

MAPLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL SEAT BELT OBSERVATIONS



ISSUE BRIEF: SEAT BELT OBSERVATIONS SEPTEMBER, 2009

Seat belt use is

an important aspect in the safety of newly privileged teen drivers.

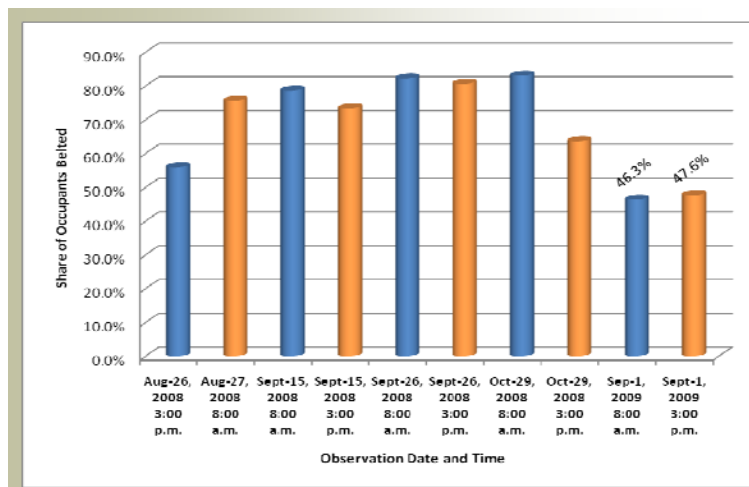
Direct observation, including seat belt observation, has predominately been used to provide statistically reliable data on vehicle occupant seatbelt use in North Dakota.

OBSERVATION DETAILS

Seat belt observations were conducted by researchers on eight occasions in 2008 to provide baseline, intermediate, post, and post-post measures for intervention and program effectiveness. In addition, on September 1, 2009 researchers conducted seat belt observations to determine the lasting effect of prior seat belt awareness programs. The observation on September 1, 2009 may also provide baseline statistics for the 2009-2010 school year. Arrivals and departures to the school parking lot were observed at two checkpoints or main driveways associated with arrival and departure from Maple Valley High School in Tower City, ND. Observers were stationed at the west access site which provided sight observations to both the west and south entrances/exits. The observations took place during morning arrivals and afternoon departures. In each of the vehicle observations, all occupant genders were recorded and seat belt use was captured with the exception of two vehicles during a.m. arrival.

OBSERVATION FINDINGS

The September 1, 2009 observation statistics show overall seat belt use at approximately 46 percent during a.m. observation and approximately 48 percent seat belt use during p.m. observation. These percentages are roughly 10 percent less than baseline observation conducted on August 26, 2008 and 37 percent less than the highest share of seat belt use observed on the morning of October 29, 2008. As noted from past observations, the morning numbers were consistently above the afternoon numbers, and the morning numbers had sustained gains even in the post-post survey while the afternoon use rates dropped. However, unlike previous observation statistics, the September 1, 2009 observations statistics show a slight increase (1 percent) in seat belt use during departure from the school.



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