

Seat Belt Usage by Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers (SBUCMVD) 2009 Survey

Final Report
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Executive Summary

The Seat Belt Usage by Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers (SBUCMVD) Survey is a nationally representative field data collection program that provides estimates of safety belt restraint use by drivers and other occupants of medium and heavy duty commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). This survey of CMVs was conducted using the sample design and field data collection methodologies similar to those used in the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) of passenger vehicle occupants. Restraint use studies were conducted in 2002, 2005, and 2006 that focused on drivers of class 7 and 8 vehicles observed primarily at truck stops in 12 states using very different sample design and data collection methodologies. The surveys conducted in the past three years (2007 - 2009) were based upon a statistically valid research design that included medium duty, class 7, and class 8 CMVs observed from roadsides in a randomly selected sample of 28 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs, which are a county or group of counties) across the United States.

The 2009 overall safety belt usage rate for drivers of all medium and heavy duty trucks and buses combined was 74%. The usage rate for CMV other occupants was 61%. A total of 20,818 CMVs, 20,818 drivers, and 1,628 other occupants were observed at 827 sites. Safety belt use was observed to be higher in states governed by primary belt use laws (78%) than secondary belt use laws (67%). Safety belt usage among drivers and other occupants in units identified as part of a regional or national fleet (78%) was also observed to be higher than non-regional/non-national (independent) operators (64%). These estimates show an increase from 2008. Observations on the use of safety belts were conducted on a sample of arterial roads (ART) and limited access highways (LAH) by trained Data Collectors and the data collection protocol remained the same as last year. All data were collected on Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) with a newly developed data collection program. Independent traffic counts were also recorded to help calibrate the estimates. Additional data items were collected, which included:

- Type of CMV: e.g., straight van, articulated single tanker, hazmat carrier, commercial bus, etc.
- Location: urban, suburban, or rural
- Weather conditions: clear, light precipitation, or light fog
- Speed of observed vehicle: 30 miles per hour (mph) or less, 31-50 mph, or over 50 mph
- Drivers' and other occupants' characteristics: race, gender, approximate age
- Driver use of cell phones and other handheld electronic devices
- Time of day

Precise schedules dictated that sites be visited between 7:00 AM and 6:30 PM on weekdays and weekend days as was done in prior years. Half of the morning weekday sites were scheduled at 7:00 AM and half at 8:00 AM so as to accumulate more rush-hour observations.

The target population of the survey can be viewed as a 'snapshot' of all medium and heavy duty CMVs on the road at a particular point in time. This report describes the overall design of the study, the methods used to collect the data, and the estimation and tabulation processes. Highlights from the analyses are contained in the body of the report. Tables of the results of the study have been reported to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration under a separate cover.

To obtain a copy of the full report, Seat Belt Usage by Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers (SBUCMVD) 2009, contact Martha Threat, CMV Safety Belt Program Manager at (202) 366-0627 or email Martha.Threatt@dot.gov