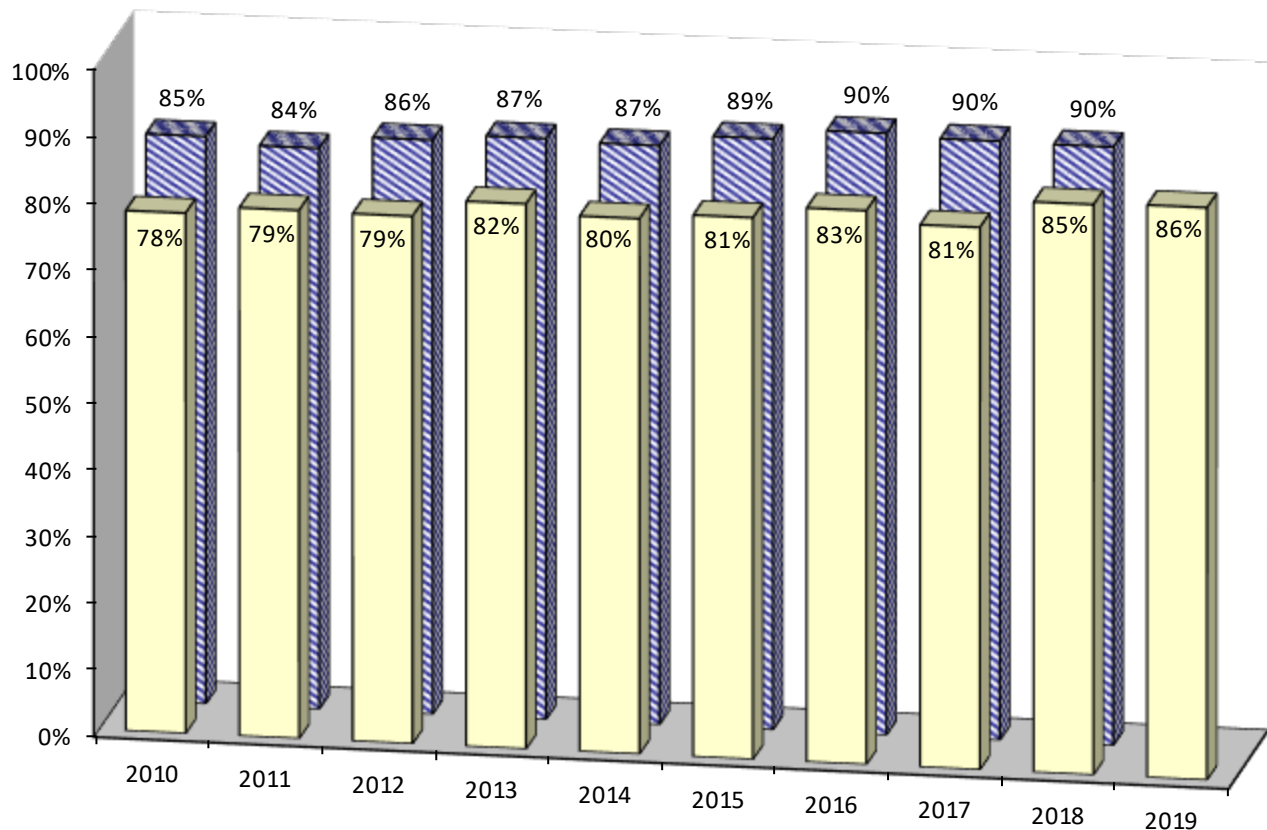


Safety Restraint Usage

Idaho's seat belt use law, effective July 1, 1986, requires seat belt use for front seat passengers and drivers, regardless of residency, in vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of 8,000 pounds or less that were manufactured with safety belts. The law is a "secondary" law and can only be enforced when someone is stopped for another traffic violation. The law was updated July 1, 2003. It now covers all seating positions and has enhanced penalties for drivers less than 18 years of age. Drivers and occupants, 18 years of age and older, receive separate tickets.

Figure 13 depicts observed seat belt use by year for both Idaho and the U.S. The figures are the observed rates for persons in passenger cars, pickups, sport utility vehicles, and vans, which made up 93% of the vehicles involved in motor vehicle crashes in 2019. The U.S. usage rate comes from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) and the mini NOPUS, which are done alternately every year.

Figure 13
Observed Seat Belt Usage – Idaho vs. U.S.: 2010 - 2019



The methodology for national seat belt surveys differs from that of Idaho and does not include any observation sites in Idaho.

Observational Seat Belt Survey Results

Table 27 shows the observed shoulder harness seat belt use by county. The methodology for the observational seat belt survey has been revised in 2013 and 2018. A new set of counties and observation sites were selected for the sample.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018-2019	Avg. Change 2015-2018
Ada	93.9%	91.7%	88.8%	95.9%	95.1%	-0.8%	0.8%
Bannock	87.2%	85.9%	89.4%	75.4%	85.4%	13.3%	-4.4%
Bingham	79.7%	87.2%	82.4%	----	----	----	----
Bonner	78.8%	77.1%	78.6%	85.1%	83.1%	-2.3%	2.7%
Bonneville	65.9%	66.0%	74.0%	75.1%	75.5%	0.6%	4.6%
Canyon	88.1%	90.2%	91.5%	82.6%	81.3%	-1.5%	-2.0%
Cassia	----	----	----	64.9%	68.7%	5.9%	
Elmore	89.4%	90.1%	89.0%	88.7%	91.7%	3.4%	-0.3%
Franklin	----	----	----	67.4%	82.3%	22.0%	----
Fremont	----	----	----	69.3%	82.0%	18.4%	----
Gem	72.7%	76.2%	55.3%	----	----	----	----
Gooding	56.2%	69.3%	72.4%	----	----	----	----
Jerome	----	----	----	75.1%	70.4%	-6.3%	----
Kootenai	74.1%	76.8%	76.0%	85.0%	89.1%	4.8%	4.8%
Latah	82.9%	84.4%	83.4%	84.6%	82.2%	-2.9%	0.7%
Madison	67.7%	71.2%	74.0%	----	----	----	----
Minidoka	57.0%	61.9%	72.6%	----	----	----	----
Nez Perce	78.2%	77.4%	84.3%	87.5%	85.6%	-2.2%	3.9%
Payette	92.1%	86.3%	85.1%	----	----	----	----
Twin Falls	59.7%	68.4%	72.7%	71.3%	77.8%	9.2%	6.3%
Washington	----	----	----	93.0%	79.6%	-14.5%	----
Statewide	81.1%	82.9%	81.2%	85.4%	85.7%	0.4%	1.8%

The Office of Highway Safety evaluates compliance rates through analysis of crash data and statewide observational surveys of seat belt use. Observational surveys are conducted by observing shoulder harness use or non-use. The observational survey is a representative sample of the state and does not include all counties.

Table 28 shows the observed seat belt use for the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) districts⁴ by vehicle type. A map of the transportation districts can be found in Appendix A. District 3 (south-western Idaho) had the highest overall usage at 89.6%, while district 4 (south-central Idaho) had the overall lowest usage at 73.9%.

ITD District	Passenger Cars, Vans, and Sport Utility Vehicles	Pickup Trucks	All Vehicles
1	90.7%	82.9%	88.6%
2	86.6%	81.5%	85.0%
3	93.1%	80.9%	89.6%
4	78.4%	65.2%	73.9%
5	86.6%	75.7%	83.8%
6	80.3%	57.6%	75.6%
Statewide	88.9%	77.2%	85.7%

Usage rates for the occupants of pickup trucks continue to be lower than usage rates for other types of passenger vehicles. The usage rate for pickup truck occupants in 2019 ranged from a high of 82.9% in District 1 (northern Idaho) to a low of 57.6% in District 6 (north-eastern Idaho).

Self-Reported Seat Belt Usage Results

Table 29 shows the self-reported seat belt use for people, ages 7 and older, in passenger cars, pickups, sport utility vehicles, and vans that were killed or seriously injured. The child passenger safety seat law was upgraded in 2005 to include children age 6 and younger. Research has indicated there is a tendency for persons involved in crashes to falsely report compliance with the seat belt law and thus, self-reported use tends to overstate actual use⁵. Seat belt use by severely or fatally injured occupants can be more directly assessed by law enforcement officers or emergency medical personnel, and is therefore, more reliable.

Injury Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018-2019	Avg. Change 2015-2018
Fatalities -Restraints Used	37.6%	34.6%	34.7%	36.8%	43.6%	18.2%	-0.5%
Suspected Serious Injuries - Restraints Used	66.8%	69.3%	65.4%	65.3%	67.6%	3.6%	-0.7%

Of the 163 passenger motor vehicle occupants over the age of 7 killed in 2019, only 71 were using seat belts. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates seat belts are 50% effective in preventing fatalities and serious injuries. By this estimate, there were 71 lives saved in 2019 by seat belt usage and an additional 42 lives (half of those killed and unbelted) could have been saved if everyone had buckled up.

Costs of Injuries by Safety Restraint Use

Injury Type	Safety Restraints			Costs of Injuries		
	Used	Not Used	Unknown	Used	Not Used	Unknown
Fatality	71	83	9	\$722,779,549	\$844,939,473	\$91,619,943
Suspected Serious Injury	578	215	62	\$281,404,214	\$104,674,578	\$30,185,227
Suspected Minor Injury	2,685	406	207	\$356,044,164	\$53,837,590	\$27,449,215
Possible Injury	6,576	460	523	\$445,276,279	\$31,147,672	\$35,413,548
No Injury	42,639	1,534	3,496	\$146,262,458	\$5,262,005	\$11,992,156
Total				\$1,951,766,664	\$1,039,861,318	\$196,660,090

Self-reported seat belt use can be biased because of the penalties involved for not wearing a seat belt (meaning people misrepresent their belt use to avoid a ticket). The number of people using seat belts is higher for the less severe injury categories because of this bias, but also because seat belts lessen the severity of injuries sustained in crashes.

Local Safety Restraint Usage

Table 31 presents self-reported restraint use rates for all motor vehicle occupants, 7 years old and older, involved in fatal and serious injury crashes for each county, for 2015 through 2019. Crash data provides an analysis of the restraint use at the local level. This information is self-reported to the investigating officer after a crash. The self-reported use is for all occupants, regardless of injury type, involved in fatal and serious injury crashes. Values of “---” indicate there were no fatal or serious injury crashes.

County by Population	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018-2019	Avg. Change 2015-2018
50,000 and over							
Ada	84.1%	89.0%	83.4%	85.6%	86.4%	0.9%	0.7%
Bannock	74.8%	60.9%	56.3%	69.4%	76.6%	10.3%	-0.9%
Bonneville	77.9%	75.8%	68.1%	66.7%	81.1%	21.7%	-5.0%
Canyon	79.6%	78.8%	77.9%	77.6%	83.5%	7.5%	-0.8%
Kootenai	78.3%	75.1%	73.2%	74.4%	79.5%	6.8%	-1.6%
Twin Falls	78.5%	79.0%	74.5%	69.8%	64.3%	-7.8%	-3.8%
20,000 - 49,999							
Bingham	61.5%	63.3%	66.7%	68.3%	77.6%	13.6%	3.6%
Blaine	63.0%	71.4%	83.3%	75.0%	78.1%	4.2%	6.7%
Bonner	68.2%	56.9%	70.6%	68.1%	70.8%	4.0%	1.3%
Cassia	63.9%	37.5%	36.0%	67.7%	71.7%	5.9%	14.3%
Elmore	67.3%	65.7%	57.7%	58.1%	75.9%	30.6%	-4.6%
Jefferson	63.9%	66.7%	61.8%	72.2%	45.5%	-37.1%	4.6%
Jerome	52.6%	62.5%	66.7%	70.8%	66.2%	-6.4%	10.5%
Latah	87.5%	70.0%	67.7%	74.3%	66.7%	-10.3%	-4.5%
Madison	57.1%	39.1%	61.1%	87.0%	64.9%	-25.4%	22.3%
Minidoka	31.8%	66.7%	58.8%	50.0%	13.3%	-73.3%	27.6%
Nez Perce	81.0%	69.7%	66.7%	61.4%	62.7%	2.0%	-8.7%
Payette	62.8%	42.1%	47.6%	65.9%	74.2%	12.7%	6.1%
10,000 - 19,999							
Boundary	40.0%	33.3%	65.2%	81.8%	81.8%	0.0%	34.8%
Franklin	72.7%	76.5%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	-50.0%	16.2%
Fremont	59.3%	20.0%	51.9%	66.7%	57.1%	-14.3%	40.5%
Gem	68.2%	66.7%	50.0%	57.1%	52.6%	-7.9%	-4.3%
Gooding	72.4%	42.9%	38.1%	75.0%	65.4%	-12.8%	15.0%
Idaho	51.7%	36.1%	35.0%	33.3%	63.3%	90.0%	-12.7%
Owyhee	22.2%	53.8%	33.3%	0.0%	51.9%	100.0%	1.4%
Shoshone	35.7%	52.4%	71.4%	42.9%	50.0%	16.7%	14.3%
Teton	0.0%	58.3%	50.0%	100.0%	80.0%	-20.0%	61.9%
Valley	71.4%	83.3%	64.5%	83.3%	60.0%	-28.0%	7.8%
Washington	73.7%	62.5%	69.2%	50.0%	66.7%	33.3%	-10.7%

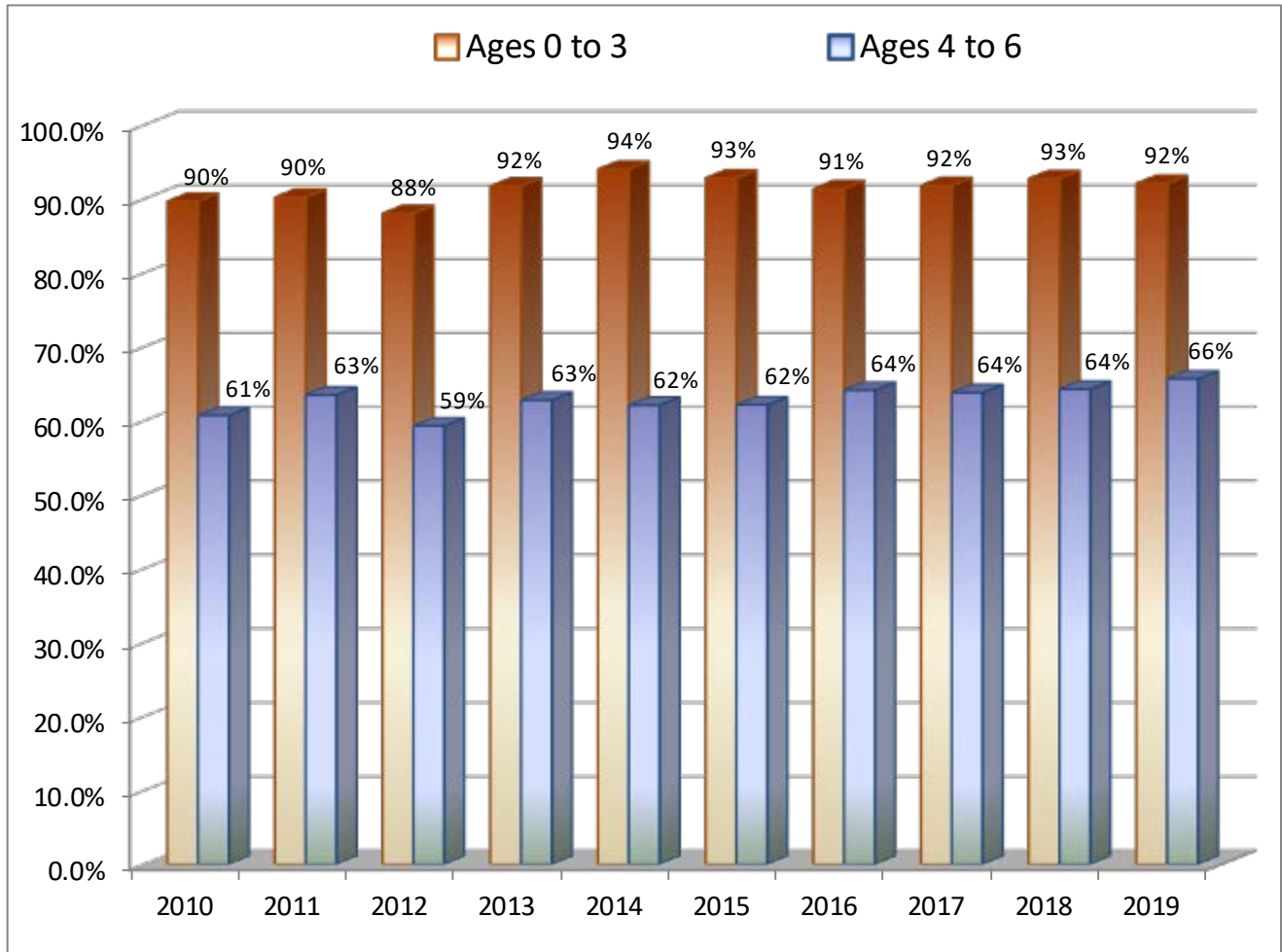
Table 31 (Continued)
Self-Reported Restraint Use of All Occupants in Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes by County: 2015-2019
in Passenger Cars, Pickups, Sport Utility Vehicles, and Vans

County by Population	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018-2019	Avg. Change 2015-2018
5,000 - 9,999							
Bear Lake	40.0%	64.3%	100.0%	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%	16.5%
Benewah	63.6%	75.0%	28.6%	14.3%	92.3%	546.2%	-31.3%
Boise	61.5%	87.1%	88.9%	69.0%	87.1%	26.1%	7.1%
Caribou	45.5%	66.7%	100.0%	70.0%	0.0%	-100.0%	22.2%
Clearwater	25.0%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%	16.7%
Lemhi	53.8%	42.9%	25.0%	72.7%	54.5%	-25.0%	42.9%
Lincoln	75.0%	50.0%	57.1%	40.0%	37.5%	-6.3%	-16.3%
Power	46.2%	58.3%	34.8%	55.6%	50.0%	-10.0%	15.2%
0 - 4,999							
Adams	92.3%	20.0%	76.9%	28.6%	66.7%	133.3%	255.1%
Butte	16.7%	91.7%	50.0%	100.0%	27.3%	-72.7%	168.2%
Camas	100.0%	33.3%	100.0%	75.0%	0.0%	-100.0%	36.1%
Clark	100.0%	66.7%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%	-100.0%	13.9%
Custer	71.4%	22.2%	54.5%	50.0%	22.2%	-55.6%	22.7%
Lewis	100.0%	75.0%	100.0%	42.9%	66.7%	55.6%	-16.3%
Oneida	33.3%	75.0%	50.0%	50.0%	62.5%	25.0%	30.6%
Statewide Average	71.4%	75.0%	74.0%	74.4%	74.7%	0.3%	1.4%

Child Safety Seat Usage by Age Groups

The child safety seat law was upgraded in 2005 to include all children under the age of 7 years old. The law took effect July 1, 2005. Prior to that, Idaho Code required every child, under the age of four, and weighing less than 40 pounds be restrained in a car safety seat that meets the federal standards when traveling in a non-commercial motor vehicle manufactured with seat belts after January 1, 1966.

Figure 14
Child Safety Seat Usage by Age Group in Crashes: 2010 - 2019



Parents are continuing to place their very young children (ages 0-3) in a child safety seat at a high rate (92%), while only 66% placed their toddlers (ages 4-6) in child safety seats or booster seats, even though they are too small for seat belts to fit them correctly.

Child Safety Seat – Self-Reported Usage

Table 32
Self-Reported Child Safety Seat Use by Injury Type: 2015-2019
Under Age 7
in Passenger Cars, Pickups, Sport Utility Vehicles, and Vans

Injury Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018-2019	Avg. Change 2015-2018
Fatalities							
Restrained	3	1	1	0	5	100.0%	-55.6%
Unrestrained	2	3	2	1	0	-100.0%	-11.1%
Suspected Serious Injuries							
Restrained	7	11	5	12	6	-50.0%	47.5%
Unrestrained	5	5	2	2	4	100.0%	-20.0%
Suspected Minor Injuries							
Restrained	66	82	57	77	63	-18.2%	9.6%
Unrestrained	30	5	23	24	22	-8.3%	93.7%
Possible Injuries							
Restrained	267	315	214	248	223	-10.1%	0.6%
Unrestrained	76	14	46	49	60	22.4%	51.2%
No Injuries							
Restrained	2,150	2,634	2,142	1,984	2,201	10.9%	-1.2%
Unrestrained	498	86	539	411	514	25.1%	140.1%
Total Restrained	2,493	3,043	2,419	2,322	2,499	7.6%	-0.8%
Total Unrestrained	611	113	612	487	600	23.2%	113.2%
% of Children Restrained	80.3%	96.4%	79.8%	80.6%	80.6%	0.1%	1.3%

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates child safety seats are 69% effective in preventing fatalities and serious injuries. By this estimate we can deduce that 11 lives were saved by child safety seats. Additionally, 13 serious injuries were prevented and 3 unrestrained serious injuries may have been prevented if they had all been properly restrained.