



AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION

Seat Belt Usage Compliance Data

Joshua Schultz, Agency of Transportation, Director of the
Operations and Safety Bureau.

Seat Belt Compliance

Introduction

Seat belt laws are divided into two categories: *primary* and *secondary*. Primary enforcement allows a police officer to stop and take an action if he or she observes a violation. A secondary law, such as Vermont's seatbelt law, is described below:

This section be enforced only if a law enforcement officer has detained the operator of a motor vehicle for another suspected traffic violation. An operator shall not be subject to the penalty established in this section unless the operator is required to pay a penalty for the primary violation.

23 V.S.A. § 1259(e)

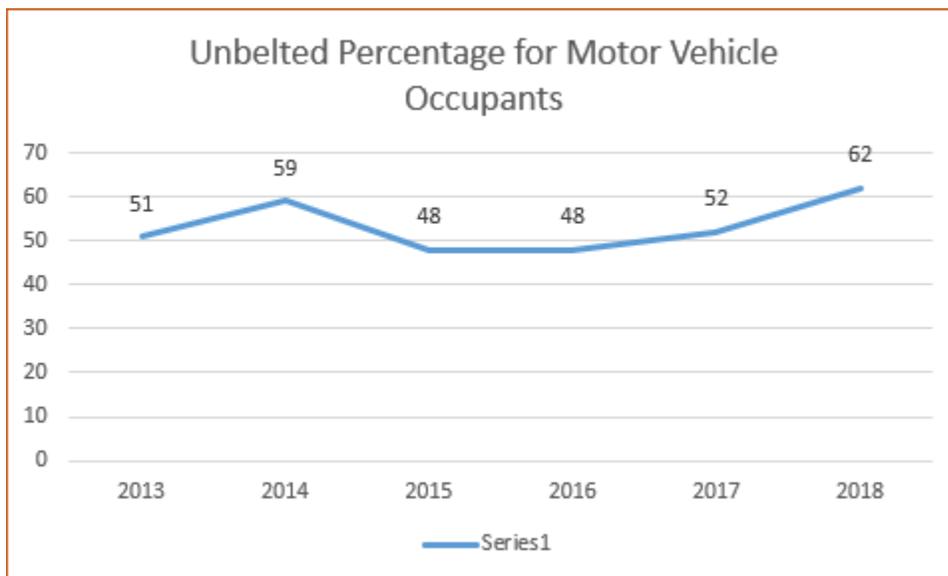
- **34 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands** have primary seat belt laws for front seat occupants. Of these:
 - **18 states, D.C. and 2 territories** include rear seats as primary enforcement.
 - **4 states** include rear seats as secondary enforcement.
 - **12 states and the Virgin Islands** do not include rear seats.
 - **15 states** have secondary laws for adult front seat occupants. Of these:
 - **6 states** also have secondary laws for rear seats.
 - **9 states** do not include rear seats.
- **New Hampshire** has enacted neither a primary nor a secondary seat belt law for adults, although the state does have a primary child passenger safety law that covers all drivers and passengers under 18. (Source GHSA Website, Accessed February 2018)

Vermont

- In 2018, 69 people died on the roadways of Vermont. Of those, 34 people were not wearing seatbelts at the time of the crash. Further, 17 of those people were either partially or totally ejected from the vehicle. FARS 2018 Data (FARS- Fatality Analysis Reporting System).

Fatalities by Vehicle Type and Restraint/Safety Equipment Used							
Road User Type	Restraint/Safety Equipment	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Motor Vehicle Occupant	Unbelted	0	34	24	21	16	16
	- Driver		25	17	11	11	13
	- Passenger		9	6	10	5	3
	- UTV Driver		0	1	0	0	0
	Belted	3	21	22	23	17	11
	- Driver	3	15	15	20	13	8
	- Passenger		6	7	3	4	3
	Improper Belt Use/Child Restraint		0	1	1	0	0
Motorcyclist/ATV	Wearing Helmet		5	11	10	11	7
	Non-DOT Compliant Helmet/Improper		1	1	1	0	1
	No Helmet		1	2	1	1	1
Vulnerable Users	Pedestrians		6	9	5	5	5
	Bicyclists		0	0	1	4	0
Unknown	Unknown Belt/Helmet Use	0	1	1	2	4	3
% Unbelted*		0%	62%	52%	48%	48%	59%
Total Fatalities		3	69	70	64	58	44

***Of all fatalities: only occupants in vehicles equipped with seatbelts are used in the calculation for unbelted percentage. Excludes: motorcycles, ATVs, pedestrians, bicyclists and unknowns. (Sum of Belted" & "Unbelted", divided into "Unbelted")**



Injury Ejected	Fatality (K) (Multiple Items)	
Row Labels	Count of Person Type	
2010		20
2011		14
2012		24
2013		20
2014		14
2015		21
2016		24
2017		17
2018		17
Grand Total		171

Primary Seat Belt States

State	Who is Covered (Yrs.)	In What Seat	Maximum Fine 1st Offense
Alabama	15+	Front	\$25
Alaska	16+	All	\$15
Arkansas	15+	Front	\$25 (plus court costs and city/county jail fines)
California	16+	All	\$162 (\$20 fine + \$142 in penalties and assessments)
Connecticut	8+	Front	\$92 for >18 (\$50 fine + \$7 fee + \$35 surcharge) \$120 for <18 (\$75 fine + \$10 fee + \$35 surcharge)
Delaware ¹	16+	All	\$25
D.C.	16+	All	\$50
Florida	6+	Front	\$30
	6 - 17	All	
Georgia	8 - 17	All	\$15
	18+	Front	
Guam	All	All	\$100
Hawaii	8+	All	\$112 (including administrative fees)
Illinois	16+	All	\$25
Indiana	16+	All	\$25
Iowa	18+	Front	\$127.50 (including court costs)
Kansas	14 - 17	All	\$60
	18+	Front (other seating positions are secondary enforcement)	\$30
Kentucky	7 & younger and 57+ 8+	All	\$25
Louisiana	13+	All	\$50
Maine	18+	All	\$50
Maryland	16+	All (secondary for rear seats)	\$83 (fine plus court costs)
Michigan	16+	Front	\$25
Minnesota	7 & younger and 57+ 8+	All	\$25, plus approx. \$75 court surcharge (surcharge varies slightly by county)
Mississippi	7+	All	\$25
New Jersey	7 & younger and 57+ 8+	All (secondary for rear seats)	\$46 (including court costs)
New Mexico	18+	All	\$25
New York	15 & younger All	All Front	\$50
North Carolina	16+	All (secondary for rear seats)	\$25 + \$135.50 in court costs (\$10 + no court costs for rear seats)
Northern Mariana Islands	6+	All	\$25
Oklahoma	9+	Front	\$20
Oregon	16+	All	\$115

Puerto Rico	9+ (or 57"+)		\$50
Rhode Island	18+	All	\$40
South Carolina	8+	All	\$25
Tennessee	16+	Front	\$30
Texas	7 & younger and 57' +	All	\$50 (driver or passenger)
	8+		\$200 (driver)
Utah	16+	All	\$45 (2nd offense)
Virgin Islands	All	Front	\$25 to \$250
Washington	16+	All	\$124
West Virginia	8+	Front	\$25
	8-17	All	
Wisconsin	8+	All ¹	\$10
Total	34 States + D.C., PR, 4 Terr.	All (19 + D.C., 2 Terr.) Rear Secondary (10) Front Seat Only (9 + VI)	

¹ Delaware's seat belt law is a civil penalty.

² In Wisconsin, all passengers are covered except for children properly restrained in a child safety restraint system.

Secondary Seat Belt States

State	Who is Covered (Yrs.)	In What Seat	Maximum Fine 1st Offense
Arizona	8-15	All	\$10
	8+	Front	
Colorado	16+ (primary for under 18)	Front	\$71
Idaho	7+ (primary for drivers under 18)	All	\$10 (drivers <18 pay \$51.50, including court costs)
Massachusetts	13+	All	\$25
Missouri	8 - 15 (primary)	All	\$50
	16+	Front	\$10 (driver and passenger)
Montana	6+	All	\$20
Nebraska	18+	Front	\$25
Nevada	6+	All	\$25
North Dakota	18+	Front	\$20
	18 & younger (primary)	All	\$25 + 1 point on license
Ohio	8 - 14	All	\$30 driver; \$20 passenger
	15+	Front	
Pennsylvania	18+	Front	\$10
	8 - 17 (primary)	All	
South Dakota	18+	Front	\$25
Vermont	18+ (primary for <18)	All	\$25
Virginia	All drivers; passengers 18+ (primary for passengers 18 & younger in all seats)	Front	\$25 (driver ticketed for passengers <18)
Wyoming	9+	All	\$25 driver; \$10 passenger
Total States	15 States	All (6) Front Seat Only (9)	

Research Sources

Center for Disease Control Motor Vehicle Facts: Seat Belts

<https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/seatbelts/index.html>

Insurance Institute of Highway Safety

<http://www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/t/safety-belts/topicoverview>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Website State Specific Highway Safety Data:

<https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/STSI.htm>

State of Maine Seat Belt Compliance Study

[NHTSA Evaluation of PBL 2010.pdf](#)

State of Minnesota Seat Belt Analysis Study/Medical Costs

[Minnesota Seat Belt Report.pdf](#)

Vermont State Highway Safety Office – Behavioral Safety Unit

<http://ghsp.vermont.gov/>