



NORTHERN IRELAND SEAT BELT BULLETIN 2008

JULY 2008

Introduction

Survey data were collected at 15 sites throughout Northern Ireland. Of these sites, six were located on rural roads, six on urban roads and three on motorways. Fieldwork involved observing stationary traffic and recording details including gender, estimated age and whether a seat belt or child restraint was being used by car occupants. Recording took place between 08:30 and 17:00 on Tuesday 22nd and Saturday 26th April 2008. In total 16,487 cars were observed and details of 25,240 occupants recorded.

Key Points

Seat Belt Wearing Rates

In April 2008, 96% of drivers were recorded as wearing a seat belt. Front seat passengers (95%) were more likely to use a restraint than back seat passengers (91%). The overall wearing rate for all car occupants was 95%.

Trends in Seat Belt Wearing

Wearing rates overall have improved since 1994. Driver wearing rates have increased from 88% to 96%, while front seat passenger wearing rates have increased from 88% to 95%. Back seat passenger wearing rates have risen to 91% continuing a steady rise from 52% in 1994.

Back Seat Belt Wearing Rates

The overall seat belt wearing rate for back seat passengers (91%) disguises different wearing rates for adults (14 years and over) and children (13 years and under), with 83% of adults wearing a seat belt in the back, compared to 95% of children. This compares with April 2007, when 84% of adults and 93% of children wore a seatbelt in the back.

Back Seat Belt Wearing Rates by Age

Children under one year of age have the highest back seat restraint wearing rate (99%).

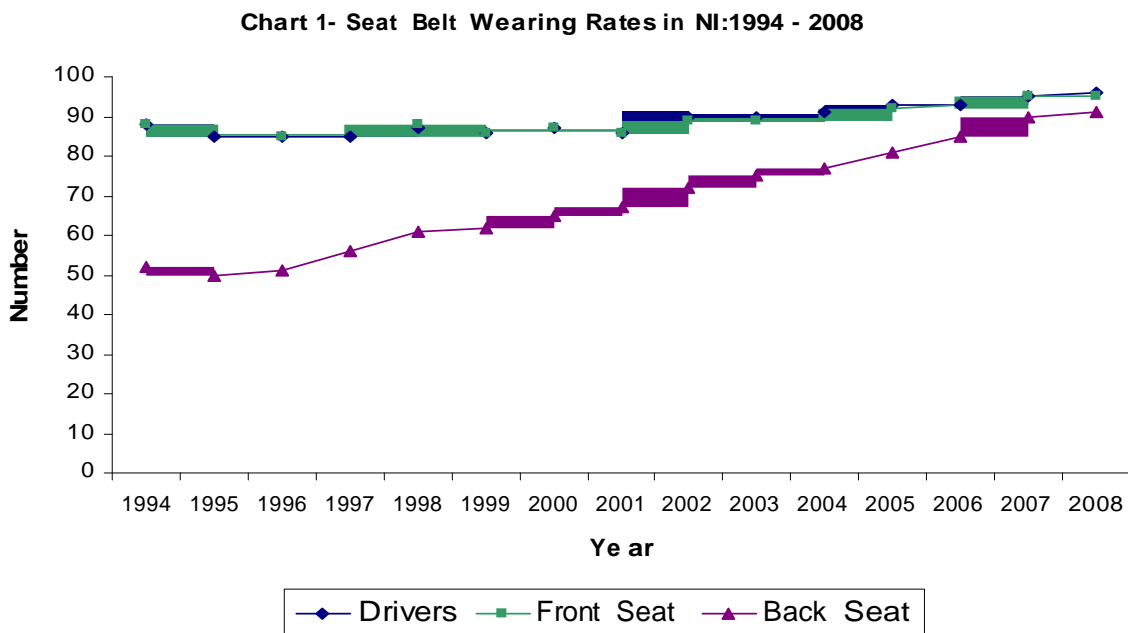
Influence of Driver upon Seat Belt Wearing Rates for Passengers

There was a marked difference in the seat belt wearing rate depending on whether the driver of the vehicle wore a seat belt or not. Ninety-six percent of front seat passengers wore a seat belt when the driver was wearing one, compared to 60% when the driver was not.

Seat Belt Wearing rate by Gender

The driver seat belt wearing rate was recorded as 98% for females and 95% for males. In the front seat 92% of males compared to 97% of females were restrained, while in the back seat 90% of males compared to 93% of females were restrained.

Seat Belt Wearing Rates



1. The seat belt wearing rate for drivers was 96% and for front seat passengers was 95%. This figure for drivers represents the highest rate recorded since the current series of Northern Ireland Seat Belt Surveys began in 1994. The wearing rate for back seat passengers was 91% in April 2008 which is the highest wearing rate recorded amongst back seat passengers since the series began. The wearing rate for back seat passengers has increased by 39 percentage points over the duration of the current series of surveys, from 52% in 1994 to the current high of 91% (See Table 1, Chart 1).

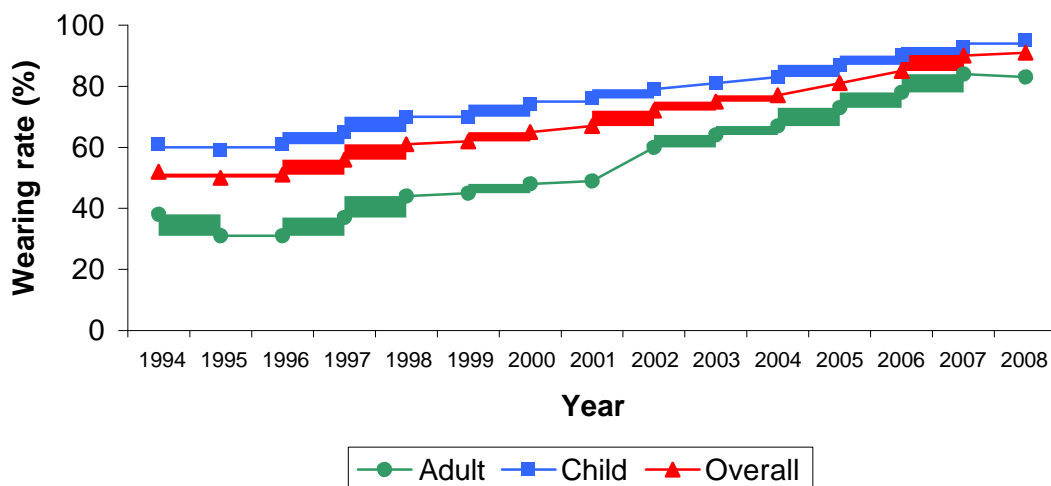
Table 1: Summary of Key Results from NI Seat Belt Surveys (1994 - 2008)

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Driver	88	85	85	85	87	86	87	86	90	90	91	93	93	95	96
Front Seat	88	86	85	86	88	86	87	86	89	89	90	92	93	95	95
Back Seat	52	50	51	56	61	62	65	67	72	75	77	81	85	90	91
Overall	82	80	80	81	84	83	84	84	88	88	89	91	93	95	95

Comparison of Back Seat Wearing Rates by Age

- The large increase in back seat wearing rates since 1994 disguises various patterns of behaviour by different age groups of back seat occupants. The overall rate of back seat wearing in April 2008 was recorded as 91%. Within this overall rate, the back seat wearing rate for adults (14 years and over) was 83%, compared to 95% for children (13 years and under) (See Table 2, Chart 2).
- Since 1994, the back seat belt wearing rate amongst children has been consistently higher than that for adults. There have, however, been substantial increases in both rates, with the adult wearing rate increasing by 45 percentage points, from 38% in 1994 to 83% in 2008 and the rate for children increasing from 61% in 1994 to 95% in 2008, a rise of 34 percentage points.

Chart 2 - Seat Belt Wearing Rates for Back Seat Passengers (Adults, Children and Overall): 1994-2008



- The difference in back seat belt wearing rates between adults and children was relatively constant between 1995 and 2001, with a difference of between 25 and 30 percentage points. However, the marked rise in the adult back seat wearing rates has contributed to a difference of only 12 percentage points in 2008 between adults and children.

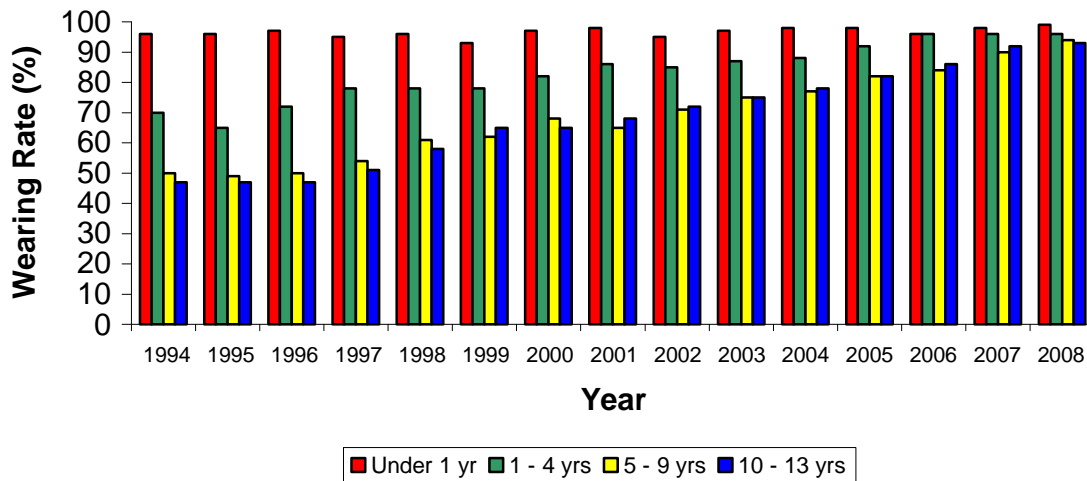
Table 2: Wearing Rate of Back Seat Passengers by Age (1994 - 2008)

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Under 1 year	96	96	97	95	96	93	97	98	95	97	98	98	96	98	99
1 - 4	70	65	72	78	78	78	82	86	85	87	88	92	96	96	96
5 - 9	50	49	50	54	61	62	68	65	71	75	77	82	84	90	94
10 - 13	47	47	47	51	58	65	65	68	72	75	78	82	86	92	93
All Children	61	59	61	65	70	70	74	76	79	81	83	86	90	93	95
14 - 29	35	28	27	34	40	38	46	46	59	60	64	68	75	83	82
30 - 59	37	31	29	38	41	49	49	49	56	66	68	77	78	83	83
60+	52	39	42	45	58	57	53	59	69	74	74	85	85	86	88
All Adults	38	31	31	37	44	45	48	49	60	64	67	73	78	84	83
All Ages	52	50	51	56	61	62	65	67	72	75	77	81	85	90	91

Back Seat Wearing Rates for Children

- Throughout the period 1994 to 2008, child back seat passengers aged under one year consistently had the highest rate of seat belt wearing among all back seat passengers. (See Chart 3, Table 2). When the series began in 1994, the wearing rate for back seat passengers aged between one and four years was 70%. Since then, the rate has increased to 96% in 2008.
- Back seat wearing rates for older children (5 - 9 years and 10 - 13 years) have increased from their 1994 rates of 50% and 47% respectively to 94% and 93%. This is the highest rate recorded for both age groups since the series began in 1994. However, 6% of those aged between 5 and 9 years were recorded as travelling unrestrained in the back seat.

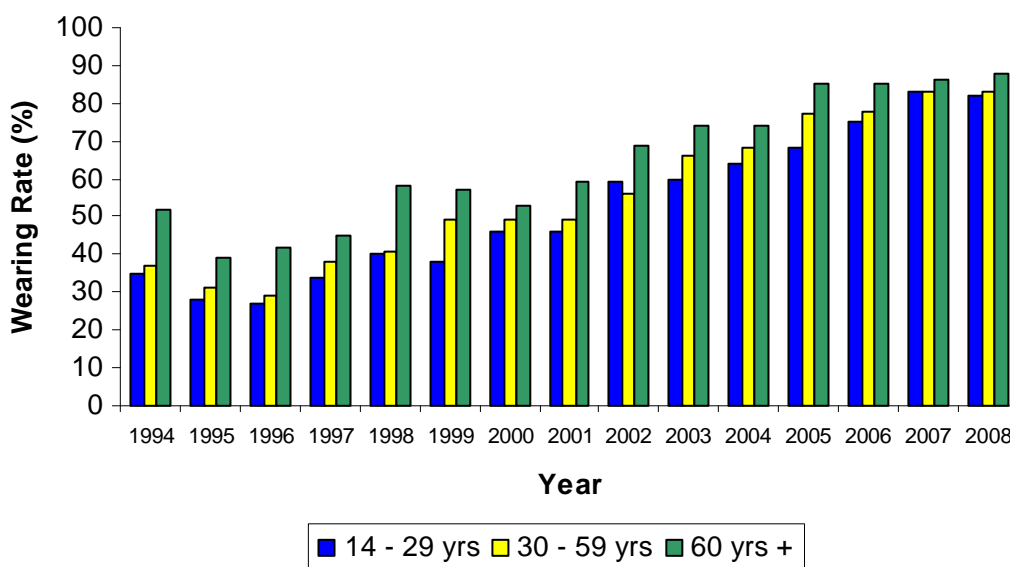
Chart 3 - Seat Belt Wearing Rate for Child Back Seat Passengers: 1994-2008



Back Seat Wearing Rates for Adults

7. The back seat wearing rate recorded for those aged over 60 years has consistently been the highest of all the adult age groups since the beginning of the series. In 1994, the rate for this age group was 52%, however increases since then have seen the rate increase to 88% in 2008, the highest rate recorded to date. The overall adult back seat wearing rate has more than doubled, increasing from 38% in 1994 to a high of 83% in April 2008.

**Chart 4 - Seat Belt Wearing Rate for Adult Back Seat
Passengers: 1994-2008**



8. The age groups 14 to 29 years and 30 to 59 years have consistently exhibited the lowest back seat wearing rates throughout the series. Both age groups back seat wearing rates have more than doubled since 1994, increasing from 35% and 37% respectively to 82% and 83% in 2008.

Influence of Driver upon Wearing Rate of Passengers

9. There is a marked difference in the seat belt wearing rates depending upon whether or not the driver of the car is wearing a seat belt. In 2008 when the driver of a car wore a seatbelt, 96% of front seat passengers were also restrained. However, when the driver did not wear a seat belt, this figure fell to 60% (Table 3).

Table 3: Wearing Rate of Front Seat Passengers Depending Upon Whether or not The Driver is Restrained (1995 - 2008)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Driver Restrained	91	90	91	99	91	91	91	92	92	93	94	95	96	96
Driver Unrestrained	50	49	48	55	49	53	49	56	56	54	55	58	59	60

Mobile phone usage

10. One percent of drivers observed were using a mobile phone (0.7% were using a hand-held phone and 0.3% were using a hands-free phone).

Additional Information

Electronic and hard copies of this bulletin and the full Northern Ireland Seat Belt Survey 2008 Report are available from:

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