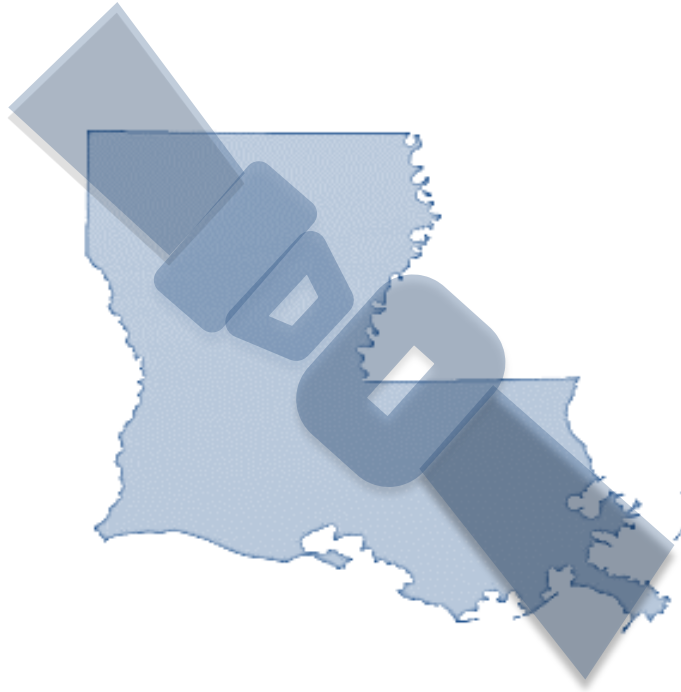

2025 LOUISIANA SEAT BELT OBSERVATION SURVEY RESULTS
LHSC Project No. 2026-20-10



February 2026

Prepared for:

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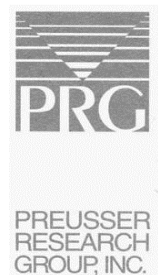
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This report documents Louisiana's annual Statewide Seat Belt Use Survey. The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC) is responsible for the State of Louisiana's Highway Safety Program. Occupant protection is among several significant program areas for which LHSC is responsible. A portion of LHSC's occupant protection program funding comes from the Federal Government, which requires administration of a statewide survey of seat belt use that must adhere to Federal Register Guidelines (Schneider, 2022).

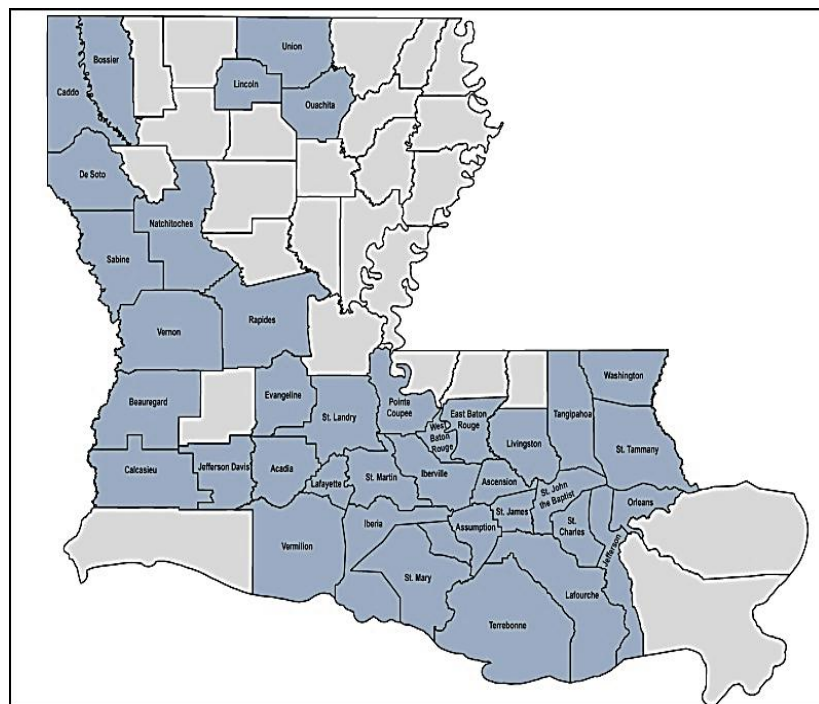
The report that follows provides results from the 2025 statewide observational survey. The survey followed National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) procedures that determine the outboard, front-seat occupant belt use rate. Rear-seat belt usage was measured as well. Preusser Research Group, Inc. (PRG) conducted the survey with the support and help of scientist and statistician, Helmut Schneider, Ph.D., of Louisiana State University.

Methodology

NHTSA requires that statewide surveys are updated every five years to include newly sampled survey sites based on the most recent traffic fatality counts. Dr. Schneider complied with NHTSA's requirements and, in 2022, selected 285 sites across 39 parishes. These sites were first used for the 2022 statewide survey and will remain functional in all statewide surveys up to, and including, the 2026 survey. The sites randomly represent all the traffic on various types of roadways around the state.

Observations were randomly scheduled for all days of the week during daylight hours, between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. One-hour observations took place at each site. PRG observers recorded information on vehicle type, driver sex, driver race, and driver seat belt use. Observers also recorded information on passenger sex, race, and belt use when an outboard passenger was present in the front-seat of the vehicle. The survey effort took place late December of 2025.

Parishes Included in Statewide Seat Belt Survey

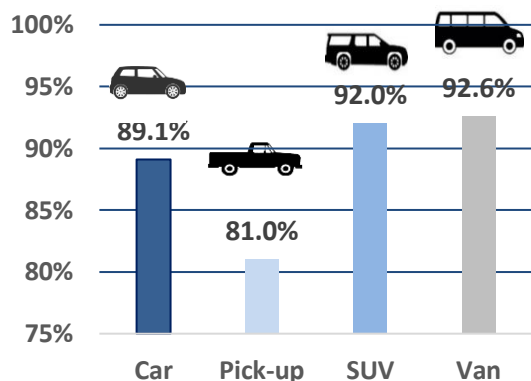


2025 Results and Key Findings

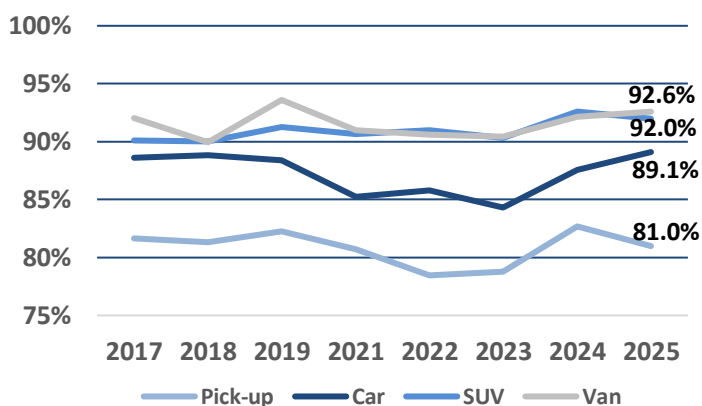
The 2025 Louisiana Statewide Seat Belt Observation Survey estimates that 88.4% of front-seat occupants were properly restrained. This rate is virtually unchanged from 2024, with both years representing the highest rates recorded in the state to date. This survey, conducted in December 2025 and compliant with National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) guidelines, provides a reliable benchmark for evaluating occupant protection efforts statewide with a standard error of only 0.4%. Four major disparities remain: vehicle type, gender, race and regional.

The "Pickup Truck" Effect: Occupants in pickup trucks remain the least likely to wear seat belts at **81.0%**, a slight decrease from 82.7% in 2024. A lower representation in the sample this year helped counterbalance the decline in usage, meaning the drop in pickup truck belt use had a smaller impact on the 2025 statewide average than it would have otherwise.

2025 Seat Belt Use Rate by Vehicle Type

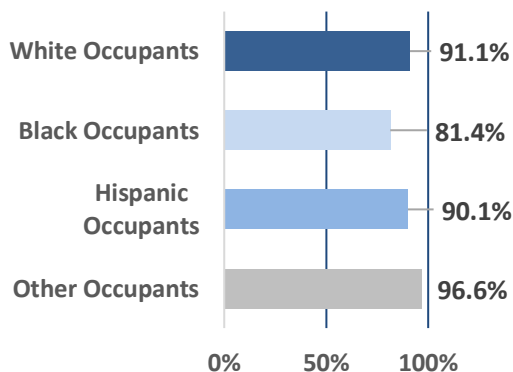


Seat Belt Usage by Vehicle Type: 2017-2025

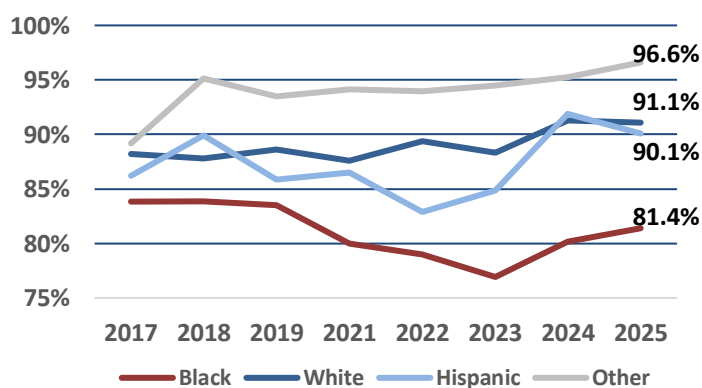


Demographic Gaps: Usage among Black occupants rose by 1.2 percentage points to **81.4%**, marking the second increase in subsequent years. Despite this progress, a significant **9.7 percentage point gap** persists between Black and White occupants. Furthermore, the proportion of Black occupants within the total survey sample increased by **1.7%** this year. Because this demographic still has a lower usage rate than the state average, their increased representation in the sample acted as a mathematical "drag," effectively neutralizing the gains made in their individual usage and limiting the upward movement of the 2025 statewide average.

2025 Seat Belt Use Rate by Race/Ethnicity



Seat Belt Usage by Race/Ethnicity: 2017-2025



Occupant Sex: The gap between male and female usage widened in 2025. Female usage remains high at 92.6%, while male usage lags at 84.6%, creating an **8.0** percentage point disparity in 2025 compared to 6.9 percentage points in 2024.

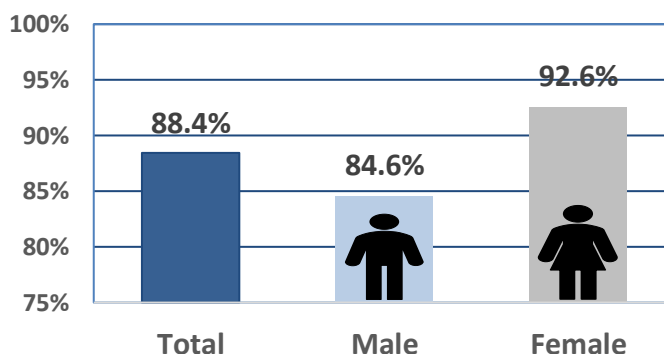
Regional Performance: Seat belt use varied sharply by geography, ranging from a high of 95.3% in the Shreveport region to a low of 78.9% in the Baton Rouge region. Baton Rouge remains the only area in the state with usage below 80%. Notable regional findings include:

Region 6 (Alexandria) experienced a statistically significant increase in overall seat belt use of 16.3 percentage points. Pickup truck occupant belt use in this region also rose significantly, increasing by 15 percentage points. In contrast, Regions 1 (New Orleans) and 2 (Baton Rouge) recorded the lowest pickup truck belt use rates in the state. However, the substantial increase observed in Region 6 should be interpreted with caution. Seat belt use in this region has fluctuated considerably in recent years, ranging from 83.5% in 2019 to 70.5% in 2024. Therefore, part of the 2025 increase may reflect normal sampling variation rather than a sustained behavioral shift.

Demographic disparities were most pronounced in the Baton Rouge and Lafayette regions. Region 2 (Baton Rouge) recorded the lowest seat belt use rate among Black occupants at 67.5%, followed by Region 4 (Lafayette) at 77.1%.

Trends: Louisiana's front-seat belt use rate for 2025 is 88.4%. The difference in rate was not statistically significant from the rate in 2024. Seat belt usage on Louisiana roadways, which had generally shown an upward trend of around one percentage point annually between 2010 and 2016, plateaued between 2016 and 2019, dropped in 2021 to 2023, increased again in 2024, and in 2025 remained at its highest level to date. The graph below shows that the seat belt use between 2010 and 2025 followed a typical learning curve which exhibits larger increases early on and smaller increases later. The 95% confidence interval for the current seat belt use rate is from 87.6% to 89.2%.

2025 Seat Belt Use Rate by Occupant Sex



Louisiana Seat Belt Weighted Use Rates, 2010-2025

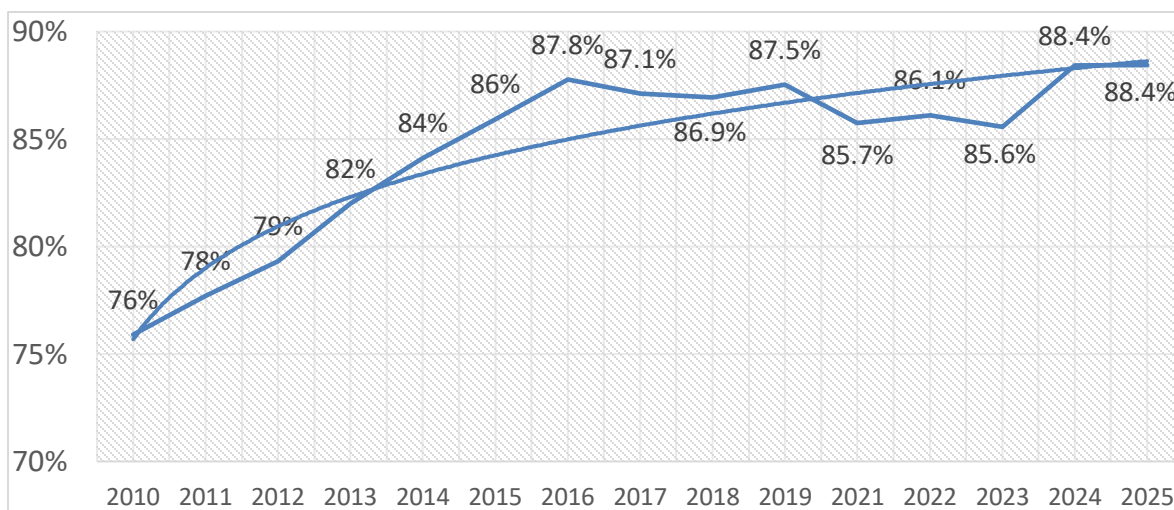


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BACKGROUND

Introduction

The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC) is responsible for the State of Louisiana's Highway Safety Program. Occupant protection is among several significant program areas for which LHSC is responsible. A portion of LHSC's occupant protection program funding comes from the Federal Government, which requires administration of a statewide survey of seat belt use that must adhere to Federal Register Guidelines (Schneider, 2022). This report documents Louisiana's 2025 Statewide Seat Belt Use Survey effort.

The statewide seat belt survey covered by this report was conducted by Preusser Research Group, Inc. (PRG), under contract with LHSC. All the survey work was completed throughout the month of December 2025. The results that follow provide an accurate and reliable estimate of outboard front-seat belt usage in the State of Louisiana in 2025, and results are directly comparable to previous surveys.

Seat Belt Law and Seat Belt Use

The Louisiana State Legislature passed the first seat belt law in 1985, and it went into effect July 1, 1986. That law was a secondary enforcement law, meaning law enforcement officers could not stop a vehicle solely for a seat belt violation. The law was changed to a primary enforcement law almost ten years later, in 1995, with the intention of allowing police to stop violators for the sole reason of not wearing a seat belt. However, in 1998, courts ruled that the wording of the bill did not allow violation of the law to be considered a primary offense. It was not until August 15, 1999, that a revised primary enforcement law became effective in Louisiana (McKenzie, III, 2011). The law was amended in 2008 to include rear-seat passengers. According to the current Louisiana seat belt law, if a person is being transported by a motor vehicle, no matter the seating position, a proper restraint should be used.

Seat belt use rates in Louisiana have fluctuated over the past couple of decades since the primary law was passed. From 1999 to 2002, statewide seat belt use rates increased very little from 67.0 to 68.6 percent. Louisiana first participated in the national *Click It or Ticket* campaign in 2003 and a 5-point increase in the statewide use rate (73.8%) was measured that year (Schneider, 2004). Statewide seat belt use rates increased over the next two years, peaking at 77.7 percent in June 2005. In 2006, the statewide measurement result decreased 2.9 percentage points to 74.8 percent (U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, July 2011). It should be noted that Louisiana sustained serious damage from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The property damage and displacement of many of the State's residents could have influenced seat belt use rates. By 2011 the use rates climbed back to the peak level seen in 2005. By 2016, the annual survey measured seat belt use at 87.8 percent (Preusser Research Group, Inc., 2016). The annual rate remained in the same statistical range until the 2019 measure. No survey was conducted in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The seat belt use dipped about two percentage points for three consecutive years 2021 to 2023 and increased in 2024 to an all-time high of 88.4%.

Statewide Survey Statistician

Dr. Helmut Schneider has developed all the seat belt survey designs approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to be used in the State of Louisiana, including the designs PRG, Inc. has used when conducting the annual statewide survey. Dr. Schneider is a professor at the E. J. Ourso College of Business, Associate Dean of Research and Economic Development, and an Ourso Family Distinguished Professor at Louisiana State University. Dr. Schneider received his degree in Operations Management and Statistics in 1978 and has taught statistics and statistical sampling for 33

years. He has published over 50 articles in peer reviewed journals and written two books. He has more than 20 years of experience in working with crash data and has analyzed Louisiana's statewide seat belt survey results since 2003 (McKenzie, III, 2011).

Preusser Research Group, Inc. (PRG) planned and implemented Louisiana's 2025 seat belt survey using Dr. Schneider's most recent resample from 2022 as a guide. Every five years, NHTSA requires that statewide surveys include newly sampled survey sites based on the most recent traffic fatality counts. Dr. Schneider complied with NHTSA's requirements and PRG carried out the survey effort. The 2022 resample and the survey effort in 2025 are compliant with NHTSA's Uniform Criteria for State Observational Surveys of Seat Belt Use.¹

¹National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2011) Uniform Criteria for State Observational Surveys of Seat Belt Use. 23 CFR Part 1340, Docket No. NHTSA-2010-0002, RIN 2127-AK41, Federal Register Vol. 76 No. 63, April 1, 2011, Rules and Regulations, pp. 18042 – 18059.

METHODOLOGY

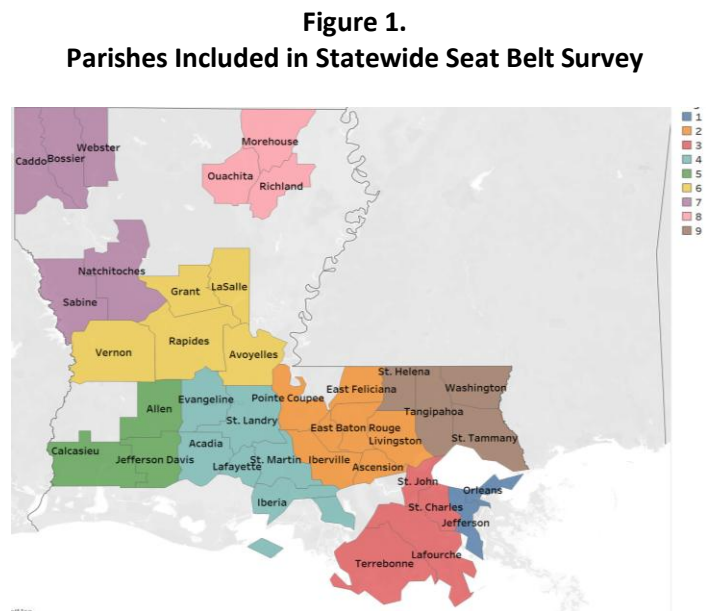
Survey Design and Site Selection

Louisiana's 2025 Statewide Seat Belt Survey was the fourth survey iteration using observation site locations resampled in 2022. This resample was in response to a NHTSA requirement that new sites be selected every five years. As such, every survey from 2022 through 2026 will use this set of sites.

The current survey design was developed by Dr. Helmut Schneider in 2022. The previous 2012 design included 390 observation sites. The number of observation sites dropped to 336 in 2013, and that change was accepted by NHTSA, as it proved to be both efficient and reliable. The 2017 resample used updated vehicle miles traveled (VMT), numbers of fatalities, and road inventory to determine the number and location of observation sites. The 2022 design does not use VMT, but rather a stratified sample of 3 road segments from each road class available from the 39 parishes included in the sample. The resample includes 285 sites, 51 fewer than the 2017 sample, but still reliable. The current sample of observation sites was approved for use by NHTSA in the spring of 2022.

Dr. Schneider used crash-related fatality data from 2016-2019 to select the parishes included in the 2022 resample. According to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), 38 of 64 parishes account for 85% of crash-related fatalities in Louisiana. However, one parish was added in Region 8 for a total of 39 parishes included in the survey design to have a minimum of three parishes in lower populated regions, i.e., Morehouse Parish was added in Region 8.

The 2022 design divided the sampling frame into eight statewide regions, the parishes within these regions, and highway types. In 2025 a ninth region was added on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain across from New Orleans. This area has grown in population over the years and thus was added as a planning region comprised of four parishes, one (St. Tammany) from Region 1 and three (Washington, St. Helena and Tangipahoa) from Region 2 (see Figure 1).



Dr. Schneider used a 2019 TIGER file provided by NHTSA. The selected road segments were classified into three types: Interstates, US and State routes, and Local roads. A site number reflecting the region, parish, and highway type was assigned to each road segment. Rural roads were excluded from the sample in parishes that were not within Metropolitan Statistical Areas - as well as other non-public roads, unnamed roads, unpaved roads, vehicular trails, access ramps, cul-de-sacs, traffic circles, and service drives. A stratified probability sampling in regions, parishes, and road segments was used to determine site locations for Interstates and US and State routes. The stratification consists of 95 different strata, and each stratum is identified by one of the 39 parishes included in the sampling frame and one of 3 road types (Limited Access Highways, Arterials and Local Roads). However, some parishes will not have all road types included (or available for use) because they either may not have limited access highways, or their rural roads are excluded as mentioned above.

PRG used specific road segment information provided by Dr. Schneider to pinpoint observation site locations in 2017, and this was done again in 2022 for the newly selected sites (Schneider, 2022). The 2025 survey used the same sites as the 2024 survey: 278 primary sites from the 2022 design and 7 alternate sites from the 2022 design submitted and approved by NHTSA. Trained observers revisited the exact observation locations (i.e., where data collectors stood to observe vehicles) from the previous site visits. Observers created site maps in 2022 upon the completion of each observation to ensure replication of exact observation locations from year to year.

Scheduling

Observation sites were organized into clusters of four to six sites based on geographical proximity. Each cluster was randomly assigned a single day of week for observation. The first site to be surveyed in each cluster was also randomly assigned. A time efficient route, starting with the randomly selected first site, was developed to determine the order of the remaining sites in the cluster. Observers were given a schedule and a mapped-out route for each cluster. The schedule specified site order, day of week to conduct observations, start times, name of road segment, location to observe, and direction of traffic to observe for each site.

Observations were prescheduled for all days of the week during daylight hours between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Observers were provided with a time frame to use as a guide to schedule sites throughout the day. Depending on the number of sites in a cluster, the time from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. was divided into nearly equal-length time periods. For example, for five-site days, time of day was specified as one-of-five, time periods, such as 7:00 – 9:00 a.m., 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., and 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Also, for six-site days, time of day was specified as one-of-six, time periods, such as 7:00 – 8:45 a.m., 8:45 – 10:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., 12:15 – 2:30 p.m., 2:30 – 4:15 p.m., and 4:15 – 6:00 p.m. Exact times were subject to adjustment but resulted in approximately an equal number of sites being observed throughout the individual 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. time frames. In all cases, each survey period lasted exactly one hour and was required to take place entirely within the broader allowable time period.

Observers

Observers were hired and trained exclusively by PRG. All had conducted seat belt observations for PRG in previous surveys, and all were trained to the specific requirements for the Louisiana survey, though most observers remained consistent from preceding years. Prior to any data collection, procedures specific to the Louisiana survey were explained to observers in a training session. Observers also participated in hours of supervised street-side practice prior to conducting observations in the field. Additionally, observers were trained on procedures to follow in conditions such as bad weather or temporary traffic impediments which may require rescheduling of sites. This year, seven observers operated individually, and one quality control monitor was utilized.

Data collectors created new Site Map forms, documenting details of each new site location upon initial arrival (see Appendix A). Site maps include information about where to stand to make observations, the direction of traffic flow to observe, a point of reference, and any prominent landmarks (names of intersecting roadways, traffic lights, nearby buildings, etc.). Site maps ensure the survey and its data can be accurately reproduced year to year.

Observation Site Details

Most locations for data observation were tentatively selected based on available on-line mapping information such as satellite images and ground-level photos. When convenient, potential site locations were visited in advance. The complete road segments were also described by map details such as road name or number and segment length.

Preference was given to observation points where traffic appeared to naturally slow or stop. For street locations, representing segments with generally equivalent traffic throughout, a suitable observation point closest to the latitude and longitude mapped pinpoint was sought, but any location along the segment where accurate observations could be made was accepted. Preferred locations were near intersections which may cause vehicles to slow, increasing the time for observation and improving data completeness and accuracy. However, observation sites were not confined to intersections only. In some cases, traffic was observed at or near exit ramps for limited access highway segments at a point where traffic slowed enough to allow reliable and accurate observations.

Data Collection Procedures

Passenger vehicles with a gross vehicle weight up to 10,000 pounds were included in the survey. Passenger vehicle drivers, right front-seat passengers (excluding children in child safety seats), and rear-seat passengers 13 years of age and older were observed for seat belt use. Observers noted vehicle type (Car, Truck, SUV, Van), sex of drivers and passengers, race/ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic, "Other") of drivers and passengers, and belt use on the data collection form. A copy of the data collection form can be found in Appendix A.

Observers recorded pertinent site information on the data collection form including site number, exact roadway location, observer's initials, date, day of week, time, weather condition, and direction of traffic flow. Each one-page form included space to record information on 25 vehicles. For more vehicles, additional sheets were used and all sheets for the period were fastened together. If data could not be collected at a site due to a temporary problem such as bad weather, a traffic impediment, or sudden illness, observers were instructed to reschedule data collection at the same site for the same time of day and day of week, when possible. If the site could not be used due to a more permanent factor such as construction, a pre-selected alternate road segment was used.

Quality Control

PRG has extensive experience in training seat belt use observers. All observers received training that included both classroom instruction and field (roadside) practice. An additional trained observer also served as a Quality Control Monitor (QCM) and conducted random, unannounced check-ins to other trained observers in the field. The QCM conducted checks at approximately 5 percent of total sites and ensured that observers were in place and making observations during the scheduled observation period.

All observation data were reviewed when received and no anomalies were found, suggesting the data did not reflect anything other than proper on-site seat belt use observations. Some cues to the contrary would have included repeating patterns within the observation data, unusual proportions of vehicle type, driver or passenger sex, presence of passengers, seat belt use, excessive unknown seat belt use, or very high or low total numbers of observations. Some variation in these values is normal, of course. If any suspicious data patterns had been noted, PRG would have followed up to verify whether observations were done properly. Invalid data would have been replaced in such cases. Again, no problems were detected and thus, corrective actions were not necessary for this survey iteration.

Building a Data Set

Observation data were keypunched by PRG staff into Excel spreadsheets. PRG applied the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to run frequencies and correlations to identify any outliers or coding errors. A thorough check of the data indicated only minimal coding or key-punch errors, all of which were corrected pre-analysis. The data set was then forwarded to Dr. Schneider for analyses and the calculation of weighted rates and results.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Data collectors observed seat belt use at 285 sites across 39 parishes, divided into nine regions across the State. Table 1 allocates the site distribution by region. The nine regions represent the following areas: New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Houma, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Shreveport, Monroe and Northshore.

TABLE 1.
Number of Observation Sites by Region, 2025

Region	Sites per the Design	Sites Completed
1-New Orleans	18	18
2-Baton Rouge	57	57
3-Houma	36	36
4-Lafayette	48	48
5-Lake Charles	18	18
6-Alexandria	27	27
7-Shreveport	33	33
8-Monroe	21	21
9-Northshore	27	27
State Total	285	285

Seat belt use information was recorded for 30,004 front-seat occupants over the nine regions. None of the sites in the 2025 survey resulted in zero belt use observations, and number of occupants with unknown seat belt use was 94, or 0.31% of occupants observed. The distribution of occupants by region, including occupant type (driver or passenger), is shown on the next page (Table 2). The observed number of vehicles decreased from 26,214 in 2024, to 24,803 in 2025 or 5.4%. Table 3 presents the distribution of observed passenger vehicle types by region.

The relative distribution of vehicle type changed slightly from 2024 to 2025. While there was a higher percentage of cars (+0.8 percentage points) and SUVs (+0.4 percentage points) there was a lower percentage of light trucks (-1.0 percentage points) and a lower percentage of vans (-0.2 percentage points) in the 2025 sample compared to 2024. It should be noted that the percentage of front-seat occupants in pickup trucks was 0.9 percentage points lower than in 2024.

TABLE 2.
Number of Louisiana Front-Seat Occupants* Recorded by Region, 2025

Region	Drivers	Passengers	Total
1-New Orleans	2,871	487	3,358
2-Baton Rouge	4,644	1,085	5,729
3-Houma	4,611	720	5,331
4-Lafayette	3,961	964	4,925
5-Lake Charles	836	167	1,003
6-Alexandria	1,418	343	1,761
7-Shreveport	2,507	566	3,073
8-Monroe	1,913	382	2,295
9-Northshore	2,042	487	2,529
LA Total	24,803	5,201	30,004

**Does not include cases with unknown belt usage information.*

TABLE 3.
Distribution of Vehicle Type* by Region, 2025

Region	% Car	% Pickup	% SUV	% Van
1-New Orleans	28.0%	19.6%	46.6%	5.8%
2-Baton Rouge	29.2%	27.9%	39.4%	3.5%
3-Houma	29.8%	27.5%	38.3%	4.4%
4-Lafayette	27.4%	29.2%	39.8%	3.6%
5-Lake Charles	27.0%	33.5%	34.9%	4.5%
6-Alexandria	29.9%	38.0%	28.6%	3.5%
7-Shreveport	46.2%	36.5%	13.1%	4.2%
8-Monroe	37.3%	31.3%	27.7%	3.7%
9-Northshore	40.6%	26.9%	28.5%	4.0%
LA Total	32.1%	28.9%	34.9%	4.1%

**Unknown vehicle type not included*

Observers recorded occupant sex and race/ethnicity. Tables 4 and 5 display these characteristics by region for all front-seat occupants. If a characteristic was unclear to the observer, “unknown” was recorded on the data form. There was a slightly lower percentage of males in the 2025 sample compared to the 2024 sample (-0.3 percentage points).

TABLE 4.
Distribution of Occupant Sex by Region, 2025

Region	% Males	% Females	% Unknown
1-New Orleans	57.4%	42.6%	0.00%
2-Baton Rouge	51.2%	48.8%	0.02%
3-Houma	53.9%	46.1%	0.00%
4-Lafayette	52.6%	47.4%	0.00%
5-Lake Charles	57.0%	43.0%	0.00%
6-Alexandria	54.2%	45.8%	0.00%
7-Shreveport	55.9%	44.1%	0.00%
8-Monroe	52.9%	47.1%	0.04%
9-Northshore	52.7%	47.3%	0.00%
LA Total	53.7%	46.3%	0.01%

Regarding race/ethnicity, the 2025 sample included a lower percentage of white occupants (-0.7 percentage points), a higher proportion of black occupants (+1.7 percentage points), and a lower proportion of Hispanic occupants (-1.0 percentage points) compared to 2024.

TABLE 5.
Distribution of Occupant Race/Ethnicity by Region, 2025

Region	% White Occupants	% Black Occupants	% Hispanic Occupants	% Other Occupants	% Unknown
1-New Orleans	53.8%	39.1%	5.2%	2.0%	0.00%
2-Baton Rouge	61.6%	33.8%	1.9%	2.7%	0.00%
3-Houma	61.7%	28.2%	8.3%	1.8%	0.00%
4-Lafayette	72.7%	24.3%	2.0%	1.0%	0.02%
5-Lake Charles	72.4%	20.2%	2.2%	5.2%	0.00%
6-Alexandria	75.5%	20.8%	2.9%	0.7%	0.06%
7-Shreveport	69.3%	27.1%	2.3%	1.2%	0.03%
8-Monroe	70.0%	26.0%	2.8%	1.0%	0.09%
9-Northshore	72.5%	25.1%	1.6%	0.8%	0.00%
LA Total	66.1%	28.6%	3.6%	1.7%	0.02%

Occupant Seat Belt Use Estimates and Descriptive Results - Based on Weighted Calculations

The 2025 Louisiana seat belt use rate, for drivers and front-seat passengers combined, is **88.44%** with a standard error of 0.4%. The 2025 weighted estimate is only 0.02 percentage points higher than the 2024 estimate of 88.42%. The observed increase is not statistically significant ($p = 0.05$) and therefore the seat belt use rate in 2025 was essentially the same as in 2024. Table 6 shows use rate estimates by region with respective standard sampling error. Usage varied from a low of 78.9% in the Baton Rouge region to a high of 95.3% in the Shreveport region. These estimates and the descriptive rates for front-seat occupants that follow are based on weighted results. Two regions (3-Houma and 6-Alexandria) had a statistically significant increase in usage rates (at $p = 0.05$) of 3.3 and 16.3 percentage points, respectively. No other region had a statistically significant change (at $p = 0.05$) in usage from 2024 to 2025. Because of multiple testing, the Bonferroni Correction was used to adjust the actual p value used.

TABLE 6.
Front-Seat Occupant Seat Belt Use Estimates by Region, 2025

Region	Estimate	STD Error	Percentage Point Diff 2024-2025
1-New Orleans	88.9%	1.0%	-2.3
2-Baton Rouge	78.9%	1.3%	-3.9
3-Houma	89.3%	0.7%	3.3*
4-Lafayette	86.3%	1.0%	1.1
5-Lake Charles	93.0%	1.8%	-2.8
6-Alexandria	86.8%	1.3%	16.3*
7-Shreveport	95.3%	0.8%	1.1
8-Monroe	87.4%	1.3%	-1.0
9-Northshore	93.6%	1.2%	-0.8
LA total	88.4%	0.4%	0.0

**Statistically significant at $p=0.05$ using Bonferroni Correction.*

Table 7 examines overall occupant belt use weighted by roadway type and shows that usage continues to be highest on Interstates (89.2%). This was 2.7 percentage points lower than in 2024. US and state routes had a belt use rate of 88.0%, 2.2 percentage points higher than in 2024. Belt usage on Local roadways, usually found within neighborhoods, was 88.7% in 2025, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points from 2024. Differences for Interstates and US & State routes are statistically significant (at $p = 0.05$).

TABLE 7.
Louisiana Front-Seat Occupant Belt Use Estimates by Road Type, 2025

Road Type	Estimate	STD Error	Percentage Point Diff 2024-2025
Interstate	89.2%	0.4%	-2.7*
US & State	88.0%	0.3%	2.2*
Local Road	88.7%	0.7%	-0.8

**Statistically significant at $p=0.05$ using the Bonferroni Correction.*

Louisiana has traditionally examined seat belt use rates by the nine Louisiana State Police Troop area designations which align with the 9 regions. However, the regions and troops cover slightly different parishes. For instance, region 3 includes two parishes from Troop B (St. Charles & St. John) and two parishes from Troop C (Lafourche & Terrebonne) and region 7 includes three parishes from Troop G (Bossier, Caddo and Webster) and 2 parishes from Troop E (Natchitoches and Sabine). Table 8 shows use rates per Troop area, along with the standard error. Use rate estimates by Troop area ranged from 78.9% in Troop A to 95.9% in Troop G. Compared to 2024, Troops C and E had statistically significant ($p = 0.006$ using Bonferroni Correction) increases in belt use of between 4.3 and 11.0 percentage points, respectively. No other troop had a statistically significant ($p = 0.05$) change from 2024 to 2025.

TABLE 8.
Louisiana Front-Seat Occupant Belt Use Estimates by Troop Area, 2025

Troop	Estimate	STD Error	Percentage Point Diff 2024-2025
A-Baton Rouge	78.9%	1.3%	-3.9
B-New Orleans	88.2%	0.9%	-1.8
C-Houma	92.1%	0.8%	4.3*
D-Calcasieu	93.0%	1.8%	-2.8
E-Natchitoches	87.7%	1.1%	11.0*
F-Monroe	87.4%	1.3%	-1.0
G-Shreveport	95.9%	0.9%	1.5
I-Lafayette	86.3%	1.0%	1.1
L-Hammond	93.6%	1.2%	-0.8

**Statistically significant at $p = 0.05$, using Bonferroni Correction*

Table 9 (on the following page) presents estimates for all front-seat occupants by parish for the 2025 survey and the weighted average of the most recent three surveys using the revised 2022 design, namely 2023, 2024 and 2025. The rows are grouped by region. While the parish use rates should be interpreted with caution because the overall survey design was not intended to provide single parish belt use rates, but rather one single, statewide use rate and thus there is a larger variance and standard error with respect to occupant usage at the parish levels due to the lower sample sizes, still, the percent seat belt use by Parish with the color schema from green (high seat belt use) to red (low seat belt use) allows some insights. First, comparing the 2025 result with the average allows to identify parishes that have consistently low or high belt use and parishes that had a decline or increase in belt use compared to its 3-year average. For instance, the Parishes in Region 6 (Avoyelles, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, and Vernon) all had an increase in average belt use rates in 2025 compared to the 3-year average). Parishes with a “*” are parishes that were added in the 2022 design.

Second, the grouping by region shows that there can be large differences between parishes in the same region. An example can be found in Region 2, where seat belt use rates over the past three years ranged from 74.3% in Iberville Parish to 86.1% in West Baton Rouge Parish.

TABLE 9.
Louisiana Front-Seat Occupant Seat Belt Use Estimates by Parish, 2025 and 3-Year Average

Parish	2025	3-Year Average
Jefferson	92.0%	92.0%
Orleans	86.3%	87.6%
Ascension	78.6%	81.5%
East Baton Rouge	78.0%	80.2%
East Feliciana*	77.7%	75.8%
Iberville	76.3%	74.3%
Livingston	82.8%	83.5%
Pointe Coupee*	80.2%	79.5%
West Baton Rouge	80.6%	86.1%
Lafourche	91.2%	88.3%
St. Charles	88.5%	87.0%
St. John	80.4%	81.6%
Terrebonne	92.8%	90.9%
Acadia	81.4%	81.7%
Evangeline	80.7%	83.9%
Iberia	87.4%	87.1%
Lafayette	89.1%	90.3%
St. Landry	82.4%	77.6%
St. Martin	82.0%	80.5%
Allen*	86.5%	89.6%
Calcasieu	93.8%	94.0%
Jefferson Davis	98.6%	90.2%
Avoyelles*	83.6%	70.4%
Grant*	89.1%	78.3%
LaSalle*	83.3%	77.4%
Rapides	85.6%	76.7%
Vernon	93.6%	94.6%
Bossier	92.5%	91.5%
Caddo	96.7%	91.7%
Natchitoches	89.5%	85.4%
Sabine	92.9%	92.8%
Webster*	87.4%	86.4%
Morehouse	83.0%	77.3%
Ouachita	87.5%	85.7%
Richland*	88.3%	86.0%
St. Tammany	90.5%	83.6%
St. Helena*	93.8%	91.9%
Tangipahoa	94.2%	91.2%
Washington	81.1%	81.8%

The 2025 survey also captured occupant gender and race/ethnicity characteristics along with vehicle type. Table 10 provides both driver and passenger use rate estimates for these occupant types. The table shows that male occupant belt usage continues to lag female occupant usage (84.6% vs. 92.6%) and male drivers were less likely to be belted compared to male passengers (84.5% vs. 85.6%). The percentage point range in Table 10 indicates the wide range of belt use due to gender, race, and vehicle type. The gap in belt use between male and female widened slightly from 6.9 percentage points in 2024 to 8.0 percentage points in 2025, and the gap between White and Black occupants narrowed from 11.1 percentage points in 2024 to 9.7 percentage points in 2025.

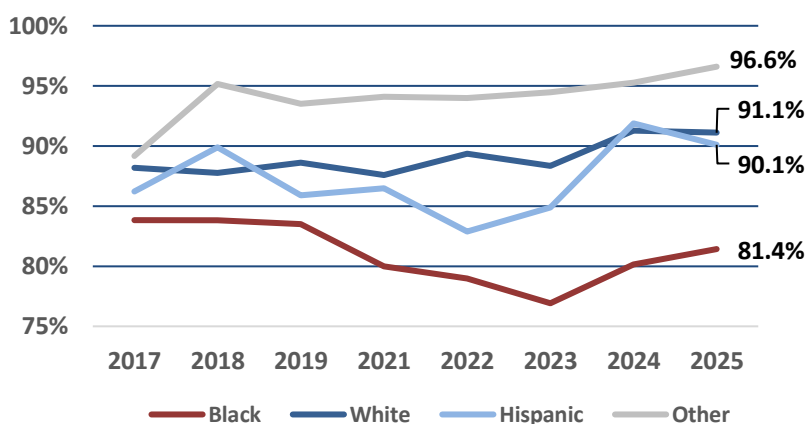
TABLE 10.
Louisiana Front-Seat Belt Use Estimates by Sex, Race, and Vehicle Type, 2025

	% Use Rate					
	Driver		Passenger		All Front-Seat	
	Estimate	STD Error	Estimate	STD Error	Estimate	STD Error
Occupant Sex						
Male	84.5%	0.7%	85.6%	1.6%	84.6%	0.6%
Female	92.3%	0.5%	93.4%	1.0%	92.6%	0.5%
Range	7.8%		7.8%		8.0%	
Occupant Race						
White	90.8%	0.5%	92.9%	0.9%	91.1%	0.5%
Black	81.3%	1.0%	82.2%	2.2%	81.4%	0.9%
Hispanic	89.0%	2.3%	93.6%	2.1%	90.1%	1.9%
Other	97.4%	1.0%	93.7%	4.7%	96.6%	1.3%
Range(W v. B)	9.5%		10.7%		9.7%	
Vehicle Type						
Car	89.0%	0.7%	89.8%	1.7%	89.1%	0.7%
Pick-up	80.8%	1.0%	82.6%	2.4%	81.0%	1.0%
SUV	91.6%	0.6%	93.9%	1.0%	92.0%	0.6%
Van	92.5%	1.5%	92.8%	3.2%	92.6%	1.7%
Range	11.7%		11.3%		11.6%	

Trends in Usage by Race and Vehicle Type

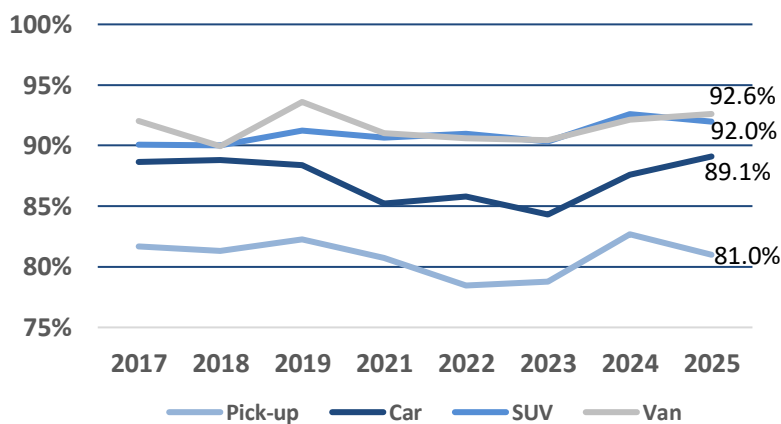
Usage among Black occupants measured lower compared to other races/ethnicities (81.4% for Black occupants vs. 91.1% for White occupants vs. 90.1% for Hispanic occupants). The group of “Other” occupants is too small a sample size to include in a comparison. Figure 2 shows the trend of belt use by race between 2017 and 2025. While there was little change in usage among Black occupants from 2017 to 2019, there was a sharp 3.5 percentage point drop in 2021, a further decline of 1.1 percentage points from 2021 to 2022 and yet another decline of 2.0 percentage points from 2022 to 2023. The 6.6 percentage point decline from 2019 to 2025 was statistically significant at $p=0.05$. In 2024, this decline started to reverse by an increase of 3.2 percentage points in 2024 and 1.2 percentage points in 2025.

FIGURE 2.
Seat Belt Usage by Race/Ethnicity: 2017-2025



Vehicle type also made a difference in belt usage. Occupants in pickup trucks used seat belts less often than occupants in other vehicle types. A sizeable portion of the sample includes occupants in pickups, thus dragging the overall statewide average downward. This has been the case every year of this survey (Figure 3). Belt use rates in 2025 by vehicle type were not statistically significant different from rates in 2024 for any of the four vehicle types at $p=0.05$.

FIGURE 3.
Seat Belt Usage by Vehicle Type: 2017-2025



A regional breakdown of occupant belt use by vehicle type (Table 11) shows a fairly consistent pattern of lower observed belt use among occupants in pickup trucks compared to the *average* of all other vehicle occupants with respect to region. Differences in usage rates between pickup trucks and the average of other vehicles range from 3.5 percentage points in the Lake Charles Region to 17.7 percentage points in the New Orleans Region. The average gap in belt use between pickup truck occupants and other vehicle occupants for Louisiana was 10.2 percentage points. However, as with previous tables, it is important to note the larger standard errors associated with occupant usage estimates at these levels—in some cases due to lower sample sizes and higher variances. As such, data breakdowns presented here should be carefully interpreted.

TABLE 11.
Louisiana Front-Seat Belt Use Estimates by Region and Vehicle Type, 2025

Region	CAR	STD Error	PICKUP	STD Error	SUV	STD Error	VAN	STD Error	AVG PP Diff PKUP
1-New Orleans	89.9%	1.9%	75.3%	3.8%	91.5%	1.2%	97.5%	0.9%	-17.7
2-Baton Rouge	78.1%	2.2%	73.0%	2.5%	83.5%	2.0%	77.0%	9.3%	-6.5
3-Houma	87.6%	1.3%	83.7%	1.6%	93.9%	0.9%	93.9%	2.5%	-8.1
4-Lafayette	83.2%	2.1%	81.1%	2.2%	91.7%	1.2%	91.5%	3.6%	-7.6
5-Lake Charles	94.3%	1.7%	89.9%	4.0%	96.3%	1.2%	89.5%	7.3%	-3.5
6-Alexandria	86.5%	2.6%	81.0%	2.5%	93.9%	1.4%	84.0%	7.1%	-7.1
7-Shreveport	96.9%	1.1%	92.1%	1.8%	96.3%	1.6%	93.3%	4.6%	-3.5
8-Monroe	90.0%	2.0%	79.0%	3.0%	91.9%	2.0%	96.4%	2.0%	-13.8
9-North Shore	92.1%	3.3%	85.1%	3.2%	97.6%	0.5%	97.5%	1.7%	-10.6
LA total	89.1%	0.7%	81.0%	1.0%	92.0%	0.6%	92.6%	1.7%	-10.2

**Differences of belt usage rate between pickup trucks and the average of all other vehicles*

Rear-Seat Belt Use

Louisiana began collecting rear-seat passenger data in response to Regular Session 2008, Senate Resolution No. 165 by Senator Walsworth.² A total of 254 rear-seat occupants were observed in the 2025 survey. Table 12 presents the distribution of rear-seat observations by vehicle type.

TABLE 12.
Number of Rear-Seat Observations by Vehicle Type, 2025

CAR	PICKUP	SUV	VAN	TOTAL
105	40	84	25	254

Unweighted estimates of belt use for rear-seat occupants, thirteen years of age or older, are presented in Table 13. The estimates presented display use rates by survey year and vehicle type. The use rate in 2025 is estimated to be 71.8%, which is 8.3 percentage points higher than the 63.6% in 2024, though not a statistically significant increase from 2024 ($p = 0.05$). However, it is the highest measured rear seat use rate to date.

² Senate Resolution No. 165 (2008) directed the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission to study the need for all occupants of a motor vehicle thirteen years of age and older to wear a safety belt. An amendment to Louisiana's seat belt law was made during the 2009 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature. The amendment expanded the State's primary seat belt law to include rear-seat occupants 13 years of age and older and went into effect August 15, 2009 (McKenzie, III, 2011). Prior to the law change, in 2008, rear-seat belt use among rear seat-passengers was estimated. The 2010 statewide survey was the first full-scale Louisiana statewide survey to cover both front and rear-seat passengers. Statewide surveys in 2011 and in 2013-2019 also include rear-seat occupants.

TABLE 13.
Louisiana Rear Passenger Seat Belt Use Rate, 2010-2011, 2013-2019 & 2021-2025

	CAR	PICKUP	SUV	VAN	TOTAL
2010	50.0%	47.8%	77.2%	90.7%	58.4%
2011	46.0%	40.3%	71.4%	93.6%	53.8%
2013	50.9%	47.0%	67.1%	62.3%	54.8%
2014	48.8%	42.4%	69.3%	77.4%	54.9%
2015	67.8%	55.1%	80.5%	79.2%	68.9%
2016	70.9%	45.8%	80.5%	84.1%	68.8%
2017	65.7%	50.0%	71.2%	77.8%	65.6%
2018	62.0%	57.6%	73.9%	89.5%	65.5%
2019	62.5%	62.2%	81.9%	76.8%	68.1%
2021	56.5%	51.0%	70.6%	71.6%	60.9%
2022	53.2%	52.4%	70.9%	50.0%	56.8%
2023	50.0%	48.2%	71.3%	73.3%	59.1%
2024	59.1%	56.1%	74.2%	71.4%	63.6%
2025	66.0%	65.2%	73.5%	89.6%	71.8%

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Statewide Seat Belt Survey indicates that Louisiana has maintained its highest recorded usage rate of **88.4%**, a figure statistically (and to the tenth decimal point) unchanged from 2024. While seat belt use in Louisiana has historically trended upward, averaging an increase of one percentage point per year between 2010 and 2015, the rate has recently reached a plateau (see Figure 4 on the following page). Based on the 95% confidence interval for 2025, the true usage rate is likely to fall between 87.6% and 89.2%. While this plateau suggests that safety habits have stabilized, significant demographic and vehicle-specific gaps remain that prevent the state from reaching the next milestone in occupant protection. For example, occupants in pickup trucks and Black occupants continue to exhibit usage rates significantly lower than the statewide average.

In 2025, the proportion of pickup trucks in the survey was one percentage point lower than in 2024. Because belt usage among pickup occupants declined by 1.7 percentage points (falling to 81.0%) this year, the lower volume of these vehicles acted as a counterbalance on the overall statewide average.

The usage rate for Black occupants was 81.4%, a 1.2 percentage point increase from 2024. While this represents the second increase in five years and a slight narrowing of the gap with White occupants (from 11.1 percentage points in 2024 to 9.7 in 2025), the disparity remains near historic highs. However, the proportion of Black occupants in the sample increased by 1.7 percentage points this year; because this group has a lower usage rate than the state average, this increase in representation also counterbalanced the 1.2 percentage point increase among Black occupants.

Geographic location remains a primary factor in belt use. The Shreveport region (95.3%) and Northshore region (93.6%) achieved the highest compliance in the state. Conversely, the Baton Rouge region (Troop A) remains a critical outlier with the state's lowest usage rate at 78.9%, followed by Lafayette at 86.3%. These findings suggest that future outreach and enforcement efforts should be specifically targeted toward these regions and demographic groups to move Louisiana beyond its current usage plateau.

Figure 4.
Louisiana Seat Belt Weighted Use Rates, 2010-2025

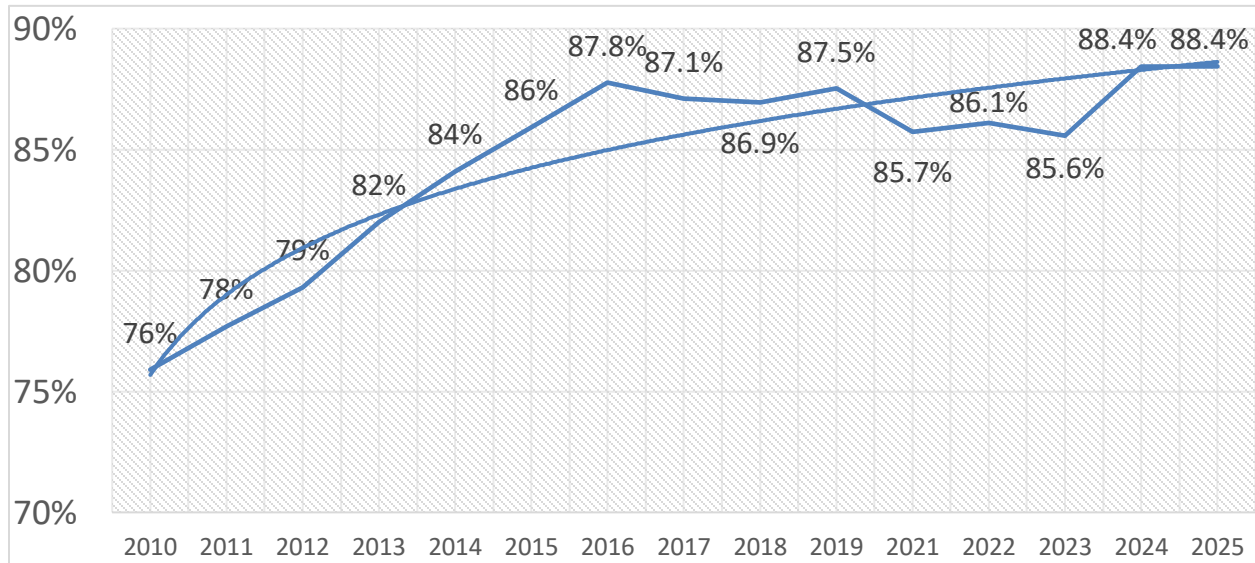
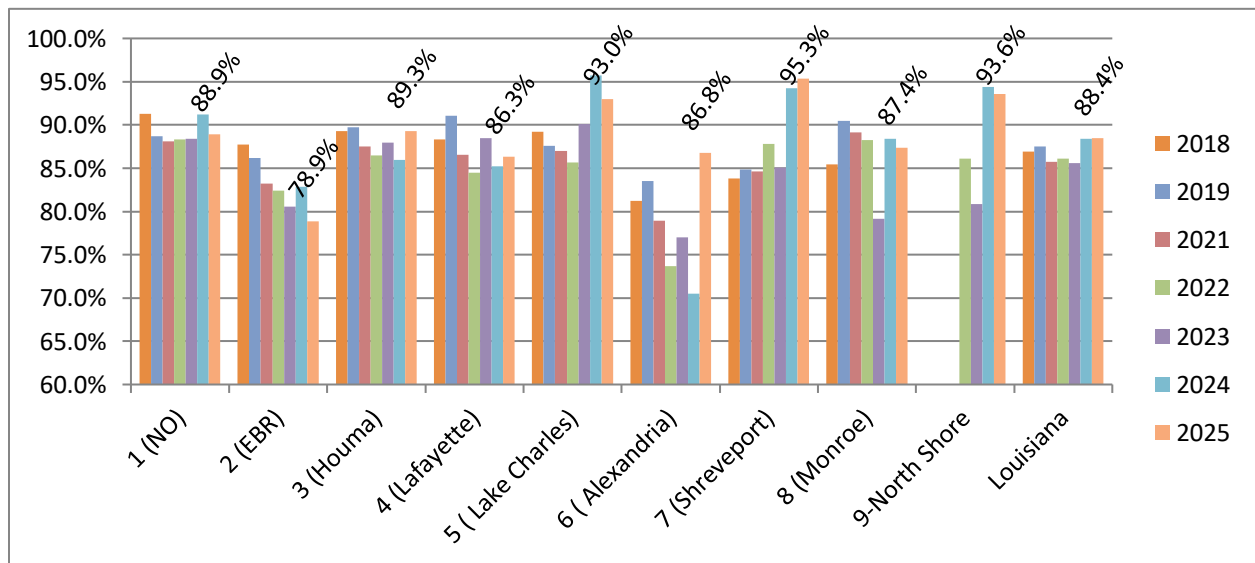


Figure 5, below, shows the trend in usage by region over the past 7 years. Numbers displayed are 2025 regional averages. While several regions in the State of Louisiana have seen usage improve considerably (Regions 5, 7, 9) or remain the same (Regions 1, 3, 4, 8) since 2018, Region 2 has seen a steady decline in seat belt use over the past couple of years and Region 6 has seen a considerable increase in seat belt usage in 2025.

Figure 5.
Louisiana Seat Belt Weighted Use Rates by Region, 2018-2025



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Appendix A

Copy of:

Seat Belt Use Observation Data Form

Seat Belt Use Observation Data Form

SITE NUMBER: _____ SITE: _____ OBSERVER INITIALS: _____

DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC FLOW: N S E W

CHECK ONE: _____ DAYTIME _____ NIGHTTIME

DATE: ____-____-____ DAY OF WEEK: _____

START TIME: _____ AM / PM (Observation period will last exactly 60 minutes)

WEATHER CONDITIONS

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Clear/Sunny | 4. Fog |
| 2. Light Rain | 5. Wet (Not Raining) |
| 3. Cloudy | |

VEHICLE		DRIVER		PASSENGER			REAR SEAT	
Veh. #	Veh. Type C=Car T=Truck S=SUV V=Van	Sex M=Male F=Female U=Unsure	Race W=White B=Black H=Hispanic O=Other U=Unsure	Belt Use + = Yes - = No U = Unsure	Sex M=Male F=Female U=Unsure	Race W=White B=Black H=Hispanic O=Other U=Unsure	Belt Use + = Yes - = No U = Unsure	Sex/Race/Use (13+ years old) Example: M W +
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
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24								
25								

Seat Belt Observation Data Form (back)

Location: _____
 (Street) (Cross Street or other landmark)

Site _____

Notes:

Diagram:

