

Seat Belt Use in 2016—Use Rates in the States and Territories

Highlights: In 2016, seat belt use in the United States ranged from 70.2 percent in New Hampshire, to 97.2 percent in Georgia. Nineteen States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands achieved belt use rates of 90 percent or higher. These results are from probability-based observational surveys conducted by the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories.

Background: In 2011, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) established new uniform criteria (23 CFR Part 1340) for observational surveys. In 2016, all the States' and Territories' observational surveys conformed to the uniform criteria. Compliance with the criteria is verified annually by NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis.

Results: Seat belt use rates in the States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, other U.S. Territories, and nationwide from 2009-2016 are listed in the table below. 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 2016 State and Territory survey results include the following:

Nineteen States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands achieved belt use rates of 90 percent or higher. These States include (in descending order of belt use rate) Georgia, California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, Michigan, South Carolina, Iowa, New Jersey, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, New Mexico, Alabama, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Delaware, and Maryland. Jurisdictions with stronger seat belt enforcement laws continue to exhibit generally higher use rates than those States and territories with weaker laws.

National Seat Belt Use Rate

The nationwide seat belt use rate was 90.1 percent in 2016, 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 seat belt use than would be obtained by combining the use rates from the individual States and Territories.

Table: Seat Belt Use in the States, U.S. Territories, and Nationwide, 2009–2016

State or U.S. Territory	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2015–2016 Change
Alabama	90.0%	91.4%	88.0%	89.5%	97.3%	95.7%	93.3%	92.0%	-1.3%
Alaska	86.1%	86.8%	89.3%	88.1%	86.1%	88.4%	89.3%	88.5%	-0.8%
Arizona	80.8%	81.8%	82.9%	82.2%	84.7%	87.2%	86.6%	88.0%	1.4%
Arkansas	74.4%	78.3%	78.4%	71.9%	76.7%	74.4%	77.7%	75.1%	-2.6%
California	95.3%	96.2%	96.6%	95.5%	97.4%	97.1%	97.3%	96.5%	-0.8%
Colorado	81.1%	82.9%	82.1%	80.7%	82.1%	82.4%	85.2%	84.0%	-1.2%
Connecticut	85.9%	88.2%	88.4%	86.8%	86.6%	85.1%	85.4%	89.4%	4.0%
Delaware	88.4%	90.7%	90.3%	87.9%	92.2%	91.9%	90.4%	91.4%	1.0%
District of Columbia	93.0%	92.3%	95.2%	92.4%	87.5%	93.2%	95.5%	94.1%	-1.4%
Florida	85.2%	87.4%	88.1%	87.4%	87.2%	88.8%	89.4%	89.6%	0.2%
Georgia	88.9%	89.6%	93.0%	92.0%	95.5%	97.3%	97.3%	97.2%	-0.1%
Hawaii	97.9%	97.6%	96.0%	93.4%	94.0%	93.5%	92.8%	94.5%	1.7%
Idaho	79.2%	77.9%	79.1%	79.0%	81.6%	80.2%	81.1%	82.9%	1.8%
Illinois	91.7%	92.6%	92.9%	93.6%	93.7%	94.1%	95.2%	93.0%	-2.2%
Indiana	92.6%	92.4%	93.2%	93.6%	91.6%	90.2%	91.9%	92.4%	0.5%
Iowa	93.1%	93.1%	93.5%	92.4%	91.9%	92.8%	93.0%	93.8%	0.8%
Kansas	77.0%	81.8%	82.9%	79.5%	80.7%	85.7%	82.1%	87.0%	4.9%

Table continues on next page

Table: Seat Belt Use in the States, U.S. Territories, and Nationwide, 2009–2016

State or U.S. Territory	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2015-2016 Change
Kentucky	79.7%	80.3%	82.2%	83.7%	85.0%	86.1%	86.7%	86.5%	-0.2%
Louisiana	74.5%	75.9%	77.7%	79.3%	82.5%	84.1%	85.9%	87.8%	1.9%
Maine	82.6%	82.0%	81.6%	84.4%	83.0%	85.0%	85.5%	85.8%	0.3%
Maryland	94.0%	94.7%	94.2%	91.1%	90.7%	92.1%	92.9%	90.8%	-2.1%
Massachusetts	73.6%	73.7%	73.2%	72.7%	74.8%	76.6%	74.1%	78.2%	4.1%
Michigan	98.0%	95.2%	94.5%	93.6%	93.0%	93.3%	92.8%	94.5%	1.7%
Minnesota	90.2%	92.3%	92.7%	93.6%	94.8%	94.7%	94.0%	93.2%	-0.8%
Mississippi	76.0%	81.0%	81.9%	83.2%	74.4%	78.3%	79.6%	77.9%	-1.7%
Missouri	77.2%	76.0%	79.0%	79.4%	80.1%	78.8%	79.9%	81.4%	1.5%
Montana	79.2%	78.9%	76.9%	76.3%	74.0%	74.0%	77.0%	76.0%	-1.0%
Nebraska	84.8%	84.1%	84.2%	78.6%	79.1%	79.0%	79.6%	83.3%	3.7%
Nevada	91.0%	93.2%	94.1%	90.5%	94.8%	94.0%	92.1%	89.4%	-2.7%
New Hampshire	68.9%	72.2%	75.0%	68.6%	73.0%	70.4%	69.5%	70.2%	0.7%
New Jersey	92.7%	93.7%	94.5%	88.3%	91.0%	87.6%	91.4%	93.4%	2.0%
New Mexico	90.1%	89.8%	90.5%	91.4%	92.0%	92.1%	93.3%	92.3%	-1.0%
New York	88.0%	89.8%	90.5%	90.4%	91.1%	90.6%	92.2%	91.8%	-0.4%
North Carolina	89.5%	89.7%	89.5%	87.5%	88.6%	90.6%	89.9%	91.7%	1.8%
North Dakota	81.5%	74.8%	76.7%	80.9%	77.7%	81.0%	80.4%	82.8%	2.4%
Ohio	83.6%	83.8%	84.1%	82.0%	84.5%	85.0%	83.9%	83.8%	-0.1%
Oklahoma	84.2%	85.9%	85.9%	83.8%	83.6%	86.3%	84.5%	86.6%	2.1%
Oregon	96.6%	97.0%	96.6%	96.8%	98.2%	97.8%	95.5%	96.2%	0.7%
Pennsylvania	87.9%	86.0%	83.8%	83.5%	84.0%	83.6%	82.7%	85.2%	2.5%
Rhode Island	74.7%	78.0%	80.4%	77.5%	85.6%	87.4%	86.7%	87.5%	0.8%
South Carolina	81.5%	85.4%	86.0%	90.5%	91.7%	90.0%	91.6%	93.9%	2.3%
South Dakota	72.1%	74.5%	73.4%	66.5%	68.7%	68.9%	73.6%	74.2%	0.6%
Tennessee	80.6%	87.1%	87.4%	83.7%	84.8%	87.7%	86.2%	88.9%	2.7%
Texas	92.9%	93.8%	93.7%	94.0%	90.3%	90.7%	90.5%	91.6%	1.1%
Utah	86.1%	89.0%	89.2%	81.9%	82.4%	83.4%	87.2%	87.9%	0.7%
Vermont	85.3%	85.2%	84.7%	84.2%	84.9%	84.1%	86.0%	80.0%	-6.0%
Virginia	82.3%	80.5%	81.8%	78.4%	79.7%	77.3%	80.9%	79.0%	-1.9%
Washington	96.4%	97.6%	97.5%	96.9%	94.5%	94.5%	94.6%	94.7%	0.1%
West Virginia	87.0%	82.1%	84.9%	84.0%	82.2%	87.8%	89.0%	86.8%	-2.2%
Wisconsin	73.8%	79.2%	79.0%	79.9%	82.4%	84.7%	85.8%	88.4%	2.6%
Wyoming	67.6%	78.9%	82.6%	77.0%	81.9%	79.2%	79.8%	80.5%	0.7%
Nationwide*	84.0%	85.0%	84.0%	86.0%	87.0%	86.7%	88.5%	90.1%	1.6%
Puerto Rico	92.3%	NA	91.9%	90.2%	89.7%	89.5%	91.8%	93.8%	2.0%
American Samoa	60.0%	73.0%	77.0%	75.0%	74.9%	76.3%	77.0%	82.9%	5.9%
Guam	80.0%	85.0%	81.0%	81.4%	93.8%	90.1%	91.5%	90.1%	-1.4%
No. Mariana Islands	84.6%	80.9%	93.7%	NA	90.5%	91.4%	95.6%	92.3%	-3.3%
U.S. Virgin Islands	85.6%	86.4%	85.6%	77.9%	76.8%	66.1%	82.7%	79.1%	-3.6%

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

NA: No rate reported.

*The "nationwide" rates are from NHTSA's National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS).

Suggested APA Format Citation for This Report:

Pickrell, T. (2017, May). *Seat belt use in 2016—Use rates in the States and Territories* (Traffic Safety Facts Crash•Stats, Report No. DOT HS 812 417). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

This issue of Crash•Stats was written by Timothy M. Pickrell, a mathematical statistician at NHTSA. For questions regarding the information presented in this document, please contact NCSAWE@dot.gov. Internet users may access this Crash•Stats and other general information on traffic safety at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov>.