

ISSUE BRIEF • FALL 2023

# NORTH DAKOTA STATEWIDE TRAFFIC SAFETY SURVEY, 2023

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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 Highway 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 11,520 ND drivers in 2023. Analysis is based on 1,407 responses.

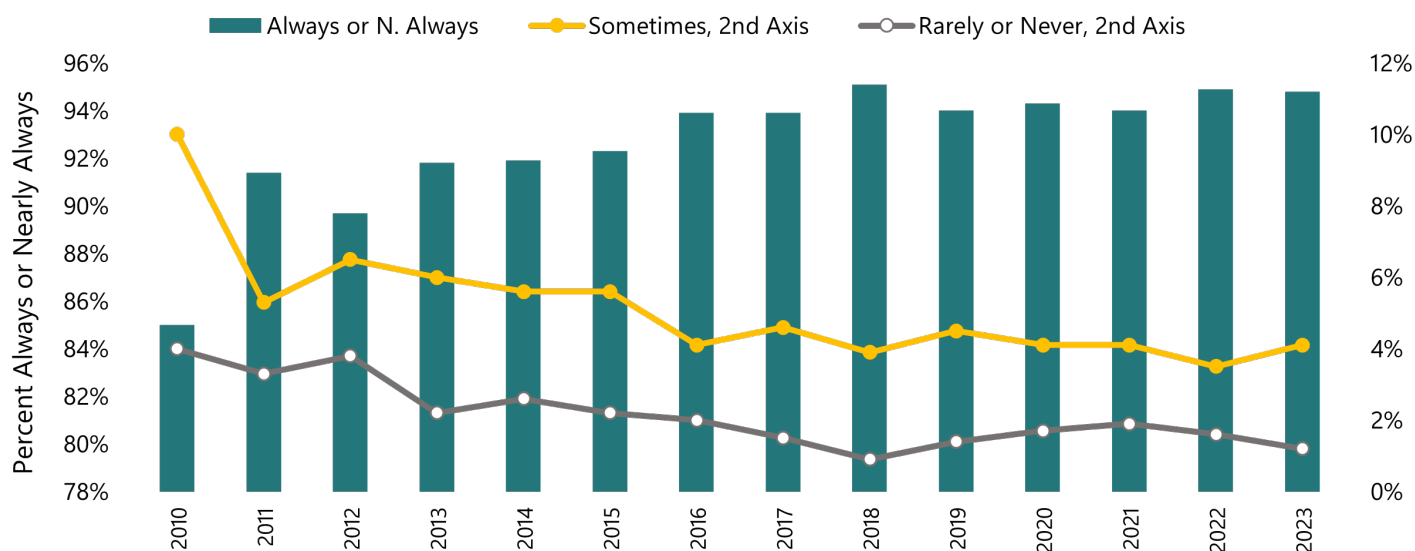
## RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

### Seat Belts

Self-reported use showed that 82.6% of respondents "always" wear seat belts with another 12.2% reporting usage as "nearly always." Only 1.2% of drivers reported that they "rarely" or "never" use a seat belt.



### Self-Reported Seat Belt Use



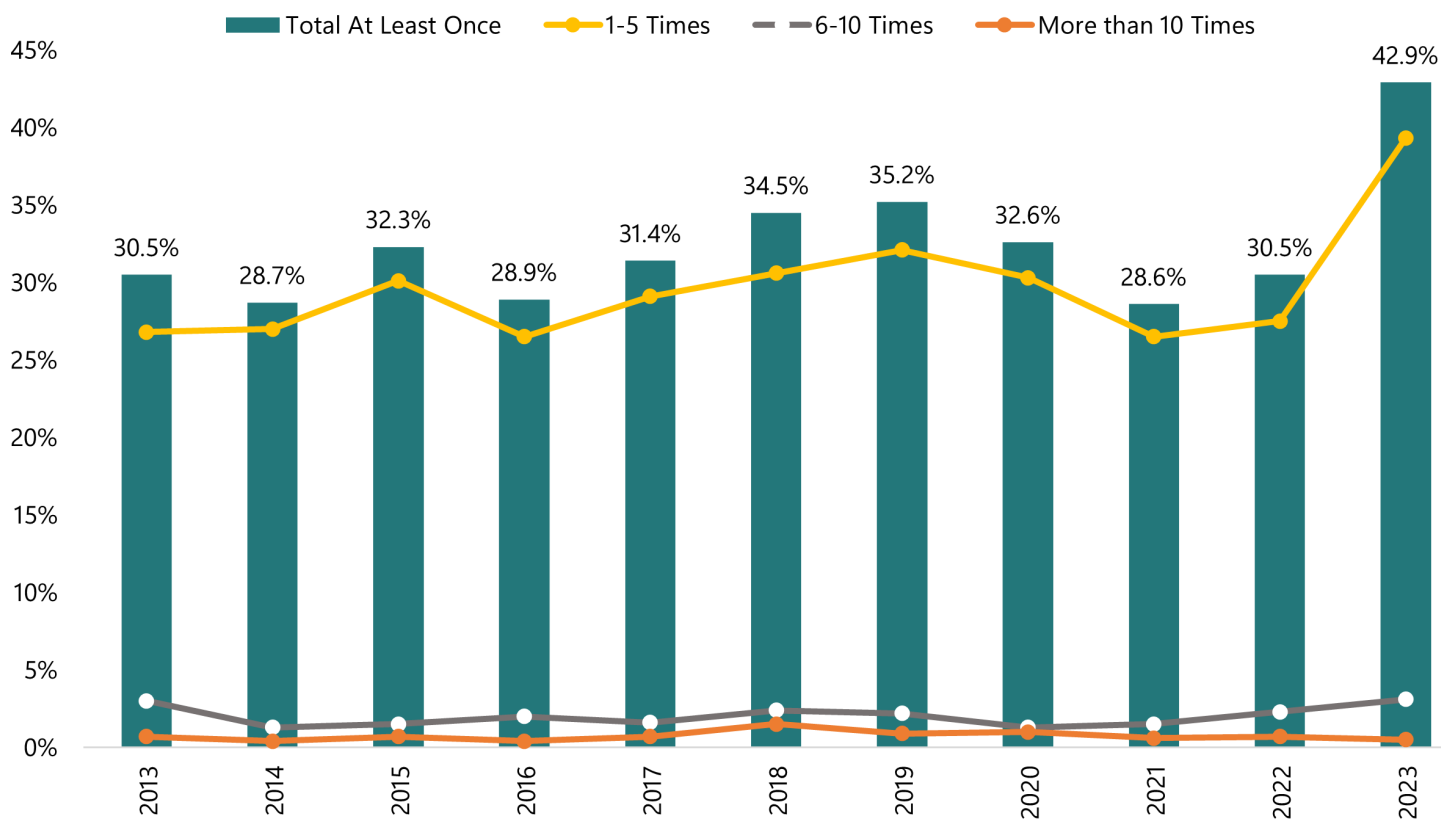
## Alcohol Impaired Driving

Among respondents who drink alcohol, 42.9% reported driving a vehicle during the past two months within two hours of drinking one or two drinks. Another 6.5% reported driving after drinking three or more drinks.

Among those respondents who do not drive after drinking alcohol, 59.4% were “very likely” to designate an alternate driver, primarily a sober driver within the group, with the remainder calling a family member/friend, or using ride share services or taxis.



## Driving after Drinking Activity

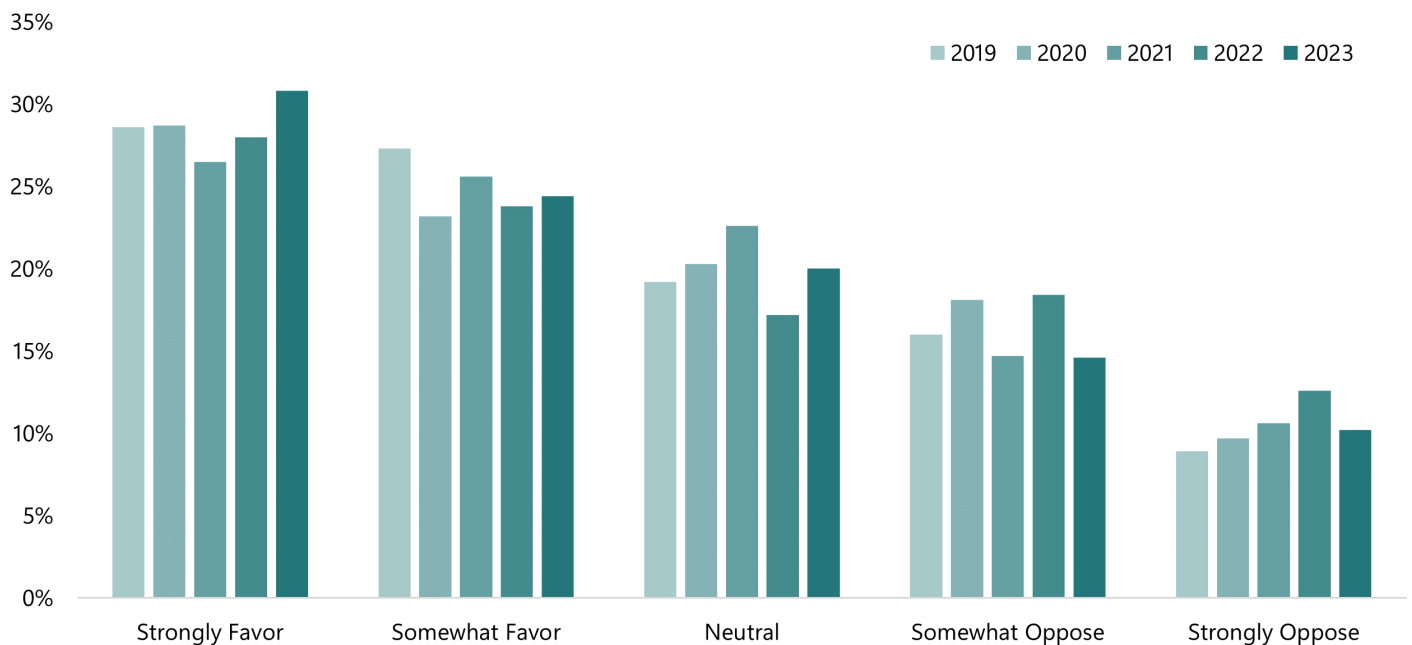


## Distracted Driving

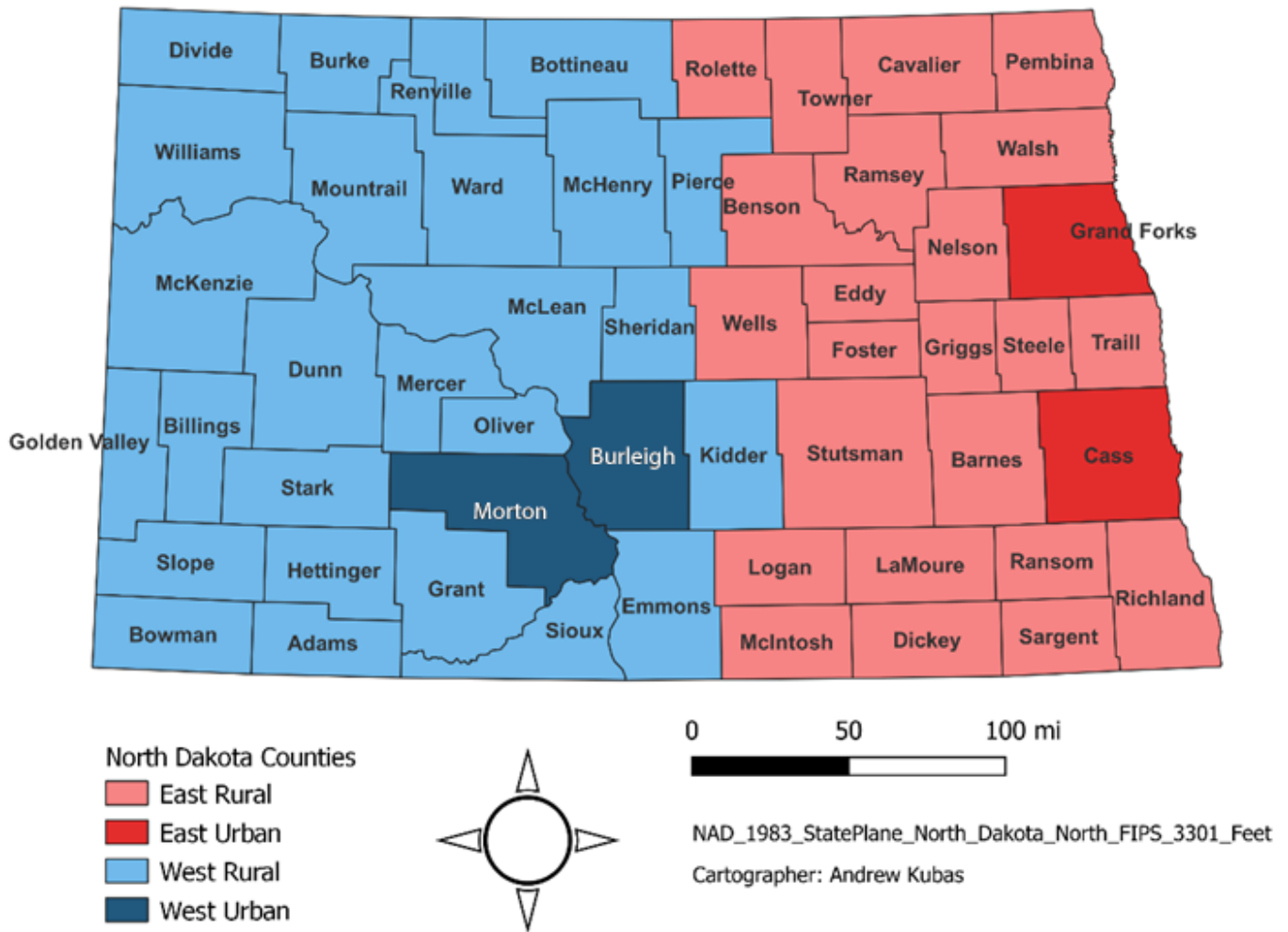
Respondents supported a ban on hand-held cell phone use while driving with 55.2% “strongly” or “somewhat” in favor of such a ban compared to 10.2% “strongly” opposed to a ban.

There was an even distribution of responses when asked to rate the likelihood of using a phone while driving: roughly one-third of respondents (32.4%) self-reported that they were “likely” or “very likely” to use a phone, roughly one-third (32.5%) indicated usage as “somewhat likely,” and roughly one-third (35.2%) answered that the chances were “very unlikely” or “unlikely”. The most commonly reported purpose for cell use while operating a vehicle was maps (61.0%) and texting (40.6%).

Of those taking phone calls while driving, about seven-in-ten do so by leveraging hands-free technology. About one-third of ND drivers expect a citation for distracted driving is “likely/very likely”.



# North Dakota County Stratification



## Geography

Drivers living in the urban counties were more likely to use seat belts, but also more likely to drive within two hours of drinking one-two alcoholic beverages. Rural drivers were more likely to speed in a 75 mph zone and were less supportive of a ban on handheld devices while driving.

## Region

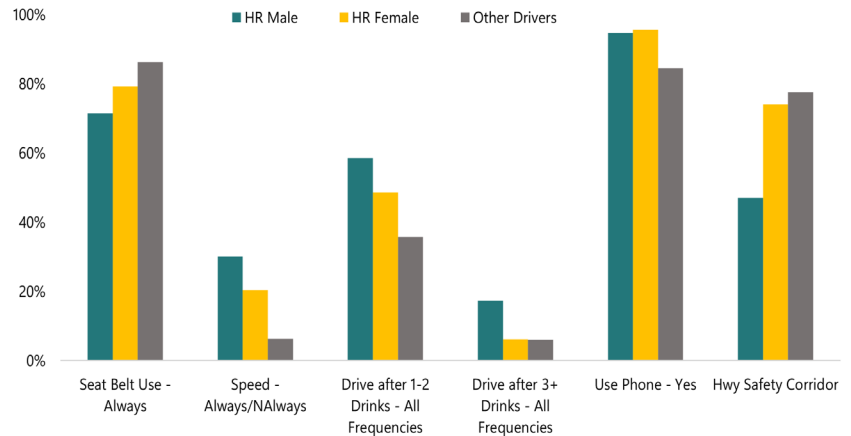
Respondents from the eastern half of the state were more likely to positively change their attention to driving and driving behavior in a highway safety corridor. Drivers from the west were more likely to have read, seen, or heard messages related to Vision Zero efforts.

# 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 71.4% of HR male drivers “always” wear a seat belt while driving or riding in a vehicle, a smaller number than the 79.2% of HR females, and the 86.2% of other drivers. About 20% of HR females self-reported speeding in a 75 mph zone compared with 30% of HR males. HR males tend to drive after drinking at a higher rate than both HR females and other drivers. Rates of cell use while driving were similar for HR male and HR females. Approximately three-fourths of HR female and other drivers reported having positively changed driving behavior in highway safety corridors compared to 47.0% of HR male drivers.



## Perceived Likelihood of Ticket

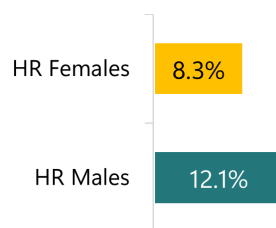
All respondents had a low expectancy of law enforcement ticketing drivers for seat belt violations. HR males felt the prospect of receiving tickets for speeding in a 75 mph zone, or distracted driving were less when compared to HR female drivers and the balance of the population. The perceived deterrent effect and threat of DUI arrest was highest with HR females.



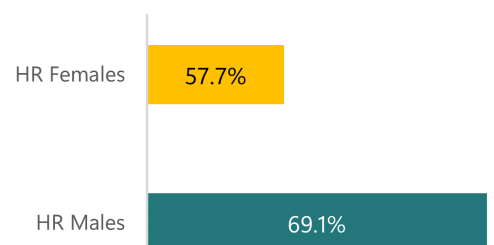
## High Risk Driver Viewpoints

HR males and HR females do not support a ban on hand-held cell use while driving, 12.1% and 8.3%, respectively. A difference in the viewpoints of HR males and HR females was also found in their beliefs that crashes are preventable, where 69.1% of HR males and 57.7% of HR females responded “always” or “nearly always” when asked to rate the preventability of crashes on roadways.

Ban Hand-held Cell Use  
(Strongly Oppose)



Crashes Preventable  
(Always / Nalways)



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