

Occupant Protection

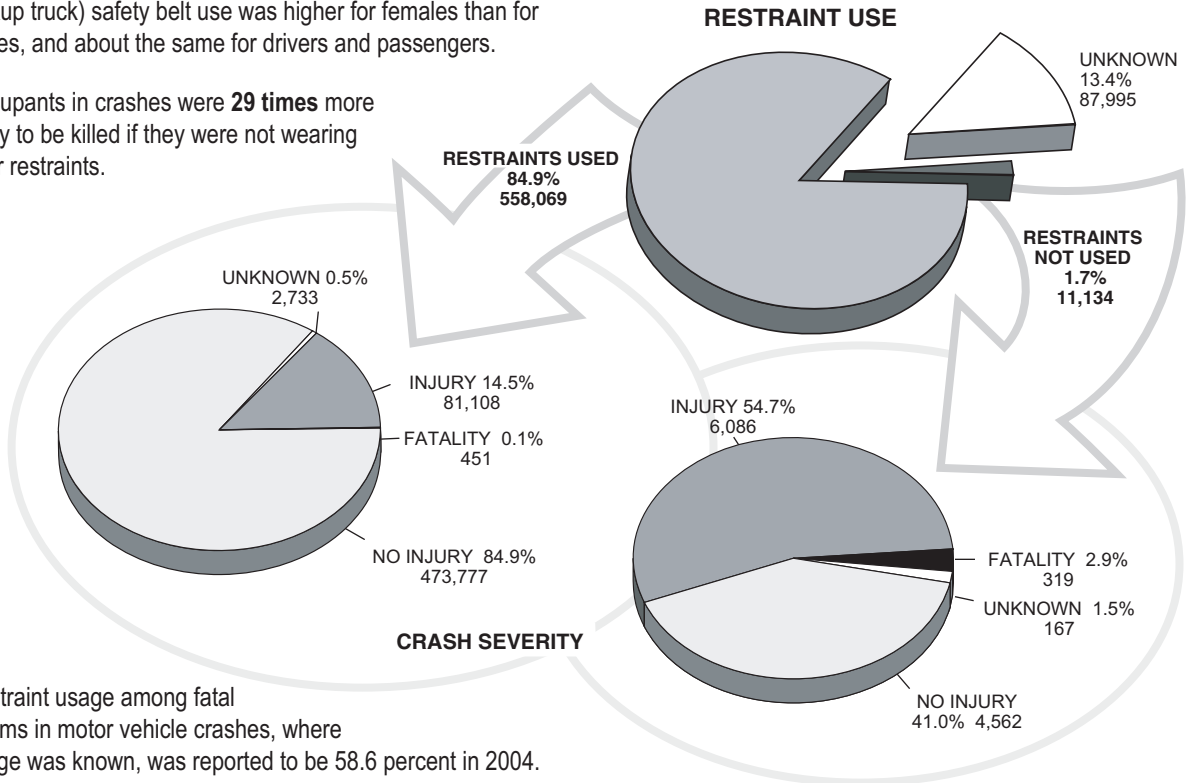


Restraint use by motorists is measured two ways: by what motorists REPORT to police at the scene of a traffic crash (reported usage), and by DIRECT OBSERVATION studies where motorists are totally unaware of the presence of researchers (observed usage).

Of the 657,198 drivers and injured passengers involved in crashes, 558,069 (84.9%) were REPORTED to have been using occupant restraints. However, a DIRECT OBSERVATION study by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute estimated overall safety belt use was 91.3 percent for passenger cars, 92.3 percent for sport-utility vehicles, 91.3 percent for vans/minivans, and 85.3 percent for pickup trucks in 2004. Statewide belt use for all vehicle types was 90.5 percent.

For all vehicle types (passenger, sport-utility, van/minivan, and pickup truck) safety belt use was higher for females than for males, and about the same for drivers and passengers.

Occupants in crashes were **29 times** more likely to be killed if they were not wearing their restraints.



Restraint usage among fatal victims in motor vehicle crashes, where usage was known, was reported to be 58.6 percent in 2004.

Motor vehicle occupants aged 75 to 104 had the highest reported restraint usage (95.1%) of any age group. Children age 11 to 15 had the lowest reported restraint usage (78.8%).

Restraint use can prevent ejection from a motor vehicle. Ejection is associated with higher levels of injury severity and greater numbers of fatalities.

