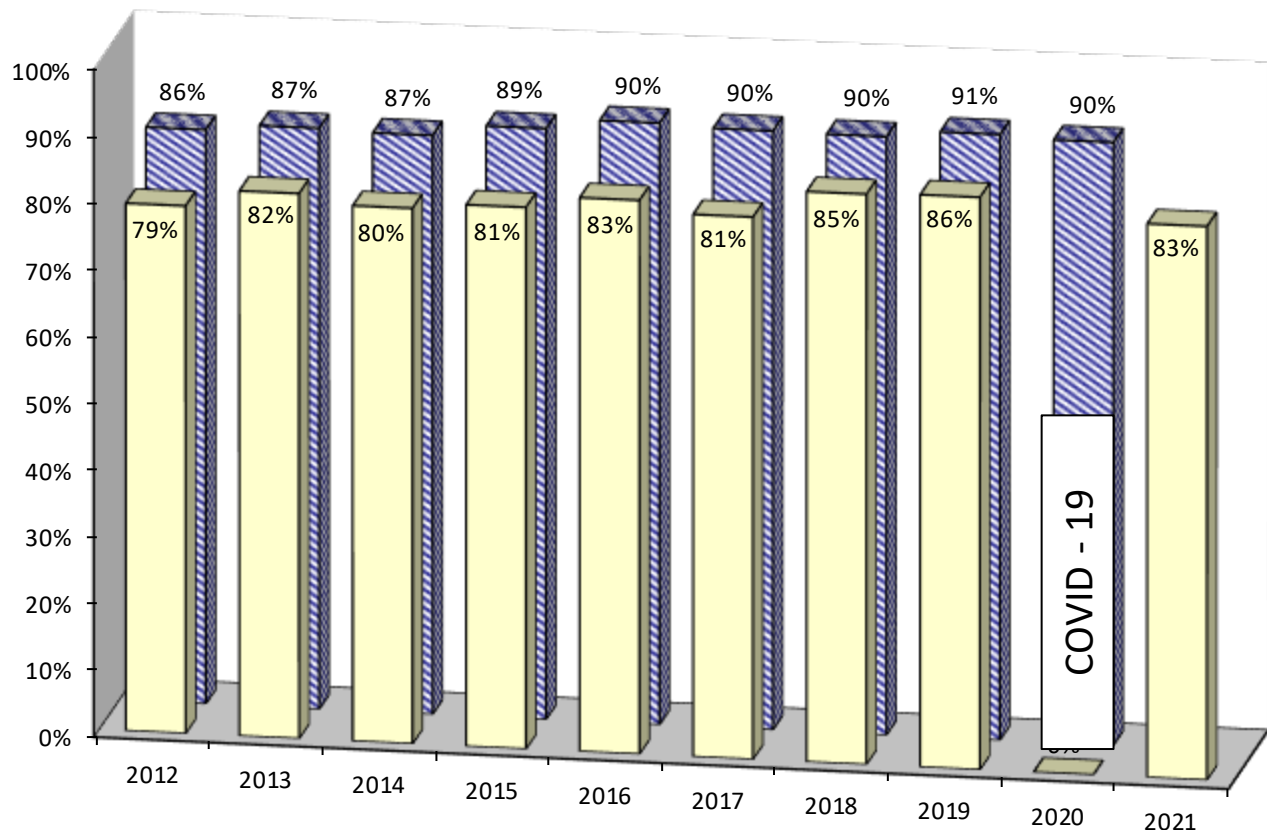


Safety Restraint Usage

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 2021. 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.: 2012 - 2021



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.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2020-2021	Avg. Change 2017-2020
Ada	88.8%	95.9%	95.1%	****	89.4%	****	****
Bannock	89.4%	75.4%	85.4%	****	83.3%	****	****
Bingham	82.4%	----	----	----	----	----	----
Bonner	78.6%	85.1%	83.1%	****	82.5%	****	****
Bonneville	74.0%	75.1%	75.5%	****	81.3%	****	****
Canyon	91.5%	82.6%	81.3%	****	78.0%	****	****
Cassia	----	64.9%	68.7%	****	60.3%	****	****
Elmore	89.0%	88.7%	91.7%	****	88.2%	****	****
Franklin	----	67.4%	82.3%	****	66.2%	****	****
Fremont	----	69.3%	82.0%	****	73.4%	****	****
Gem	55.3%	----	----	----	----	----	----
Gooding	72.4%	----	----	----	----	----	----
Jerome	----	75.1%	70.4%	****	73.8%	****	****
Kootenai	76.0%	85.0%	89.1%	****	85.4%	****	****
Latah	83.4%	84.6%	82.2%	****	86.9%	****	****
Madison	74.0%	----	----	----	----	----	----
Minidoka	72.6%	----	----	----	----	----	----
Nez Perce	84.3%	87.5%	85.6%	****	91.9%	****	****
Payette	85.1%	----	----	----	----	----	----
Twin Falls	72.7%	71.3%	77.8%	****	73.7%	****	****
Washington	----	93.0%	79.6%	****	78.4%	****	****
Statewide	81.2%	85.4%	85.7%	****	82.9%	****	****

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 for 2021. A map of the transportation districts can be found in Appendix A. District 2 (north-central Idaho) had the highest overall usage at 91.2%, while district 4 (south-central Idaho) had the overall lowest usage at 69.8%.

ITD District	Passenger Cars, Vans, and Sport Utility Vehicles	Pickup Trucks	All Vehicles
1	87.2%	80.8%	85.1%
2	92.4%	88.3%	91.2%
3	89.3%	69.9%	83.1%
4	75.7%	60.5%	69.8%
5	83.9%	65.5%	79.1%
6	83.1%	74.9%	81.2%
Statewide	87.4%	72.5%	82.9%

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 2021 ranged from a high of 88.3% in District 2 (north-central Idaho) to a low of 60.5% in District 4 (south-central 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	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2020-2021	Avg. Change 2017-2020
Fatalities -Restraints Used	34.7%	36.8%	43.6%	34.8%	36.4%	4.6%	1.5%
Suspected Serious Injuries - Restraints Used	65.4%	65.3%	67.6%	57.7%	55.7%	-3.4%	-3.8%

Of the 184 passenger motor vehicle occupants over the age of 7 killed in 2021, only 67 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 67 lives saved in 2021 by seat belt usage and an additional 52 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	67	103	14	\$790,600,000	\$1,215,400,000	\$165,200,000
Suspected Serious Injury	550	293	144	\$310,384,445	\$165,350,259	\$81,264,291
Suspected Minor Injury	3,016	403	322	\$463,580,776	\$61,943,983	\$49,493,704
Possible Injury	5,262	403	546	\$413,002,898	\$31,630,591	\$42,854,349
No Injury	41,603	1,530	4,544	\$165,418,853	\$6,083,476	\$18,067,526
Total				\$2,142,986,973	\$1,480,408,308	\$356,879,869

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 2017 through 2021. 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	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2020-2021	Avg. Change 2017-2020
50,000 and over							
Ada	83.4%	85.6%	86.4%	77.5%	79.9%	3.1%	-2.3%
Bannock	56.3%	69.4%	76.6%	50.0%	57.8%	15.7%	-0.3%
Bonneville	68.1%	66.7%	81.1%	60.8%	63.7%	4.7%	-1.8%
Canyon	77.9%	77.6%	83.5%	73.1%	71.3%	-2.5%	-1.7%
Kootenai	73.2%	74.4%	79.5%	77.7%	81.5%	4.9%	2.1%
Twin Falls	74.5%	69.8%	64.3%	66.9%	55.7%	-16.8%	-3.4%
20,000 - 49,999							
Bingham	66.7%	68.3%	77.6%	55.6%	54.6%	-1.7%	-4.1%
Blaine	83.3%	75.0%	78.1%	66.7%	74.4%	11.6%	-6.8%
Bonner	70.6%	68.1%	70.8%	53.4%	70.8%	32.5%	-8.0%
Cassia	36.0%	67.7%	71.7%	87.2%	62.5%	-28.4%	38.6%
Elmore	57.7%	58.1%	75.9%	49.2%	70.7%	43.6%	-1.3%
Jefferson	61.8%	72.2%	45.5%	50.0%	25.0%	-50.0%	-3.4%
Jerome	66.7%	70.8%	66.2%	59.1%	64.6%	9.3%	-3.7%
Latah	67.7%	74.3%	66.7%	54.2%	66.7%	23.1%	-6.4%
Madison	61.1%	87.0%	64.9%	71.9%	56.0%	-22.1%	9.2%
Minidoka	58.8%	50.0%	13.3%	45.5%	46.3%	2.0%	50.9%
Nez Perce	66.7%	61.4%	62.7%	47.2%	54.1%	14.7%	-10.2%
Payette	47.6%	65.9%	74.2%	55.2%	82.0%	48.6%	8.4%
10,000 - 19,999							
Boundary	65.2%	81.8%	81.8%	100.0%	41.7%	-58.3%	15.9%
Franklin	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	80.0%	72.7%	-9.1%	63.3%
Fremont	51.9%	66.7%	57.1%	60.8%	67.4%	11.0%	6.9%
Gem	50.0%	57.1%	52.6%	72.2%	52.9%	-26.7%	14.5%
Gooding	38.1%	75.0%	65.4%	34.6%	55.0%	58.9%	12.3%
Idaho	35.0%	33.3%	63.3%	22.2%	64.7%	191.2%	6.8%
Owyhee	33.3%	0.0%	51.9%	39.3%	40.9%	4.1%	-24.1%
Shoshone	71.4%	42.9%	50.0%	70.6%	42.9%	-39.3%	5.9%
Teton	50.0%	100.0%	80.0%	80.0%	85.7%	7.1%	26.7%
Valley	64.5%	83.3%	60.0%	65.8%	73.9%	12.3%	3.6%
Washington	69.2%	50.0%	66.7%	25.0%	20.0%	-20.0%	-19.0%

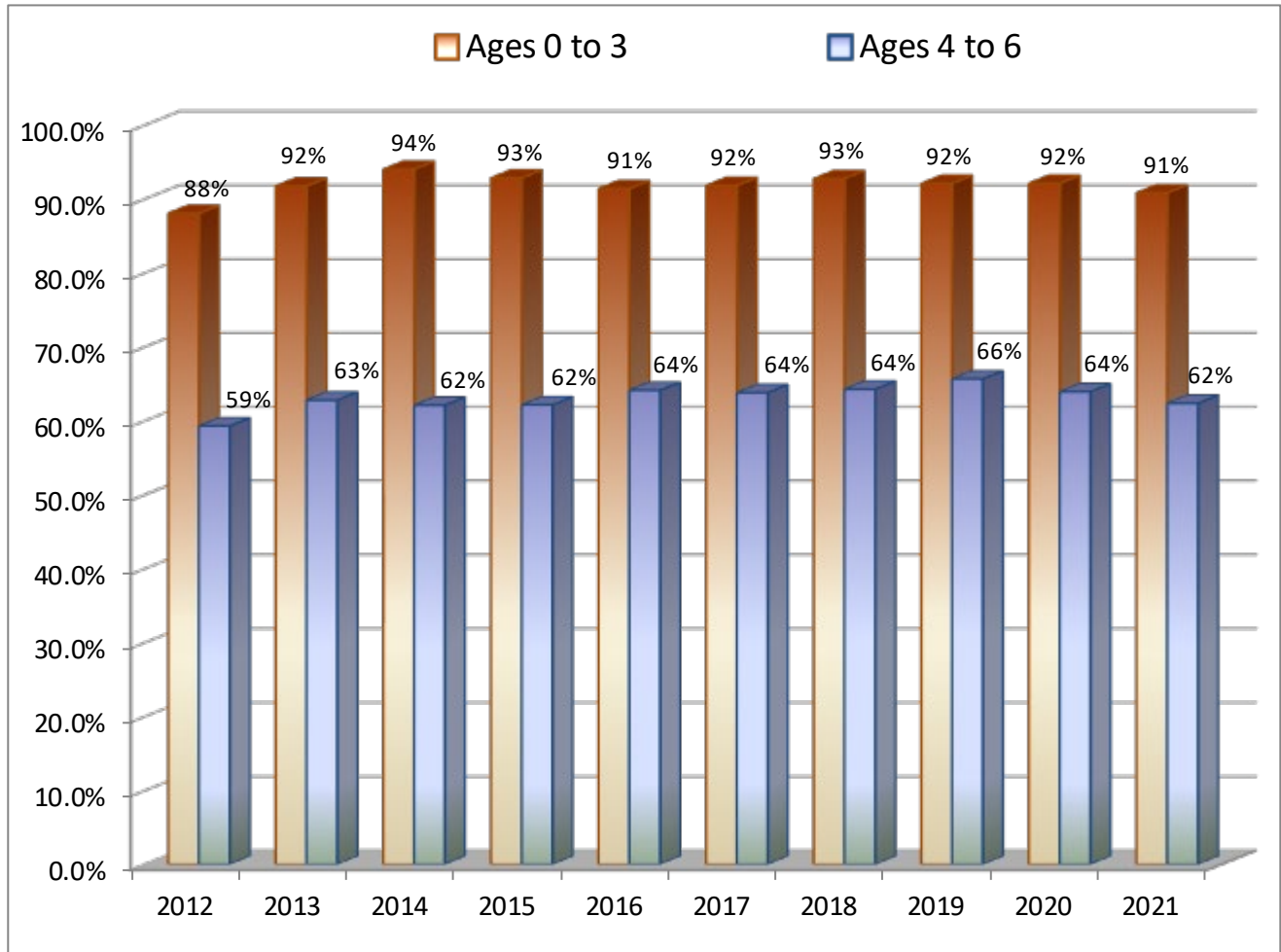
Table 31 (Continued)
Self-Reported Restraint Use of All Occupants in Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes by County: 2017-2021
in Passenger Cars, Pickups, Sport Utility Vehicles, and Vans

County by Population	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2020-2021	Avg. Change 2017-2020
5,000 - 9,999							
Bear Lake	100.0%	33.3%	66.7%	36.8%	33.3%	-9.5%	-3.8%
Benewah	28.6%	14.3%	92.3%	20.0%	44.4%	122.2%	139.3%
Boise	88.9%	69.0%	87.1%	88.9%	41.4%	-53.4%	2.0%
Caribou	100.0%	70.0%	0.0%	60.0%	71.4%	60.0%	-23.3%
Clearwater	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	88.9%	41.7%	-53.1%	66.6%
Lemhi	25.0%	72.7%	54.5%	46.7%	26.3%	-43.6%	50.5%
Lincoln	57.1%	40.0%	37.5%	69.2%	20.0%	-71.1%	16.1%
Power	34.8%	55.6%	50.0%	0.0%	34.5%	34.5%	-16.8%
0 - 4,999							
Adams	76.9%	28.6%	66.7%	33.3%	50.0%	50.0%	116.7%
Butte	50.0%	100.0%	27.3%	62.5%	85.7%	37.1%	52.1%
Camas	100.0%	75.0%	0.0%	----	62.5%	----	-41.7%
Clark	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%	85.7%	33.3%	100.0%	28.6%
Custer	54.5%	50.0%	22.2%	22.2%	10.0%	-55.0%	-21.3%
Lewis	100.0%	42.9%	66.7%	40.9%	78.6%	92.1%	-13.4%
Oneida	50.0%	50.0%	62.5%	74.2%	72.7%	-2.0%	14.6%
Statewide Average	74.0%	74.4%	74.7%	66.0%	66.9%	1.4%	-3.6%

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: 2012 - 2021



Parents are continuing to place their very young children (ages 0-3) in a child safety seat at a high rate (91%), while only 62% 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: 2017-2021
Under Age 7
in Passenger Cars, Pickups, Sport Utility Vehicles, and Vans

Injury Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2020-2021	Avg. Change 2017-2020
Fatalities							
Restrained	1	0	5	1	1	0.0%	-26.7%
Unrestrained	2	1	0	0	4	100.0%	-50.0%
Suspected Serious Injuries							
Restrained	5	12	6	5	5	0.0%	24.4%
Unrestrained	2	2	4	2	4	100.0%	16.7%
Suspected Minor Injuries							
Restrained	57	77	63	42	48	14.3%	-5.5%
Unrestrained	23	24	22	23	31	34.8%	0.2%
Possible Injuries							
Restrained	214	248	223	190	194	2.1%	-3.0%
Unrestrained	46	49	60	47	56	19.1%	2.4%
No Injuries							
Restrained	2,142	1,984	2,201	1,582	2,042	29.1%	-8.2%
Unrestrained	539	411	514	381	436	14.4%	-8.2%
Total Restrained	2,419	2,322	2,499	1,820	2,290	25.8%	-7.9%
Total Unrestrained	612	487	600	453	622	37.3%	-7.2%
% of Children Restrained	79.8%	80.6%	80.6%	80.1%	78.6%	-1.8%	0.1%

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 and an additional three lives may have been saved if they had all been properly restrained. Additionally, 11 serious injuries were prevented and 3 unrestrained serious injuries may have been prevented if they had all been properly restrained.