FIELD OBSERVATION OF SAFETY BELT USE IN WISCONSIN
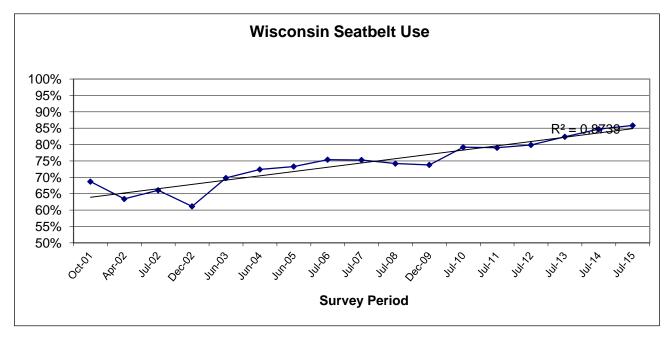
July 2015[1]

Since March 1987, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has conducted annual statewide observation surveys of safety belt use. Wisconsin enacted a mandatory safety belt law with secondary enforcement in December 1987, a mandatory child safety seat law in May 1992, and a primary safety belt enforcement law in July 2009.
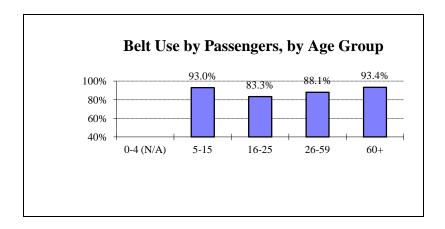
RESULTS

-In July 2015, **85.8%** of passenger vehicle occupants (front outboard*) used their safety belts.

*Front outboard refers to the driver and the right front seat passenger.

(Note: The chronology on the graph is not to scale due to irregularity in collection dates.)
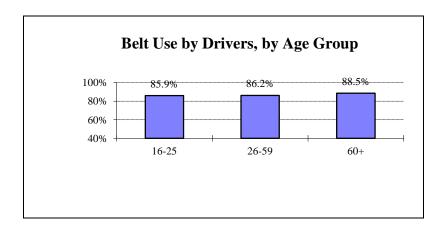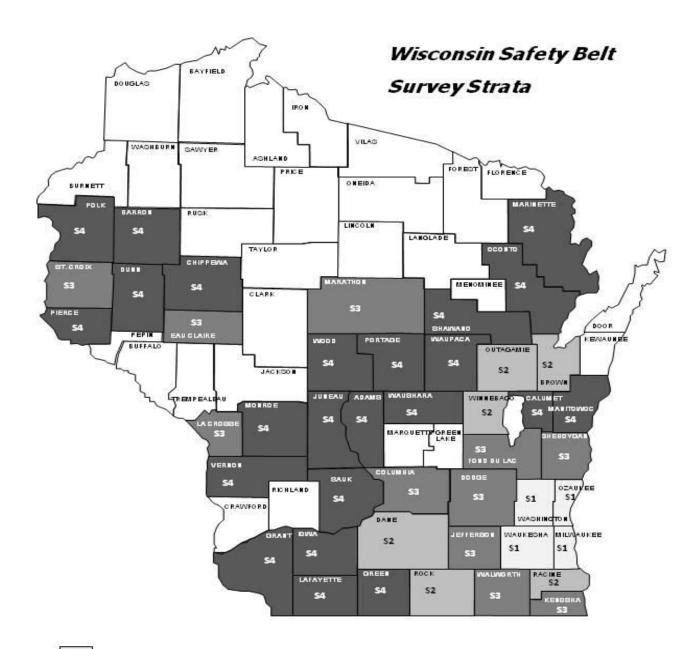
Wisconsin Seatbelt Use

R² = 0.8739

Survey Period

Belt use is second highest (93.0%) among children 5-15 years of age and highest for the category representing the oldest age group of 60+.

(Please note: The 0-4 Age Group was excluded from the survey, because children who should be legally restrained in car seats, as is the case with this particular age group, should also be in the back passenger compartment of the vehicle for legal purposes.)

Belt Use by Passengers, by Age Group

	0-4 (N/A)	5-15	16-25	26-59	60+
		93.0%	83.3%	88.1%	93.4%

Belt use is the lowest (85.9%) among drivers ages 16-25. This group represents 14.1% of licensed drivers, yet accounted for 30.8% of drivers involved in crashes in 2014.

Belt Use by Drivers, by Age Group

	16-25	26-59	60+
	85.9%	86.2%	88.5%

Wisconsin Safety Belt Survey Strata

DOUGLAS
BAYFIELD
IRON
WASHBURN SAWYER ASHLAND VILAS
PRICE
ONEIDA
FOREST FLORENCE
BURNETT
POLK **S4** BARRON **S4** RUSK LINCOLN MARINETTE **S4**
LANGLADE OCONTO
ST. CROIX **S3** DUNN **S4** CHIPPEWA **S4** TAYLOR MARATHON **S3** MENOMINEE OCONTO **S4**
PIERCE **S4** PEPIN **S3** CLARK **S4** SHAWANO **S4**
BUFFALO EAU CLAIRE WOOD **S4** PORTAGE **S4** WAUPACA **S4** OUTAGAMIE **S2** **S2** DOOR
JACKSON KEWAUNEE
BROWN
TREMPEALEAU JUNEAU ADAMS WAUSHARA WINNEBAGO CALUMET MANITOWOC
MONROE **S4** **S4** **S4** **S4** **S2** **S4** **S4**
LA CROSSE **S3** MARQUETTE GREEN LAKE SHEBOYGAN **S3**
VERNON **S4** **S3**
SAUK COLUMBIA FOND DU LAC
RICHLAND **S4** **S3** DODGE **S3** OZAUKEE **S1**
CRAWFORD **S1** WASHINGTON
GRANT IOWA DANE JEFFERSON WAUKESHA MILWAUKEE
S4 **S4** **S2** **S3** **S1** **S1**
LAFAYETTE GREEN ROCK WALWORTH RACINE **S2**
S4 **S4** **S2** **S3** KENOSHA **S3**

S1 Stratum 1 - Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties

S2 Stratum 2 - Brown, Dane, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, and Winnebago Counties

S3 Stratum 3 — Columbia, Dodge, Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Kenosha, La Crosse, Marathon, Saint Croix, Sheboygan, and Walworth Counties

S4 Stratum 4 - Adams, Barron, Calumet, Chippewa, Dunn, Grant, Green, Iowa, Juneau, Lafayette, Manitowoc, Marinette, Monroe, Oconto, Pierce, Polk, Portage, Sauk, Shawano, Vernon, Waupaca, Waushara, and Wood Counties
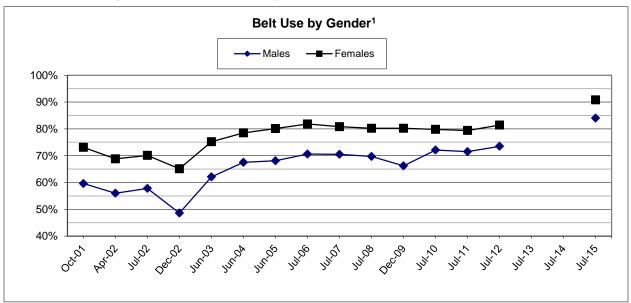
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
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Belt Use by Region (Stratum)

Belt use varies by 9.8% across the state. The Stratum 4 area is highest at 90.0%, and the Stratum 1 area is lowest at 80.2%

	Strata[2]	Belt Usage 2015 (%)
1	Stratum 1	80.2
2	Stratum 2	84.4
3	Stratum 3	88.5
4	Stratum 4	90.0

Belt Use by Gender

Wisconsin has consistently displayed a gender difference of approximately 10% or more in safety belt use. In the most recent survey, 90.8% of females wore their belts, while only 84.0% of males did, giving a 6.8% difference, instead of the usual 10% or greater difference between genders.[1]

Belt Use by Gender[1]

[1] The data for the age, gender, and the vehicle type variables were not collected in 2013 and 2014. Graphs and narratives that had been included in the Seat Belt Survey Monographs from previous years, for these three variables during the 2013-2014 time period, will not be included in the 2015 Seat Belt Monograph and future Seat Belt Survey Monographs

[2] A stratum consists of one of four groups of counties, which are not necessarily contiguous that constitute a comparable number of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and altogether make up 85+ percent of the three-year average, of statewide motor vehicle fatalities. The counties making up the 85+ percent of 3-year statewide fatalities are necessary to meet the NHTSA guidelines for a seatbelt observation survey.

Except for Stratum 1, which represents metropolitan Milwaukee and is intrinsically contiguous, the other three strata each represent groups of counties that are by their nature have similar population size and characteristics. Please note that Stratum 2 represents the counties with the larger cities (outside of metro Milwaukee) of a more urban environment in Wisconsin, with Stratum 3 mostly representing the counties with the small to mid-size municipalities and a greater combination of urban and rural areas, whereas Stratum 4 represents the counties with the smallest municipalities, which are more rural in their nature when taken together with the other three strata. Altogether, the four strata make up the forty-four counties that have a possibility of having sites selected to be surveyed for seatbelt usage observations.