



Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning
P.O. Box 30634, Lansing, MI 48909
517-284-3332
www.michigan.gov/ohsp

November 1, 2023
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dennis Raymo
raymod@michigan.gov

Michigan seat belt use rate fell slightly in 2023

Additionally, state's use rate has decreased by 2 percent since 2019

Michigan's seat belt use rate fell slightly in 2023, according to results from a grant-funded direct observation study conducted by Michigan State University.

In 2023, Michigan's seat belt use rate was 92.4, a decrease of 0.5 percent from the 92.9 percent recorded in 2022. Results from the 2023 study, which was conducted between May and July, mark the lowest seat belt use rate since 2004, when it was 90.5 percent.

Every 1 percent increase in seat belt use means an estimated 10 fewer traffic deaths and 100 fewer serious injuries. In Michigan in 2022, there were 1,123 fatalities.

"Seat belts are the foundation of every effective traffic safety strategy and one of the easiest things drivers and passengers can do to be safe," said Katie Bower, director of the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP). "Michigan was once a leading state in seat belt use. It should give all Michiganders pause to see that our state's seat belt use rate continues to decrease — an alarming 2 percentage points since 2019. Drivers and passengers of all ages must buckle up, every trip, every time."

[Click here to view a map of the seat belt use rate for every Michigan county.](#)

Other relevant seat belt usage data for Michigan:

- The state's highest seat belt use rate was 97.9 percent in 2009.
- The counties with the lowest belt use rates were generally rural counties in northern Michigan.

Michigan's 2023 direct observation survey also included driver use of electronic devices, encompassing talking and/or typing. The rate of drivers using an electronic device was 8.3 percent, a 2.2 percent increase from the 6.1 percent rate in 2022.

"Since much of the seat belt survey was conducted before Michigan's hands-free law took effect on June 30, we are looking forward to next year's results to see the impact the new law has had on traffic safety," Bower said.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the nationwide seat belt use rate was 91.6 percent in 2022. The NHTSA requires states to conduct annual seat belt observation surveys to determine belt usage.

The OHSP produced two videos, titled "[Perfect World](#)" and "[Something Stops You](#)," to help address the situation by raising awareness and educating drivers about the importance of using their seat belts.

####
