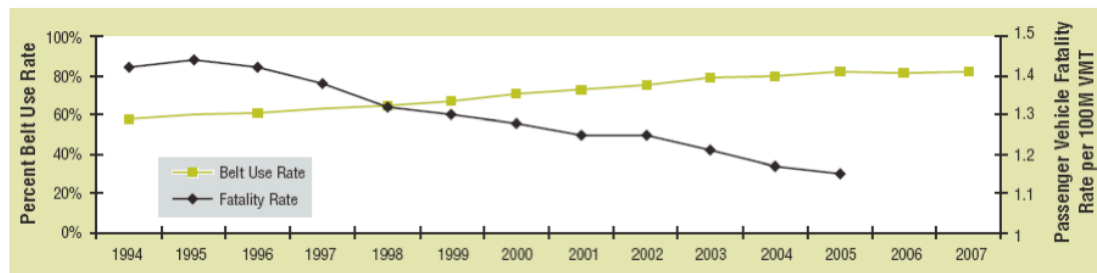


Buckle Up! Seatbelts Still Saving Lives.

Are you buckling up? As of the latest National Highway Traffic Safety Association survey (NHTSA—2007 National Occupant Protection Use Survey, or NOPUS), safety belt use across the country is at an all-time high—82%, after climbing steadily for the last 20+ years. This has not always been the case—only 15 years ago, fewer than 60% of drivers were buckling up. Significantly, as safety belt use has increased incrementally, vehicle fatalities have decreased dramatically (see chart below). In 2004, NHTSA estimated more than 329,000 lives have been saved by safety belts since the first seat belts were introduced in the late 1950s; today that number approaches ½ million.

Seat Belt Use Versus Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatality Rate, 1994-Present



Source: NOPUS and FARS, NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis; FHWA

Experts at NHTSA attribute the current high level of compliance to a combination of “fear of the law” and “safety awareness,” but it’s important to note that even though more than 90% of drivers agree that seat belts save lives, more than one quarter of drivers still don’t buckle up if they’re not required to by law. Safety belt use is significantly higher—87%—in states with primary safety belt laws (meaning a driver can be stopped solely for not wearing a safety belt, or at random safety belt checkpoints) compared with 73% in states without primary laws (meaning the driver must be stopped for another violation before being cited for not wearing a belt). There is only one state in the country—New Hampshire—with no

States With Primary Enforcement Seat Belt Laws¹

Alabama	Alaska	California
Connecticut	Delaware	District of Columbia
Georgia	Hawaii	Illinois
Indiana	Iowa	Kentucky
Louisiana	Maryland	Michigan
Mississippi	New Jersey	New Mexico
New York	North Carolina	Oklahoma
Oregon	South Carolina	Tennessee
Texas	Washington	

¹States with laws in effect as of June 30, 2007. Also includes DC. During the period July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007, only in Kentucky did a primary law take effect. Since Maine’s primary law took effect on Sept 17, 2007, it is not included in this table. Under a primary enforcement law, motorists can be stopped and ticketed solely for not using seat belts.

seat belt law, while 25 states plus DC have primary laws, and the remaining 24 have secondary laws.

For this reason, in 2004, NHTSA initiated its annual “Click It Or Ticket” campaign, running from just before Memorial Day weekend through June 1 and reminding drivers that they can be ticketed for not buckling up. Distilled down, drivers are more likely to buckle up to save the points and dollars resulting from a ticket, than to save their own life!

Still not buckling up? According to NHTSA’s 2003 MVOSS (Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey—a telephone survey about safety belt usage), seat belt violators fall into two categories: those who occasionally don’t buckle up (20-25% of the population), and those who never use a seat belt (5-10% of the population). These drivers usually have some kind of “reason” for not buckling up. The most common reason cited by “occasional” seat belt wearers is that they are only driving a short distance (56%) or they simply forgot (50%). The primary reason cited by those who never wear a belt is that it is uncomfortable (65%). Other reasons include:

- Being in a hurry and not having time
- Light traffic on the roads
- Not wanting to wrinkle clothing
- Resentment at being told what to do
- Knowing someone who died in a crash while wearing a seat belt
- Resentment at government interference in personal behavior
- Never having gotten used to seat belts
- The belief that with air bags, seat belts are redundant

A few more interesting points:

- Safety belt use is lowest in men ages 20-35.
- Driver-side air bags have been required in new cars built since 1997 (model year 1998). Yet air bags alone do not offer protection equal to an air bag plus a seat belt in a collision.
- Safety belts are engineered to fit an adult who weighs less than 250 lbs. As our nation struggles with its highest obesity levels ever, more and more people may be foregoing the seat belt, or realizing less-than-ideal safety levels.
- Safety belt use is higher in heavier and fast traffic (84% & 86%) than lighter and slow traffic (82% and 78%), but does not vary significantly based on weather conditions.
- Safety belt use is higher in passenger cars, SUVs, and minivans (84-86%), than pick up trucks (72%).

Driver Safety is an extremely important part of any organization operating a fleet of vehicles. We encourage our clients to take a proactive approach to driver safety, including the use of safety belts. Motorlease has partnered with TrafficSchool.com to provide you with effective

and affordable driver safety solutions. For more information, follow the link on the Motorlease website, or click [here](#).

* Charts from NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts Research Report, September 2007. www.nhtsa.gov