

Safety Belt Usage by Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers (SBUCMVD) 2010 Survey

Final Report
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Executive Summary

The Safety 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. Surveys were conducted in the past four years (2007 - 2010) and are based on a statistically valid research design that includes medium duty, class 7, and class 8 CMVs observed from roadsides. Data collection sites are chosen from a randomly selected sample of Primary Sampling Units (PSUs), which are a county or group of counties across the United States. In 2007, the SBUCMVD survey sample contained 22 PSUs; in 2008 the sample was increased to 28 PSUs; and in 2010 the sample was increased further to 34 PSUs.

The overall safety belt usage rate for drivers of all medium and heavy duty trucks and buses rose from 74 percent in 2009 to 78 percent in 2010. The usage rate for CMV other occupants also increased from 61 percent in 2009 to 64 percent in 2010. Safety belt usage among CMV drivers has steadily increased from 65 percent in 2007 to 72 percent in 2008 and 74 percent in 2009. This 2010 survey result represents a 20 percent increase in safety belt usage compared to 2007 survey results.

A total of 26,830 CMVs, 26,830 drivers, and 1,929 other occupants were observed at 998 sites. Safety belt use was observed to be higher in states governed by primary belt use laws (80 percent) than secondary belt use laws (72 percent). Safety belt usage among drivers and other occupants in units identified as part of a fleet (80 percent) was also observed to be higher than independent owner-operators (71 percent). These estimates show an increase from 2009. Observations on the use of safety belts were conducted on a sample of arterial roads and limited access highways by trained data collectors and the data collection protocol remained the same as last year. All data were collected on Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) utilizing a customized 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 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. on weekdays and weekend, as was done in prior years. Half of the morning weekday sites were scheduled at 7 a.m. and half at 8 a.m. 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, Safety Belt Usage by Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers (SBU CMVD) 2010, contact Brian Ronk at (202) 366-1072 or via email at Brian.Ronk@dot.gov.