

# Northern Ireland Seat Belt Bulletin October 2001

## Introduction

Survey data were collected at 15 sites throughout Northern Ireland. Of these sites, six were located on rural roads, six on urban roads and three on motorways.

Fieldwork involved observing stationary traffic and recording details including gender, estimated age and whether a seat belt or child restraint was being used by car occupants. Recording took place between 08:30 and 17:00 on Tuesday 18 and Saturday 22 September 2001. In total 16,971 cars were observed and details of 26,567 occupants recorded.

## Key Points

### Seat Belt Wearing Rates

87% of all car occupants used a restraint. Drivers (88%) and front seat passengers (89%) were more likely to use a restraint than back seat passengers (71%)

### Change since April 2001

The seat belt wearing rate for all car occupants increased by 3 percentage points, from 84% to 87%. The percentage of drivers wearing seat belts increased from 86% to 88%, whilst the number of front seat passengers wearing seat belts rose from 86% to 89%.

### Survey Trends

Wearing rates for all car occupants have improved since 1994. Both front and back seat passenger wearing rates are at their highest since the Northern Ireland Seat Belt Survey series began back in 1994.

### Back Seat Belt Wearing Rates

Children under 1 year of age have the highest back seat restraint wearing rate (97%). Back seat passengers aged between 14 and 59 years are the least likely to wear seat belts (55%). Approximately 1 in 4 (27%) children aged between 5 and 9 years and almost 1 in 3 children aged between 10 and 13 years (30%) travel unrestrained in the back of a car.

### Changes in Back Seat Belt Wearing Rates

Over the period of the last three surveys (April 2000, April 2001 and October 2001), wearing rates have increased most notably among those aged 60 or over (from 53% up to 71%), 14 to 29 year olds (from 46% to 55%) and 30 to 59 year olds (from 49% to 55%).

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF KEY RESULTS FROM NI SEAT BELT SURVEY\* 1994 - 2001**

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Apr 2001	Oct 2001
<b>% of car occupants wearing seat belts:</b>									
Driver	88%	85%	85%	85%	87%	86%	87%	86%	88%
Front Seat Passenger	88%	86%	85%	86%	88%	86%	87%	86%	89%
Back Seat Passenger	52%	50%	51%	56%	61%	62%	65%	67%	71%
<b>All Car Occupants</b>		<b>80%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>Occupancy Rate</b>									
Front Seat Passengers	0.41	0.39	0.40	0.40	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.38
Back Seat Passengers	0.27	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.21	0.20	0.21	0.20	0.18

\* 1994 - 2000 data refers to April Seat Belt Survey results. In 1994 - 1996, surveys were also conducted each October.

### Seat Belt Wearing Rates

Due largely to increased seat belt wearing by back seat passengers, wearing rates for all car occupants have increased steadily, rising from 80% in 1995 to 87% in October 2001.

Following a slight decline in the late 1990s, wearing rates for drivers (88%) and front seat passengers (89%) have either returned to, or are now marginally higher than 1994 levels (88%).

Wearing rates for back seat passengers have shown the most marked increase, rising each year since 1995 (when they were 50%) to 71% in October 2001.

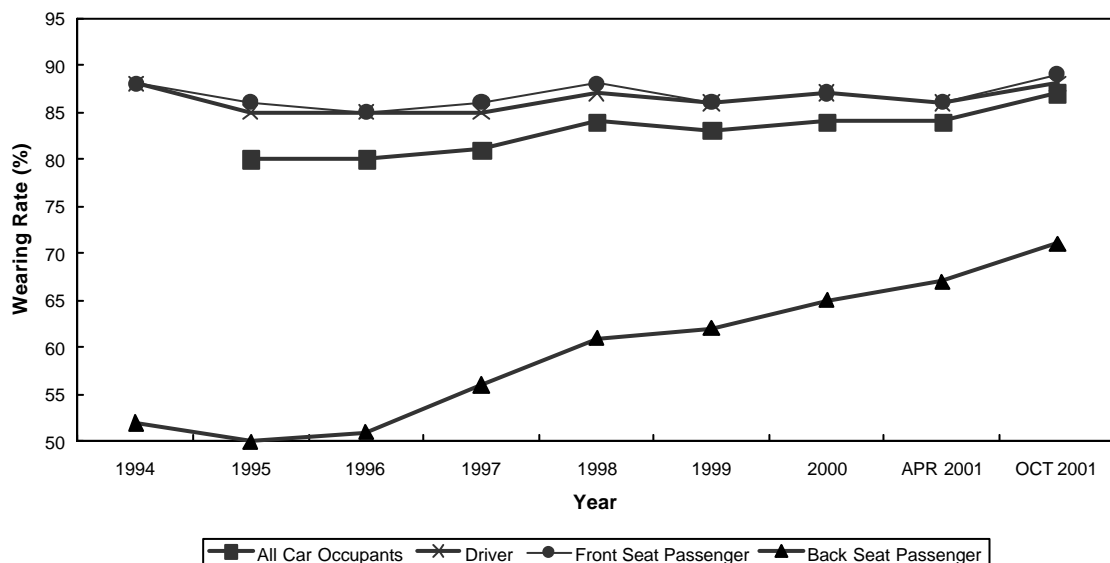
### Changes Since April 2001

Since April 2001, the seat belt wearing rate for 'all car occupants' has increased by 3 percentage points, from 84% to 87%. The percentage of drivers wearing seat belts also increased from 86% in April 2001 to 88% in October 2001, whilst the number of front seat passengers wearing seat belts rose from 86% to 89% over the same time period.

Back seat passenger wearing rates rose by 4 percentage points, from 67% in April 2001 to 71% in October 2001. Despite this, the wearing rate for back seat passengers remains considerably lower than that for both drivers and front seat passengers (Table 1, Chart 1).

Patterns and trends in seat belt wearing by back seat passengers are highlighted further in Table 2 and Chart 2.

**Chart 1: Seat Belt Wearing Rates in NI (1994 - 2001)**



**TABLE 2: WEARING RATE OF ALL BACK SEAT PASSENGERS BY AGE (OCT 2001)**

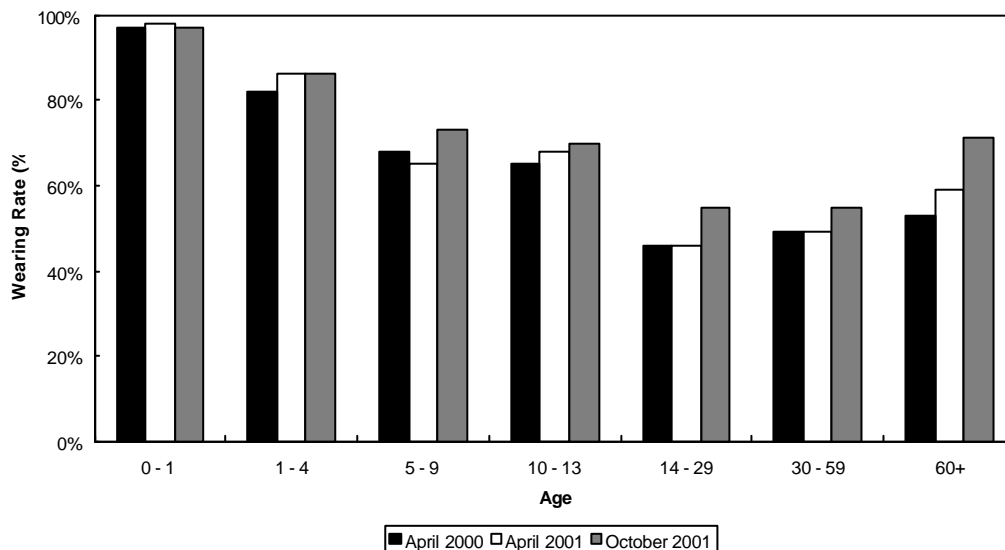
AGE	SEAT BELT / RESTRAINT USED	SEAT BELT RESTRAINT / NOT USED
0 - 1	97%	3%
1 - 4	86%	14%
5 - 9	73%	27%
10 - 13	70%	30%
14 - 29	55%	45%
30 - 59	55%	45%
60+	71%	29%
<b>ALL AGES</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>29%</b>

**Back Seat belt wearing rates by age**

Results from the October 2001 survey indicate that children under 1 year of age are most likely (97%), and passengers aged 14 to 29 years or 30 to 59 years (55%) least likely, to wear a seat belt or restraint in the back seat of a car. Approximately 1 in 4 (27%) children aged between 5 and 9 years and almost 1 in 3 children aged between 10 and 13 (30%) travel unrestrained in the back seat (Table 2).

Over the period of the last three surveys (April 2000 and 2001, and October 2001), wearing rates have increased most notably among those aged 60 or over (from 53% up to 71%), 14 to 29 year olds (from 46% up to 55%) and 30 to 59 year olds (from 49% up to 55%) (Chart 2).

**Chart 2: Seat Belt / Restraint Wearing Rate (%) of all back seat passengers by age**



**Additional Information**

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