



**CALIFORNIA OFFICE  
OF TRAFFIC SAFETY**

# 2013 Seat Belt Usage Report



PROVIDED TO THE CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY  
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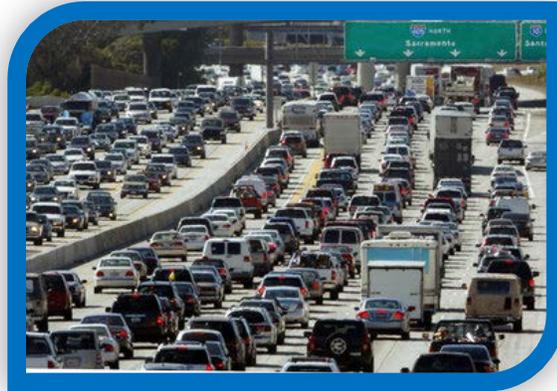
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## Executive Summary

2013 was the second year for a new method of collecting restraint usage data in California. A new technique that is fatality-based and includes all roads for sampling was developed as a result of changes made by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and implemented in 2012.

There were no causes for delays in data collection, which occurred in two waves: a spring (pre-Memorial Day) pretest and a summer (July-August) posttest. The data collection occurred in two waves to measure the effectiveness of the Memorial Day Click-It-Or-Ticket campaign. In total, data collection was conducted at 280 sites across California and serves as California's main usage survey for NHTSA.



In 2013, the combined usage rate was 97.36 percent, meaning that only 2.64 percent of drivers and front seat passengers were without safety restraints. The spring pretest rate was 97.67 percent and the summer posttest rate 97.03 percent. These numbers both represent the highest usage rates in the history of the California restraint usage surveys.

Since this is only the second year of measuring the usage rate in this manner, an analysis of longer-term trends is not directly possible. Comparing 2013 to 2012, however, shows a significant improvement moving from 95.49 percent to 97.36 percent. The conversion rate of unbelted people was 41.4 percent, meaning that over 41 percent of people who were not wearing seatbelts in 2012 were restrained in 2013.

The accompanying report provides a further detailed breakdown of restraint usage.

## Usage Rates by Road Type

This data shows the restraint usage rates by the type of road. More specifically, roads are sampled by three different federal classifications from a U.S. Census Bureau database. More specifically, roads are classified as “local”, “secondary”, or “primary.” There were differences between restraint usages based on the type of road during 2013.



For the first time, restraints were not used statistically less on local roads than they were on secondary and primary roads. This is an important finding as, traditionally, usage rate on local roads is normally significantly lower than the other two road types.

The finding that belt use on local roads has improved may suggest that the long-held perception among drivers in California that they do not need to buckle up as consistently when they are traveling shorter distances on more local roads has finally changed. People were equally diligent about restraining themselves when they were travelling on local roads as they were on primary and secondary roads.

### Combined Data – All Occupants

	Local	Secondary	Primary	All Roads
Usage Rates	97.46	96.81	97.79	97.36
Standard Error	.007	0.007	0.003	.006
Sample Sizes	6,192	19,776	14,729	40,697
95% Confidence Interval	96.15-98.78%	95.41-98.22%	97.11-98.48%	96.27-98.45%

## Usage Rates for Drivers

The usage rates shown here indicate that the traditional differences between usage rates on different types of roads were not found for drivers in 2013.

The change from 2012 is mostly accounted for by improved usage on local roads. In 2012, drivers were belted 94.69 percent of the time on local roads versus 97.25 percent in 2013. Usage rates on secondary roads (96.16 percent in 2012 versus 96.95 percent in 2013) and primary roads (98.32 percent in 2012 versus 97.78 percent in 2013) showed small variations, but not more than that expected by chance.



The finding that Californians increased their restraint usage on the “smaller” roads is particularly positive given that on a per mile driven basis, these roads are significantly more dangerous than primary roads and a large portion of traffic fatalities occur on local and secondary roads. As a result, Californians increased their usage on the very roads where driver protection is most important.

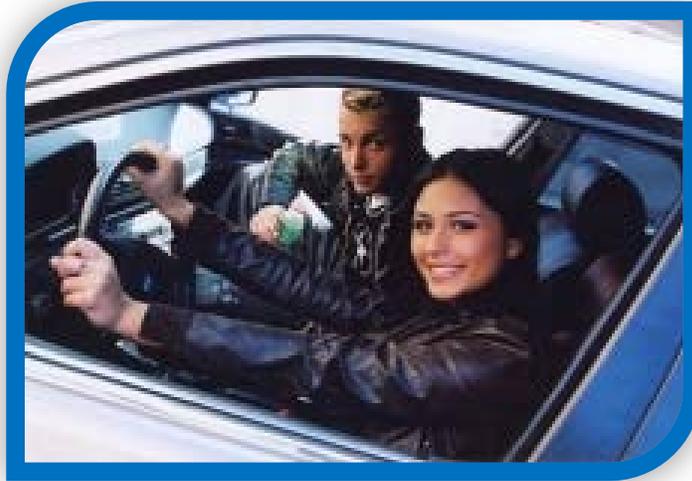
### Driver Only Data

	Local	Secondary	Primary	All Roads
Usage Rates	97.25	96.95	97.78	97.22
Standard Error	.006	0.007	0.003	.005
Sample Sizes	4,809	14,770	11,083	30,662
95% Confidence Interval	96.01-98.49%	95.65-98.25%	97.13-98.43%	96.21-98.24%

## Usage Rates for Passengers

This data shows the restraint usage rates for the front seat passengers of the vehicle. The rates for front seat passengers are estimated in the same way that the combined rates and the driver-only rates are estimated.

The results for passenger use directly duplicate the pattern for driver use. The usage rates for local roads improved in much the same way they did for drivers. More specifically, usage rates for passengers on local roads increased from 94.64 percent in 2012 to 98.20 percent in 2013.



Since the results for front seat passengers show the same pattern as they do for drivers, the safety

implications are also the same. Passengers in California increased belt usage in the situations where crashes and fatalities are more common.

### Passenger Only Data

	Local	Secondary	Primary	All Roads
Usage Rates	98.20	96.43	97.85	97.83
Standard Error	.008	0.010	0.005	.007
Sample Sizes	1,383	5,006	3,646	10,035
95% Confidence Interval	96.59-99.81%	94.47-98.40%	96.85-98.85%	96.42-99.25%

## Usage Rates by County

This table shows the combined (drivers and passengers) restraint usage rates in each of the fourteen counties included in the statewide survey.

These specific counties were selected to provide a representative sampling of California. Of the fourteen counties, eight were selected from more populous counties while the remaining six were selected from less populated counties. In addition, a representative balance of northern and southern California was used so that the survey was representative of the entire state and not a particular region of the state.



When examined by county, it is clear that the counties in Southern California improved their usage considerably from 2012 to 2013. In fact, Riverside and San Diego counties had the lowest usage rates in 2012 (89.03 percent and 92.45 percent) and in 2013 these two counties had the highest usage rates. Considering that usage rates were 95 percent or above in all but two counties (and those counties were 94.35 percent and 93.56 percent) suggests that seatbelt usage was relatively consistent across the state and that the rate was consistently high.

### COMBINED USAGE BY COUNTY

County	2013 Usage Rate	Observations
Riverside	99.81	2,691
San Diego	99.04	3,972
Monterey	97.90	3,126
Sacramento	97.53	3,421
El Dorado	97.18	3,055
Merced	96.87	1,883
Mendocino	96.77	3,159
Los Angeles	96.61	3,500
Sonoma	96.38	3,791
San Bernardino	96.37	2,729
Shasta	95.49	2,363
Alameda	95.00	2,813
Kern	94.35	2,335
Fresno	93.56	1,859
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>97.36%</b>	<b>40,697</b>