

North Dakota Statewide Traffic Safety Survey, 2022

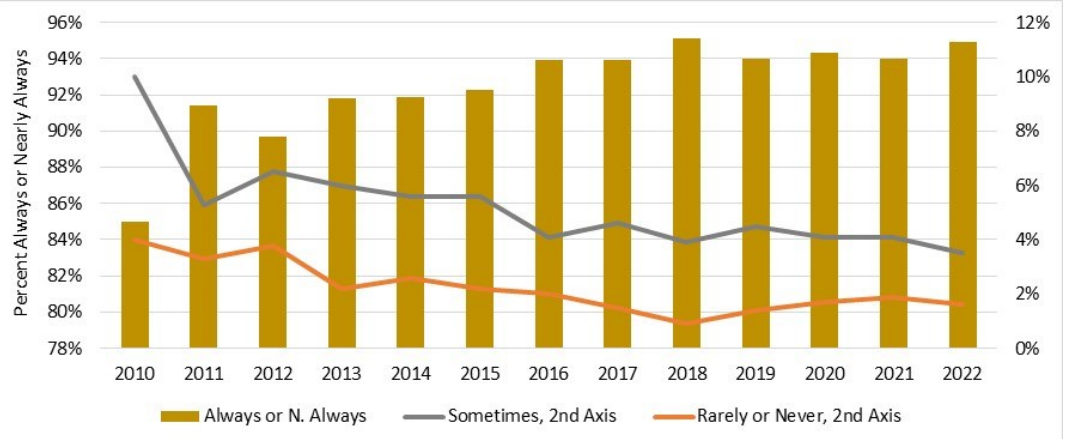
The United States lags behind other developed countries in several transportation safety metrics. Progress has been made in reducing the number of traffic-related fatalities, but preventable crashes resulting in death, injury, and property damage continue to occur. The statewide driver survey provides baseline metrics for the North Dakota Department of Transportation Safety Division and others to use in understanding perceptions and self-reported behaviors related to traffic safety.

A mail survey was selected as the method for the driver traffic safety survey. A questionnaire was created by blending a core set of questions addressing nationally agreed-upon priorities including seat belt use, impaired driving, and speeding, along with questions designed to better understand views on specific programs and attitudes pertinent to ND drivers. Surveys were mailed to 11,321 ND drivers in 2022. Analysis is based on 1,595 responses.

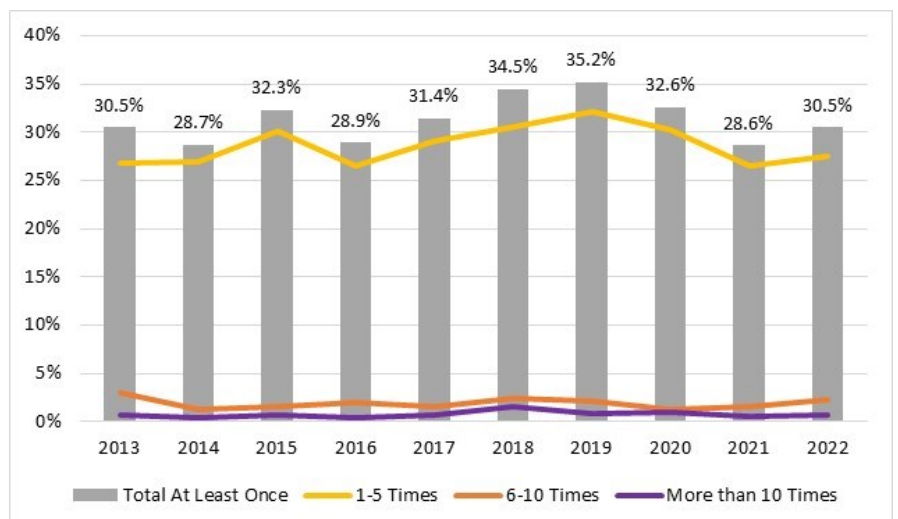
RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

- Seat Belts:** Self-reported use showed that 81.8% of respondents “always” wear seat belts with another 13.1% reporting usage as “nearly always.” Only 1.6% of drivers reported that they “rarely” or “never” use a seat belt.
- Alcohol Impaired Driving:** Among respondents who drink alcohol, 30.5% reported driving a vehicle during the past two months within two hours of drinking one or two drinks. Another 4.9% reported driving after drinking three or more drinks. Since 2010, the percentage of ND drivers who think the chances of getting arrested for impaired driving are “unlikely” or “very unlikely” has declined from 15.5% to just 6.9% in 2022. Among those respondents who do not drive while drinking alcohol, 73.9% designate a sober driver when drinking or planning to drink and the remainder use ride share services or taxis.

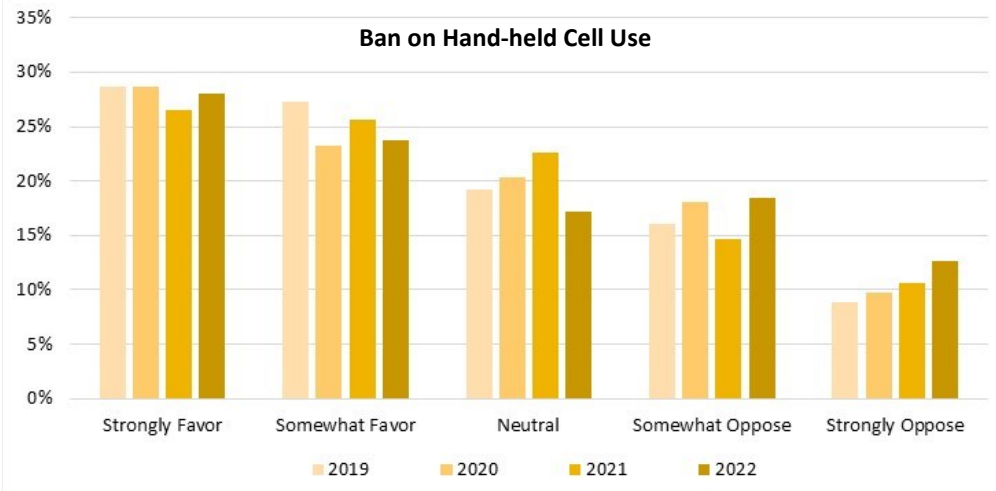
Self-Reported Seat Belt Use



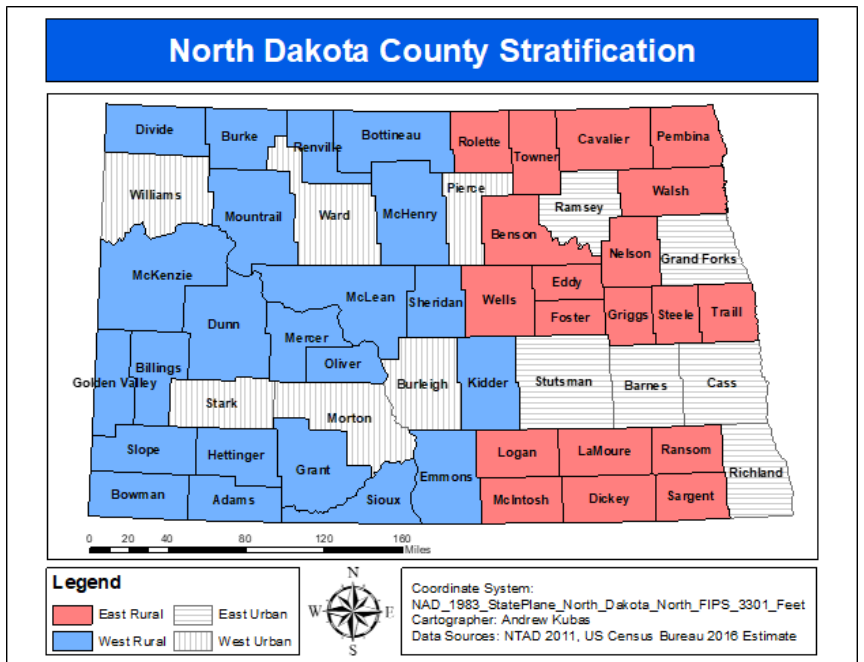
Driving After Drinking Activity



- Distracted Driving:** The majority of drivers (56.5%) reported that they would make or answer a phone call while driving. Conversely, 23.5% responded they were “very unlikely/unlikely” to do so. The most commonly reported purpose for cell use while operating a vehicle was for talking, at 28.4%. Maps, texting, and social media were other reported uses. Just 18.4% of respondents indicated that they do not use cell phones while driving at all. Of those taking phone calls while driving, about seven-in-ten do so by leveraging hands-free technology. One-third of ND drivers expect a citation for distracted driving is “likely/very likely”.

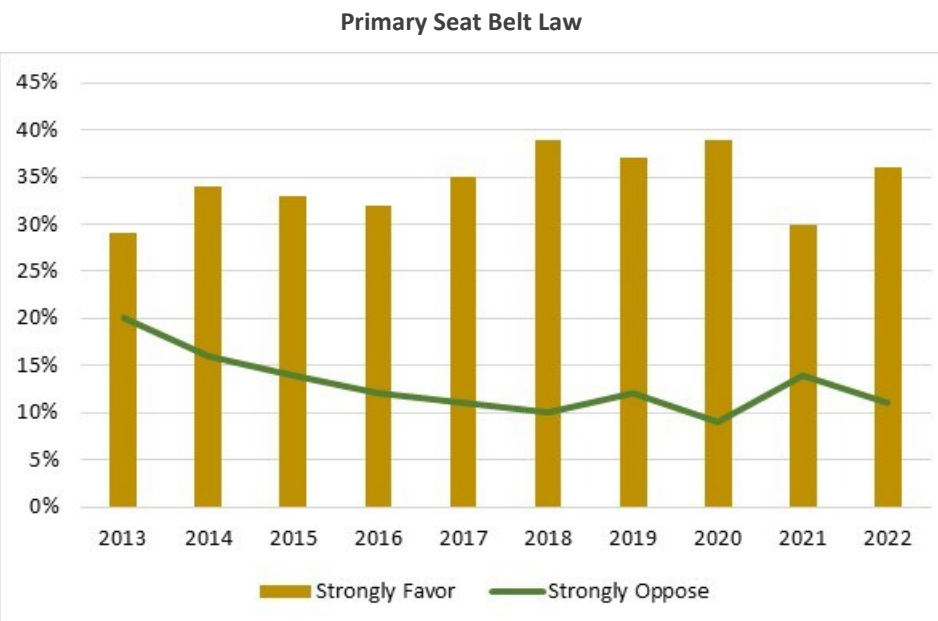


- Geography:** Drivers living in the urban counties were more likely to use a seat belt, and also believe other drivers used seat belts at a higher rate. Rural drivers were less likely to support initiatives such as a primary seat belt law and a ban on using hand-held cellular devices while driving. They were also more likely to speed, but less likely to drive after consuming alcohol.



- Region:** Respondents from the eastern half of the state were more likely to positively change their attention to driving and driving behavior in a highway safety corridor. Drivers from the west were more dangerous with regards to impaired driving behaviors and were less likely to support higher speeding fines. The 5-year average measuring the perceived likelihood of receiving a ticket for not wearing seat belts is at an all-time low for drivers from both the eastern and western regions of the state, as well as those from rural counties.

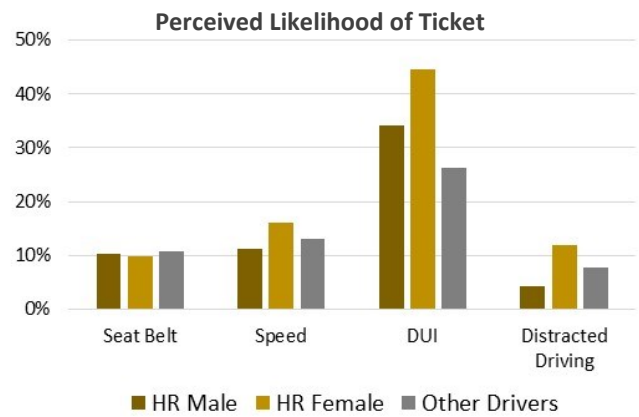
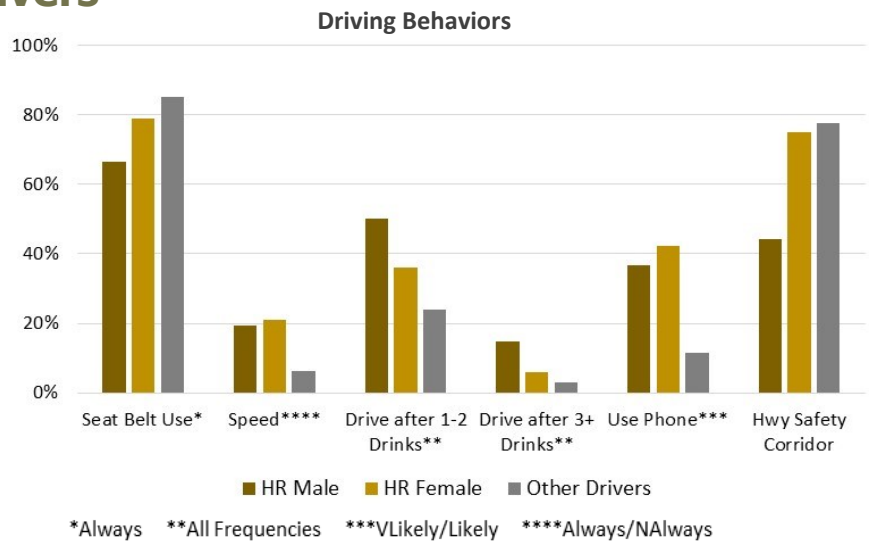
- Primary Seat Belt Law:** Support for a primary seat belt law was 29% in 2013 and currently sits at 36% in 2022. The 11% of respondents who “strongly oppose” this law represented a general decline in opposition since 2013.



Young Male and Female Drivers

Selected target groups of 18-to-34-year-old high-risk (HR) male and female drivers show noticeable differences in behaviors and viewpoints when compared to other drivers.

- Driving Behaviors:** The survey showed 66.5% of HR male drivers “always” wear a seat belt while driving or riding in a vehicle, a smaller number than the 79.1% of high-risk females, and the 85.3% of other drivers. About 20% of HR males and females self-reported speeding in a 75 mph zone. HR males tend to drive after drinking at a higher rate than HR females and other drivers. Both HR groups were more than twice as likely than other drivers to use a cell phone while driving. Approximately three-fourths of HR female and other drivers reported having positively changed driving behavior in high-way safety corridors compared to 44.4% of HR male drivers.
- Perceived Likelihood of Ticket:** All respondents had a low expectancy for law enforcement to ticket drivers for seat belt violations. HR males felt the prospect of receiving tickets for speeding in a 75 mph zone, or distracted driving were less when compared to HR female drivers and the balance of the population. Both HR males and females felt there was a greater likelihood of a DUI arrest than other respondents, although the perceived deterrent effect and threat of arrest was not as great as with high-risk females.
- Viewpoints:** Twenty-five percent of HR males “strongly oppose” a primary seat belt law as well as a ban on hand-held cell use while driving. HR females were less resistant to such legislation at 9.1%, and 16.9%, respectively. HR females also showed less opposition to higher speeding fines, 19.7% compared with 31.1% of HR males. There was little difference in HR drivers’ perceptions of the use of seat belts and cell phones by other drivers, with the exception of HR females belief that only two-thirds of other drivers were restrained.



Viewpoints	HR Males	HR Females
Seat Belt Use-Others*	74.0%	66.6%
Talk While Driving-Others**	73.9%	74.7%
Higher Speed Fines***	31.1%	19.7%
Primary Seat Belt***	25.3%	9.1%
Ban Hand-held Cell Use***	25.0%	16.9%

*Always/NAways ** Daily ***Strongly Oppose

Conclusion: North Dakota drivers have adopted safe driving practices, but it is apparent that additional efforts are needed to improve safety on the state’s roads. When examining trends over the years of administering this survey, results clearly show that rural residents are less likely to use seat belts than their urban counterparts, and younger drivers generally engage in dangerous behavior behind the wheel more often and engage in safe practices less often than those over the age of 35. Improvement in these two areas would likely reduce rates of fatalities and serious injuries during crash events in ND.

View complete research report at <https://www.ugpti.org/resources/reports/details.php?id=1095&program=rtssc>

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost for Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 201, NDSU Main Campus, 701-231-7708, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu.

The content of this report reflects the views of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the information presented. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the North Dakota Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

For more information contact:
info@ugpti.org • (701) 231-7767
 NDSU Dept 2880 • P.O. Box 6050
 Fargo, ND • 58108-6050