



Statistical Press Release

NORTHERN IRELAND SEAT BELT SURVEY 2010

JULY 2010

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 20th and Saturday 24th April 2010. In total 16,057 cars were observed and details of 24,357 occupants recorded.

Key Points

Seat Belt Wearing Rates

In April 2010, 98% of drivers and 97% of front seat passengers were recorded as wearing a seat belt. Back seat passengers were less likely to use a restraint (92%). The overall seat belt wearing rate for all car occupants observed was 97%.

Changes in Wearing Rates since April 2009

Over the last year, the seat belt wearing rate for drivers has increased from 97% to 98%. The seat belt wearing rate for all car occupants has increased from 96% to 97%.

Back Seat Belt Wearing Rates

The overall seat belt wearing rate for back seat passengers (92%) disguises different wearing rates for adults (14 years and over) and children (13 years and under), with 88% of adults wearing a restraint in the back, compared to 93% of children. Children under one year of age have a back seat restraint wearing rate of 98%.

Restraint wearing rates by type of site

Ninety-seven percent of drivers on urban roads were restrained, compared to 98% of drivers on rural roads and motorways. Back seat passengers observed wearing rates varied from 96% on rural roads to 89% on urban roads.

Seat Belt Wearing rate by Gender

Ninety-eight percent of female and 97% of male drivers were restrained. With regard to front seat passengers, 97% of females and 96% of males were restrained. There was no difference between male and female back seat passengers.

Restraint wearing rates by age

In adult age groups (14+), driver restraint wearing rates are similar, irrespective of age group. Eight percent of children aged 10-13, 9% of those aged 5-9 and 4% of those aged 1-4 were unrestrained when travelling in the back of a car.

Influence of Driver upon Seat Belt Wearing Rates for Passengers

The seat belt wearing rate for both front and back seat passengers was higher when the driver of the vehicle wore a seat belt, compared to when they did not. Ninety-seven percent of front seat passengers wore a seat belt when the driver of the vehicle was wearing one, compared to around 63% when the driver was not.

Trends in Seat Belt Wearing (1994-2010)

Wearing rates overall have improved markedly since 1994. Driver wearing rates have increased from 88% to 98%, while front seat wearing rates have increased from 88% to 97%. Back seat wearing rates have increased fairly consistently from around 51% in the early years of the survey to around 92% in recent years. However, between 2009 and 2010 back seat wearing rates of those aged 5-9 years old fell from 95% to 91%.

Comparison with Great Britain

According to the latest GB figures available (2009) the wearing rates were 95% for drivers, 95% for front seat passengers and 89% for back seat passengers. This latest figure has risen considerably from 63% in April 1997. The equivalent wearing rates for Northern Ireland (2010) were 98% for drivers, 97% for front seat passengers and 92% for back seat passengers. The 2010 Great Britain Seat Belt Survey will be carried out in October 2010.

Mobile phone usage in 2010

This is the eighth Northern Ireland Seat Belt Survey that has observed the use of mobile phones by drivers. Just under one percent (0.8%) of drivers were using a mobile phone (0.6% were using a hand-held phone and 0.2% were using a hands-free phone).

Additional Information

Electronic and hard copies of this bulletin and the full Northern Ireland Seat Belt Survey 2010 Report are available from:

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