

# FIELD OBSERVATION OF SAFETY BELT USE IN WISCONSIN

## July 2011



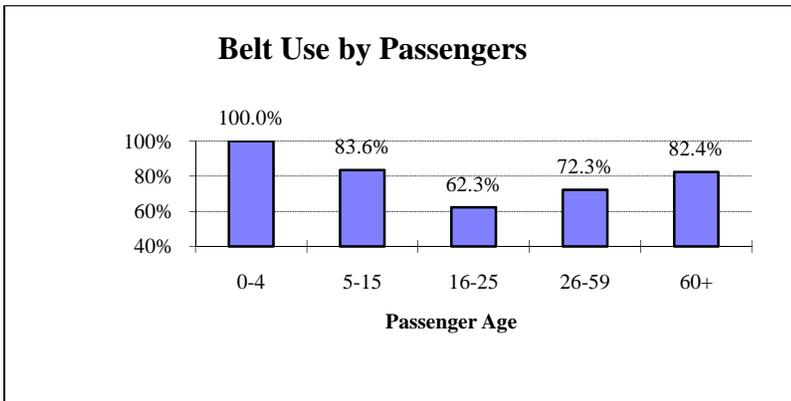
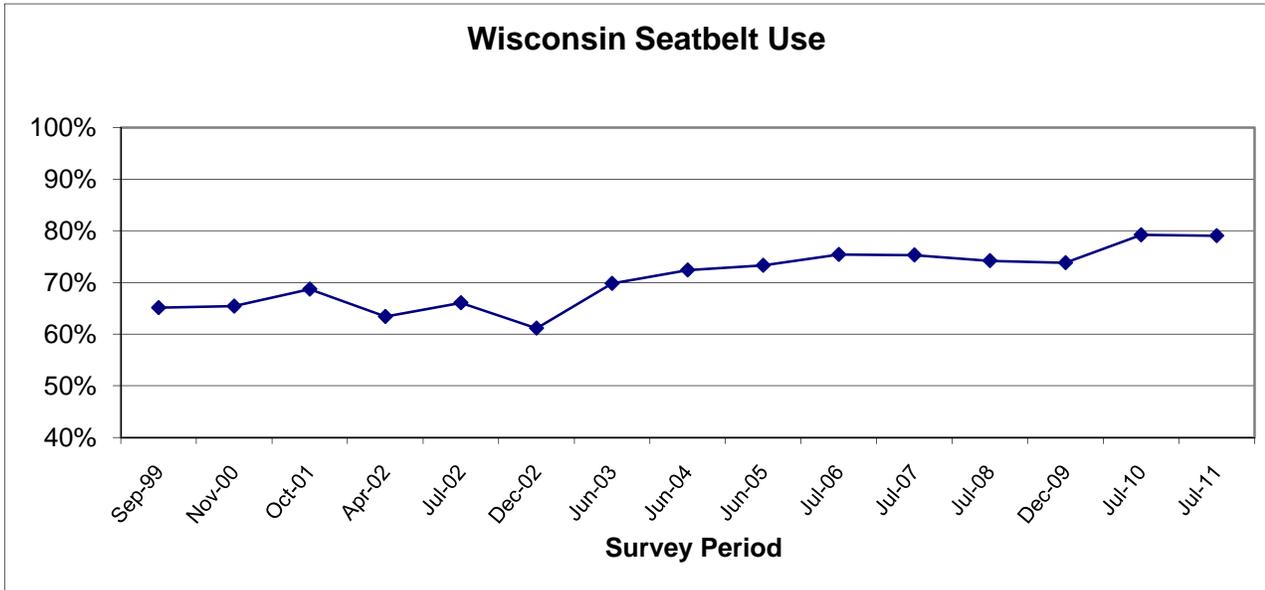
Since March 1987, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has conducted periodic statewide observation surveys of safety belt use. Wisconsin enacted a mandatory safety belt law with secondary enforcement in December 1987, a mandatory child safety seat law in May 1992, and a primary safety belt enforcement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

### RESULTS

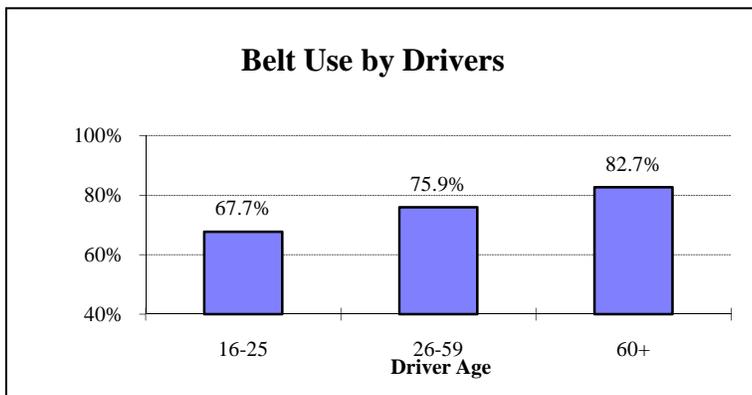
In July 2011, **79.0%** of passenger vehicle occupants (front outboard\*) used their safety belts.

\*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.)



**Belt use is highest (100.0%) among children 0-4 years of age. This includes child safety seat use.** However, a 16-month, nationwide study completed in 2002 by the National Safe Kids Campaign showed that approximately 72.6% of child safety seats are used improperly in the vehicle, creating a situation where a child would be at increased risk of injury in the event of a crash. Please also note the enactment of **2005 Wisconsin Act 106**. This legislation broadly necessitates the use of booster seats for children from 4 through 7 years of age.

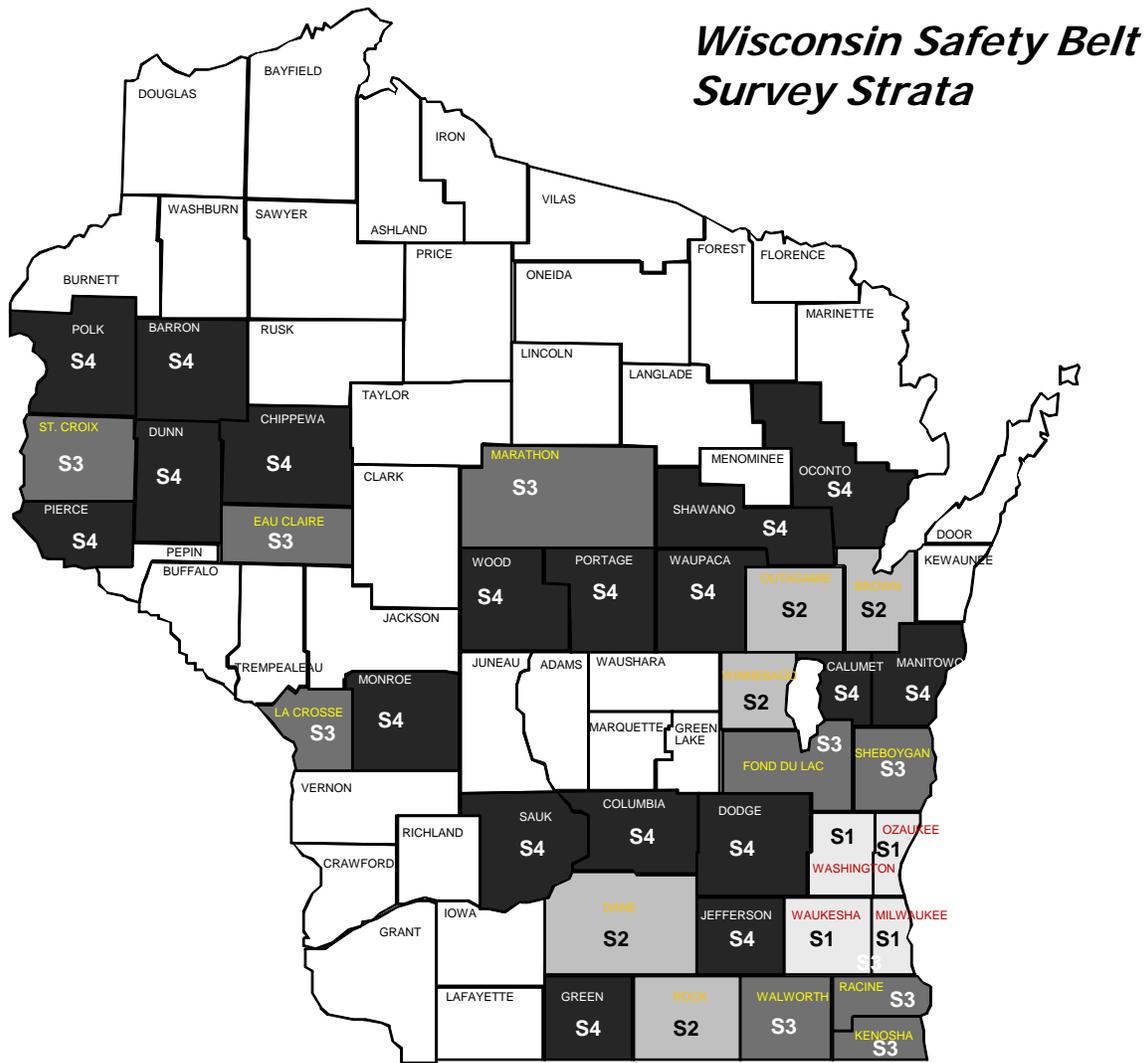


**Belt use is the lowest (67.7%) among drivers ages 16-25.** This group represents 15.0% of licensed drivers, yet accounted for 25.8% of drivers involved in crashes in 2010.

**Belt Use by Region (Stratum)**

**Belt use varies by 13.3% across the state.** The Stratum 2 area is highest at 85.1%, and the Stratum 1 area is lowest at 71.8%

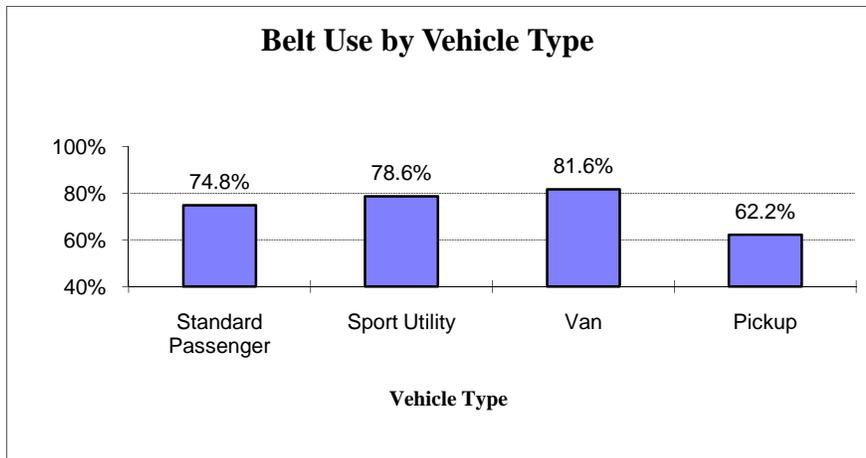
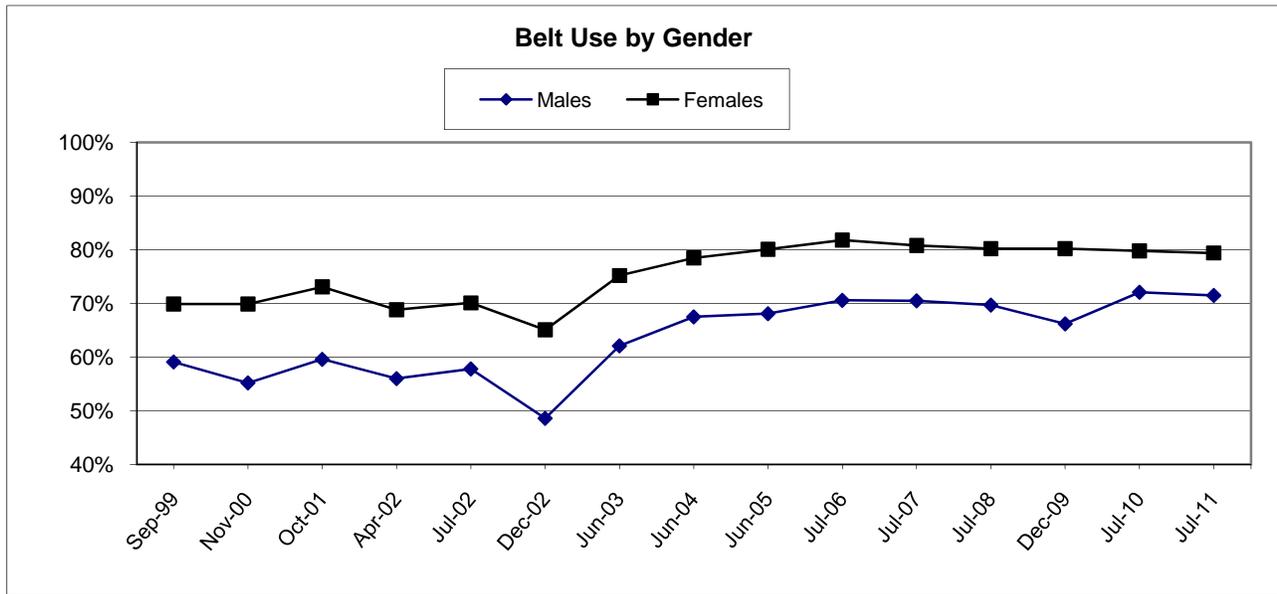
Strata <sup>1</sup>		Belt Usage 2011 (%)
1	Stratum 1	71.8
2	Stratum 2	85.1
3	Stratum 3	74.5
4	Stratum 4	82.9



- S1** Stratum 1 - Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties
- S2** Stratum 2 - Brown, Dane, Outagamie, Rock, and Winnebago Counties
- S3** Stratum 3 - Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Kenosha, La Crosse, Marathon, Racine, Sheboygan, St. Croix, and Walworth Counties
- S4** Stratum 4 - Barron, Calumet, Chippewa, Columbia, Dodge, Dunn, Green, Jefferson, Manitowoc, Monroe, Oconto, Pierce, Polk, Portage, Sauk, Shawano, Waupaca, and Wood Counties

Source: WisDOA Demographic Services

**Wisconsin has consistently displayed a gender difference of approximately 10% or more in safety belt use.** In the most recent survey, 79.4% of females wore their belts, while only 71.5% of males did, giving a 7.9% difference.



**Occupants of vans were most likely to be wearing their safety belts.** 81.6% of front seat van occupants wore safety belts.

**Occupants of pickup trucks were least likely to use their belts.** Little more than half (62.2%) of the occupants of pickup trucks wore safety belts.

<sup>1</sup> A stratum consists of one of the four grouping of not necessarily contiguous counties, with a comparable number of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) that make up 85+ percent of the state population, which is 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 stratum each represent groups of counties that are by their nature of similar population size and characteristics, such as 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 that are more rural in their nature, when taken together with the other three strata make up the thirty-six counties that have the possibility of having sites selected to be surveyed for seatbelt usage.