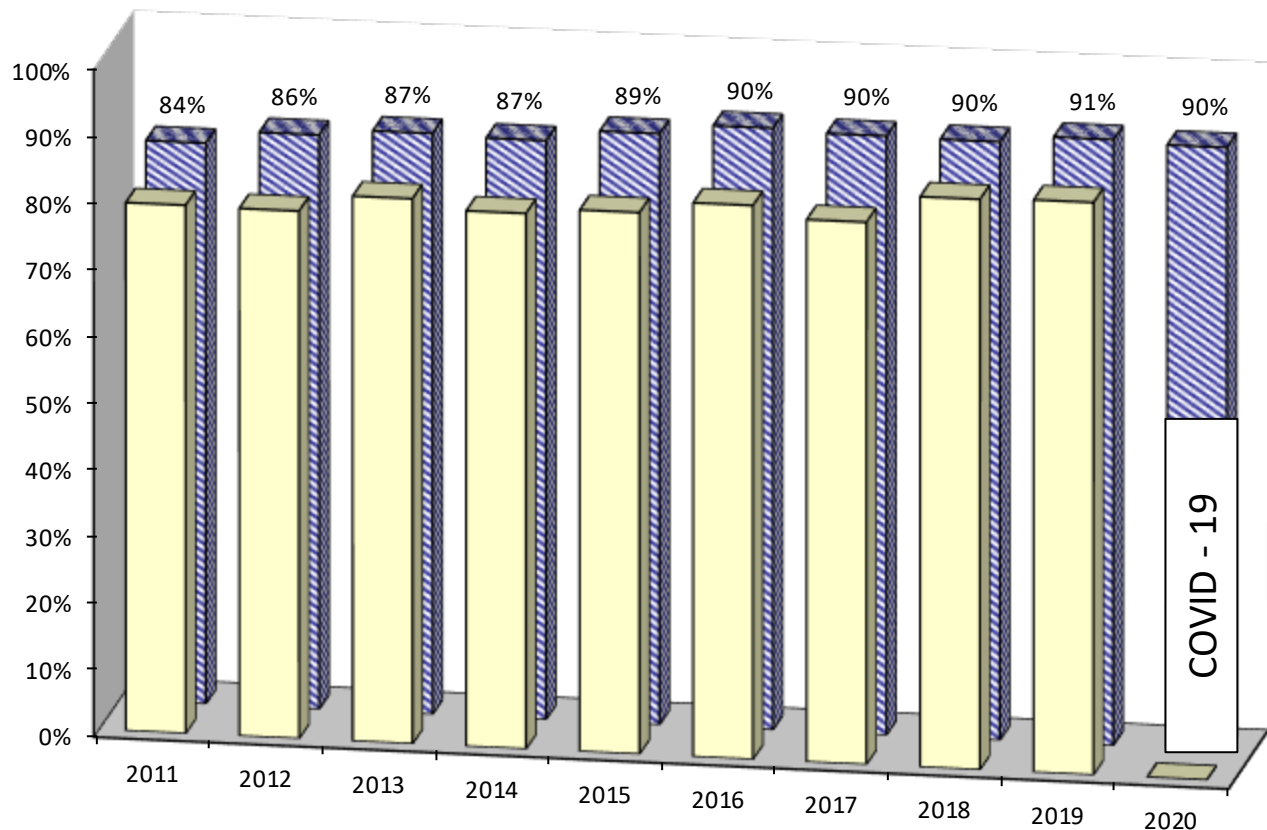


## Safety Restraint Usage

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 92% of the vehicles involved in motor vehicle crashes in 2020. 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.: 2011 - 2020



No observational seat belt survey was done in 2020 because of the pandemic. 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. There was no survey done in 2020 because of COVID-19.

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change 2019-2020</b>	<b>Avg. Change 2016-2020</b>
Ada	91.7%	88.8%	95.9%	95.1%	****	****	1.3%
Bannock	85.9%	89.4%	75.4%	85.4%	****	****	0.5%
Bingham	87.2%	82.4%	---	---	---	---	---
Bonner	77.1%	78.6%	85.1%	83.1%	****	****	2.6%
Bonneville	66.0%	74.0%	75.1%	75.5%	****	****	4.7%
Canyon	90.2%	91.5%	82.6%	81.3%	****	****	-3.3%
Cassia	---	---	64.9%	68.7%	****	****	
Elmore	90.1%	89.0%	88.7%	91.7%	****	****	0.6%
Franklin	---	---	67.4%	82.3%	****	****	---
Fremont	---	---	69.3%	82.0%	****	****	---
Gem	76.2%	55.3%	---	---	---	---	---
Gooding	69.3%	72.4%	---	---	---	---	---
Jerome	---	---	75.1%	70.4%	****	****	---
Kootenai	76.8%	76.0%	85.0%	89.1%	****	****	5.2%
Latah	84.4%	83.4%	84.6%	82.2%	****	****	-0.9%
Madison	71.2%	74.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Minidoka	61.9%	72.6%	---	---	---	---	---
Nez Perce	77.4%	84.3%	87.5%	85.6%	****	****	3.5%
Payette	86.3%	85.1%	---	---	---	---	---
Twin Falls	68.4%	72.7%	71.3%	77.8%	****	****	4.5%
Washington	---	---	93.0%	79.6%	****	****	---
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>81.2%</b>	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>****</b>	<b>****</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

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) districts<sup>4</sup> by vehicle type for 2019. No observational survey was done in 2020 because of COVID-19. 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
<b>1</b>	90.7%	82.9%	88.6%
<b>2</b>	86.6%	81.5%	85.0%
<b>3</b>	93.1%	80.9%	89.6%
<b>4</b>	78.4%	65.2%	73.9%
<b>5</b>	86.6%	75.7%	83.8%
<b>6</b>	80.3%	57.6%	75.6%
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>88.9%</b>	<b>77.2%</b>	<b>85.7%</b>

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 use<sup>5</sup>. 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	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change 2019-2020	Avg. Change 2016-2019
Fatalities -Restraints Used	34.6%	34.7%	36.8%	43.6%	34.8%	-20.1%	8.3%
Suspected Serious Injuries - Restraints Used	69.3%	65.4%	65.3%	67.6%	57.7%	-14.7%	-0.8%

Of the 158 passenger motor vehicle occupants over the age of 7 killed in 2020, only 55 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 55 lives saved in 2020 by seat belt usage and an additional 43 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	55	86	17	\$567,733,837	\$887,729,273	\$175,481,368
Suspected Serious Injury	455	227	107	\$224,620,163	\$112,063,246	\$52,822,764
Suspected Minor Injury	2,414	397	323	\$324,587,230	\$53,380,750	\$43,430,686
Possible Injury	5,201	427	498	\$357,099,459	\$29,317,721	\$34,192,565
No Injury	33,108	1,315	3,217	\$115,157,807	\$4,573,895	\$11,189,521
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$1,589,198,495</b>	<b>\$1,087,064,885</b>	<b>\$317,116,903</b>

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 2016 through 2020. 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	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change 2019-2020	Avg. Change 2016-2019
<b>50,000 and over</b>							
Ada	89.0%	83.4%	85.6%	86.4%	77.5%	-10.3%	-0.9%
Bannock	60.9%	56.3%	69.4%	76.6%	50.0%	-34.7%	8.7%
Bonneville	75.8%	68.1%	66.7%	81.1%	60.8%	-25.0%	3.1%
Canyon	78.8%	77.9%	77.6%	83.5%	73.1%	-12.4%	2.0%
Kootenai	75.1%	73.2%	74.4%	79.5%	77.7%	-2.3%	2.0%
Twin Falls	79.0%	74.5%	69.8%	64.3%	66.9%	4.0%	-6.6%
<b>20,000 - 49,999</b>							
Bingham	63.3%	66.7%	68.3%	77.6%	55.6%	-28.4%	7.1%
Blaine	71.4%	83.3%	75.0%	78.1%	66.7%	-14.7%	3.6%
Bonner	56.9%	70.6%	68.1%	70.8%	53.4%	-24.5%	8.2%
Cassia	37.5%	36.0%	67.7%	71.7%	87.2%	21.6%	30.0%
Elmore	65.7%	57.7%	58.1%	75.9%	49.2%	-35.2%	6.4%
Jefferson	66.7%	61.8%	72.2%	45.5%	50.0%	10.0%	-9.2%
Jerome	62.5%	66.7%	70.8%	66.2%	59.1%	-10.8%	2.1%
Latah	70.0%	67.7%	74.3%	66.7%	54.2%	-18.8%	-1.3%
Madison	39.1%	61.1%	87.0%	64.9%	71.9%	10.8%	24.4%
Minidoka	66.7%	58.8%	50.0%	13.3%	45.5%	240.9%	-33.4%
Nez Perce	69.7%	66.7%	61.4%	62.7%	47.2%	-24.8%	-3.4%
Payette	42.1%	47.6%	65.9%	74.2%	55.2%	-25.6%	21.4%
<b>10,000 - 19,999</b>							
Boundary	33.3%	65.2%	81.8%	81.8%	100.0%	22.2%	40.4%
Franklin	76.5%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	80.0%	140.0%	-2.1%
Fremont	20.0%	51.9%	66.7%	57.1%	60.8%	6.4%	57.8%
Gem	66.7%	50.0%	57.1%	52.6%	72.2%	37.2%	-6.2%
Gooding	42.9%	38.1%	75.0%	65.4%	34.6%	-47.1%	24.3%
Idaho	36.1%	35.0%	33.3%	63.3%	22.2%	-64.9%	27.4%
Owyhee	53.8%	33.3%	0.0%	51.9%	39.3%	-24.2%	-44.2%
Shoshone	52.4%	71.4%	42.9%	50.0%	70.6%	41.2%	4.3%
Teton	58.3%	50.0%	100.0%	80.0%	80.0%	0.0%	60.0%
Valley	83.3%	64.5%	83.3%	60.0%	65.8%	9.6%	-7.1%
Washington	62.5%	69.2%	50.0%	66.7%	25.0%	-62.5%	5.4%

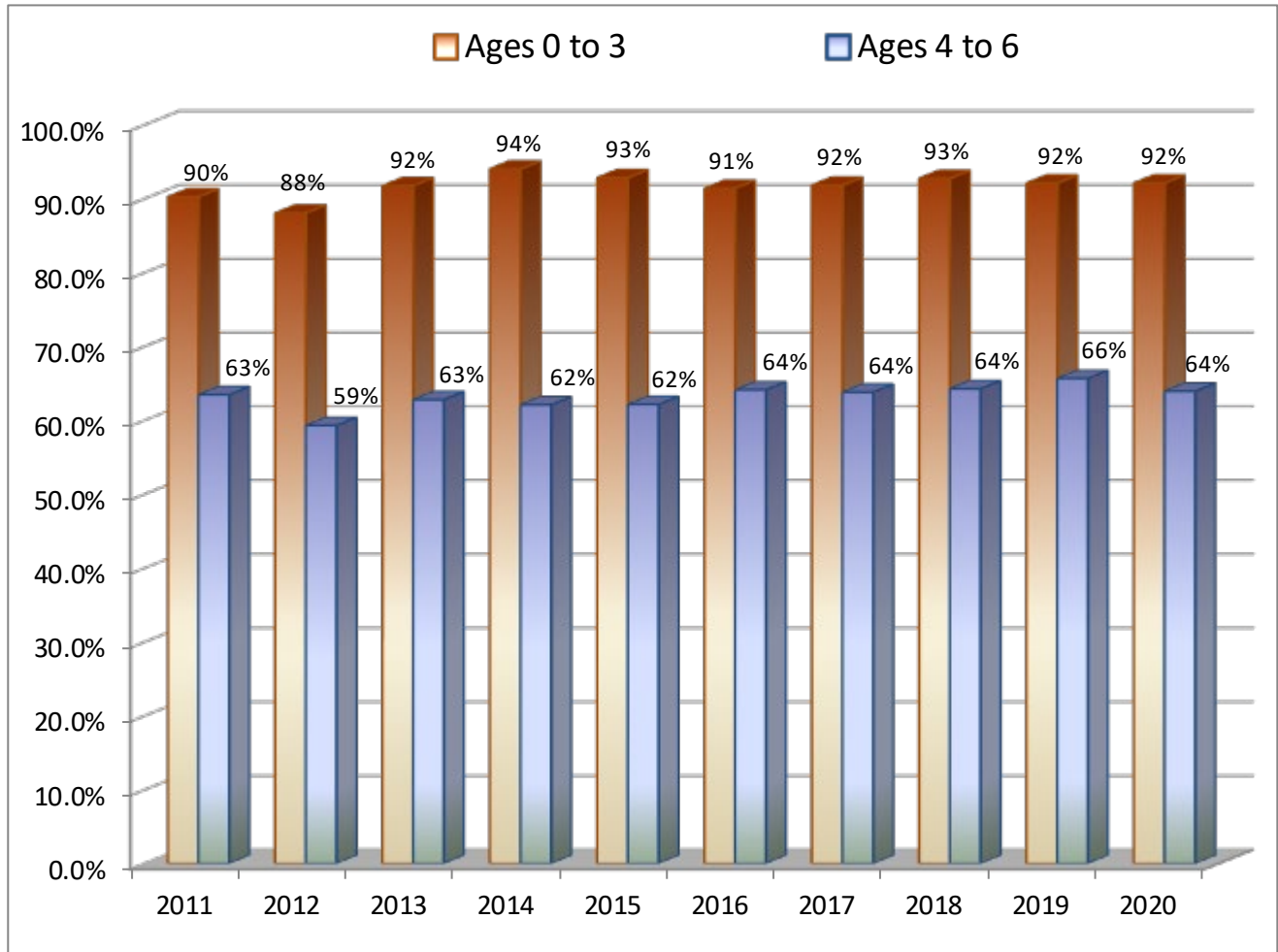
**Table 31 (Continued)**  
**Self-Reported Restraint Use of All Occupants in Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes by County: 2016-2020**  
**in Passenger Cars, Pickups, Sport Utility Vehicles, and Vans**

<b>County by Population</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change 2019-2020</b>	<b>Avg. Change 2016-2019</b>
<b>5,000 - 9,999</b>							
Bear Lake	64.3%	100.0%	33.3%	66.7%	36.8%	-44.7%	29.6%
Benewah	75.0%	28.6%	14.3%	92.3%	20.0%	-78.3%	144.7%
Boise	87.1%	88.9%	69.0%	87.1%	88.9%	2.1%	2.0%
Caribou	66.7%	100.0%	70.0%	0.0%	60.0%	60.0%	-26.7%
Clearwater	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	88.9%	166.7%	-22.3%
Lemhi	42.9%	25.0%	72.7%	54.5%	46.7%	-14.4%	41.4%
Lincoln	50.0%	57.1%	40.0%	37.5%	69.2%	84.6%	-7.3%
Power	58.3%	34.8%	55.6%	50.0%	0.0%	-100.0%	3.1%
<b>0 - 4,999</b>							
Adams	20.0%	76.9%	28.6%	66.7%	33.3%	-50.0%	103.8%
Butte	91.7%	50.0%	100.0%	27.3%	62.5%	129.2%	-6.1%
Camas	33.3%	100.0%	75.0%	0.0%	----	----	25.0%
Clark	66.7%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%	85.7%	100.0%	-8.3%
Custer	22.2%	54.5%	50.0%	22.2%	22.2%	0.0%	27.2%
Lewis	75.0%	100.0%	42.9%	66.7%	40.9%	-38.6%	10.6%
Oneida	75.0%	50.0%	50.0%	62.5%	74.2%	18.7%	-2.8%
<b>Statewide Average</b>	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>74.0%</b>	<b>74.4%</b>	<b>74.7%</b>	<b>66.0%</b>	<b>-11.6%</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>

## 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: 2011 - 2020



Parents are continuing to place their very young children (ages 0-3) in a child safety seat at a high rate (92%), while only 64% 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: 2016-2020**  
**Under Age 7**  
**in Passenger Cars, Pickups, Sport Utility Vehicles, and Vans**

<b>Injury Type</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change 2019-2020</b>	<b>Avg. Change 2016-2019</b>
<b>Fatalities</b>							
Restrained	1	1	0	5	1	100.0%	#DIV/0!
Unrestrained	3	2	1	0	0	0.0%	-61.1%
<b>Suspected Serious Injuries</b>							
Restrained	11	5	12	6	6	0.0%	11.8%
Unrestrained	5	2	2	4	1	-75.0%	13.3%
<b>Suspected Minor Injuries</b>							
Restrained	82	57	77	63	58	-7.9%	-4.5%
Unrestrained	5	23	24	22	7	-68.2%	118.7%
<b>Possible Injuries</b>							
Restrained	315	214	248	223	225	0.9%	-8.8%
Unrestrained	14	46	49	60	12	-80.0%	85.8%
<b>No Injuries</b>							
Restrained	2,634	2,142	1,984	2,201	1,875	-14.8%	-5.0%
Unrestrained	86	539	411	514	88	-82.9%	176.0%
<b>Total Restrained</b>	<b>3,043</b>	<b>2,419</b>	<b>2,322</b>	<b>2,499</b>	<b>2,165</b>	<b>-13.4%</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>
<b>Total Unrestrained</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>-82.0%</b>	<b>148.1%</b>
<b>% of Children Restrained</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>79.8%</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>-5.4%</b>

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 2 lives were saved by child safety seats. Additionally, 13 serious injuries were prevented and 1 unrestrained serious injury may have been prevented if they had all been properly restrained.