025 NOPUS CI Study.

Front-Seat Belt Use (Occupants 8 and Older)

- **Overall Stability**: Front-seat belt use in 2025 was 91.3 percent, not statistically different from 91.2 percent in 2024.
- **Demographic Disparities**: Use continues to be lower for males (89.3%) than for females (93.8%). Seat belt use also continued to be lowest among 16- to 24-year-olds (87.4%) and highest among those 70 and older (92.2 %). Furthermore, seat belt use continues to be lower among Black occupants (84.4%) than White occupants (91.5%) and Members of other races (94.9%).

Rear-Seat Belt Use (Occupants 8 and Older)

Seat belt use continued to be lower among occupants of rear seats (84.0%) than those in front seats (91.3%). 2025 revealed statistically significant increases in rear-seat belt usage across several categories compared to 2024.

- **Demographic Gains**: Usage among 16- to 24-year-olds significantly increased from 75.0 percent in 2024 to 83.5 percent in 2025, and usage among members of other races also significantly increased from 74.8 percent in 2024 to 82.2 percent in 2025.
- **Regional and Legal Factors**: Rear-seat belt use in the West census region significantly increased from 83.6 percent in 2024 to 97.1 percent in 2025. Usage in States with laws requiring belt use in all seating positions also significantly increased from 80.1 percent in 2024 to 86.3 percent in 2025.
- **Driver Influence**: An increasing percentage of passengers buckled up in rear seats when driven by unrestrained drivers (significantly increasing from 44.6 percent in 2024 to 57.8 percent in 2025), male drivers (significantly increasing from 78.5 percent in 2024 to 83.7

percent in 2025), and drivers 16 to 24 years old (significantly increased from 54.3% in 2024 to 72.8 percent in 2025).

- **Environmental Factors**: Rear-seat belt use increased for occupants traveling on surface streets (significantly increasing from 80.3% in 2024 to 85.9% in 2025), in slow traffic (significantly increasing from 75.5% in 2024 to 84.6% in 2025), and in light traffic (significantly increasing from 75.4% in 2024 to 86.0% in 2025).
- **Vehicle Types**: Rear-seat belt use saw statistically significant increases for occupants in vans and SUVs (increasing from 83.2% in 2024 to 88.2% in 2025), and occupants in pickup trucks (increasing from 71.5% in 2024 to 81.2% in 2025).

Child Restraint Use (Children From Birth to 7)

Restraint use for children from birth to 7 years old in 2025 was 92.5 percent, not statistically different from 92.2 percent in 2024.

- **Driver Impact**: Restraint use for children driven by belted drivers (94.5%) continued to be higher than for those driven by unbelted drivers (71.1%).
- **Regional Improvements**: Among the four regions, the West region had the highest child restraint use rate of 97.3 percent in 2025 significantly improving from 93.5 in 2024, while the South region had the lowest child restraint use rate of 89.7 percent. Restraint use for children traveling in the Midwest region significantly increased from 91.4 percent in 2024 to 95.6 percent in 2025.

Introduction

NOPUS is the only nationwide, probability-based survey in the United States that measures seat belt use for occupants 8 and older in both front and rear seats, motorcycle helmet use, child restraint use for children under 8 years old, and driver electronic device use. NCSA conducts NOPUS annually. Two sub-surveys, the MT survey and the CI study, make up the NOPUS.

For the MT survey, data collectors gather front-seat occupant shoulder belt use and motorcyclist helmet use data either from the roadside or from within vehicles on expressways. NOPUS derives its estimates for front-seat belt use and motorcycle helmet use from the MT survey. The report Seat Belt Use in 2025 – Overall Results (National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 2026) describes the collective front-seat belt use estimate, also known as NHTSA's national seat belt estimate.

By contrast, data collectors conduct the NOPUS CI study at intersections controlled by stop signs or stoplights, observing vehicle occupants from the roadside. Because the vehicles are stationary, data collectors have enough time to record occupant characteristics such as race, age, and sex. NOPUS derives its estimates for rear-seat belt use, child restraint use, driver electronic device use, and demographic characteristics of the vehicle occupants from the CI study.

Data collectors only observe motorcycles and passenger vehicles (passenger cars, pickup trucks, SUVs, and vans) for the NOPUS. The survey's population of interest includes all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Sample observation sites consist of Federal, State, and county highways, residential streets, and rural roads. Data is collected only during daylight hours when light is adequate to observe seat belt use through vehicle windshields.

Data collectors gathered the 2025 NOPUS data from June 2 to June 22, 2025, whereas they collected the 2024 data from June 3 to June 20, 2024. In a typical year, data is collected in early June, immediately following the *Click It or Ticket* campaign. The 2025 NOPUS data is based on the observation of 87,385 occupants (approximately 2 percent more than the 2024 sample) inside 66,497 vehicles (approximately 4% more than the 2024 sample). Of those observed occupants, 2,764 were children under 8. The NOPUS Methodology section below discusses more details regarding sampling, data collection, and estimation.

Please note that this report uses the terms "significant" and "statistically significant" interchangeably. "Significant" always means "statistically significant," using a statistical significance level is alpha = .05. In tables below, we format data with p-values that are less than or equal to .05 in boldface type.

The percentages provided in this report are interpreted as the percentage of occupants during an average daylight moment.

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Seat Belt Use in Front Seats

The national seat belt use estimate in 2025 was 91.3 percent; not a significant change from 91.2 percent in 2024 (National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 2026). This section breaks down the demographic characteristics of the occupants who used seat belts in 2025. Table 1 details passenger vehicle occupant seat belt use in front seats for occupants ages 8 and older by demographic and other characteristics in 2024 and 2025. NOPUS demographics are highlighted below.

Use by Age

Figure 1 illustrates the 10-year trend (2016-2025) of front-seat belt use rates across four age groups. Seat belt use among 16- to 24-year-olds has been consistently lower than other age groups. Seat belt use among occupants 70 and older (92.2%) was higher than other age groups in 2025. None of the age groups experienced a significant year-to-year change between 2024 and 2025 in their seat belt use rate (Table 1).

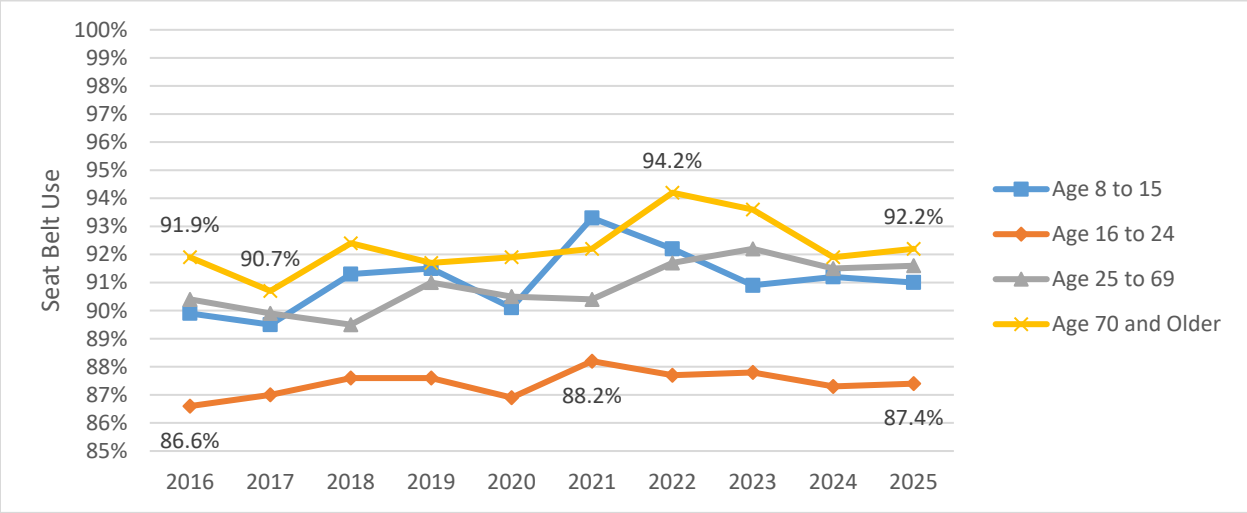

Figure 1. Seat Belt Use in Front Seat by Age for Occupants 8 and Older, 2016 to 2025

Use by Sex

Figure 2 displays the 10-year trend (2016 to 2025) of front-seat belt use for male and female occupants. In 2025 males continue to buckle up at a lower rate (89.3%) compared to females (93.8%) (Table 1). During the 10-year period, seat belt use for males and females was highest in 2023.

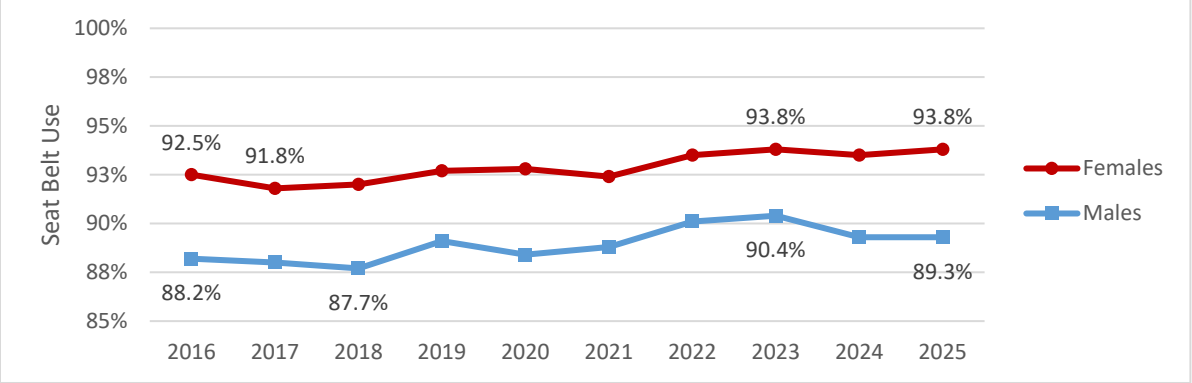

Figure 2. Seat Belt Use in Front Seats by Sex for Occupants 8 and Older, 2016 to 2025

Use by Race

NOPUS classifies observed vehicle occupant race into three categories: Black, White, and members of other races. Data collectors make this characterization based on their visual assessment from the roadside. Figure 3 tracks the front-seat belt use among these three racial categories over a 10-year period (2016 to 2025). In 2025, Black occupants continued to use seat belts at a lower rate than both white occupants and members of other races.

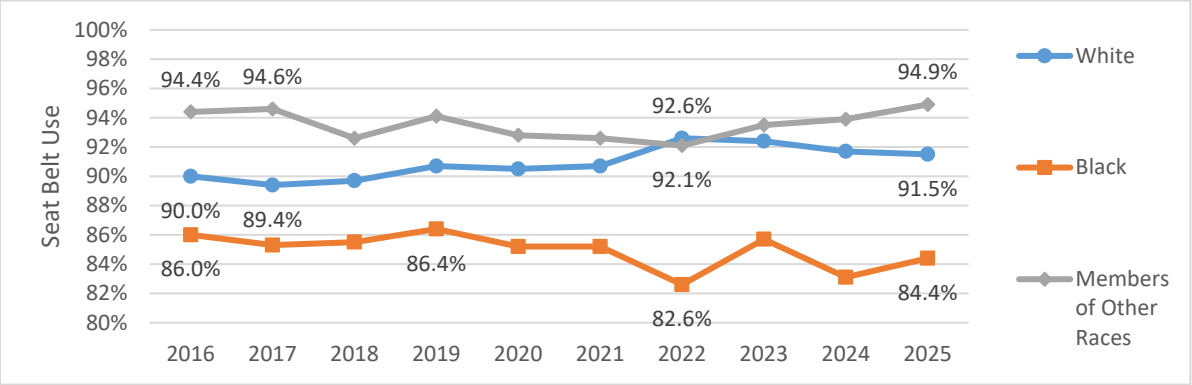

Figure 3. Seat Belt Use in Front Seats by Race for Occupants 8 and Older, 2016 to 2025

Use by Presence of Passengers

Figure 4 demonstrates a passenger on front-seat belt use. In 2025 drivers traveling alone continued to use their seat belts at a lower rate (91.2%) than for a driver traveling with at least one passenger in the vehicle (92.3%) (Table 1).

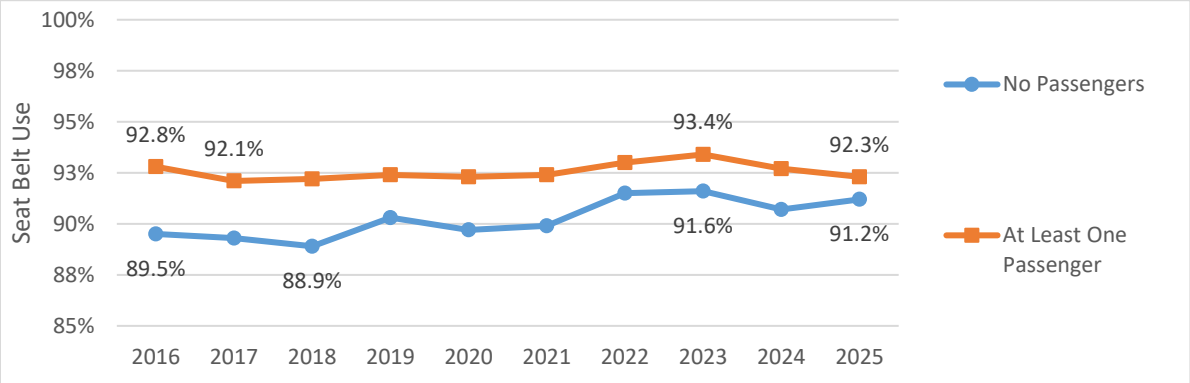

Figure 4. Passenger Effect on Seat Belt Use for Occupants 8 and Older, 2016 to 2025

Table 1. Seat Belt Use in Front Seats (8 and Older) of Passenger Vehicles, by Major Characteristics

Occupant Group[1]	**2024 Belt Use**[2]	**2024 95% Confidence Interval**[3]	**2025 Belt Use**[2]	**2025 95% Confidence Interval**[3]	**2024-2025 Change in Percentage**[4]	**2024-2025 Change 95% Confidence Interval**[5]	**2024-2025 Change *p*-value**[6]
All Occupants	91.2%	(89.0, 92.9)	91.3%	(89.2, 93.0)	0.1	(-1.1, 1.3)	0.85
Males	89.3%	(86.9, 91.4)	89.3%	(86.7, 91.4)	-0.1	(-1.7, 1.5)	0.91
Females	93.5%	(91.8, 94.8)	93.8%	(92.1, 95.2)	0.4	(-0.5, 1.2)	0.37
Occupants by Age Group							
8 to 15	91.2%	(88.3, 93.4)	91.0%	(86.4, 94.2)	-0.2	(-4.9, 4.6)	0.94
16 to 24	87.3%	(82.4, 91.1)	87.4%	(82.3, 91.2)	0.0	(-3.1, 3.2)	0.97
25 to 69	91.5%	(89.4, 93.1)	91.6%	(89.5, 93.2)	0.1	(-1.1, 1.2)	0.89
70 and Older	91.9%	(89.3, 93.9)	92.2%	(89.4, 94.3)	0.3	(-1.9, 2.5)	0.78
Occupants by Race							
White	91.7%	(89.7, 93.4)	91.5%	(89.3, 93.2)	-0.2	(-1.6, 1.1)	0.74
Black	83.1%	(75.6, 88.6)	84.4%	(77.4, 89.6)	1.3	(-1.2, 3.9)	0.29
Members of Other Races	93.9%	(92.3, 95.2)	94.9%	(93.3, 96.1)	1.0	(-0.2, 2.1)	0.10
Drivers With							
No Passengers	90.7%	(88.5, 92.5)	91.2%	(89.2, 93.0)	0.6	(-0.8, 1.9)	0.41
At Least One Passenger	92.7%	(90.7, 94.3)	92.3%	(90.3, 93.9)	-0.4	(-1.6, 0.7)	0.44
Passengers All Under 8	93.0%	(90.8, 94.7)	91.7%	(88.6, 94.1)	-1.2	(-3.7, 1.3)	0.32
Passengers All 8 and Older	92.7%	(90.7, 94.3)	92.4%	(90.3, 94.1)	-0.3	(-1.4, 0.8)	0.58

Occupant Group[1]	2024 Belt Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Belt Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage[4]	2024-2025 Change 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change *p*-value[6]
Some Passengers Under 8 and Some 8 or Older	92.7%	(88.3, 95.5)	91.2%	(88.7, 93.3)	-1.4	(-5.8, 2.9)	0.50
Drivers 16-24 With							
No Passengers	87.8%	(82.5, 91.7)	86.7%	(81.4, 90.6)	-1.2	(-4.8, 2.4)	0.51
Passengers All 16-24	84.2%	(74.9, 90.5)	87.2%	(80.7, 91.7)	3.0	(-3.8, 9.7)	0.38
At Least One Passenger Not 16-24	90.8%	(83.3, 95.2)	88.3%	(79.0, 93.8)	-2.5	(-8.2, 3.2)	0.38
Occupants 16-24 When							
All Occupants Are 16-24	86.4%	(80.3, 90.8)	86.7%	(81.5, 90.6)	0.3	(-3.3, 3.9)	0.86
At Least One Occupant Is Not 16-24	89.8%	(85.9, 92.7)	89.2%	(83.5, 93.1)	-0.5	(-4.7, 3.6)	0.79

Source: NOPUS 2024 and 2025

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[1] Drivers and right-front passengers of passenger vehicles. The age, sex, and racial classifications are based on the subjective assessments of roadside observers.

[2] Use of shoulder belts observed from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

[3] The Wilson confidence interval is used in the estimated percentages in the occupant group (e.g., occupants who are male), which is in the form: $\left\{(2n_{EFF}p + t^2) \pm t\sqrt{(t^2 + 4n_{EFF}pq)}\right\}/(2(n_{EFF} + t^2))$, where p is the estimated percentage of belt use, $n_{EFF} = n/D_{EFF}$ is the effective sample size (where n is the sample size and D_{EFF} is the design effect), $t = t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$, is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom, and $q = 1 - p$. For percentages, these endpoints are multiplied by 100.

[4] The "Change in Percentage Points" column was computed using unrounded estimates and may not equal the difference between the rounded estimates displayed in the table.

[5] The regular symmetric interval was used for the estimated change in percentage point, which is in the form: $p \pm t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)\sqrt{v(p)}$, where p is the estimated change in percentage point, $v(p)$ is its estimated variance, and $t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$ is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom.

[6] A p-value of .05 or less indicates that there is a statistically significant difference (at the alpha=.05 level) between the year-over-year estimates for the group in question, **indicated with bold type**.

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Seat Belt Use in Rear Seats

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 208, *Occupant crash protection*, requires all passenger cars to have integral lap and shoulder belts at every front outboard designated seating position and every rear designated seating position (except for side-facing seats). Using the 2024 vehicle registration data from the National Vehicle Population Profile (R.L. Polk & Co., 2025), NHTSA estimates that 96.8 percent of passenger vehicles on the road have shoulder belts in the rear outboard seats.

Because data collectors cannot reliably observe lap belts from the roadside, NOPUS counts any occupant without a visible shoulder belt as "unbelted." Consequently, for the 3.6 percent of vehicles equipped with only lap belts in the rear outboard seats, NOPUS records those rear-seat occupants as unbelted even if they are using their lap belts. Therefore, NOPUS rear-seat shoulder belt use estimates reflect both the occupants' actual restraint use and the availability of shoulder belts in those seating positions.

Please note that NOPUS observers only record data for up to two passengers in the second row of seats; they do not observe occupants in the third row and beyond.

Table 2 details the 2024 and 2025 rear-seat belt use estimates, and we highlight the major trends below. There are twelve statistically significant changes for rear-seat belt use from 2024 to 2025.

Seat Belt Use in Rear Seats Versus in Front Seats

Figure 5 shows the trends of front- and rear-seat belt use from 2016 to 2025. As in previous years, rear-seat belt use in 2025 (84.0%) continued to be lower than in front seats (91.3%) (Table 2).

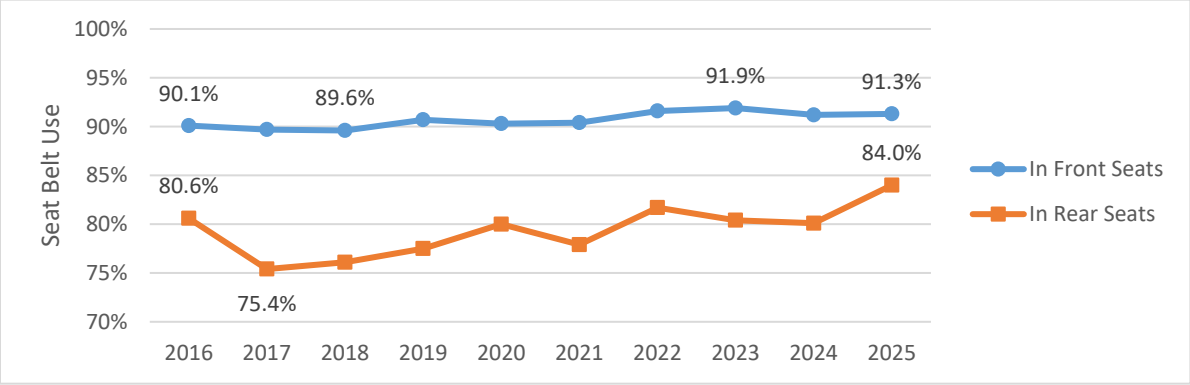

Figure 5. Seat Belt Use by Seating Position for Occupants 8 and Older, 2016 to 2025

State Laws

When the 2025 NOPUS survey was conducted, 33 States and the District of Columbia legally required all vehicle occupants 18 and older to use seat belts when riding in rear seats (Highway Loss Data Institute, 2025). New Hampshire remains the only State without mandatory seat belt laws for adults 18 and older.

In 12 of those States (Alabama, Connecticut, Idaho, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Vermont, and Wyoming), rear-seat belt use laws are

subject to only secondary enforcement. Secondary enforcement means law enforcement officers can cite violators only after stopping them for a different traffic violation first.

The following States and the District of Columbia had laws in effect as of June 2, 2025, that require people 18 and older to use seat belts in all seating positions.

Alabama, Alaska, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Figure 6 compares the 2016 to 2025 trends for States with universal belt laws versus those without.

- **Universal Law States:** In States requiring belts in all seating positions, rear-seat belt use significantly increased from 80.1 percent in 2024 to 86.3 percent in 2025 (Table 2).
- **Front-Seat Only Law States:** Meanwhile, in States requiring belts only in the front seat, rear-seat belt use decreased from 80.1 percent in 2024 to 78.0 percent in 2025, which is not statistically significant (Table 2).

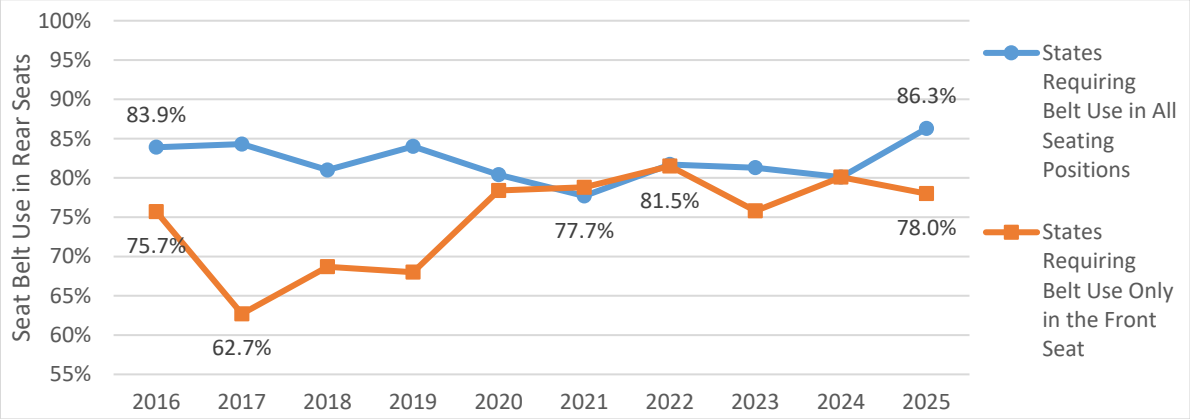

Figure 6. Seat Belt Use in Rear Seats by State Law Type for Occupants 8 and Older, 2016 to 2025

Demographics

Female passengers used rear-seat belts at a higher rate (87.7%) than male passengers (81.4%). Additionally, in rear seats, Black occupants continued to use seat belts at a lower rate (70.9%) than White occupants (86.7%) and members of other races (82.2%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Seat Belt Use in Rear Seats (8 and Older) of Passenger Vehicles, by Major Characteristics

Passenger Group[1]	**2024 Belt Use**[2]	**2024 95% Confidence Interval**[3]	**2025 Belt Use**[2]	**2025 95% Confidence Interval**[3]	**2024-2025 Change in Percentage**[4]	**2024-2025 Change 95% Confidence Interval**[5]	**2024-2025 Change *p*-value**[6]
All Passengers	80.1%	(74.3, 84.8)	84.0%	(78.3, 88.5)	3.9	(-0.1, 7.9)	0.05
Males	77.9%	(72.1, 82.9)	81.4%	(75.2, 86.3)	3.4	(-1.5, 8.4)	0.16
Females	82.7%	(75.8, 87.9)	87.7%	(81.9, 91.8)	5.0	(-0.3, 10.3)	0.06
Passengers by Age Group							
8 to 15	88.0%	(83.9, 91.2)	88.9%	(83.3, 92.8)	0.9	(-3.3, 5.2)	0.66
16 to 24	**75.0%**	**(66.1, 82.2)**	**83.5%**	**(75.9, 89.0)**	**8.5**	**(0.4, 16.6)**	**0.04**
25 to 69	77.3%	(70.7, 82.7)	78.9%	(70.6, 85.4)	1.7	(-4.1, 7.5)	0.56
70 and Older	80.8%	(69.3, 88.7)	89.1%	(80.3, 94.3)	8.4	(-3.1, 19.8)	0.15
Passengers by Race							
White	84.1%	(78.9, 88.1)	86.7%	(80.9, 91.0)	2.7	(-2.6, 8.0)	0.31
Black	69.9%	(58.9, 79.0)	70.9%	(60.1, 79.8)	1.0	(-7.8, 9.8)	0.82
Members of Other Races	**74.8%**	**(66.5, 81.6)**	**82.2%**	**(71.1, 89.7)**	**7.4**	**(0.6, 14.2)**	**0.03**
Passengers in States With Law Requiring Belting							
In All Seating Positions	**80.1%**	**(73.0, 85.7)**	**86.3%**	**(80.6, 90.5)**	**6.2**	**(2.2, 10.2)**	**0.00**
In Front Seats Only	80.1%	(69.1, 87.9)	78.0%	(62.6, 88.3)	-2.1	(-13.4, 9.2)	0.70

Passenger Group[1]	2024 Belt Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Belt Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage[4]	2024-2025 Change 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change *p*-value[6]
Passengers in States With							
Primary Belt Use Laws	80.3%	(73.7, 85.5)	84.5%	(77.6, 89.6)	4.2	(-0.1, 8.5)	0.05
Secondary or No Belt Use Laws	79.4%	(65.8, 88.5)	81.9%	(74.7, 87.4)	2.6	(-9.0, 14.1)	0.65
Passengers Driven by							
a Restrained Driver	83.1%	(77.7, 87.5)	85.9%	(79.8, 90.3)	2.7	(-1.5, 6.9)	0.19
an Unrestrained Driver	**44.6%**	**(33.1, 56.7)**	**57.8%**	**(47.1, 67.7)**	**13.2**	**(3.2, 23.1)**	**0.01**
a Male Driver	**78.5%**	**(71.4, 84.2)**	**83.7%**	**(77.3, 88.5)**	**5.2**	**(0.5, 10.0)**	**0.03**
a Female Driver	82.6%	(77.6, 86.6)	84.6%	(77.8, 89.7)	2.1	(-3.5, 7.7)	0.45
a Driver Aged 16-24	**54.3%**	**(42.4, 65.8)**	**72.8%**	**(56.1, 84.8)**	**18.4**	**(3.4, 33.5)**	**0.02**
a Driver Aged 25-69	82.2%	(76.5, 86.7)	84.8%	(79.3, 89.0)	2.6	(-1.4, 6.5)	0.19
a Driver Aged 70 or Older	79.8%	(66.5, 88.7)	89.2%	(77.4, 95.3)	9.5	(-6.8, 25.8)	0.24
a White Driver	82.6%	(77.4, 86.9)	86.8%	(81.3, 90.8)	4.1	(-1.4, 9.7)	0.14
a Black Driver	73.2%	(62.7, 81.6)	71.7%	(62.1, 79.6)	-1.5	(-9.7, 6.7)	0.71
a Driver of Another Race	77.1%	(68.0, 84.2)	81.6%	(70.1, 89.3)	4.5	(-1.4, 10.4)	0.13
Passengers on							
Expressways	79.7%	(68.4, 87.7)	79.8%	(68.8, 87.6)	0.1	(-5.7, 5.9)	0.98
Surface Streets	**80.3%**	**(74.7, 84.8)**	**85.9%**	**(81.2, 89.5)**	**5.6**	**(1.2, 10.0)**	**0.01**

Passenger Group[1]	2024 Belt Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Belt Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage[4]	2024-2025 Change 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change *p*-value[6]
Passengers Traveling in							
Fast Traffic	83.6%	(78.3, 87.8)	83.1%	(73.8, 89.6)	-0.5	(-8.4, 7.4)	0.90
Medium Speed Traffic	80.6%	(74.3, 85.7)	84.4%	(78.3, 89.0)	3.8	(-1.6, 9.1)	0.16
Slow Traffic	**75.5%**	**(65.6, 83.3)**	**84.6%**	**(76.4, 90.3)**	**9.1**	**(3.4, 14.8)**	**0.00**
Passengers Traveling in							
Heavy Traffic	80.9%	(73.5, 86.6)	83.0%	(75.6, 88.5)	2.1	(-2.1, 6.4)	0.31
Moderately Dense Traffic	79.9%	(72.7, 85.7)	85.7%	(78.6, 90.8)	5.8	(-0.2, 11.8)	0.06
Light Traffic	**75.4%**	**(67.0, 82.2)**	**86.0%**	**(78.7, 91.1)**	**10.6**	**(1.4, 19.9)**	**0.03**
Passengers Traveling Through							
Not Clear Weather Conditions	79.1%	(48.6, 93.8)	82.1%	(65.8, 91.6)	3.0	(-25.2, 31.2)	0.83
Clear Weather Conditions	80.2%	(74.2, 85.0)	84.3%	(78.9, 88.5)	4.1	(-0.5, 8.8)	0.08
Passengers in							
Passenger Cars	78.1%	(70.3, 84.3)	76.5%	(68.5, 83.0)	-1.5	(-8.5, 5.4)	0.65
Vans & SUVs	**83.2%**	**(76.4, 88.4)**	**88.2%**	**(81.6, 92.6)**	**4.9**	**(0.9, 9.0)**	**0.02**
Pickup Trucks	**71.5%**	**(64.1, 77.9)**	**81.2%**	**(72.9, 87.5)**	**9.7**	**(1.6, 17.9)**	**0.02**
Passengers in the							
Northeast	75.4%	(57.8, 87.2)	76.5%	(60.7, 87.3)	1.2	(-3.7, 6.1)	0.63
Midwest	78.1%	(64.9, 87.4)	83.7%	(78.1, 88.1)	5.6	(-5.7, 16.9)	0.32

Passenger Group[1]	2024 Belt Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Belt Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage[4]	2024-2025 Change 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change *p*-value[6]
South	81.0%	(74.0, 86.5)	79.5%	(67.9, 87.6)	-1.5	(-9.4, 6.3)	0.69
West	**83.6%**	**(72.3, 90.9)**	**97.1%**	**(95.0, 98.4)**	**13.5**	**(4.5, 22.6)**	**0.00**
Passengers in Objectively Characterized							
Urban Areas	80.6%	(73.6, 86.1)	84.8%	(77.6, 89.9)	4.1	(-0.4, 8.7)	0.07
Rural Areas	79.0%	(70.1, 85.8)	82.9%	(75.4, 88.4)	3.9	(-4.1, 11.8)	0.33
Passengers Traveling During							
Weekdays	79.8%	(74.3, 84.3)	83.8%	(79.8, 87.1)	4.0	(-0.6, 8.6)	0.09
Rush Hours	79.0%	(73.4, 83.8)	82.6%	(77.8, 86.6)	3.6	(-1.0, 8.1)	0.12
Non-Rush Hours	80.6%	(73.1, 86.4)	85.1%	(80.2, 89.0)	4.5	(-1.6, 10.7)	0.14
Weekends	80.6%	(72.1, 87.0)	84.4%	(74.5, 90.9)	3.8	(-2.6, 10.3)	0.24

[1] Up to two passengers observed in the second row of seats in passenger vehicles. The age, sex, and racial classifications are based on the subjective assessments of roadside observers.
[2] Use of shoulder belts observed from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
[3] The Wilson confidence interval is used in the estimated percentages in the occupant group (e.g., occupants who are male), which is in the form: $\left\{(2n_{EFF}p + t^2) \pm t\sqrt{(t^2 + 4n_{EFF}pq)}\right\}/(2(n_{EFF} + t^2))$, where p is the estimated percentage of belt use, $n_{EFF} = n/D_{EFF}$ is the effective sample size (where n is the sample size and D_{EFF} is the design effect), $t = t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$, is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom, and $q = 1 - p$. For percentages, these endpoints are multiplied by 100.
[4] The "Change in Percentage Points" column was computed using unrounded estimates and may not equal the difference between the rounded estimates displayed in the table.
[5] The regular symmetric interval was used for the estimated change in percentage point, which is in the form: $p \pm t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)\sqrt{v(p)}$, where p is the estimated change in percentage point, $v(p)$ is its estimated variance, and $t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$ is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom.
[6] A p-value of .05 or less indicates that there is a statistically significant difference (at the alpha=.05 level) between the year-over-year estimates for the group in question, **indicated with bold type**.

Child Restraint Use

In 2025 NOPUS continued to collect roadside observational data on child restraint use for all children under 8 years old. We highlight the major findings regarding child restraint use below.

Restraint use for children under 8 in 2025 was 92.5 percent, up from 92.2 percent in 2024, which is not a significant change (Table 3). Figure 7 shows the child restraint use trend since 2016.

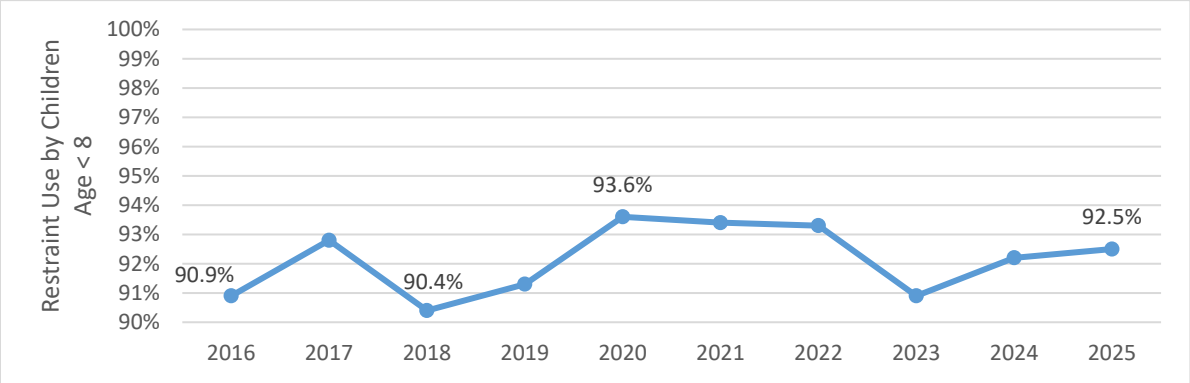

Figure 7. Child Restraint Use Among Children Under 8 Years Old, 2016 to 2025

Rear Seat Placement

Figure 8 shows the trends for each age group of rear-seat placement of children under 8 from 2016 to 2025. The 2025 NOPUS found that 93.6 percent of children under 8 rode in the rear seats of vehicles, which is not a significant increase from 94.2 percent in 2024. When broken down by age group, 98.2 percent of infants (birth to 12 months), 99.3 percent of children 1 to 3 years old, and 88.9 percent of 4- to 7-year-olds were in rear seats in 2025 (Table 3).

As of June 2nd, 2025, at the time the 2025 survey was conducted, 15 States legally required children 5 and younger who weighed less than 80 pounds and were less than 54 inches tall, to ride in the rear seats of vehicles. The following is a list of those States: California, Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming. In these States with laws, rear seat placement for children under 8 decreased from 93.1 percent in 2024 to 93.0 percent in 2025 (Table 3). In no other State did such a law take effect from June 3, 2024, to June 2, 2025. In Delaware, children 11 and younger and 65 inches or less must be in rear seats if air bags are active (Highway Loss Data Institute, 2025).

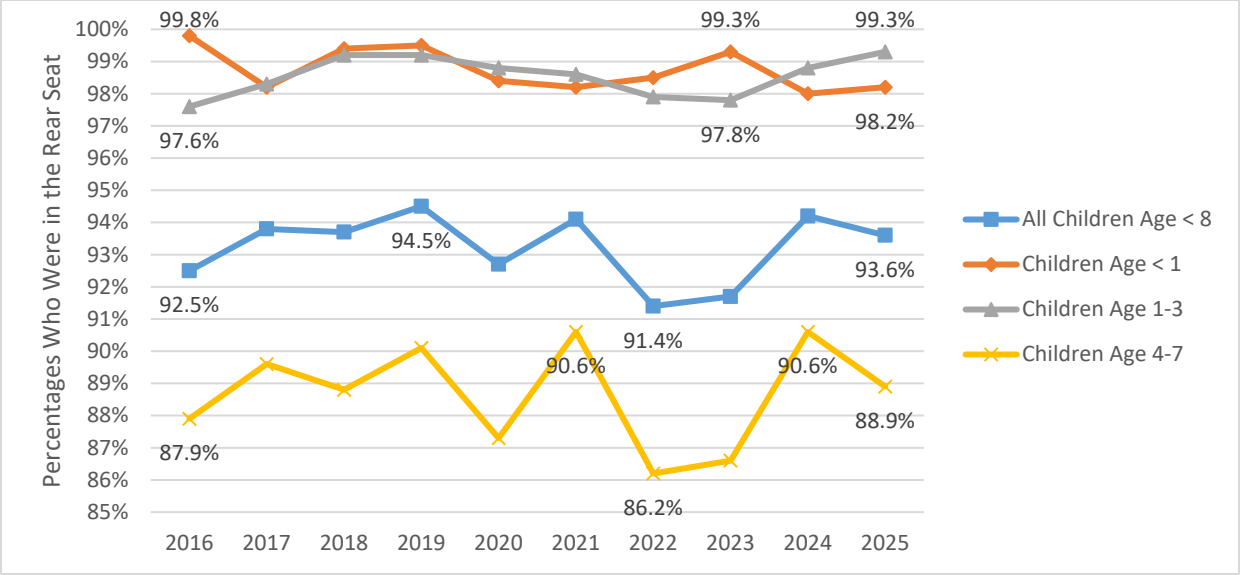

Figure 8. Child Rear Seat Placement, 2016 to 2025

Use by Region

The Midwest and West regions experienced statistically significant increases in child restraint use from 2024 to 2025. Restraint use in the Midwest significantly increased to 95.6 percent from previous year's 91.4 percent. Similarly, the West region's rate significantly increased to 97.3 percent from previous year's 93.5 percent. Figure 9 shows the trends in child restraint use by region from 2016 to 2025. The South region had the lowest restraint use rate of 89.7 percent in 2025, while the West region had the highest restraint use rate of 97.3 percent in 2025 (Table 3).

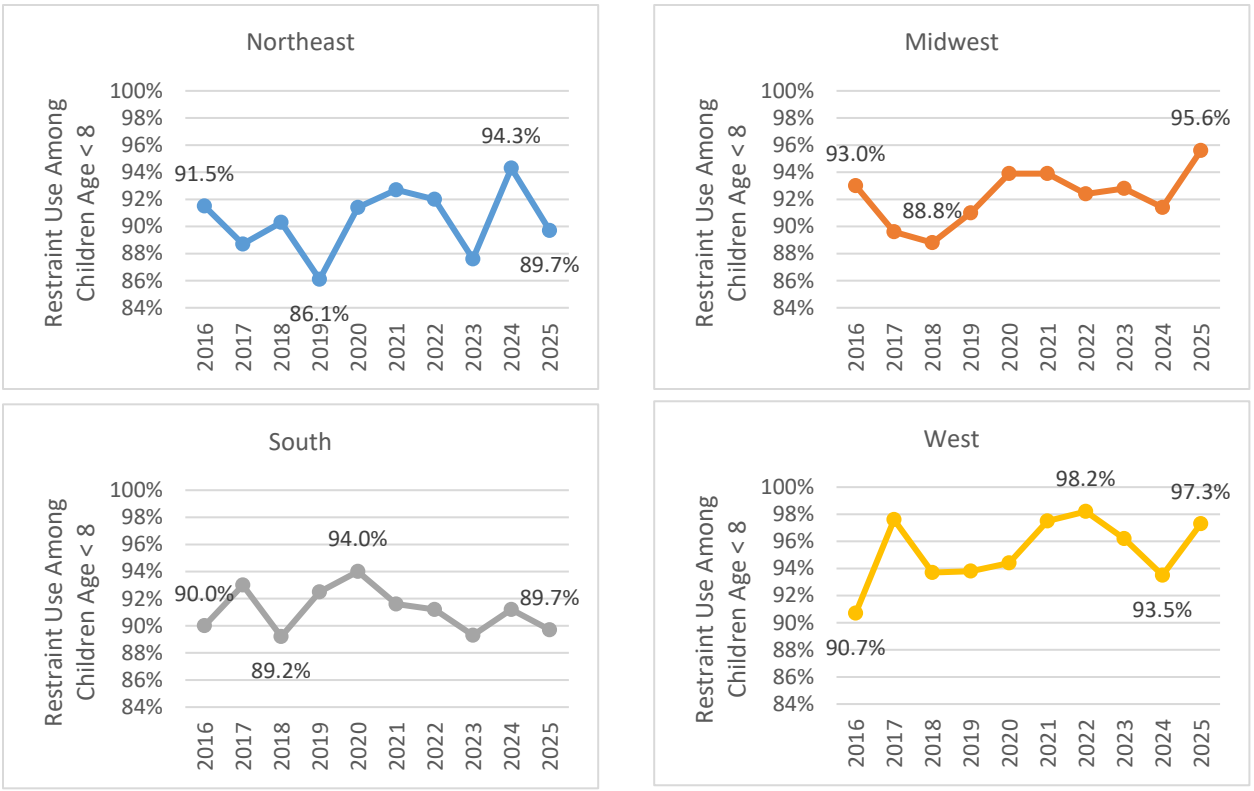

Figure 9. Child Restraint Use by Region, 2016 to 2025

Use by Time of Week

Child restraint use increased for each of the time of week categories except for weekends; none of the changes are statistically significant (Figure 10) (Table 3).

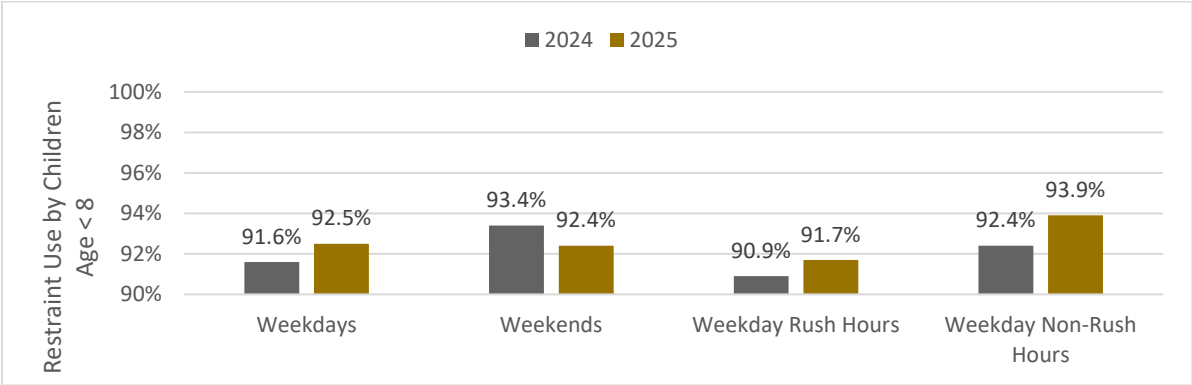

Figure 10. Child Restraint Use by Time of Week in 2024 and 2025

Use by Vehicle Type

Child restraint use increased for vans, SUVs, and pickup trucks but decreased for passenger cars. However, none of these changes are statistically significant (Figure 11) (Table 3).

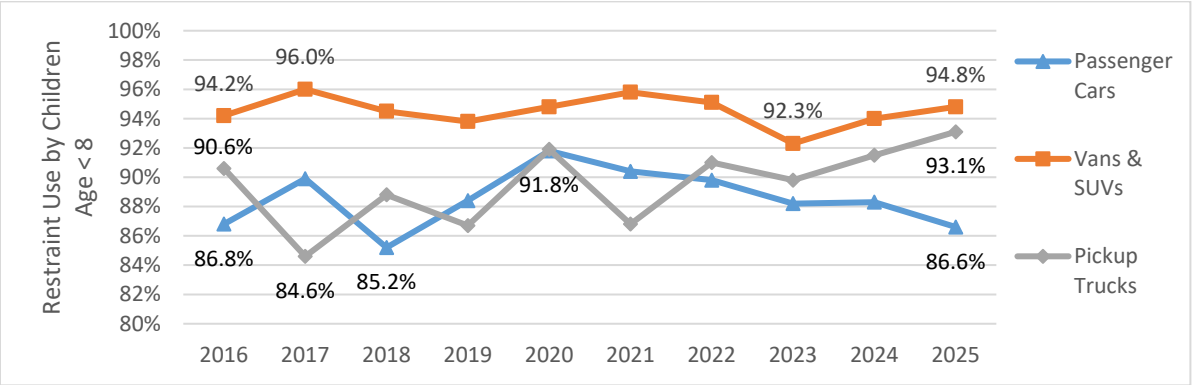

Figure 11. Child Restraint Use by Vehicle Type, 2016 to 2025

Use by Driver's Belt Use Status

As shown in Figure 12, restraint use for children driven by belted drivers (94.5%) continued to be higher than for those driven by unbelted drivers (71.1%) (Table 3).

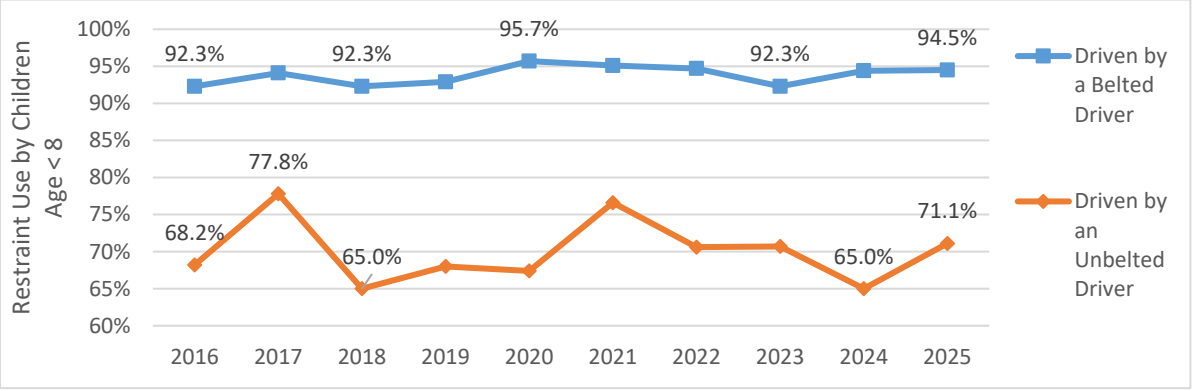

Figure 12. Child Restraint Use by Driver Belt Status, 2016 to 2025

Table 3. Child Restraint Use in Passenger Vehicles, by Major Characteristics

Child Passenger Group[1]	**2024 Restraint Use**[2]	**2024 95% Confidence Interval**[3]	**2025 Restraint Use**[2]	**2025 95% Confidence Interval**[3]	**2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points**[4]	**2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval**[5]	**2024-2025 Change in *p*-value**[6]
All Child Passengers (From Birth to 7 Years)	92.2%	(90.0, 94.0)	92.5%	(90.5, 94.1)	0.2	(-2.1, 2.6)	0.83
0 (Infants)	98.7%	(94.9, 99.7)	99.5%	(97.8, 99.9)	0.8	(-1.2, 2.8)	0.43
1-3	95.6%	(92.7, 97.4)	96.0%	(93.7, 97.5)	0.4	(-2.4, 3.1)	0.79
4-7	88.8%	(85.7, 91.3)	88.6%	(85.1, 91.3)	-0.2	(-3.6, 3.2)	0.90
Children Driven by							
a Belted Driver	94.4%	(92.4, 95.9)	94.5%	(92.9, 95.8)	0.2	(-2.1, 2.4)	0.89
an Unbelted Driver	65.0%	(51.7, 76.4)	71.1%	(59.7, 80.3)	6.0	(-11.1, 23.2)	0.48
a Male Driver	92.0%	(89.9, 93.8)	93.3%	(90.0, 95.5)	1.2	(-2.5, 5.0)	0.51
a Female Driver	92.4%	(89.8, 94.4)	91.9%	(88.9, 94.1)	-0.5	(-3.3, 2.3)	0.71
a Driver 16 to 24	95.7%	(83.6, 99.0)	83.9%	(69.4, 92.3)	-11.9	(-24.6, 0.8)	0.07
a Driver 25 to 69	91.9%	(89.7, 93.7)	93.2%	(91.0, 94.8)	1.3	(-1.3, 3.8)	0.33
a Driver 70 and Older	93.8%	(85.4, 97.5)	82.7%	(56.5, 94.6)	-11.1	(-32.5, 10.2)	0.29
a White Driver	94.1%	(91.9, 95.8)	93.7%	(91.4, 95.5)	-0.4	(-2.7, 1.8)	0.71
a Black Driver	81.6%	(69.6, 89.6)	82.2%	(75.2, 87.5)	0.5	(-8.3, 9.3)	0.91
a Driver Who is a Member of Other Races	90.9%	(86.1, 94.1)	92.9%	(88.4, 95.7)	2.0	(-3.8, 7.8)	0.49

Child Passenger Group[1]	2024 Restraint Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Restraint Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points[4]	2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change in *p*-value[6]
Children in							
Front Seat	83.2%	(75.5, 88.9)	79.2%	(67.6, 87.4)	-4.1	(-15.3, 7.2)	0.46
Rear Seats	92.8%	(90.7, 94.5)	93.4%	(91.3, 95.0)	0.6	(-1.5, 2.7)	0.56
Child Passengers on							
Expressways	93.2%	(89.3, 95.7)	95.0%	(92.8, 96.5)	1.8	(-1.7, 5.2)	0.30
Surface Streets	91.9%	(88.9, 94.1)	91.7%	(89.1, 93.7)	-0.2	(-3.2, 2.7)	0.86
Child Passengers Traveling in							
Fast Traffic	92.1%	(88.4, 94.7)	94.1%	(92.0, 95.7)	2.0	(-1.8, 5.7)	0.29
Medium Speed Traffic	92.4%	(89.7, 94.5)	94.2%	(91.1, 96.2)	1.7	(-0.9, 4.4)	0.19
Slow Traffic	92.0%	(86.0, 95.6)	88.3%	(83.4, 91.9)	-3.7	(-9.2, 1.7)	0.17
Child Passengers Traveling in							
Heavy Traffic	92.5%	(90.1, 94.3)	93.3%	(90.5, 95.3)	0.9	(-1.5, 3.3)	0.47
Moderately Dense Traffic	92.8%	(88.8, 95.5)	91.4%	(86.4, 94.7)	-1.4	(-5.9, 3.0)	0.51
Light Traffic	89.3%	(83.8, 93.1)	90.0%	(82.5, 94.4)	0.6	(-6.8, 8.1)	0.86
Child Passengers Traveling Through							
Not Clear Weather Conditions	87.9%	(69.3, 95.9)	94.3%	(86.9, 97.6)	6.3	(-8.3, 21.0)	0.38
Clear Weather Conditions	92.5%	(90.5, 94.1)	92.2%	(90.1, 93.9)	-0.3	(-2.5, 1.9)	0.77

Child Passenger Group[1]	2024 Restraint Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Restraint Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points[4]	2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change in *p*-value[6]
Child Passengers in							
Passenger Cars	88.3%	(83.5, 91.8)	86.6%	(82.1, 90.2)	-1.6	(-7.5, 4.3)	0.58
Vans & SUVs	94.0%	(91.9, 95.6)	94.8%	(92.6, 96.4)	0.8	(-1.6, 3.3)	0.50
Pickup Trucks	91.5%	(86.1, 95.0)	93.1%	(88.7, 95.9)	1.6	(-4.5, 7.6)	0.60
Child Passengers in the							
Northeast	94.3%	(85.8, 97.9)	89.7%	(81.1, 94.7)	-4.6	(-10.3, 1.0)	0.10
Midwest	**91.4%**	**(87.9, 94.1)**	**95.6%**	**(89.0, 98.3)**	**4.1**	**(0.3, 8.0)**	**0.04**
South	91.2%	(87.8, 93.8)	89.7%	(85.9, 92.5)	-1.6	(-5.8, 2.6)	0.45
West	**93.5%**	**(89.0, 96.2)**	**97.3%**	**(95.0, 98.6)**	**3.8**	**(0.5, 7.1)**	**0.03**
Child Passengers in							
Urban Areas	93.2%	(90.6, 95.2)	93.1%	(91.0, 94.7)	-0.1	(-2.9, 2.6)	0.92
Rural Areas	90.2%	(85.5, 93.5)	91.3%	(87.5, 94.0)	1.0	(-4.4, 6.5)	0.69
Child Passengers Traveling During							
Weekdays	91.6%	(88.2, 94.0)	92.5%	(90.5, 94.2)	1.0	(-2.2, 4.1)	0.54
Rush Hours	90.9%	(85.5, 94.4)	91.7%	(89.1, 93.8)	0.8	(-3.3, 4.9)	0.68
Non-Rush Hours	92.4%	(89.3, 94.6)	93.9%	(88.9, 96.7)	1.5	(-3.5, 6.5)	0.53
Weekends	93.4%	(90.7, 95.3)	92.4%	(88.7, 94.9)	-1.0	(-3.6, 1.6)	0.44

[1] Passengers under 8 observed from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the right-front seat or the second row of seats in passenger vehicles that are stopped at a stop sign or stoplight. Age, sex, and racial classifications are based on the subjective assessments of roadside observers.

[2] Use of child car seats (forward- or rear-facing), booster seats, and seat belts.

[3] The Wilson confidence interval is used in the estimated percentages in the occupant group (e.g., occupants who are male), which is in the form: $\left\{(2n_{EFF}p + t^2) \pm t\sqrt{(t^2 + 4n_{EFF}pq)}\right\}/(2(n_{EFF} + t^2))$, where p is the estimated percentage of belt use, $n_{EFF} = n/D_{EFF}$ is the effective sample size (where n is the sample size and D_{EFF} is the design effect), $t = t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$, is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom, and $q = 1 - p$. For percentages, these endpoints are multiplied by 100.

[4] The "Change in Percentage Points" column was computed using unrounded estimates and may not equal the difference between the rounded estimates displayed in the table.

[5] The regular symmetric interval was used for the estimated change in percentage point, which is in the form: $p \pm t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)\sqrt{v(p)}$, where p is the estimated change in percentage point, $v(p)$ is its estimated variance, and $t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$ is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom.

[6] A p-value of .05 or less indicates that there is a statistically significant difference (at the alpha=.05 level) between the year-over-year estimates for the group in question, **indicated with bold type**.

Table 4. The Percentage of Children Who Rode in Rear Seats, by Major Characteristics

Child Passenger Group[1]	**2024 Restraint Use**[2]	**2024 95% Confidence Interval**[3]	**2025 Restraint Use**[2]	**2025 95% Confidence Interval**[3]	**2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points**[4]	**2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval**[5]	**2024-2025 Change in *p*-value**[6]
All Child Passengers (From Birth to 7 Years)	94.2%	(92.2, 95.6)	93.6%	(91.7, 95.1)	-0.6	(-3.0, 1.9)	0.63
0 (Infants)	98.0%	(94.4, 99.3)	98.2%	(94.4, 99.4)	0.2	(-2.5, 2.9)	0.88
1-3	98.8%	(97.6, 99.4)	99.3%	(98.0, 99.8)	0.5	(-0.6, 1.6)	0.39
4-7	90.6%	(87.8, 92.9)	88.9%	(85.6, 91.5)	-1.8	(-5.7, 2.2)	0.36
Child Passengers in States With							
Law Requiring Children From Birth to 5 Years to be in Rear Seats	93.1%	(88.8, 95.8)	93.0%	(89.6, 95.4)	-0.1	(-3.3, 3.1)	0.97
No Such Law	94.5%	(92.4, 96.0)	93.8%	(91.0, 95.8)	-0.6	(-3.7, 2.5)	0.68
Children Driven by							
a Belted Driver	94.3%	(92.3, 95.8)	93.7%	(91.7, 95.2)	-0.6	(-3.1, 1.9)	0.62
an Unbelted Driver	92.4%	(86.0, 96.1)	92.6%	(87.2, 95.8)	0.2	(-5.9, 6.2)	0.95
a Male Driver	95.9%	(94.0, 97.2)	94.5%	(91.7, 96.4)	-1.4	(-4.3, 1.5)	0.34
a Female Driver	92.8%	(90.1, 94.8)	92.9%	(89.8, 95.1)	0.1	(-3.7, 3.8)	0.97
a Driver 16 to 24	97.2%	(90.3, 99.2)	99.2%	(94.9, 99.9)	2.0	(-3.0, 7.1)	0.41
a Driver 25 to 69	94.0%	(92.0, 95.6)	93.2%	(91.2, 94.8)	-0.8	(-3.3, 1.7)	0.52
a Driver 70 and Older	89.7%	(76.9, 95.8)	95.3%	(86.1, 98.5)	5.6	(-5.7, 16.9)	0.31
a White Driver	94.0%	(91.6, 95.7)	93.9%	(91.8, 95.5)	-0.1	(-3.0, 2.8)	0.95

Child Passenger Group[1]	2024 Restraint Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Restraint Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points[4]	2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change in *p*-value[6]
a Black Driver	94.3%	(89.3, 97.1)	89.2%	(83.4, 93.2)	-5.1	(-11.4, 1.2)	0.11
a Driver Who is a Member of Other Races	95.0%	(89.7, 97.7)	94.9%	(89.9, 97.5)	-0.1	(-6.3, 6.1)	0.98
Child Passengers on							
Expressways	95.6%	(93.5, 97.1)	96.3%	(94.1, 97.7)	0.7	(-1.4, 2.9)	0.49
Surface Streets	93.7%	(91.2, 95.5)	92.7%	(90.2, 94.6)	-1.0	(-4.2, 2.2)	0.53
Child Passengers Traveling in							
Fast Traffic	94.7%	(93.3, 95.8)	96.0%	(93.7, 97.5)	1.3	(-0.6, 3.2)	0.16
Medium Speed Traffic	95.6%	(93.1, 97.2)	94.0%	(90.8, 96.1)	-1.6	(-4.7, 1.6)	0.32
Slow Traffic	91.9%	(86.3, 95.3)	90.3%	(85.5, 93.7)	-1.5	(-7.9, 4.8)	0.62
Child Passengers Traveling in							
Heavy Traffic	94.9%	(92.9, 96.4)	95.5%	(93.5, 96.9)	0.6	(-1.4, 2.5)	0.56
Moderately Dense Traffic	93.8%	(90.9, 95.8)	90.4%	(85.2, 94.0)	-3.3	(-8.3, 1.7)	0.19
Light Traffic	91.1%	(80.7, 96.2)	90.4%	(83.9, 94.4)	-0.7	(-11.1, 9.6)	0.88
Child Passengers Traveling Through							
Not Clear Weather Conditions	95.9%	(89.1, 98.5)	91.4%	(82.9, 95.9)	-4.4	(-11.3, 2.4)	0.20
Clear Weather Conditions	94.0%	(92.2, 95.5)	93.9%	(91.9, 95.4)	-0.2	(-2.6, 2.3)	0.90

Child Passenger Group[1]	2024 Restraint Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Restraint Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points[4]	2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change in *p*-value[6]
Child Passengers in							
Passenger Cars	94.0%	(90.5, 96.3)	92.6%	(88.8, 95.2)	-1.4	(-6.1, 3.4)	0.56
Vans & SUVs	95.2%	(93.0, 96.8)	94.6%	(92.3, 96.2)	-0.7	(-2.8, 1.5)	0.54
Pickup Trucks	88.3%	(80.8, 93.2)	89.5%	(81.8, 94.2)	1.2	(-7.1, 9.5)	0.77
Child Passengers in the							
Northeast	93.7%	(86.0, 97.3)	92.4%	(82.0, 97.0)	-1.3	(-4.5, 1.9)	0.43
Midwest	92.4%	(88.0, 95.3)	95.5%	(88.9, 98.2)	3.0	(-4.1, 10.2)	0.39
South	94.4%	(92.2, 96.0)	92.7%	(89.2, 95.1)	-1.8	(-5.6, 2.0)	0.35
West	95.9%	(89.8, 98.4)	94.5%	(89.7, 97.1)	-1.4	(-4.6, 1.8)	0.38
Child Passengers in							
Urban Areas	94.5%	(92.2, 96.2)	93.6%	(91.0, 95.5)	-0.9	(-3.9, 2.1)	0.54
Rural Areas	93.5%	(90.3, 95.6)	93.6%	(90.6, 95.6)	0.1	(-3.8, 4.0)	0.96
Child Passengers Traveling During							
Weekdays	93.8%	(91.0, 95.7)	94.1%	(91.7, 95.8)	0.3	(-2.8, 3.4)	0.84
Rush Hours	93.7%	(90.9, 95.7)	93.6%	(90.1, 95.9)	-0.1	(-4.1, 3.8)	0.94
Non-Rush Hours	93.8%	(90.0, 96.2)	94.9%	(90.9, 97.2)	1.1	(-2.5, 4.6)	0.53
Weekends	94.9%	(92.2, 96.7)	92.8%	(88.4, 95.6)	-2.1	(-4.8, 0.7)	0.13

Child Passenger Group[1]	2024 Restraint Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Restraint Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points[4]	2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change in *p*-value[6]
Child Passengers in a							
Rear-Facing Car Seat	98.7%	(95.6, 99.6)	99.1%	(95.0, 99.8)	0.4	(-2.0, 2.8)	0.73
Forward-Facing Car Seat	98.7%	(94.9, 99.7)	99.8%	(99.1, 100.0)	1.1	(-0.9, 3.0)	0.27
High-Backed Booster Seat	99.3%	(95.5, 99.9)	100.0%	(100.0, 100.0)	0.7	(-0.8, 2.3)	0.34
Seat Belt or Backless Booster Seat	88.3%	(84.0, 91.5)	84.3%	(79.9, 87.9)	-3.9	(-8.6, 0.7)	0.10
No Restraint Observed	87.4%	(81.5, 91.6)	82.2%	(71.9, 89.3)	-5.2	(-15.3, 5.0)	0.31

[1] Passengers under 8 observed from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the right-front seat or the second row of seats in passenger vehicles that are stopped at a stop sign or stoplight. Age, sex, and racial classifications are based on the subjective assessments of roadside observers.

[2] Use of child car seats (forward- or rear-facing), booster seats, and seat belts.

[3] The Wilson confidence interval is used in the estimated percentages in the occupant group (e.g., occupants who are male), which is in the form: $\left\{(2n_{EFF}p + t^2) \pm t\sqrt{(t^2 + 4n_{EFF}pq)}\right\}/\left(2(n_{EFF} + t^2)\right)$, where p is the estimated percentage of belt use, $n_{EFF} = n/D_{EFF}$ is the effective sample size (where n is the sample size and D_{EFF} is the design effect), $t = t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$, is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom, and $q = 1 - p$. For percentages, these endpoints are multiplied by 100.

[4] The "Change in Percentage Points" column was computed using unrounded estimates and may not equal the difference between the rounded estimates displayed in the table.

[5] The regular symmetric interval was used for the estimated change in percentage point, which is in the form: $p \pm t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)\sqrt{v(p)}$, where p is the estimated change in percentage point, $v(p)$ is its estimated variance, and $t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$ is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom.

[6] A *p*-value of .05 or less indicates that there is a statistically significant difference (at the alpha=.05 level) between the year-over-year estimates for the group in question, **indicated with bold type**.

Table 5. Child Restraint Use in Passenger Vehicles, by Age and Other Characteristics

Child Passenger Group[1]	2024 Restraint Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Restraint Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points[4]	2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change in *p*-value[6]
Infants (From Birth to 12 Months)							
Infants Driven by							
a Belted Driver	99.6%	(98.4, 99.9)	99.8%	(99.3, 100.0)	0.2	(-0.4, 0.9)	0.52
an Unbelted Driver	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
a Male Driver	98.2%	(87.1, 99.8)	99.8%	(98.5, 100.0)	1.6	(-2.8, 6.0)	0.47
a Female Driver	99.0%	(97.2, 99.7)	99.2%	(96.2, 99.8)	0.2	(-1.5, 1.9)	0.82
Infants in							
Passenger Cars	96.3%	(84.1, 99.2)	98.1%	(91.3, 99.6)	1.7	(-5.0, 8.4)	0.60
Vans & SUVs	99.6%	(97.4, 99.9)	99.9%	(99.4, 100.0)	0.3	(-0.6, 1.2)	0.45
Pickup Trucks	100.0%	(100.0, 100.0)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Infants in the							
Northeast	100.0%	(100.0, 100.0)	99.6%	(97.6, 99.9)	-0.4	(-1.3, 0.4)	0.31
Midwest	100.0%	(100.0, 100.0)	100.0%	(100.0, 100.0)	0.0	(0.0, 0.0)	1.00
South	96.5%	(87.6, 99.1)	99.0%	(94.0, 99.8)	2.5	(-2.5, 7.5)	0.32
West	100.0%	(100.0, 100.0)	99.6%	(97.1, 99.9)	-0.4	(-1.3, 0.5)	0.40

Child Passenger Group[1]	2024 Restraint Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Restraint Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points[4]	2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change in *p*-value[6]
Infants in							
Urban Areas	99.2%	(97.6, 99.7)	99.2%	(96.8, 99.8)	0.0	(-1.5, 1.5)	1.00
Rural Areas	97.5%	(83.0, 99.7)	100.0%	(100.0, 100.0)	2.5	(-3.5, 8.5)	0.41
Children 1 to 3							
Children 1-3 Driven by							
a Belted Driver	97.0%	(95.4, 98.0)	96.8%	(94.3, 98.3)	-0.1	(-2.3, 2.0)	0.90
an Unbelted Driver	78.8%	(56.2, 91.5)	85.9%	(73.0, 93.3)	7.1	(-15.3, 29.5)	0.52
a Male Driver	95.7%	(92.4, 97.6)	97.0%	(94.5, 98.4)	1.3	(-1.6, 4.2)	0.37
a Female Driver	95.5%	(91.9, 97.6)	95.2%	(91.5, 97.4)	-0.3	(-4.1, 3.5)	0.87
Children 1-3 in							
Passenger Cars	92.9%	(88.3, 95.8)	93.6%	(87.7, 96.8)	0.7	(-5.1, 6.6)	0.80
Vans & SUVs	96.8%	(92.8, 98.6)	96.6%	(93.4, 98.2)	-0.2	(-4.1, 3.7)	0.91
Pickup Trucks	95.9%	(85.8, 98.9)	99.5%	(97.1, 99.9)	3.6	(-1.3, 8.5)	0.14
Children 1-3 in the							
Northeast	97.0%	(90.5, 99.1)	92.0%	(80.1, 97.0)	-5.1	(-14.8, 4.7)	0.30
Midwest	**95.8%**	**(91.5, 97.9)**	**99.4%**	**(98.2, 99.8)**	**3.6**	**(0.7, 6.5)**	**0.02**
South	94.8%	(88.5, 97.8)	96.1%	(93.3, 97.8)	1.2	(-3.4, 5.9)	0.59
West	95.7%	(85.9, 98.8)	95.4%	(86.4, 98.6)	-0.3	(-6.1, 5.4)	0.91

Child Passenger Group[1]	2024 Restraint Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Restraint Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points[4]	2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change in *p*-value[6]
Children 1-3 in							
Urban Areas	96.3%	(93.5, 98.0)	94.6%	(91.1, 96.8)	-1.7	(-5.2, 1.7)	0.32
Rural Areas	**94.3%**	**(87.4, 97.5)**	**99.0%**	**(97.6, 99.6)**	**4.8**	**(0.1, 9.5)**	**0.05**
Children 4 to 7							
Children 4-7 Driven by							
a Belted Driver	91.6%	(88.3, 94.1)	91.7%	(88.7, 93.9)	0.0	(-3.4, 3.5)	0.98
an Unbelted Driver	52.1%	(42.9, 61.0)	59.3%	(44.6, 72.6)	7.3	(-8.4, 23.0)	0.35
a Male Driver	88.8%	(85.5, 91.4)	89.6%	(84.8, 93.0)	0.8	(-4.7, 6.2)	0.78
a Female Driver	88.7%	(85.0, 91.6)	87.7%	(82.1, 91.8)	-1.0	(-5.5, 3.5)	0.65
Children 4-7 in							
Passenger Cars	83.0%	(76.3, 88.1)	79.3%	(71.4, 85.4)	-3.7	(-12.7, 5.2)	0.40
Vans & SUVs	91.2%	(88.2, 93.5)	92.5%	(88.6, 95.1)	1.3	(-2.5, 5.0)	0.49
Pickup Trucks	87.7%	(80.2, 92.6)	88.0%	(81.0, 92.6)	0.3	(-8.9, 9.4)	0.95
Children 4-7 in the							
Northeast	91.0%	(79.2, 96.4)	85.2%	(69.0, 93.7)	-5.8	(-12.6, 1.0)	0.09
Midwest	86.5%	(79.7, 91.3)	91.7%	(80.9, 96.6)	5.2	(-1.7, 12.0)	0.14
South	88.5%	(83.8, 91.9)	84.3%	(78.4, 88.8)	-4.1	(-10.0, 1.7)	0.16
West	**90.0%**	**(84.3, 93.8)**	**97.7%**	**(95.2, 98.9)**	**7.7**	**(1.5, 13.8)**	**0.02**

Child Passenger Group[1]	2024 Restraint Use[2]	2024 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2025 Restraint Use[2]	2025 95% Confidence Interval[3]	2024-2025 Change in Percentage Points[4]	2024-2025 Change in 95% Confidence Interval[5]	2024-2025 Change in *p*-value[6]
Children 4-7 in							
Urban Areas	90.1%	(86.2, 93.0)	90.4%	(87.0, 93.0)	0.3	(-3.3, 3.9)	0.86
Rural Areas	86.1%	(79.9, 90.7)	85.4%	(79.0, 90.1)	-0.7	(-9.0, 7.5)	0.86

Source: NOPUS 2024 and 2025

[1] Passengers under 8 observed from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the right-front seat or the second row of seats in passenger vehicles that are stopped at a stop sign or stoplight. Age, sex, and racial classifications are based on the subjective assessments of roadside observers.

[2] Use of child car seats (forward- or rear-facing), booster seats, and seat belts.

[3] The Wilson confidence interval is used in the estimated percentages in the occupant group (e.g., occupants who are male), which is in the form: $\left\{(2n_{EFF}p + t^2) \pm t\sqrt{(t^2 + 4n_{EFF}pq)}\right\}/(2(n_{EFF} + t^2))$, where p is the estimated percentage of belt use, $n_{EFF} = n/D_{EFF}$ is the effective sample size (where n is the sample size and D_{EFF} is the design effect), $t = t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$, is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom, and $q = 1 - p$. For percentages, these endpoints are multiplied by 100.

[4] The "Change in Percentage Points" column was computed using unrounded estimates and may not equal the difference between the rounded estimates displayed in the table.

[5] The regular symmetric interval was used for the estimated change in percentage point, which is in the form: $p \pm t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)\sqrt{v(p)}$, where p is the estimated change in percentage point, $v(p)$ is its estimated variance, and $t_{(1-\alpha/2)}(df)$ is a multiplier from the t-distribution with df degrees of freedom.

[6] A *p*-value of .05 or less indicates that there is a statistically significant difference (at the alpha=.05 level) between the year-over-year estimates for the group in question, **indicated with bold type**.

NA: Data was not sufficient to produce a reliable estimate.

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NOPUS Methodology

The NOPUS sample was redesigned in 2022 and 2023 and implemented in the 2024 survey. This section discusses the sample design, data collection, and estimation used in the 2025 NOPUS CI Study. Data collection, estimation, and variance estimation for NOPUS are conducted by Westat, Inc., under the direction of the NCSA.

Sample Design

NOPUS uses a complex multistage probability sample, statistical data editing, imputation for unknown values, and complex estimation procedures. The sample sites for the 2025 NOPUS were entirely from the 2024 NOPUS sample redesign.

The redesigned NOPUS sample was selected using a stratified two-stage design. The first stage of selection was the individual county or set of adjacent counties, referred to as the primary sampling unit (PSU) within the design framework. The PSUs were targeted for selection based on their measure of size (MOS). A sample of 60 PSUs, up from 57 PSUs in the 2015 design, were selected from a frame of 1,588 PSUs.

The second stage of selection or secondary sampling unit (SSU), within the selected PSUs, is the road segment. At the road segment level, the NOPUS data collectors are then positioned so that they can efficiently observe seat belt use, motorcycle helmet use, and driver electronic device use.

The NOPUS sample frame of PSUs excluded Puerto Rico and the U.S. Territories. All other counties in the United States were included in the sampling frame with the exception of 37 counties and three areas in Alaska; these locations were excluded on the basis of low traffic volume measured in terms of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or because they were geographically isolated. The sample frame of SSUs excluded segments along unnamed roads, cul-de-sacs, private roads, and a variety of other road types that have traditionally had very low traffic volume measured by VMT.

One PSU was sampled with certainty because of its large VMT, and the remaining PSUs were then grouped into the eight major strata based on the four Census regions (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West) and two urbanicity classes (Urban and Rural).

A sample of 60 PSUs was selected using a sequential Poisson method with probability approximately proportional to the VMT as the MOS (Ohlsson, 1998). The new NOPUS sample was selected to maximize PSU overlap with the old sample, thus maintaining comparability of the estimates from the current and previous samples. Of the 60 PSUs in the 2024 design, 41 came from the 2015 design. An SSU sample of road segments within each PSU was selected using a probability proportional to size sample design, stratified by road type within each sampled PSU, and sampled with probability proportional to a measure of size that was based on adjusted road segment length.

Table 6 shows the observed sample sizes of the 2025 CI study. A total of 87,385 occupants were observed in 66,497 vehicles, the former is approximately 2% percent more than the 2024 sample and the latter is approximately 4% percent more than the 2024 sample. Of these observed occupants, 2,764 were children under 8. Please note that due to ineligibility, construction, danger in the area, or road closure, observations could not be completed at some of the sampled observation sites.

Table 6. Counts of Sites, Vehicles, and Occupants in the 2024 and 2025 NOPUS Controlled Intersection Study

Number of	2024	2025	Percentage Change
Sites Observed	1,693	1,693	0%
Vehicles Observed	64,151	66,497	3.66%
Total Occupants	85,813	87,385	1.83%
Occupants 8 and Older	82,956	84,621	2.01%
Front Seat Passengers	15,468	15,146	-2.08%
Rear Seat Passengers	3,337	2,978	-10.76%
Occupants Under 8	2,857	2,764	-3.26%
Children Under 1	338	366	8.28%
Children 1 to 3	900	948	5.33%
Children 4 to 7	1,619	1,450	-10.44%

Data Collection

The 2025 NOPUS data was collected from June 2 to June 22, 2025, while the 2024 NOPUS data was collected from June 3 to June 20, 2024. In a typical year, data is collected in early June, immediately following the *Click It or Ticket* campaign.

Data collection protocols remain largely the same in the redesigned NOPUS from 2015; however, NHTSA increased the data collection time by 10 minutes, to a total of 50 minutes and CI sties were virtually identified ahead of time instead of in the field.

In the CI study trained data collectors observe restraint use of drivers and other occupants of passenger vehicles (passenger cars, pickup trucks, SUVs, and vans) that have stopped at stop signs or stoplights during daylight hours from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Observations are made both on the surface streets and at the ends of the expressway exit ramps (where there are controlled intersections). Only stopped vehicles are observed based on the time required to collect the variety of information required by the survey, including subjective assessments of the vehicle occupant age and race. Observers collect data on the driver, right-front passenger, and up to two passengers in the second row of seats. Observers do not interview vehicle occupants, allowing NOPUS to capture the uninfluenced behavior of the occupants.

The CI sites study is conducted annually following the MT survey and is usually scheduled for all surface streets and limited access highway ramps, where NOPUS data from previous years indicates that a controlled intersection exists. If the data collectors arrive at an assigned surface street site and the site is not controlled, they are instructed to search for an alternate data collection site further along the same road segment. After the data collectors have located a controlled intersection, they position themselves at the traffic signal or stop sign, facing the oncoming traffic from the side of the road. The data collectors walk in the direction of the

oncoming traffic, away from the intersection to make their observations. When the traffic light turns green or they finish observing all vehicles, the data collectors return to the intersection to wait for the next traffic light cycle or next vehicle. They observe vehicles in the lane closest to their observational position, even if the closest lane is an exclusive turn lane (which is often the case at the controlled intersections.) When possible and if visibility allows, the data collectors also observe the other lanes of traffic. The data collectors are instructed to record the first behavior of the driver that they observe.

Estimation

NOPUS estimates the proportion of occupants restrained in restraint type (R) among the occupants having characteristic (C) using the formula,

$$Restraint\ Use_{CR} = \frac{\sum_{ijk} w_{ijk} F_{ijk} CR_{ijk}}{\sum_{ijk} w_{ijk} F_{ijk} C_{ijk}}$$

Where w_{ijk} and F_{ijk}, respectively, denote the base weight and the product of various weight adjustment factors at the site k in the stratum j of the PSU i. CR_{ijk}stands for the number of observed occupants having characteristic C and restrained in restraint type R and C_{ijk} denotes the number of observed occupants having characteristic C at the site k in the stratum j of the PSU i. For example, the seat belt use by vehicle type is estimated using the above formula, where CR_{ijk} is the number of observed belted occupants in certain types of vehicles (such as passenger cars, vans and SUVs, or pickup trucks) and C_{ijk} is the number of ALL (belted and unbelted) occupants observed in that type of vehicle at the site k in the stratum j of the PSU i.

Note that estimates computed from the CI study reflect the population of all occupants on the road at a typical daylight moment, not just those at intersections.

In certain instances NHTSA does not provide estimates. These are typically restraint use estimates whose numerator is based on fewer than five people observed, or whose denominator is based on fewer than 30 people observed. These are reported as “NA” in publications. Any related estimate (i.e., change in use and confidence estimates) is not reported as well.

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