Occupant seat belt use in fatal and injury crashes is considerably lower than conventional use rate reported by NHTSA. North Dakota’s 10-year average occupant use in fatal crashes is 23%, and injury crashes, 64%.

The distribution of seat belt use in crashes by age reflects a slight drop in use in the 18-24 year olds and a steady increase with age, hovering at about 80% for 65 years and older.

Observational studies of seat belt use in North Dakota have found that female use is higher than male use, and this pattern holds true in crashes. From 2010-2012, female use in crashes was 53% compared to male use of 47%.

Frequency of seat belt use of drivers in speeding, lane departure, and rollover crash types is approximately 8%-17% less than those in crashes outside each category. Only intersection crashes reflect higher use.

Whereas regional seat belt use in crashes was uniform in 2002, the east has trended upwards and the west has demonstrated irregular use. The east 10-year average is 72% and the west is 66%.