

Seat Belts are for Everyone

(Even You in the Back)

National Advanced
Driving Simulator

Injury Prevention
Research Center

IOWA

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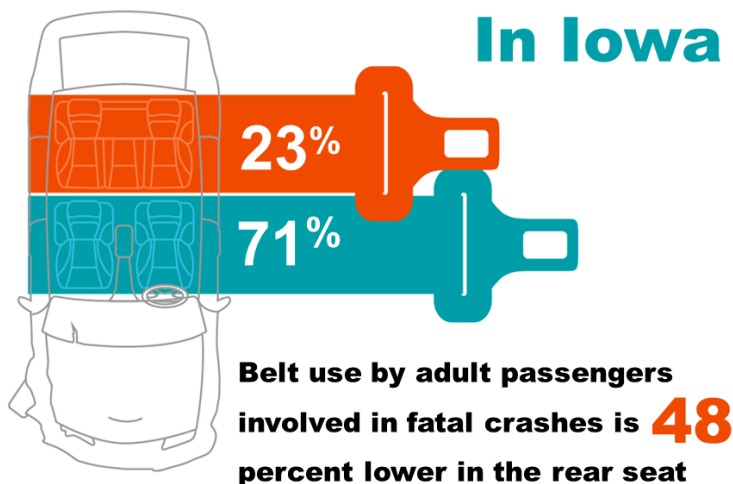
This brief summarizes research findings about seat belt use by adults when they ride in the back seats of vehicles. Crash data analyses, a public opinion survey, and a literature review were conducted by researchers from the University of Iowa's National Advanced Driving Simulator, Injury Prevention Research Center, and Public Policy Center.

SEAT BELT LAW IN IOWA

Since 1986 Iowa has required front seat occupants to use seat belts. However, the current state law does not require adults in back seats to use seat belts.

IOWANS USE SEAT BELTS IN THE FRONT SEAT

In 2020, the observed belt use rate for the front seat was 95% (Allen, et al., 2020). In a survey of 1,077 Iowans, 85% said they always use a seat belt in the front seat but only 35% said they always use a seat belt in the back seat (Reyes, et al., 2015).



Iowa crash data, 2013-2019, graphic design by GHSA

A SEAT BELT PROTECTS YOU FROM INJURY AND DEATH

In the back seat, seat belts reduce crash deaths by 60% in passenger cars and by 70% in light trucks (Zhu, et al., 2007).

The back seat is NOT safe without a seat belt. For adults, the back seat is not safer than the front seat (Bilston, et al., 2010; Mitchell, et al., 2015) so wearing a seat belt is crucial.

YOUR SEAT BELT ALSO PROTECTS EVERYONE ELSE IN THE VEHICLE

During a crash, unbelted occupants can collide with other occupants. For example, a belted driver is more than twice as likely to die from injuries when seated in front of an unbelted passenger during a head-on crash (Bose, et al., 2013; Mayrose, et al., 2005).

IOWANS SUPPORT AN ALL-PASSENGER SEAT BELT LAW

More than 60% of those surveyed agreed that Iowa's law should require everyone to use seat belts. Of the respondents who did not always use a seat belt in the back seat, 80% said they would use a belt more often if required by law (Reyes, et al., 2015).

In Iowa

Adults in the back seat injured in crashes are

6.2 TIMES

more likely to die from their injuries if they are NOT belted.

2 OUT OF 3

adults in the back seat injured in crashes are younger than age 40.

NEARLY 1,900

years of potential life* were lost for adults fatally injured in the back seat from 2016-2019.

*relative to age 80

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