

Safety belt wearing by adult front seat occupants: Results of national survey, March / April 2008

The latest annual national survey of safety belt use in New Zealand by adults in the front seats of cars and vans was carried out in March and April 2008. More than 90,000 drivers and adult front seat passengers were observed at 274 sites around the country. As in previous years, each site was surveyed between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. on normal working weekdays during the school term.

In 2008, the safety belt wearing rate for drivers and adult front seat passengers was **95%**. This result indicates that the improvements made in earlier years are being maintained (see Table 1).

The wearing rates for various categories of front seat occupant are shown in Table 1. As observed in previous years, travellers on the open road had a higher wearing rate than those in urban areas (96% and 94%, respectively) and males were less likely to wear their safety belts than females (also see Figure 1). Six percent of male drivers and nine percent of male passengers were not wearing a safety belt, compared to three percent of female drivers and four percent of female passengers. Over the last 10 years, wearing rates have increased significantly, especially for male drivers and passengers.

Table 1. Safety belt wearing rates for front seat adults by category (%)

Category	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Urban	87	88	90	91	91	93	94	94	94	94
Open road	91	92	93	93	93	95	96	97	96	96
Drivers	89	90	92	92	92	94	95	95	95	95
Passengers	89	90	92	93	92	94	95	96	95	95
Males	86	87	89	90	89	92	93	94	94	94
Male drivers	86	88	89	90	90	92	94	94	94	94
Male passengers	82	83	88	88	88	89	90	93	90	91
Females	93	93	95	95	94	96	96	97	97	97
Female drivers	93	94	95	95	94	96	96	97	97	97
Female passengers	93	93	94	95	94	96	96	97	97	96
All New Zealand	89	90	92	92	92	94	95	95	95	95

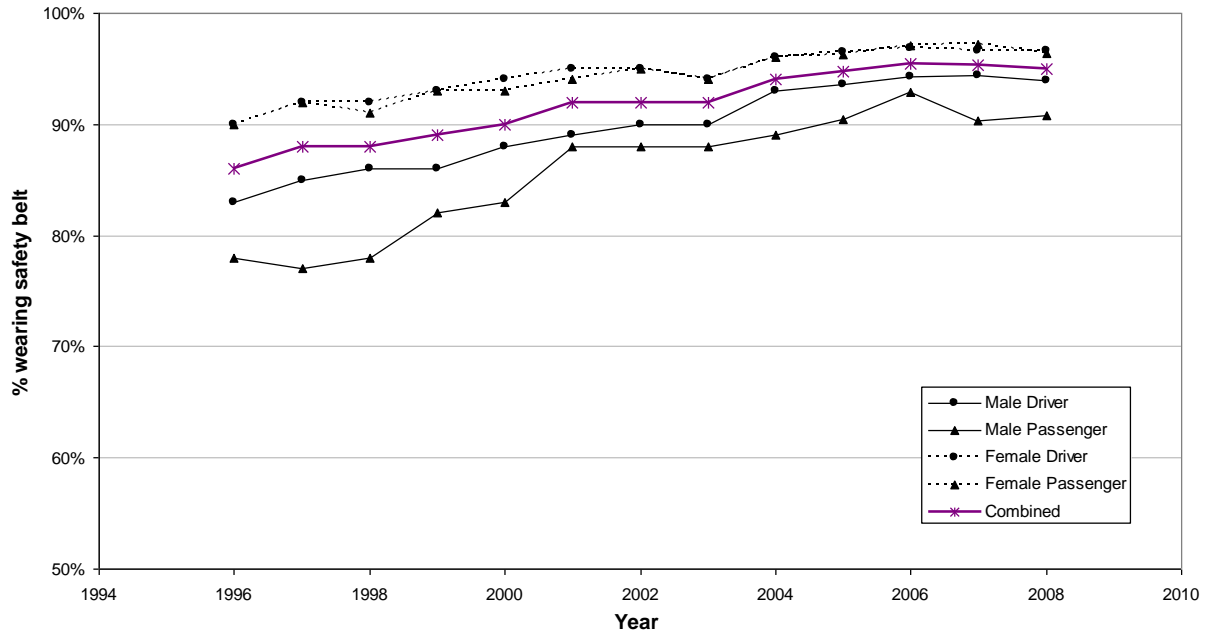


Figure 1. Safety belt wearing rates for front seat adults, 1996-2008

Regional Wearing Rates

These restraint wearing surveys are designed to provide a consistent measure of safety belt use over time by surveying the same sites in each region each year.

Table 2 shows the safety belt wearing rates in each Local Government region over the last ten years. In 2008, at least 3,600 drivers and front seat occupants were surveyed in each region, except in Gisborne where 885 occupants were surveyed.

Overall, all regions show generally increasing trends in seatbelt usage since 1998. Seatbelt usage has increased significantly¹ since last year in Waikato, Gisborne, Taranaki, West Coast and Otago. It has decreased since last year in Northland, Hawkes Bay, and Canterbury. Other regions have not changed markedly since last year, and are continuing to follow a similar pattern to the national wearing rate.

¹ Increase/ decreases have been commented on when the change is considered to be statistically significant; that is, the change in the wearing rate observed in the survey is likely to reflect a real change in the wearing rate.

Table 2. Front seat adult safety belt wearing rates by Local Government Region (%)

Local Government Region	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Northland	87	83	88	93	90	93	93	98	100	90
Auckland	93	94	94	91	95	96	97	97	96	96
Waikato	87	90	93	94	93	94	96	94	95	97
Bay of Plenty	90	92	94	95	93	95	93	95	94	93
Gisborne	93	97	94	95	96	92	92	96	78	85
Hawkes Bay	79	81	82	90	90	91	91	97	94	89
Taranaki	98	92	93	96	93	92	96	95	95	96
Manawatu-Wanganui	83	87	88	88	88	92	92	96	96	96
Wellington	95	89	94	93	91	94	96	96	95	95
Nelson-Marlborough	89	90	94	95	96	96	97	97	97	97
West Coast	77	82	94	90	90	93	94	95	95	96
Canterbury	90	92	92	93	92	94	95	94	97	96
Otago	93	94	95	95	92	94	94	95	95	97
Southland	92	95	93	87	93	96	97	95	95	96
All NZ	89	90	92	92	92	94	95	95	95	95

Note. The accuracy of the wearing rates shown here depends on the sample sizes (the number of vehicle occupants observed). If the sample size is small, the data may show large random fluctuations in the observed wearing rate. Gisborne region is most affected, with a sample size of less than 300 occupants in 1999 and 600-900 occupants in 2000-2008. Typically, sample sizes in other regions have been over 1000 occupants prior to 2003 and over 3600 occupants since then.

Metropolitan Area Wearing Rates

Table 3 shows the wearing rates for selected metropolitan areas over the last ten years. The observed front seat belt wearing rate has decreased in Waitakere from 98% on recent years to 92% in 2008. Wellington City's wearing rate has returned to 98% after a recorded drop in 2007. Wearing rates in the other metropolitan areas are similar to previous years.

Table 3. Front seat adult safety belt wearing rates by Metropolitan area (%)

Metropolitan area	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
North Shore	93	93	96	87	98	97	98	96	96	98
Waitakere	94	92	93	92	92	98	98	97	98	92
Auckland City	96	97	99	98	99	96	98	100	98	98
Manukau	93	94	89	83	93	93	97	93	94	96
Hamilton	91	91	96	91	96	96	99	98	95	96
Wellington City	95	92	94	93	96	97	98	98	92	98
Christchurch	92	94	86	94	97	97	97	97	96	95
Dunedin	94	96	96	98	95	92	97	94	97	98

Note. The accuracy of wearing rates shown here depends on the sample sizes (the number of vehicle occupants observed). If the sample size is small, the data may show large random fluctuations in the observed wearing rate.

Police District Wearing Rates

National restraint wearing surveys are designed to provide a consistent measure of safety belt use over time, by surveying the same sites in each district each year.

Table 4 shows the safety belt wearing rates in each Police District over the last ten years.

Table 4: Front seat adult safety belt wearing rates by Police District (%).

Police District	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Northland	87	83	88	93	90	93	93	98	99	90
Waitemata	94	92	95	93	96	98	98	98	97	96
Auckland	96	97	99	98	99	96	98	100	98	98
Counties/Manukau	91	95	89	86	93	94	95	95	94	95
Waikato	87	89	91	96	92	94	96	94	95	97
Bay of Plenty	89	92	95	94	94	95	94	95	94	94
Eastern	81	84	84	91	90	91	91	97	91	89
Central	88	89	90	90	90	92	93	96	96	96
Wellington	95	89	94	93	91	94	96	96	95	95
Tasman	83	86	94	92	93	95	95	96	96	96
Canterbury	90	92	92	93	92	94	96	94	97	96
Southern	92	95	94	92	93	95	95	95	95	96
All NZ	89	90	92	92	92	94	95	95	95	95

Local Authority Wearing Rates

Front seat safety belt wearing rates at Local Authority level are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Front seat adult safety belt wearing rates by Territorial Local Authority, 2008

Local authority / authorities	N	Wearing rate (%)	Local authority / authorities	N	Wearing rate (%)
<i>Northland</i>			Hastings	1457	95
Far North	1498	88	Central Hawkes Bay	1371	87
Whangarei	1383	93	<i>Taranaki</i>		
Kaipara	1250	91	New Plymouth	1551	95
<i>Auckland</i>			Stratford	819	97
Rodney	1425	99	South Taranaki	1326	96
North Shore City	1370	98	<i>Manawatu-Wanganui</i>		
Waitakere	1496	92	Wanganui	1035	94
Auckland	1178	98	Rangitikei	849	94
Manukau	1539	96	Ruapehu	897	93
Papakura	1184	94	Horowhenua	1647	96
Franklin	1227	96	Tararua	1042	94
<i>Waikato</i>			Manawatu	1034	98
Hamilton	1316	96	Palmerston North	1545	98
Thames-Coromandel	1340	99	<i>Wellington</i>		
Matamata-Piako	1494	98	Kapiti Coast	1555	93
Hauraki	1238	98	Porirua	1396	97
Waikato	1576	96	Wellington	1457	98
Waipa	1557	98	Hutt City	1453	95
Waitomo/ Otorohanga	1302	97	Upper Hutt	1205	95
South Waikato	1756	93	South Wairarapa/ Carterton	1085	93
Taupo	1657	95	Masterton	1502	96
<i>Bay of Plenty</i>			<i>Nelson- Marlborough/Tasman</i>		
Tauranga	1535	95	Nelson	1556	97
Western Bay of Plenty	1396	84	Tasman	1519	97
Kawerau / Opotiki	599	88	Marlborough	1459	97
Whakatane	1294	98	Kaikoura	803	95
Rotorua	1573	98	<i>West Coast</i>		
Gisborne	885	85	Buller	1210	98
<i>Hawkes Bay</i>			Grey	1409	98
Wairoa	1376	78	West Coast	1275	94
Napier	1503	96			

Local authority / authorities	N	Wearing rate (%)
<i>Canterbury</i>		
Hurunui	1425	95
Waimakariri	1504	96
Christchurch	1504	94
Selwyn	1504	94
Ashburton	1383	98
Timaru	1370	98
Mackenzie	1492	96
Waimate	746	98

Local authority / authorities	N	Wearing rate (%)
<i>Otago</i>		
Central Otago	936	97
Queenstown-Lakes	1341	93
Waitaki	851	97
Dunedin	1531	98
Clutha	1588	99
<i>Southland</i>		
Gore	1276	96
Southland	1302	94
Invercargill	1338	97

Note. N = number of car/van occupants observed.

Police Area Wearing Rates

Front seat safety belt wearing rates at Police area level are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Front seat adult wearing rates by Police Area, 2008.

Police Area	N	Wearing rate (%)	Police Area	N	Wearing rate (%)
<i>Northland</i>			Palmerston North Rural	3928	96
Far North	1498	88	Palmerston North City	1545	98
Whangarei	2633	92	<i>Wellington</i>		
<i>Waitemata</i>			Kapiti - Mana	2951	95
Rodney	1425	99	Wellington	1457	98
North Shore	1370	98	Lower Hutt	1453	95
Waitakere	1496	92	Upper Hutt	1205	95
<i>Auckland</i>			Wairarapa	2587	94
Auckland City/West	559	97	<i>Tasman</i>		
Auckland East	619	99	Nelson Bays	3075	97
<i>Counties / Manukau</i>			Marlborough	2262	96
Counties-Manukau West	813	97	West Coast	3894	96
Counties-Manukau East	726	96	<i>Canterbury</i>		
Counties-Manukau South	2411	95	Northern Canterbury	2929	95
<i>Waikato</i>			Christchurch Central	1515	95
Hamilton	1316	96	Southern Canterbury	2585	93
Waikato East	4072	98	Mid-South Canterbury	4459	98
Waikato West	4435	97	<i>Southern</i>		
<i>Bay of Plenty</i>			Otago Rural	3808	95
Taupo	3413	94	Dunedin	2890	98
Western Bay of Plenty	2931	90	Southland	4131	96
Eastern Bay of Plenty	1893	95	<i>Note.</i> N = number of car/van occupants observed.		
Rotorua	1573	98			
<i>Eastern</i>					
Gisborne	2261	81			
Napier	1503	96			
Hastings	2828	91			
<i>Central</i>					
New Plymouth	1551	95			
Rural Taranaki	2145	97			
Wanganui	1375	95			
Ruapehu	1201	94			