

Safety belt wearing by adult front seat occupants: Results of national survey, March / April 2009

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 2009. 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 2009, 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 95%, respectively) and males were less likely to wear their safety belts than females (also see Figure 1). Five percent of male drivers and ten percent of male passengers were not wearing a safety belt, compared to three percent of female drivers and three 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	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Urban	88	90	91	91	93	94	94	94	94	95
Open road	92	93	93	93	95	96	97	96	96	96
Drivers	90	92	92	92	94	95	95	95	95	96
Passengers	90	92	93	92	94	95	96	95	95	95
Males	87	89	90	89	92	93	94	94	94	94
Male drivers	88	89	90	90	92	94	94	94	94	95
Male passengers	83	88	88	88	89	90	93	90	91	90
Females	93	95	95	94	96	96	97	97	97	97
Female drivers	94	95	95	94	96	96	97	97	97	97
Female passengers	93	94	95	94	96	96	97	97	96	97
All New Zealand	90	92	92	92	94	95	95	95	95	95

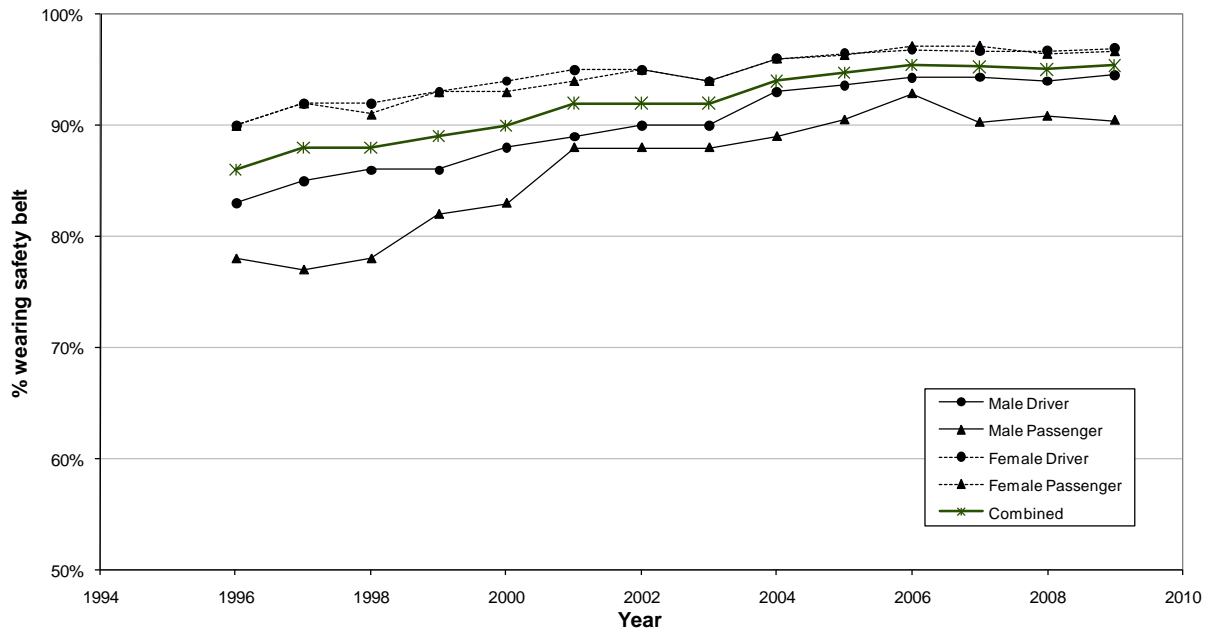


Figure 1. Safety belt wearing rates for front seat adults, 1996-2009

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 2009, at least 3,600 drivers and front seat occupants were surveyed in each region, except in Gisborne where 1117 occupants were surveyed.

Overall, all regions show generally increasing trends in seatbelt usage since 1998. Seatbelt usage has increased significantly¹ since last year in Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, and Nelson/Marlborough/Tasman. It has decreased since last year in Northland, Waikato, and Manawatu. 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	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Northland	83	88	93	90	93	93	98	100	90	87
Auckland	94	94	91	95	96	97	97	96	96	96
Waikato	90	93	94	93	94	96	94	95	97	95
Bay of Plenty	92	94	95	93	95	93	95	94	93	96
Gisborne	97	94	95	96	92	92	96	78	85	86
Hawkes Bay	81	82	90	90	91	91	97	94	89	97
Taranaki	92	93	96	93	92	96	95	95	96	96
Manawatu-Wanganui	87	88	88	88	92	92	96	96	96	95
Wellington	89	94	93	91	94	96	96	95	95	95
Nelson/ Marlborough/ Tasman	90	94	95	96	96	97	97	97	97	98
West Coast	82	94	90	90	93	94	95	95	96	96
Canterbury	92	92	93	92	94	95	94	97	96	96
Otago	94	95	95	92	94	94	95	95	97	97
Southland	95	93	87	93	96	97	95	95	96	96
All NZ	90	92	92	92	94	95	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 increased in Waitakere and Wellington. Auckland has decreased. 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	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
North Shore	93	96	87	98	97	98	96	96	98	99
Waitakere	92	93	92	92	98	98	97	98	92	98
Auckland City	97	99	98	99	96	98	100	98	98	95
Manukau	94	89	83	93	93	97	93	94	96	96
Hamilton	91	96	91	96	96	99	98	95	96	95
Wellington City	92	94	93	96	97	98	98	92	98	99
Christchurch	94	86	94	97	97	97	97	96	95	96
Dunedin	96	96	98	95	92	97	94	97	98	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.

Auckland and Northland have declined from previously high levels in 2006-2007. Eastern has started approaching national levels after a decline in 2007-2008.

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	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Northland	83	88	93	90	93	93	98	99	90	87
Waitemata	92	95	93	96	98	98	98	97	96	98
Auckland	97	99	98	99	96	98	100	98	98	95
Counties/Manukau	95	89	86	93	94	95	95	94	95	96
Waikato	89	91	96	92	94	96	94	95	97	95
Bay of Plenty	92	95	94	94	95	94	95	94	94	95
Eastern	84	84	91	90	91	91	97	91	89	95
Central	89	90	90	90	92	93	96	96	96	95
Wellington	89	94	93	91	94	96	96	95	95	95
Tasman	86	94	92	93	95	95	96	96	96	97
Canterbury	92	92	93	92	94	96	94	97	96	96
Southern	95	94	92	93	95	95	95	95	96	97
All NZ	90	92	92	92	94	95	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, 2009

Local authority / authorities	N	Wearing rate (%)	Local authority / authorities	N	Wearing rate (%)
<i>Northland</i>			Napier	1546	99
Far North	1542	91	Central Hawkes Bay	1162	95
Whangarei	1410	86	<i>Taranaki</i>		
Kaipara	1084	84	New Plymouth	1559	95
<i>Auckland</i>			Stratford	806	99
Rodney	1244	97	South Taranaki	1408	97
North Shore City	935	99	<i>Manawatu-Wanganui</i>		
Waitakere	1414	98	Ruapehu	995	89
Auckland	1460	95	Wanganui	1173	92
Manukau	1566	96	Rangitikei	1123	97
Papakura	1249	96	Manawatu	1140	97
Franklin	1222	95	Palmerston North	1580	98
<i>Waikato</i>			Tararua	1221	95
Thames-Coromandel	1820	98	Horowhenua	1297	95
Hauraki	1322	93	<i>Wellington</i>		
Waikato	1285	90	Kapiti Coast	1536	93
Matamata-Piako	1364	94	Porirua	1397	96
Hamilton	1523	95	Upper Hutt	1386	98
Waipa	1580	96	Hutt City	1559	98
Waitomo/ Otorohanga	1420	95	Wellington	1511	99
South Waikato	1606	95	Masterton	1461	92
Taupo	1425	93	South Wairarapa/ Carterton	1313	90
<i>Bay of Plenty</i>			<i>Nelson/ Marlborough/ Tasman</i>		
Western Bay of Plenty	1785	94	Tasman	1522	97
Tauranga	1777	96	Nelson	1529	99
Rotorua	1586	96	Marlborough	1556	97
Whakatane	1422	99	Kaikoura	845	96
Kawerau / Opotiki	918	94	<i>West Coast</i>		
Gisborne	1117	86	Buller	1019	93
<i>Hawkes Bay</i>			Grey	1366	98
Wairoa	1240	96	Westland	1272	95
Hastings	1561	98			

Local authority / authorities	N	Wearing rate (%)
<i>Canterbury</i>		
Hurunui	1352	95
Waimakariri	1403	96
Christchurch	2757	95
Selwyn	1318	97
Ashburton	1395	98
Timaru	1407	96
Mackenzie	1043	96
Waimate	946	97

Local authority / authorities	N	Wearing rate (%)
<i>Otago</i>		
Waitaki	998	96
Central Otago	1289	96
Queenstown-Lakes	1540	96
Dunedin	1544	98
Clutha	1305	99
<i>Southland</i>		
Southland	1314	96
Gore	1322	95
Invercargill	1442	96

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, 2009.

Police Area	N	Wearing rate (%)	Police Area	N	Wearing rate (%)
<i>Northland</i>			Palmerston North Rural	3956	96
Far North	1542	91	Palmerston North City	1580	98
Whangarei	2494	85	<i>Wellington</i>		
<i>Waitemata</i>			Kapiti - Mana	2933	95
Rodney	1244	97	Upper Hutt	1386	98
North Shore	935	99	Lower Hutt	1559	98
Waitakere	1414	98	Wellington	1511	99
<i>Auckland</i>			Wairarapa	2774	91
Auckland City/West	718	94	<i>Tasman</i>		
Auckland East	742	95	Nelson Bays	3051	98
<i>Counties / Manukau</i>			Marlborough	2401	97
Counties-Manukau West	799	95	West Coast	3657	96
Counties-Manukau East	767	97	<i>Canterbury</i>		
Counties-Manukau South	2471	96	Northern Canterbury	2755	95
<i>Waikato</i>			Christchurch Central	1554	96
Waikato East	4506	96	Southern Canterbury	2521	96
Waikato West	4285	94	Mid-South Canterbury	4791	97
Hamilton	1523	95	<i>Southern</i>		
<i>Bay of Plenty</i>			Otago Rural	3827	96
Taupo	3031	94	Dunedin	2849	99
Western Bay of Plenty	3562	95	Southland	4078	96
Rotorua	1586	96	<i>Note. N = number of car/van occupants observed.</i>		
Eastern Bay of Plenty	2340	97			
<i>Eastern</i>					
Gisborne	2357	91			
Hastings	2723	97			
Napier	1546	99			
<i>Central</i>					
New Plymouth	1559	95			
Ruapehu	1323	91			
Rural Taranaki	2214	98			
Wanganui	1670	93			