

# Seat Belts, Car Seats/ Booster Seats for Children, and Air Bags.

## Why It's Important

**Take Occupant Protection as seriously as the statistics.** Restraint use helps save lives.



### What is occupant protection?

A safety feature designed to protect occupants of motor vehicles in the event of a crash.

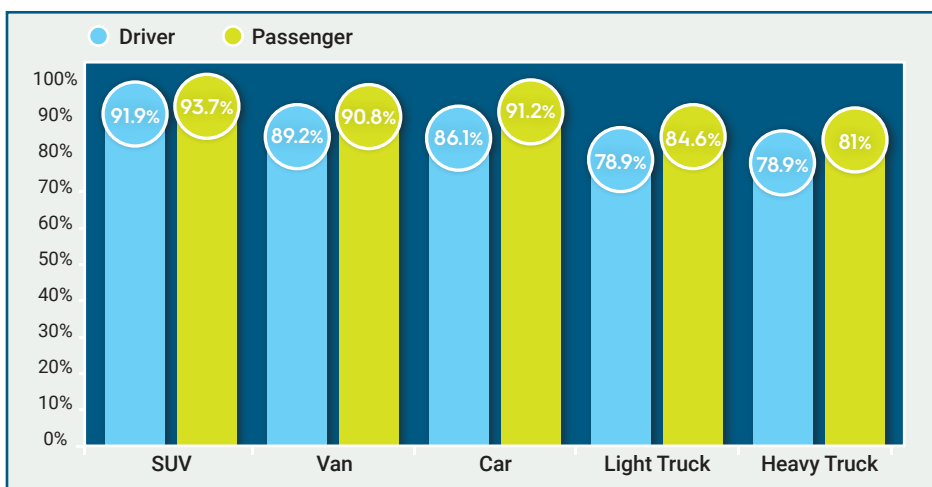
### What does it include?

Seat belts, car seats for children and air bags in passenger vehicles.

### Ohio's seat belt compliance:

- **The 2024 compliance rate in Ohio is 85.2%.** The compliance rate over the past decade has varied between 81% and 86.0%.
- **Saturday/Sunday are days with the highest compliance at 90.3%** while Thursday is the lowest at 84.3%. The time of day has little to no impact.
- Staying local lowers compliance to 84.5% compared to 87.5% on state and local highways or 90% on interstate/highways.
- According to statistics, **seatbelt restraints for all occupants continues to save lives** no matter the circumstances.

### Ohio's seat belt compliance rate by vehicle type\*



*The compliance rate per vehicle type was observed to identify if the type of vehicle had an impact on the occupant compliance rate.*

\* Vehicle information was obtained from the U.S. Department of Energy and Federal Highway Admin.

## Did You Know?

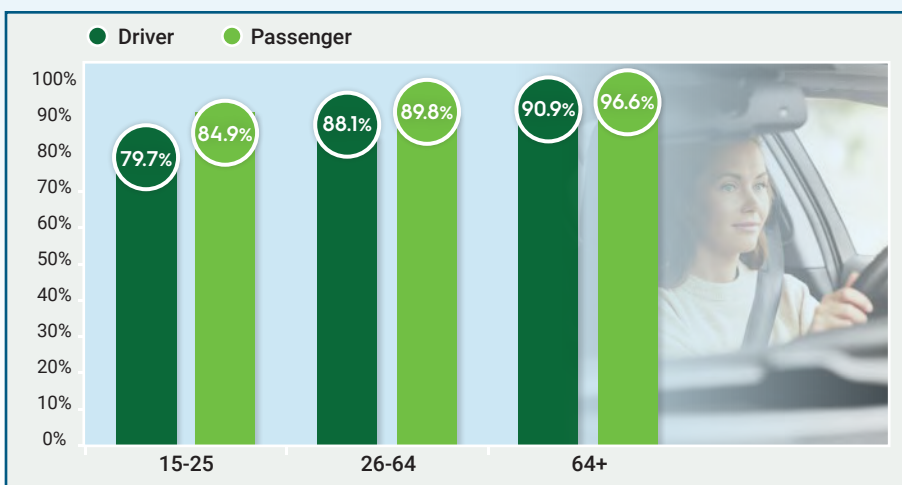
**Failure to buckle up is a factor in more crash fatalities** than any other traffic safety-related behavior.

**Ohio observed a seat belt compliance rate of 85.2% in 2024.** 7% lower than the National average of 91.2%.

Females in Ohio practice seat belt safety over their male counterparts by 7.1%:  
**Females: 91.9%**  
**Males: 84.8%**

The lowest compliance rates among all vehicle types belongs to:  
**Truck-Light: 82.5%**  
**Truck-Heavy: 79.2%**

### Ohio's seat belt compliance rate by age



The compliance rate per age was considered to understand if there is a relationship between occupant age and compliance.

Younger occupant drivers aged 15-25 years have the lowest compliance rate of 79.7%. A prime target to increase seat belt guidance during driver training and school.

### 2024 Observational survey of seat belt use in Ohio

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) conducts an annual survey to help identify factors associated with strategies to enhance seat belt use and reduce fatalities. The following areas have been identified:

- **Local roads** create a false sense of safety with lower compliance rates compared to longer drives on interstates/highways.
- **Heavy and light trucks** take the highest chances with seat belt compliance.
- **Male** occupants display lower compliance compared to females.
- **Young drivers** need reminders on why seat belt safety is important and guidance on how it saves lives, including their own.
- **Young, male, heavy truck drivers** exhibit the lowest compliance rates among all surveyed.

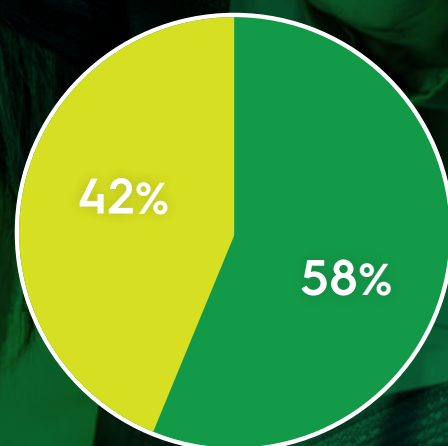
Identifying areas for seat belt improvements is the most effective way to reduce the number of annual fatalities on Ohio roads. Each year a combination of enforcement efforts and media campaigns is crucial for increasing the compliance rate which makes everyone safer.

## Did You Know?

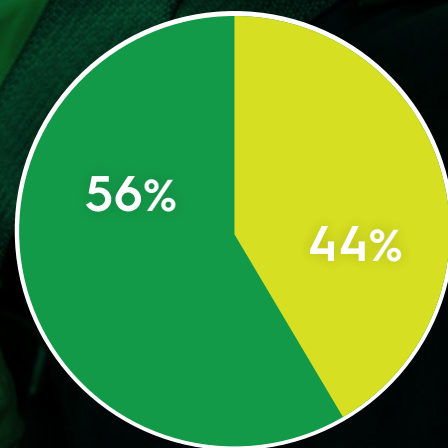
In 2023, 23,959 passenger vehicle occupants were killed. NHTSA says nearly 50% of those deaths were not buckled. Factor in your ability to survive.

**Be safe anytime you drive.**

### Daytime crashes



### Nighttime crashes



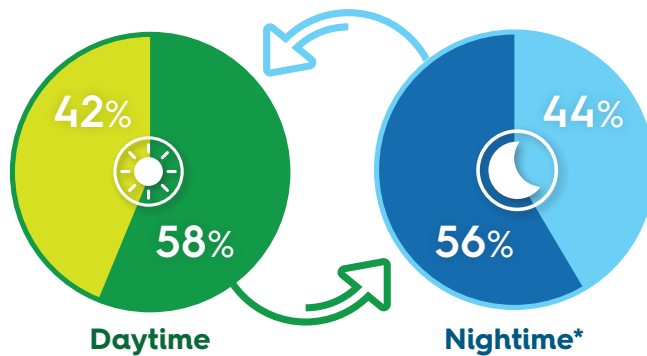
### Vehicle ejection risk

Ejection from the vehicle is one of the most injurious events that can happen to a person in a crash. In National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA), Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data, ejection refers to occupants being totally or partially thrown from the vehicles. In 2022 fatal traffic crashes based on known restraint use, 83% of passenger vehicle occupants who were totally ejected from vehicles were killed. Seat belts are very effective in preventing total ejections; in 2022 only 1% of all passenger vehicle occupants involved (those killed as well as survivors) in fatal traffic crashes reported to have been using restraints were totally ejected, compared to 26% of those unrestrained.

### Time of day for vehicle crashes\*

Daytime crashes vs. nighttime crashes.

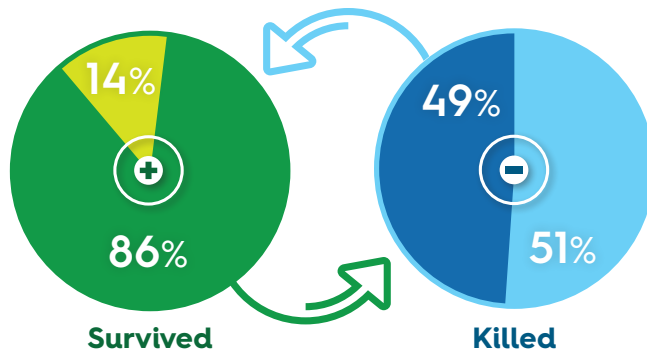
- Unrestrained
- Restrained



### Fatal crashes by survival and restraint use\*

Passenger vehicle occupants in fatal crashes by survival and restraint use.

- Unrestrained
- Restrained



\* FARS 2023 ARF, based on known restraint use.

### Child restraints

NHTSA has estimated that car seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71% for infants (younger than 1 year old) and by 54% for toddlers (1 to 4 years old) in passenger cars. For infants and toddlers in light trucks, the corresponding reductions are 58% and 59%.

### Frontal air bags

Frontal air bags, combined with lap/shoulder belts, offer effective safety protection for passenger vehicle occupants. NHTSA analyses indicate frontal air bags reduce fatalities by 14% when no seat belts were used, and 11% when seat belts were used in conjunction with frontal air bags.

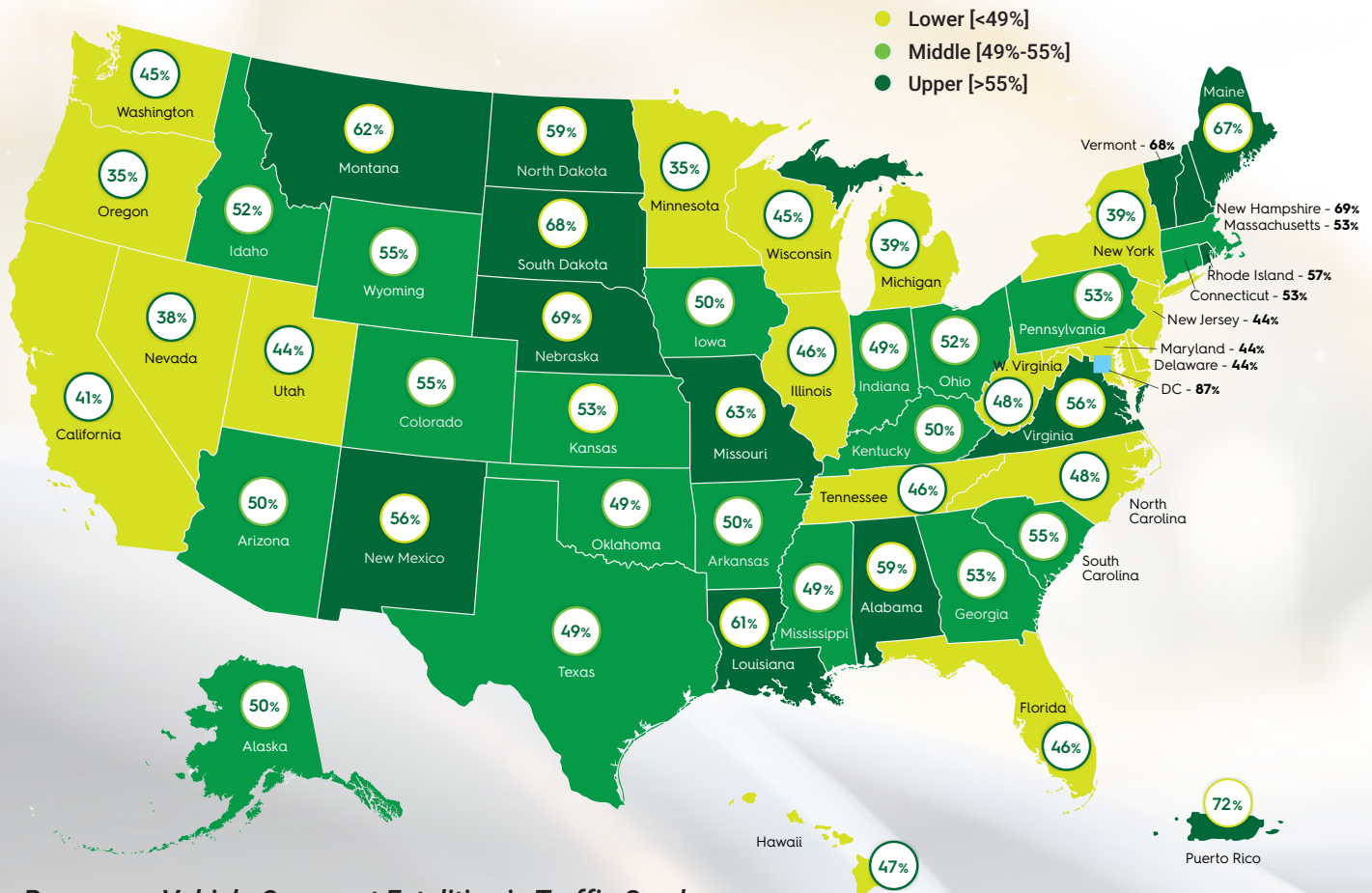
## Did You Know?

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## Occupant Protection (continued)

### Unrestrained deaths in traffic crashes



Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities in Traffic Crashes, by State and Restraint Use, 2023.

### Seat belt safety benefits

The safety benefits of seat belt use are significant and well-documented.

Seat belts help keep occupants inside vehicles and prevent them from becoming projectiles inside the vehicle and hurting others. NHTSA has estimated that lap/shoulder seat belts, when used, reduce the risk of:

- fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45%;
- moderate-to-critical injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 50%;
- fatal injury to front-seat light-truck occupants by 60%; and
- moderate-to-critical injury to front-seat light-truck occupants by 65%.

#### Cites:

- FARS 2023 ARF
- <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813743>
- <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813615>
- <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813573>
- <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812069>
- <https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/otso.ohio.gov/reports/2023-Observational-Survey-of-Seat-Belt-Use.pdf>
- <http://www.ghsa.org/state-laws-issues/seat-belt-use>
- <https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/seat-belts>
- <https://www.nhtsa.gov/book/countermeasures-that-work/seat-belts-and-child-restraints>



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