

TOGETHER FOR LIFE

# Key Findings Report



*Adult*

## *San Juan County*

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Based on the 2019 Utah Community  
Survey of Adults on Seat Belt Use in San Juan County

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Prepared for the  
Highway Safety Office,  
Utah Department of Public Safety



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# Increasing Seat Belt Use in Rural Utah

## Executive Summary

The Utah Department of Public Safety's Highway Safety Office (HSO) has recognized that significant disparities exist between urban and rural rates of seat belt use among citizens of Utah. The Utah Seat Belt Observational Survey revealed that seat belts are used less frequently in rural areas of Utah than the statewide average in urban areas.<sup>1</sup> Driving or riding in a vehicle without a seat belt is a well-recognized contributing factor to fatality, serious injury, and harm associated with traffic crashes.

A recent survey conducted by the Center for Health and Safety Culture on behalf of the HSO revealed strong positive norms regarding protective behaviors and attitudes about seat belts among adults in seven rural counties of Utah: Box Elder, San Juan, Sanpete, Cache, Carbon, Sevier, and Tooele.<sup>2</sup> However, many adults misperceived these positive norms.<sup>2</sup> For example, while most adults are wearing seat belts, many adults do not believe that MOST others in the communities are engaging in these protective behaviors.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, adults significantly underestimated the prevalence of protective beliefs and behaviors about seat belts among adults in the communities.<sup>2</sup>

Most adults support strong enforcement of seat belt laws and agree with encouraging others in the vehicle with them to wear their seat belts.<sup>2</sup> However, many adults misperceived these positive norms.<sup>2</sup> For example, while most adults strongly agreed that a driver has the responsibility to make sure others in the vehicle wear a seat belt, many did not believe that MOST adults in their community felt the same way.<sup>2</sup> Recommendations are made to correct misperceptions and address gaps in knowledge.

## Background

The Center for Health and Safety Culture developed a survey to better understand the behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of adults in rural Utah regarding seat belts. The survey was conducted using a paper survey mailed to a representative sample of households in Box Elder, San Juan, Sanpete, Cache, Carbon, Sevier, and Tooele. Counties between April and June, 2019. About 1,200 households were sent an introductory letter followed by a survey and up to two follow-up requests. In San Juan County, 384 individuals responded resulting in an overall response rate of 36%, and a confidence interval for the results is  $\pm 4.9\%$  with a 95% confidence level. The results of this survey only represent the behaviors and beliefs of those adults in the seven counties surveyed and cannot be generalized to adults in other counties in Utah or adults in other states.

## Seat Belt Use among Adults – Actual and Perceived Norms

In 2019, MOST adults in San Juan County, 51%, report always wearing their seat belt. However, 91% perceive that most other adults in their county do NOT always wear their seat belt (Q7).

- 47% report always wearing their seat belt when driving within a few miles of their home. However, 89% perceive that most other adults in their county do not always wear their seat belts (Q5).
- 92% report always wearing their seat belt when driving many miles from their home. However, 76% perceived that most other adults in their county do not always wear their seat belts (Q6).

## Observational Studies Reveal Most Adults Wear Their Seat Belts

Observational studies completed in 2019 show MOST adults are wearing their seat belts.

- In 2019, observational studies conducted in San Juan County revealed **82% of adults were wearing their seat belts**<sup>1</sup>

## Most Adults Have Positive Beliefs about Wearing Seat Belts

- **In 2019, MOST adults in San Juan County, 70%, strongly agree that “it is important to protect myself by always wearing a seat belt.” However, 74% perceive that most other adults in their county do NOT strongly agree (Q8).**
  - 50% strongly or mostly agree that they wear a seat belt because they don’t want to get a ticket (Q9).
  - 79% strongly or mostly agree that they wear a seat belt because they want to set a good example for their children (Q10).
  - 50% strongly or mostly disagree that seat belts are just as likely to harm you as help you (Q11).
  - 78% strongly or mostly agree that people are less likely to be seriously injured or killed if they always wear their seat belt (Q12).
  - 80% strongly or mostly agree that seat belts help prevent lifelong disabilities such as paralysis, spinal cord injuries and serious brain injuries (Q13).
  - 82% strongly agree that parents should require their children to always use an appropriate child car seat or, when big enough, a seat belt (Q17).
- **In 2019, MOST adults in San Juan County, 73%, strongly agree that they should always wear a seat belt (Q14).**
  - 78% strongly agree that they want people they care about to always wear a seat belt (Q15).
  - 70% strongly agree that “people who care about me want me to always wear a seat belt” (Q16).
  - 78% strongly or mostly agree that they are comfortable wearing their seat belt even if others in the vehicle are not (Q19).
- **In 2019, MOST adults in San Juan County, 52%, indicate they are extremely likely to wear their seat belt every time they are in a vehicle. However, 87% perceive that most other adults in their county are NOT extremely likely (Q20).**

## Many Adults Have Family Rules and Workplace Policies about Wearing Seat Belts

- In 2019, MOST adults in San Juan County, 72%, indicate their family has a rule about always wearing a seat belt (16% said they do not have a family rule, 8% said they do not know, and 5% said they do not have a family) (Q21).
- In 2019, many adults in San Juan County, 41%, indicate their workplace has a policy about always wearing a seat belt (12% said they do not have a workplace policy, 10% said they do not know, and 38% said they do not have a workplace) (Q22).

## Most Adults Support Seat Belt Enforcement

- MOST adults in San Juan County, 74%, strongly or mostly agree that local law enforcement should enforce Utah seat belt laws (Q18a).
  - However, 57% perceive that most other adults in the county would NOT feel the same way (Q18b).
  - Among those surveyed, 53% indicate they would receive a ticket half the time or more often if they did not wear their seat belt at all for the next six months (Q23).

## Getting Others to Wear a Seat Belt: Actual and Perceived Norms

- In 2019, MOST adults in San Juan County, 49%, report always making sure others were wearing their seat belt when they were the driver. However, 87% perceive that most other adults in their county did NOT always do this (Q24).
  - Some adults in San Juan County, 35%, report always making sure others were wearing their seat belt when they were the passenger (Q25).
- In 2019, MOST adults in San Juan County, 81%, mostly or strongly agreed that it was their responsibility to make sure others were wearing their seat belts when they were the driver. However, 52% perceive that most other adults in their county did NOT feel this way (Q26).
  - 80% mostly or strongly agree that they are comfortable asking other people to wear their seat belts when they were the driver (Q27).
  - 58% mostly or strongly agree that they were comfortable asking other people to wear their seat belts when they are a passenger (Q28).
  - 57% report they are extremely likely to ask everyone in the vehicle to wear a seat belt when they were the driver. However, 84% perceived that most adults in their county were NOT extremely likely to do the same (Q29).
  - Only 34% report they are extremely likely to ask everyone in the vehicle to wear a seat belt when they were a passenger (Q30).

## Recommended Next Steps

- ✓ **Correct misperceptions about seat belt use in the county.**
  - Seek to communicate to all citizens that MOST adults in the county are wearing seat belts.<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ **Take steps to bolster strategies to increase seat belt use in the county.**
  - Seek to communicate to all aspects of the community – elected officials, law enforcement leaders, business owners, schools, families and citizens, that
    - MOST adults believe it is important to always wear a seat belt;<sup>2</sup>
    - MOST adults want people they care about to always wear a seat belt;<sup>2</sup>
    - MOST adults support enforcement of Utah seat belt laws;<sup>2</sup>
    - MOST families have a family rule about always wearing a seat belt. <sup>2</sup>
- ✓ **Take steps to increase the likelihood that citizens will encourage others to wear their seat belts.**
  - Build on the existing strong positive norms outlined in this report:
    - MOST drivers make sure everyone is wearing a seat belt;<sup>2</sup>
    - MOST drivers believe it is their responsibility to make sure everyone is wearing a seat belt.<sup>2</sup>

## Questions to Foster Meaningful Dialogue<sup>3</sup>

### Questions to Focus Collective Attention

- What opportunities can you see that the data are revealing?
- What do we still need to learn about this issue?
- What would someone who had a very different set of beliefs than you do say about these data?

### Questions to Reveal Deeper Insights

- What has had real meaning for you from what you've seen in the data?
- What surprised you? What challenged you? What encouraged you?
- What needs clarification?
- What's been your major learning, insight, or discovery so far from these data?

### Questions to Create Forward Movement

- What's possible here?
- What will it take to create change?
- What needs our immediate attention going forward?

Adapted from Brown, Isaacs, and Community, 2005<sup>3</sup>

### References

1. Perkins, MPH, Ron. (2019). *Utah observational surveys of seat belt use*
2. Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2019). *Utah community survey of adults on seat belt use in Box Elder, San Juan, Sanpete, Carbon, Cache, Sevier, and Tooele Counties*. Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana. (N=3114)
3. Brown, J., Isaacs, D., & Community, W.C. (2005). *The World Café: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter (1st ed.)*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.