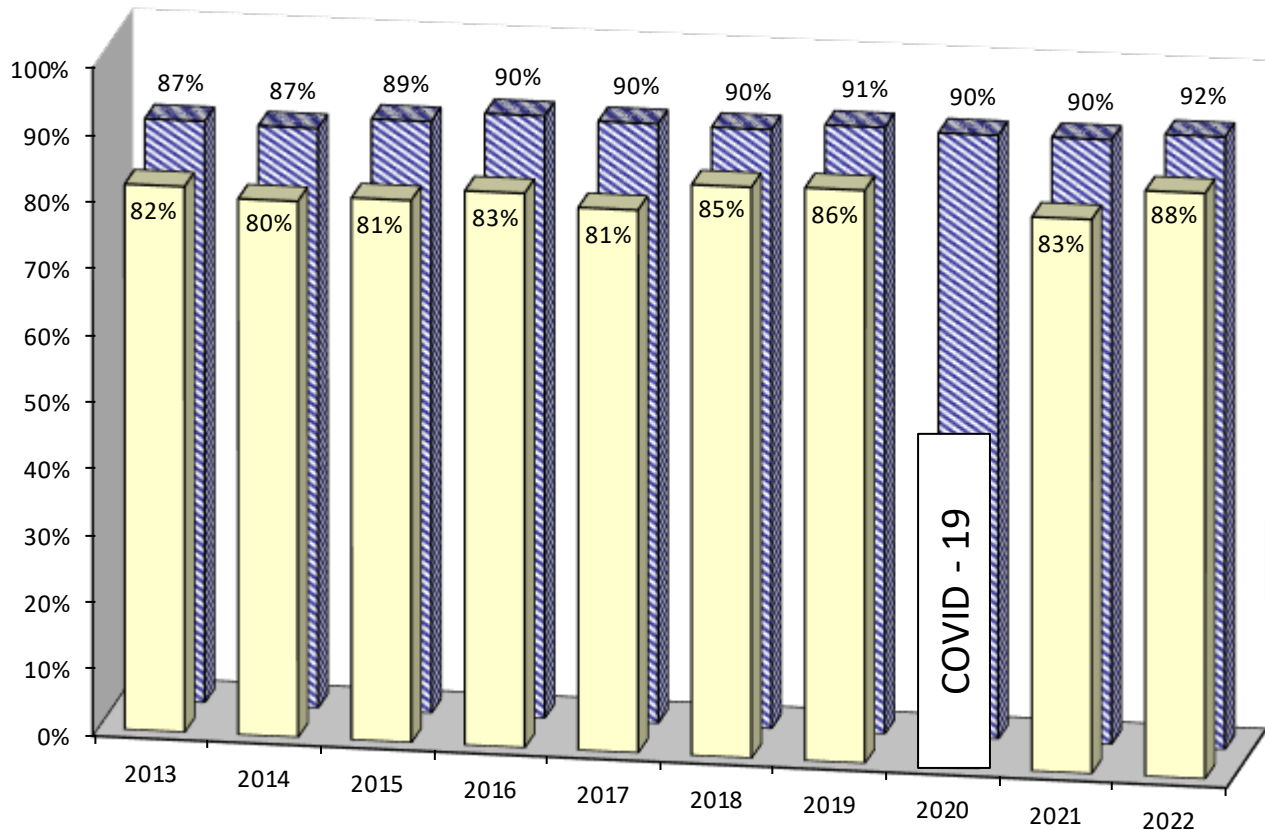


## Safety Restraint Usage

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 2022. 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.: 2013 - 2022



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.

## Observational Seat Belt Survey Results

Table 27 shows the observed shoulder harness seat belt use by county. The sample for the observational seat belt survey is required to be updated every 5 years. The revisions have been implemented in 2013, 2018 and in 2023. A new set of counties and observation sites are selected for the sample. There was no survey done in 2020 because of COVID-19.

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Change 2021-2022</b>	<b>Avg. Change 2018-2021</b>
Ada	95.9%	95.1%	////	89.4%	97.4%	9.0%	-3.4%
Bannock	75.4%	85.4%	////	83.3%	76.0%	-8.8%	5.4%
Bonner	85.1%	83.1%	////	82.5%	89.2%	8.0%	-1.5%
Bonneville	75.1%	75.5%	////	81.3%	79.1%	-2.7%	4.1%
Canyon	82.6%	81.3%	////	78.0%	80.3%	2.9%	-2.8%
Cassia	64.9%	68.7%	////	60.3%	75.0%	24.3%	-3.2%
Elmore	88.7%	91.7%	////	88.2%	93.6%	6.1%	-0.2%
Franklin	67.4%	82.3%	////	66.2%	70.7%	6.9%	1.2%
Fremont	69.3%	82.0%	////	73.4%	77.8%	6.0%	4.0%
Jerome	75.1%	70.4%	////	73.8%	81.6%	10.6%	-0.8%
Kootenai	85.0%	89.1%	////	85.4%	88.0%	3.0%	0.3%
Latah	84.6%	82.2%	////	86.9%	87.8%	1.1%	1.4%
Nez Perce	87.5%	85.6%	////	91.9%	82.9%	-9.8%	2.6%
Twin Falls	71.3%	77.8%	////	73.7%	74.9%	1.6%	1.9%
Washington	93.0%	79.6%	////	78.4%	74.3%	-5.2%	-8.0%
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>////</b>	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>87.6%</b>	5.6%	-1.5%

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 2022. A map of the transportation districts can be found in Appendix A. District 3 (south-west Idaho) had the highest overall usage at 93.5%, while district 5 (south-east Idaho) had the overall lowest usage at 74.4%.

ITD District	Passenger Cars, Vans, and Sport Utility Vehicles	Pickup Trucks	All Vehicles
<b>1</b>	89.5%	84.5%	88.1%
<b>2</b>	85.6%	79.5%	83.7%
<b>3</b>	94.7%	90.3%	93.5%
<b>4</b>	80.5%	68.1%	76.2%
<b>5</b>	78.6%	62.6%	74.4%
<b>6</b>	83.2%	66.5%	79.1%
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>89.6%</b>	<b>82.3%</b>	<b>87.6%</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 2021 ranged from a high of 94.7% in District 3 (south-west Idaho) to a low of 62.6% in District 5 (south-east 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	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2021-2022	Avg. Change 2018-2021
Fatalities -Restraints Used	36.8%	43.6%	34.8%	36.4%	33.8%	-7.1%	0.9%
Suspected Serious Injuries - Restraints Used	65.3%	67.6%	57.7%	55.7%	57.7%	3.6%	-4.8%

Of the 157 passenger motor vehicle occupants over the age of 7 killed in 2022, only 53 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 53 lives saved in 2022 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	53	84	20	\$669,178,000	\$1,060,584,000	\$252,520,000
Suspected Serious Injury	567	303	117	\$299,505,069	\$160,052,974	\$61,802,633
Suspected Minor Injury	3,226	426	358	\$464,132,847	\$61,289,706	\$51,506,373
Possible Injury	5,097	366	434	\$374,455,962	\$26,888,539	\$31,884,224
No Injury	44,259	1,667	4,197	\$164,719,803	\$6,204,115	\$15,620,078
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$1,971,991,681</b>	<b>\$1,315,019,333</b>	<b>\$413,333,307</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 2018 through 2022. 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	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2021-2022	Avg. Change 2018-2021
<b>50,000 and over</b>							
Ada	85.6%	86.4%	77.5%	79.9%	79.9%	0.0%	-2.1%
Bannock	69.4%	76.6%	50.0%	57.8%	64.1%	10.9%	-2.9%
Bonneville	66.7%	81.1%	60.8%	63.7%	68.5%	7.5%	0.5%
Canyon	77.6%	83.5%	73.1%	71.3%	77.5%	8.7%	-2.5%
Kootenai	74.4%	79.5%	77.7%	81.5%	69.1%	-15.3%	3.2%
Twin Falls	69.8%	64.3%	66.9%	55.7%	63.5%	14.0%	-6.9%
<b>20,000 - 49,999</b>							
Bingham	68.3%	77.6%	55.6%	54.6%	48.8%	-10.8%	-5.5%
Blaine	75.0%	78.1%	66.7%	74.4%	40.9%	-45.0%	0.4%
Bonner	68.1%	70.8%	53.4%	70.8%	59.3%	-16.3%	4.0%
Cassia	67.7%	71.7%	87.2%	62.5%	67.2%	7.5%	-0.3%
Elmore	58.1%	75.9%	49.2%	70.7%	57.0%	-19.4%	13.0%
Jefferson	72.2%	45.5%	50.0%	25.0%	57.6%	130.3%	-25.7%
Jerome	70.8%	66.2%	59.1%	64.6%	63.3%	-2.0%	-2.6%
Latah	74.3%	66.7%	54.2%	66.7%	69.6%	4.3%	-2.0%
Madison	87.0%	64.9%	71.9%	56.0%	73.9%	32.0%	-12.2%
Minidoka	50.0%	13.3%	45.5%	46.3%	69.8%	50.6%	56.5%
Nez Perce	61.4%	62.7%	47.2%	54.1%	35.3%	-34.8%	-2.7%
Payette	65.9%	74.2%	55.2%	82.0%	77.4%	-5.6%	11.9%
<b>10,000 - 19,999</b>							
Benewah	14.3%	92.3%	20.0%	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%	196.7%
Boundary	81.8%	81.8%	100.0%	41.7%	88.9%	113.3%	-12.0%
Franklin	66.7%	33.3%	80.0%	72.7%	45.5%	-37.5%	27.0%
Fremont	66.7%	57.1%	60.8%	67.4%	80.4%	19.2%	1.0%
Gem	57.1%	52.6%	72.2%	52.9%	89.5%	69.0%	0.9%
Gooding	75.0%	65.4%	34.6%	55.0%	47.1%	-14.4%	-0.3%
Idaho	33.3%	63.3%	22.2%	64.7%	38.5%	-40.6%	72.1%
Owyhee	0.0%	51.9%	39.3%	40.9%	56.7%	38.5%	10.6%
Shoshone	42.9%	50.0%	70.6%	42.9%	39.1%	-8.7%	6.2%
Teton	100.0%	80.0%	80.0%	85.7%	83.3%	-2.8%	35.7%
Valley	83.3%	60.0%	65.8%	73.9%	68.4%	-7.4%	-2.0%
Washington	50.0%	66.7%	25.0%	20.0%	83.3%	316.7%	-16.4%

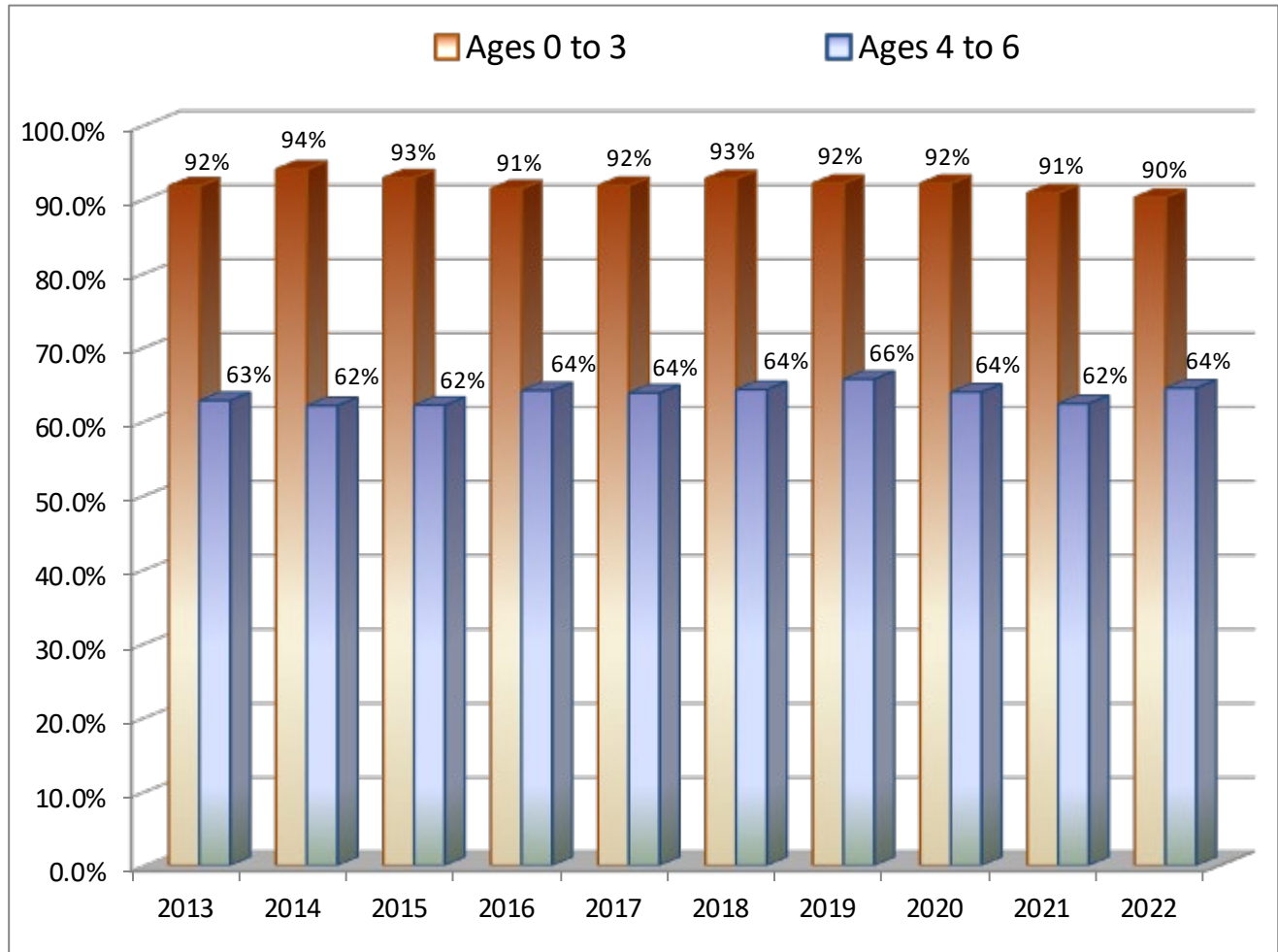
**Table 31 (Continued)**  
**Self-Reported Restraint Use of All Occupants in Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes by County: 2018-2022**  
**in Passenger Cars, Pickups, Sport Utility Vehicles, and Vans**

<b>County by Population</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Change 2021-2022</b>	<b>Avg. Change 2018-2021</b>
<b>5,000 - 9,999</b>							
Bear Lake	33.3%	66.7%	36.8%	33.3%	20.0%	-40.0%	15.2%
Boise	69.0%	87.1%	88.9%	41.4%	30.0%	-27.5%	-8.4%
Caribou	70.0%	0.0%	60.0%	71.4%	25.0%	-65.0%	-7.0%
Clearwater	0.0%	33.3%	88.9%	41.7%	77.8%	86.7%	48.9%
Lemhi	72.7%	54.5%	46.7%	26.3%	40.0%	52.0%	-27.7%
Lincoln	40.0%	37.5%	69.2%	20.0%	44.0%	120.0%	2.4%
Power	55.6%	50.0%	0.0%	34.5%	33.3%	-3.3%	-98.5%
<b>0 - 4,999</b>							
Adams	28.6%	66.7%	33.3%	50.0%	----	----	33.3%
Butte	100.0%	27.3%	62.5%	85.7%	60.0%	-30.0%	31.2%
Camas	75.0%	0.0%	----	62.5%	----	----	----
Clark	100.0%	0.0%	85.7%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	-33.7%
Custer	50.0%	22.2%	22.2%	10.0%	25.0%	150.0%	-36.9%
Lewis	42.9%	66.7%	40.9%	78.6%	50.0%	-36.4%	36.3%
Oneida	50.0%	62.5%	74.2%	72.7%	75.0%	3.1%	13.9%
<b>Statewide Average</b>	<b>74.4%</b>	<b>74.7%</b>	<b>66.0%</b>	<b>66.9%</b>	<b>67.6%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>-3.3%</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: 2013 - 2022



Parents are continuing to place their very young children (ages 0-3) in a child safety seat at a high rate (90%), 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

Injury Type	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2021-2022	Avg. Change 2018-2021
Fatalities							
Restrained	0	5	1	1	0	-100.0%	140.0%
Unrestrained	1	0	0	4	0	-100.0%	100.0%
Suspected Serious Injuries							
Restrained	12	6	5	5	5	0.0%	-22.2%
Unrestrained	2	4	2	4	8	100.0%	50.0%
Suspected Minor Injuries							
Restrained	77	63	42	48	55	14.6%	-12.4%
Unrestrained	24	22	23	31	36	16.1%	10.3%
Possible Injuries							
Restrained	248	223	190	194	154	-20.6%	-7.6%
Unrestrained	49	60	47	56	41	-26.8%	6.6%
No Injuries							
Restrained	1,984	2,201	1,582	2,042	1,868	-8.5%	4.0%
Unrestrained	411	514	381	436	460	5.5%	4.5%
Total Restrained	2,322	2,499	1,820	2,290	2,082	-9.1%	2.1%
Total Unrestrained	487	600	453	622	548	-11.9%	12.0%
% of Children Restrained	80.6%	80.6%	80.1%	78.6%	79.2%	0.7%	-0.8%

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates child safety seats are 69% effective in preventing fatalities and serious injuries. By this estimate 11 serious injuries were prevented and 6 unrestrained serious injuries may have been prevented if they had all been properly restrained.