2025 Colorado Statewide Seat-Belt Study Results

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2025, Atélior, LLC administered a thorough study on seat belt usage for the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The following report highlights the findings from an overall seat belt usage across all vehicle types, all the way down to the seat belt usage in twenty-six counties across the state. The following individuals are part of the administrative team of Atélior.

Atélior Research Team:

D. Todd Donavan, Ph.D.	Principal Investigator
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Atélior works to assure the highest standards in reliability and validity of the data and results. To ensure the results are at the highest standard, Atélior hires a team of retired Colorado State Highway Patrol Officers to serve as observers/recorders. These former officers are well versed in the traffic safety procedures, as well as interstate, state highway and local roads. These observers are certified on the proper procedures of observation and recording each year. Each observer is evaluated for quality performance during the weeks of data collection. Additional training is given to anyone who struggles to meet our standards. Further, Atélior utilizes IPads to collect data as an additional step towards accuracy.

We observed a total of 106,087 vehicles across the 744 site locations. This included 126,173 occupants in the front seat including the driver and any front seat passengers. We logged the vehicle category across five vehicle categories of cars, vans, sports utility vehicles (SUVs), pickup trucks, and commercial vehicles (10,000 pounds or less). This year's usage rate stands at 90.69%, which is an increase of 2.5% and a percentage increase of 2.83% from the 2024 Statewide study of 88.19%.

D. Todd Donavan, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator, Atélior

Seatbelt Usage Across the Five Vehicle Categories

Atélior, LLC has now completed the 2025 Colorado Statewide seat-belt study. This report provides an overview of the results as shown in Table 1.0 below. We found an overall seat belt usage rate of 90.69% which is the highest usage rate in the last fourteen years. The rate is an absolute increase of 2.5% since the 2024 study which is a percentage increase of 2.83%, that is ((90.69-88.19)/88.19).

When considering the difference between various vehicle types, (i.e., cars, trucks, SUVs, Vans and Commercial vehicles), we find the order from highest to lowest did not change from the previous year. The breakdown from highest to lowest is the following:

- **SUVs** 93.35% (C.I. 93.15% to 93.55%), this was an increase of 2.19% for a percentage increase of 2.4%. This year's confidence interval is slightly tighter than last year standing at 93.15% to 93.55%. Last year's confidence interval for SUVs stood at 90.92% to 91.40.This is the second year in a row that the lower bound stood above the 90% mark, which is promising considering the meaning of the lower bound that is, we are 95% confident that the percentage of seat belt usage is at least 93.15% .
- **Vans** 92.88% increased by 3.53% with a percentage increase of 3.95%. The lower bound on the Vans confidence interval also exceeded the 90% mark: (92.21% to 93.55%).
- **Cars,** 89.83%, stood in third place (C.I. 89.45% to 90.21%).
- **Commercial Vehicles** stood at 86.79% (C.I. 86.00% to 87.58%).
- **Trucks** stood at 85.68% (C.I. 85.24% to 86.12%).

The overall rate of 90.69% is the highest in recent years. The rate across all vehicle classes has remained in the upper 80% range since 2018 and bounced around slightly through those years. The 2025 confidence interval stands at 90.53% to 90.85%. The confidence interval (C.I.) indicates that we are 95% confident that the overall rate, if we took an infinitely large number of samples, would be between 90.53% and 90.85%.

Table 1.0

2025 Statewide Seat-belt Usage by Vehicle Type

		# of Sites	Estimate %	Std Error	CV %	Lower 95% Limit	Upper 95% Limit
1	SUVs	744	93.35%	.10139	.1086	93.15	93.55
2	Vans	744	92.88%	.3415	.3677	92.21	93.55
3	Cars	744	89.83%	.1939	.2158	89.45	90.21
4	Commercial	744	86.79%	.4021	.4633	86.00	87.58
5	Trucks	744	85.68%	.2220	.2591	85.24	86.12
	Overall	744	90.69%	.0917	.0916	90.53	90.85

Statewide Seatbelt Survey

Sampling Methodology

We continue to survey seven-hundred forty-four (744) statewide sites across 26 counties. Seven-hundred thirty-eight (738) original sites and 6 alternate sites provide survey data for this study performed during a 2-week period from June 9th to June 22nd, 2025. In selecting the sample, stratification by county was employed as well as an unequal weighting by road class. Each county had either 12 or 48 sites chosen for observation.

Observers

Atelior hires mostly retired Colorado State Highway Patrol Officers to conduct the data. Due to their extensive experience/familiarity with the interstate, and state highway system, as well as safety procedures, potential safety and location problems are reduced or eliminated. Most observers have worked on this study for a number of years which increases the validity and reliability of the results.

In the study, an emphasis in training and certification with observers on the definition of belted, unbelted, and unknown.
According to regulations, 1340.7(d) states:

(d) *Occupant coverage.* Data shall be collected by direct observation of all drivers and right front passengers, including right front passengers in booster seats, but excluding right front passengers in child safety seats. Observers shall record a person as—

(1) Belted if the shoulder belt is in front of the person's shoulder.
(2) Unbelted if the shoulder belt is not in front of the person's shoulder.
(3) Unknown if it cannot reasonably be determined whether the driver or right-front passenger is belted.

"Unobservable" vehicles (i.e., vehicles with tinted windshields) should be included in the sample and recorded as "unknown" belt status if the observer cannot reasonably determine if the driver or right front passenger is belted or unbelted.

SURVEY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The 2025 Colorado Statewide Seat Belt Usage Survey was designed to meet all requirements established by the Uniform Criteria for State Observational Surveys of Seat Belt Use issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Final Rule, Federal Register, Vol. 76, No. 63, April 1, 2011.

1. Samples were probability-based on population road segments within each county and were therefore representative of seat belt usage for the State's driver and outboard front seat passenger population for vehicles falling within the parameters of the study.

2. The sample data were collected through direct observation of seat belt usage at the pre-determined sites by qualified and trained observers. Observation times were assigned and rescheduled if weather interfered, or other conditions existed which made observations at a particular site unsafe.

3. The population of interest was the driver and outboard front seat passenger of cars, vans, SUVs, light trucks, and select commercial vehicles 10,000 pounds and under.

4. Observations were conducted in daylight hours from June 9th to June 22nd, 2025 between the hours of 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM.

5. Observations start times were staggered to obtain a representative sample from rush hour and non-rush hour time frames.

6. Observational data were recorded on IPADS. The data were then transferred to a digital record and entered into the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program for data reduction.

As required by the "Final Rule," the counties that account for 85% of the crash-related fatalities in the state are to be included in the survey sample. As shown in Appendix 1, 22 of the 64 counties accounted for 85% of the fatalities for the period of 2015-2019. These counties thus comprise the sample frame and were used as strata for sampling road segments.

The research design involved a stratified systemic PPS sample of data collection sites described below.

1. Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data for the period of 2015 to 2019 were used to determine the average number of crash-related fatalities per county. It was determined that 26 counties accounted for 85% of Colorado's total crash-related fatalities. In this Statewide study, we observed vehicles in all 26 selected counties.

2. Road segments were selected systematically with probability proportional to size (PPS) from all segments in the stratified counties. The road segments were serpentine sorted by latitude and longitude within counties, which makes the sampling spatially more uniform within counties.

For the purposes of this survey, an observational site was defined as a specific road intersection or interstate ramp where observations take place. Observations were conducted at each site for 40 minutes of each hour between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Twenty minutes were allowed for recording data and moving to the next observation site.

Determination of Sample Size

Sample size determination was, in large measure, governed by time constraints and the precision requirement of the study (the coefficient of variation %: standard error divided by the parameter estimate*100 <=2.5). A decision as to how many roadways to select and assign for observation during the observation period required a balance between issues of statistical reliability and observer productivity. There was a practical need to select an optimal number of road segments for study so that observers would not spend an inordinate amount of time traveling from site to site. With all those issues in mind, as well as the needs of the contracting organization, a total sample of 204 observational time periods and sites were selected.

Estimation

The basic estimate derived from this Colorado State-wide Seat Belt Usage Survey is the estimate of seat belt usage for all drivers and outboard front seat occupants of cars, vans, sport utility vehicles (SUVs), light trucks, and select commercial vehicles 10,000 pounds and under.

The seat belt usage rate of 90.69% for Colorado was determined by using a survey sampling methodology to obtain information about a large population of Colorado drivers and outboard front seat passengers by selecting and measuring a sample of that population. Fundamental to the analysis of this survey is the concept of cluster analysis, a collection of statistical methods that can be used to assign cases to groups (clusters). Group members share certain properties in common, and it is therefore assumed that the resultant classifications will provide insight into seat belt usage for the State of Colorado.

Analysis

The SPSS Program was used to perform statistical analysis of the survey data. This analytical procedure considers the design used to select the sample. The sample design was a complex design that incorporated stratification and unequal weighting. The program computes ratio estimates and provides standard errors and confidence intervals for the ratios and for any specified domain analysis, such as road class.

Using this procedure, seat belt usage rates in Colorado were estimated along with a determination of the standard errors and coefficients of variation. The survey sample size was large enough to allow estimates of usage rates for various domains of vehicles, speed, and local versus major roads. The estimates for all domains, their standard errors, coefficients of variation (CV) and confidence intervals are shown in Table 1.0.

Analysis Methodology

Data from observing both drivers and passengers was combined with site characteristic data to create the input data file. Sampling weights were derived and utilized in the analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Sample Characteristics

- 744 of 744 sites surveyed.
- 106,087 vehicles were observed.
- 126,173 occupants (both drivers and front seat passengers) were observed.
- 3,829 occupants were surveyed as "unable to be observed" (3,619 of these were drivers)
    - This represents 3.03% of all individuals surveyed (observable + non-observable)
    - Non-observable rates by vehicle type (includes both drivers and front seat passengers)
- The table below indicates the unobservable rates among the five vehicle types. Trucks 5.25% were the most likely to be unobservable, followed by Cars at 3.69%, Commercial vehicles 2.44%, SUVs 2.04% and Vans at 1.49%.

Vehicle Type	**2025**
Car	3.69%
Van	1.49%
SUV	2.04%
Truck	5.25%
Commercial	2.44%
Overall	3.03%

RESULTS

Statewide Survey Results

The results of this observational study demonstrate similar results as found in recent years. As mentioned, the overall rate across all vehicle categories stands at 90.69%, which is slightly higher from the 2024 results of 88.19%, a 2.5% increase and a percentage increase of 2.83%. (Percentage increase is the calculated difference between the two years divided by the first year under consideration). All five vehicle categories increased from last year with Vans increasing the most. Vans moved from 89.35% to 92.88% for an increase of 3.53 which equates to a percentage increase of 3.95%. Commercial vehicles increased from 83.59% to 86.79% for the second highest improvement and a percentage increase of 3.86%. The improvement for trucks was 2.76 for a percentage increase of 3.3%, while Cars was the fourth highest improved category with a percentage increase of 2.6%. Finally, SUVs was the final category, which improved percentage-wise by 2.4% in one year. Table 2.0 provides the historical data for the past twelve years.

We also calculated the five-year moving average across the five vehicle categories. The 2025 average for each vehicle category is above their five-year moving average, which indicates they are moving in a upward/positive direction. For comparisons, here are the current rates and five-year moving average for each category.

- **Cars:** (89.83%) with a five-year moving average of 88.15%.
- **Vans:** (92.88%) has a five-year moving average of 89.87%.
- **SUVs:** (93.35%) had a five-year moving average of 90.42%.
- **Trucks:** (85.68%) with the five-year moving average of 83.62%.
- **Commercial vehicles:** (86.79%) with a five-year moving average of 81.86%.

Table 2.0
Historical Statewide Usage Rates (%)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Car	83.1	85.2	83.9	83.7	86.0	88.3	86.1	87.0	87.6	88.8	87.53	89.83
Van	87.3	89.2	89.5	87.2	88.0	90.1	90.2	88.1	89.0	90.0	89.35	92.88
SUV	87.1	89.9	89.2	88.5	90.8	92.0	90.9	85.9	90.3	91.4	91.16	93.35
Truck	72.4	77.6	76.1	76.5	80.1	82.6	78.3	88.1	78.5	82.9	82.92	85.68
Commercial	67.5	73.9	68.2	70.8	74.7	75.8	74.8	76.2	79.2	83.5	83.59	86.79
		85.2	84.0	83.8	86.3	88.3	86.3	86.6	87.0	88.6	88.19	90.69

Seat-belt Usage Since 2015

It is important for CDOT to know the percentage rates of the various vehicle categories as this information should assist in planning educational and promotional events. However, to have a better picture of the data we evaluated the data relative to a ten-year time frame. Atélior, LLC calculated the absolute change in seat belt usage since 2015 as shown in Table 3.0 below. The five vehicle categories have all increased since 2015, with the overall rate among all five categories increasing by 6.05%. The table also indicates the **percentage increase** from the beginning back in 2015. This calculation is scored as follows: ((current percentage – original percentage)/ original percentage). This calculation tells a score of the growth or decrease rate since the beginning of this ten-year period. While we could go back further in time than 2015, we chose to use a ten-year period from 2015 to 2025.

The increases in **Trucks** and **Commercial** vehicles were the most substantial among the five categories. **Trucks** began with a rate of 77.6% in 2015, while **Commercial Vehicles** stood at 73.9%. **Trucks** current rate of 85.68% is an improvement of 8.08 and a percentage improvement of 9.40%. **Commercial Vehicles** stands at 86.79% for an increase of 12.89 and a percentage increase of 14.90% over this ten-year period. The other three categories of **Cars, Vans** and **SUVs** are less likely to make dramatic improvements as the three categories are consistently in the upper 80%. As a category approaches the 100% mark, it is more difficult for it to increase. There's simply less room for these three categories to increase. However, each of these three categories did improve over the ten-year period. Cars had an absolute increase of 4.63 and a percentage increase of 5.2%, Vans improved by 3.68 for a percentage increase of 4.00% and finally SUVs increased by 3.45 for a percentage increase of 3.70%.

Table 3.0
Increases in Seat-belt Usage in Past Ten Years (%)

Vehicle Type	Absolute Increase	Percentage Increase (2015 to 2025)
Car	4.63	5.20%
Van	3.68	4.00%
SUV	3.45	3.70%
Truck	8.08	9.40%
Commercial	12.89	14.90%
Overall	5.49	6.05%

Seat-belt Usage by Passengers

In Table 4.0 below illustrates the passenger seat belt usage rate. The current rate of seat belt usage by passengers stands at 91.94%, up from 90.17% last year. This represents a 1.77 increase and a percentage increase of 1.96%. Looking at the current rate compared to the year 2021, we find an increase of 4.37 and a percentage increase of 4.99%. This is a meaningful increase over a four-year period.

Four of the five vehicle categories improved in 2025, with **Commercial Vehicles** being the only category that did not improve.

Table 4.0
Statewide Passenger Usage Rate by Vehicle Type

Vehicle Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Car	85.56	88.20	88.8	88.8	91.2
Van	93.13	99.17	91.05	92.7	93.8
SUV	88.38	92.88	90.14	92.67	94.6
Truck	88.41	82.05	82.95	86.16	87.5
Commercial	72.33	74.64	71.91	80.19	80.0
Overall	87.57%	89.72%	87.88%	90.17%	91.94%

Seat-belt Usage and Speed

Atélior captures data on vehicle speed limit and seat belt usage. Vehicle speed is the speed limit posted for the designated road stretch rather than the actual speed of the vehicles. We use this data to determine whether drivers and passengers are more likely to comply with the seat belt law under various speeds. Table 5.0 below provides the results of this analysis.

The results illustrate that as vehicles travel along roadways with higher posted speeds; more drivers and passengers comply with the seat belt law. The lowest speed zone of *0-30* earned a seat belt usage rate of 86.91%, (C.I. 86.28 to 87.54). This was an increase from 2024 when the estimate was at 85.77%, representing a 1.14% increase and a percentage increase of 1.33% increase. In the *31-50 mph* posted speed range, we found a usage rate of 90.3% up from 86.85% in 2024. This illustrates an increase of 3.45% and a percentage increase of 3.97%. In the final category, greater than 50 mph, the usage rate stands at 91.53, (C.I. 91.32 to 91.74). Overall, as vehicles travel along roads with higher posted speeds, occupants are more likely to wear their seat belt.

Table 5.0
Statewide Seat-belt Usage by Vehicle Speed

	# of Sites	Estimate %	Std Error	CV %	Lower 95% Limit	Upper 95% Limit
0-30 mph	143	86.91	.3205	.3688	86.28	87.54
31-50 mph	171		.1423	.1576	90.02	90.58
> than 50 mph	191	91.53	.1068	.1166	91.32	91.74

Seat-belt Usage and Road Class

Seat belt usage was also evaluated by the road class, across three categories. *Primary roads* have more lanes and vehicles are allowed to drive at higher speeds. *Secondary roads* are the middle class of roadways based on access, speed and the number of lanes provided. The third road class is the *Local roads*, which are neighborhood streets primarily used for short trips and involve lower speeds. (See Appendix 6 for further details on the three road classes).

We offer Table 6.0 below to illustrate the usage differences between the three road classes. Drivers and passengers are most likely to wear a seat belt while driving on Primary roads, which as mentioned above, have more lanes and allow higher speeds. This correlates with the findings in the posted speeds as presented in Table 5. That is to say, roads that allow higher speeds, (i.e., Primary roads) have a higher occurrence of seat belt usage.

Secondary roads have the second highest seat belt usage of the three categories with a 90.22% rate. Finally, Local roads are the least likely to observe seat belt usage. Drivers and passengers on Local roads utilize seat belts at a rate of 89.37%. It is noteworthy that all three categories are approaching a 90% usage rate, with only the Local road class short of the 90%.

Table 6.0
Statewide Seat-belt Usage by Road Class

	# of Sites	Estimate %	Std Error	CV %	Lower 95% Limit	Upper 95% Limit
Primary S1100	89	92.27%	.14505	.1572	91.99	92.55
Secondary S1200	398		.10911	.12093	90.01	90.43
Local S1400	257	89.37%	.25753	.28816	88.87	89.87

Seat-belt Usage by County

Seat belt usage rates have historically varied by county. To evaluate which counties observe the highest and lowest rates of seat belt usage we prepared Tables 7.0 and 7.1. For the convenience of CDOT, we prepared two tables that offer different groupings of the counties. In Table 7.0, the counties are shown in alphabetical order. It may be beneficial to also know the rank order of seat belt usage from highest to lowest, hence we prepared Table 7.1.

In 2025, we found thirteen counties were above the 90.0% rate, which is a decrease of two counties from the 2024 survey. This is the first drop in recent years as we've seen a steady increase from 2020 to 2024. The following bullets illustrates the number of counties from 2020 to 2025 that met or exceeded the 90% mark.

- 2020 = 6 counties
- 2021 = 9 counties
- 2022 = 11 counties
- 2023 = 13 counties
- 2024 = 15 counties
- 2025 = 13 counties

In 2025, nine counties scored between the 80% and 90% mark, and four counties scored below 80%. The four counties that fell below the 80.0% seat belt usage rate were Pueblo at 71.58% (C.I. 70.16 to 73.00), Jefferson at 75.3% (C.I. 74.66 to 75.94), Morgan 79.03 (C.I. 77.02 to 81.04), and Weld 79.84 (C.I. 78.97 to 80.71).

Table 7.0 Statewide Seat-belt Usage by County

Counties	# of sites	Estimate %	n	Std. error	CV%	Lower 95% limit	Upper 95% limit
Adams	48	92.13	8168	0.2979	0.3234	91.55	92.71
Arapahoe	48	93.58	10782	0.2361	0.2522	93.12	94.04
Boulder	48	92.71	7120	0.3081	0.3323	92.11	93.31
Chaffee	12	93.03	2267	0.5348	0.5749	91.98	94.08
Costilla	12	83.64	1357	1.0042	1.20059	81.67	85.61
Delta	12	86.87	2642	0.6571	0.756364	85.58	88.16
Denver	48	92.73	9372	0.2682	0.289228	92.20	93.26
Douglas	48	95.74	10898	0.1935	0.202062	95.36	96.12
Eagle	12	93.95	3041	0.4323	0.460173	93.10	94.80
El Paso	48	91.76	6601	0.3384	0.368835	91.10	92.42
Fremont	12	90.55	2043	0.6472	0.714723	89.28	91.82
Garfield	12	94.3	3371	0.3993	0.42345	93.52	95.08
Grand	12	97.12	1456	0.4383	0.451296	96.26	97.98
Jefferson	48	75.3	17629	0.3248	0.431357	74.66	75.94
La Plata	12	86.77	1587	0.8505	0.980182	85.10	88.44
Larimer	48	88.35	7444	0.3718	0.420878	87.62	89.08
Las Animas	12	80.9	1241	1.1158	1.379293	78.71	83.09
Logan	12	85.91	965	1.1200	1.303677	83.71	88.11
Mesa	48	91.64	4678	0.4047	0.441601	90.85	92.43
Montezuma	12	86.5	1297	0.9489	1.096955	84.64	88.36
Montrose	12	86.77	2834	0.6365	0.733492	85.52	88.02
Morgan	12	79.03	1569	1.0277	1.300444	77.02	81.04
Otero	12	81.21	1309	1.0797	1.329501	79.09	83.33
Park	48	94.05	4418	0.3559	0.378413	93.35	94.75
Pueblo	48	71.58	3891	0.7231	1.010149	70.16	73.00
Weld	48	79.84	8193	0.4432	0.555154	78.97	80.71

Table 7.1
Statewide Seat-belt Usage by County
In Order from Highest Seat Belt Usage to Lowest

County	# of sites	Estimate %	n	Std. Error	CV%	Lower 95% limit	Upper 95% limit
Grand	12	97.12	1456	0.4383	0.451296	96.26	97.98
Douglas	48	95.74	10898	0.1935	0.202062	95.36	96.12
Garfield	12	94.3	3371	0.3993	0.42345	93.52	95.08
Park	48	94.05	4418	0.3559	0.378413	93.35	94.75
Eagle	12	93.95	3041	0.4323	0.460173	93.10	94.80
Arapahoe	48	93.58	10782	0.2361	0.2522	93.12	94.04
Chaffee	12	93.03	2267	0.5348	0.5749	91.98	94.08
Denver	48	92.73	9372	0.2682	0.289228	92.20	93.26
Boulder	48	92.71	7120	0.3081	0.3323	92.11	93.31
Adams	48	92.13	8168	0.2979	0.3234	91.55	92.71
El Paso	48	91.76	6601	0.3384	0.368835	91.10	92.42
Mesa	48	91.64	4678	0.4047	0.441601	90.85	92.43
Fremont	12	90.55	2043	0.6472	0.714723	89.28	91.82
Larimer	48	88.35	7444	0.3718	0.420878	87.62	89.08
Delta	12	86.87	2642	0.6571	0.756364	85.58	88.16
La Plata	12	86.77	1587	0.8505	0.980182	85.10	88.44
Montrose	12	86.77	2834	0.6365	0.733492	85.52	88.02
Montezuma	12	86.5	1297	0.9489	1.096955	84.64	88.36
Logan	12	85.91	965	1.1200	1.303677	83.71	88.11
Costilla	12	83.64	1357	1.0042	1.20059	81.67	85.61
Otero	12	81.21	1309	1.0797	1.329501	79.09	83.33
Las Animas	12	80.9	1241	1.1158	1.379293	78.71	83.09
Weld	48	79.84	8193	0.4432	0.555154	78.97	80.71
Morgan	12	79.03	1569	1.0277	1.300444	77.02	81.04
Jefferson	48	75.3	17629	0.3248	0.431357	74.66	75.94
Pueblo	48	71.58	3891	0.7231	1.010149	70.16	73.00

CONCLUSIONS

We collected data for the 2025 Statewide seat belt usage study from June 9th to June 22nd, 2025. Data were collected across twenty-six counties and a total of 744 sites. The overall rate of seat belt usage was 90.69%. We observed 106,087 vehicles which included 126,173 occupants, including both drivers and any front seat passengers. A total of three thousand eight hundred twenty-nine (3,829) occupants were classified as "unable to observe" their seat belt status. This number is 3.03% of the total vehicles observed. This is a slight decrease in the unable to observe rate from the 2024 study. In 2024, we found a total of 4,451 were unobservable for a 3.315% rate.

Overall Rate

In 2025, we observed an overall rate of 90.69% of drivers and front-seat passengers wore their seat belt, with a confidence interval of 90.53% to 90.85%. As mentioned, the confidence interval indicates that if we took an infinite number of samples, we are 95% certain that the average would fall between the 90.53% and 90.85%.

Rates among the five vehicle types remained consistent from previous year with SUVs once again scoring the highest rate of usage at 93.35% (C.I. 93.15 to 93.55). SUVs rate is a percentage increase from the 2024 study of 2.4%. Vans were second highest once again with a rate of 92.88% (C.I. 92.21 to 93.55). The rate for Vans represents a percentage increase of 3.95% in one year. Cars scored the third highest seat belt usage rate at 89.83% (C.I. 89.45 to 90.21) for a percentage increase of 2.62%. Commercial vehicles demonstrated a rate of 86.79% (C.I. 86.00 to 87.58) which is a percentage increase of 3.83%. Trucks ranked fifth on the usage rate with 85.68% of drivers and passengers in trucks wearing a seat belt. This gave Trucks a percentage increase of 3.3% for the year.

The 2025 seat belt usage rate of 90.69% is the highest overall rate in the past fourteen years. Further, the overall rate has maintained at or above 86.3% since 2018. Overall, since 2015, the five categories of vehicles combine for an increase in the absolute rate of 5.49 and a percentage increase in seat belt usage of 6.05%.

Speed and Road Classification

Seat belt usage rates are strongly tied to the posted speed of the roadway as well as the road classification. As vehicles travel on roads with higher posted speeds, they are more likely to wear the seat belt. Roads posted with maximum speeds of 0-30 found that 86.91% of travelers wore a seat belt, while roads with posted speeds from 31-50 mph found that 90.3% of travelers wore the belt. Finally, the roads with the highest posted speeds, greater than 50 mph, demonstrated that 91.53% of travelers wore their seat belt.

As mentioned, the posted speed of roadways is related to the road class. Road class is broken down in three categories which relate to posted speeds. Primary roads have more lanes and drivers are allowed to drive at a faster speed. Primary roads, like the higher posted speed roads garnered the highest seat belt usage at 92.27%. Secondary roads are similar to the posted speeds of 31-50 roadways. These secondary roads scored a percentage usage of 90.22%. Finally, the Local roads are similar to the 0-30 mph roadways. The Local roadways earned an 89.37% seat belt usage rate.

County Performance

In recent years, the number of counties that have earned a 90% compliance or better has increased among the 26 counties. In 2020, only six counties displayed a 90% or better rate. By 2024, last year, 15 counties were at 90% or better. The 2025 survey illustrates that 13 of the 26 counties are at the 90% or better. While this is a slight drop, 13 counties were at this same rate in 2023, the 13 number is identical to the 2023 study.