

# SAFETY BELTS



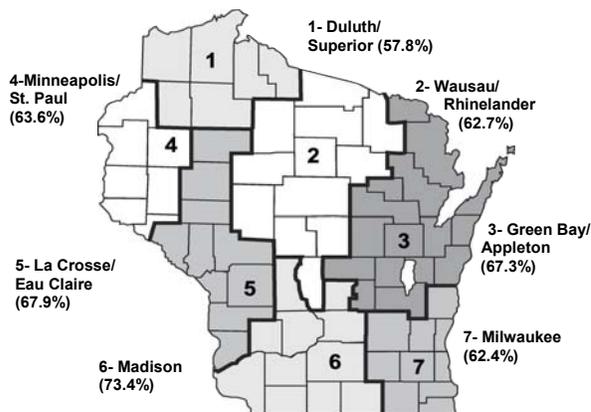
## Buckling Up WILL Save Your Life

**In July 2002, 66.1% of passenger vehicle occupants buckled up in Wisconsin.**

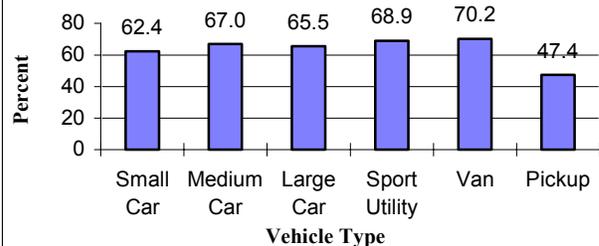
- Safety belts are the most effective means of reducing fatalities and serious injuries when traffic crashes occur and are estimated to save 9,500 lives in America each year.
- Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death to children in America.
- The greatest predictor of child restraint use in a vehicle is adult restraint use. In fact, a restrained driver is three times more likely to restrain a child.

### Belt Use Varies by More Than 15% Across the State.

#### Wisconsin Media Markets

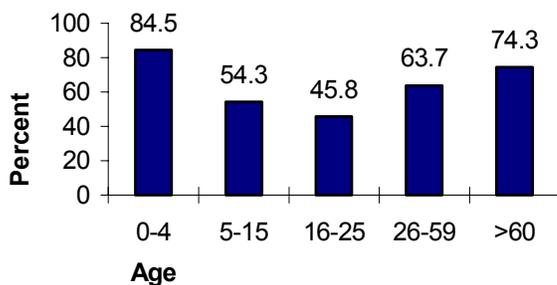


#### 2002 Belt Use by Vehicle



- Occupants of vans were most likely to be wearing their safety belts. 70.2% of van occupants wore safety belts.
- Occupants of pickup trucks were least likely to use their belts. Fewer than half (47.4%) of the occupants of pickup trucks wore safety belts.

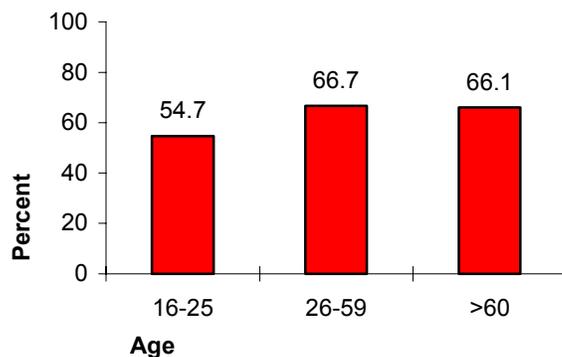
#### 2002 Belt Use by Age for Passengers



#### Who is at Risk?

- Belt use is highest among children 0-4 years of age (84.5%). This includes child safety seat use. However, a 16-month, nationwide study by the National Safe Kids Campaign in 2002 showed that approximately 82% of child safety seats are used improperly creating a risk in the event of a crash.

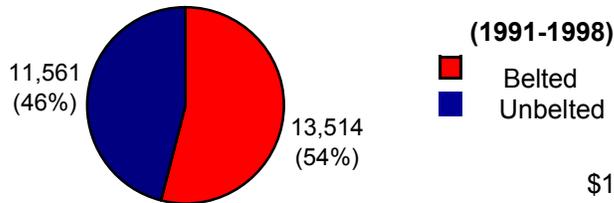
#### 2002 Belt Use by Age for Drivers



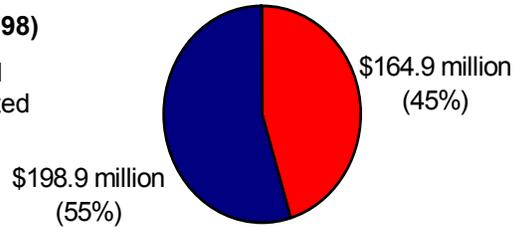
- Belt use is the lowest among drivers ages 16-25 (54.7%). This group represents 16.5% of licensed drivers, yet accounts for 29.0% of drivers involved in crashes in 2001.

## Economic Costs

### Hospitalized Occupants Injured in Traffic Crashes



### Costs of Hospitalization for Injuries in Traffic Crashes



- 54% of hospitalized traffic crash victims were wearing their safety belts, reflecting the fact that there are more people in the general population who wear safety belts than those who choose not to. This does not mean that those who wear safety belts are more likely to be in crashes or to be hospitalized.
- The average per person cost of hospitalization for injured **unbelted** occupants was \$5,000 higher than for those wearing safety belts, reflecting the more traumatic injuries that unbelted occupants suffer.

## Current Safety Belt Laws

Wis. Stats. 347.48 (2m)

### General Passenger Safety Laws

- All drivers must be properly restrained in a safety belt and each passenger, between the ages of 4 and 16, must be properly restrained in the front seat or designated seat with a shoulder harness.
- Drivers not wearing their safety belts may be cited (\$10) when stopped for some other reason.
- Drivers cannot be stopped solely because they are not wearing their safety belts.

### Child Passenger Safety Laws

- Persons transporting children under the age of 4 in motor vehicles must have the child properly restrained in a child car safety seat.
- Persons transporting children between the ages of 4-8 must have the children restrained in a safety seat or a vehicle safety belt.
- The penalty for violating the child passenger law involving a child under the age of 4 is not less than \$30 nor more than \$75.
- The penalty for violating the child passenger law involving a child between the ages of 4-8 is not less than \$10 nor more than \$25.

## What Can I Do?

- Always wear lap and shoulder belt.
- Never place shoulder belt under your arm or behind your back.
- Always use rear-facing child seats for children under 20 lbs and 1 year old.
- Always use forward-facing child seats for children 20-40 lbs and over 1 year old.
- Never place rear-facing child seat in front seat of vehicle with passenger side airbags.
- Always place children 12 years and under in back seat.