

TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS

Occupant Protection

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INTRODUCTION

Restraint devices such as seat belts are a key element of motor vehicle occupant protection systems. Each year, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) conducts the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) that measures, among many variables, the use of seat belts by occupants age eight and older. The 2019 NOPUS reported that seat belt use was 90.7 percent among front-seat passengers, a slight increase from the 89.6 percent observed in 2018. Additionally, the 2019 survey found that seat belt use increased during both weekday rush hours and non-rush hours. Use during weekday rush hours increased from 89.3 percent in 2018 to 90.7 percent in 2019 and use during non-rush hours increased from 89.1 percent in 2018 to 90.8 percent in 2019.

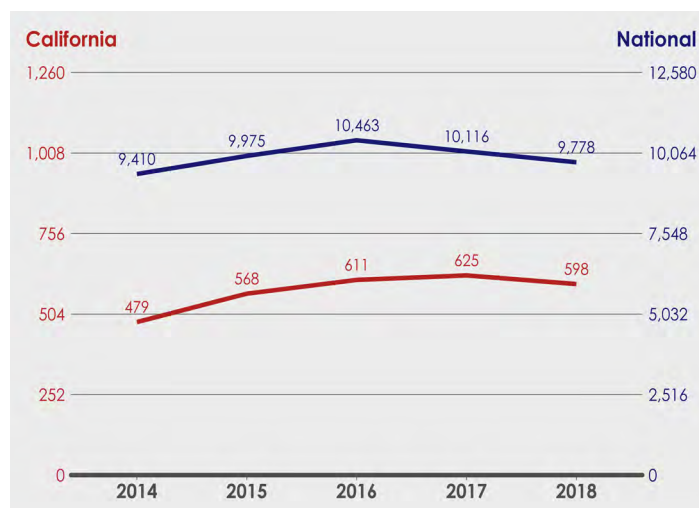
Analyses presented in the occupant protection program area include fatal and serious injuries where a driver or passenger in a passenger vehicle was unrestrained. Occupant protection crashes in this fact sheet are defined as crashes where one or more occupants in a passenger vehicle was unrestrained. Under this program area, there are additional analyses that address aging road users and child passenger safety.

CALIFORNIA FACTS

NATIONAL DATA

- Seat belt use among vehicle occupants in the western region of the U.S. increased from 92.7 percent in 2018 to 94.5 percent in 2019.
- In the United States, there were 9,778 unrestrained passenger vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes in 2018, a 3.34 percent decrease from 10,116 in 2017.
- In 2017, of the 21,464 passenger vehicle occupants with known restraint use killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes, 10,076 or 46.9 percent were known to be unrestrained.
- In 2017, daytime restraint use was higher than nighttime; 54.9 percent of passenger vehicle occupants with known restraint use involved in a nighttime fatal crash were unrestrained compared with 39.8 percent involved in a daytime crash.
- NHTSA estimated that, among passenger vehicle occupants aged five or older involved in traffic crashes, seat belt use saved 14,955 lives in 2017. In addition, if all passenger vehicle occupants aged five or older had been wearing seat belts, an additional 2,549 lives could have been saved in 2017.
- NHTSA found that, in 2018, weekday seat belt use among motorists increased from 89.2 percent in 2018 to 90.8 percent in 2019.

Unrestrained Occupant Fatality Trends, Nationwide and California, 2014-2018

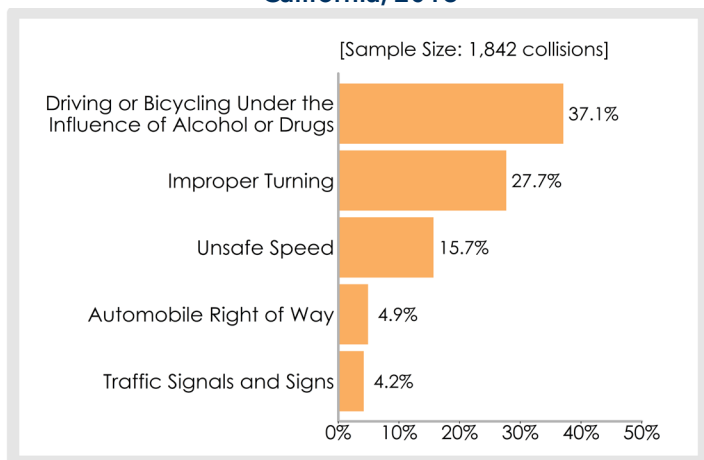


Source: FARS 2014-2017, FARS ARF 2018

CALIFORNIA DATA

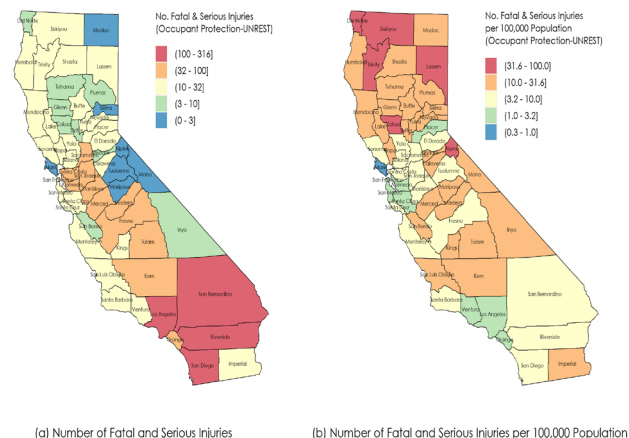
- In California, there were 598 unrestrained occupants killed in traffic crashes in 2018, comprising 4.3 percent fewer fatalities than the 625 in 2017.
- In 2018, California’s front seat belt use was observed to be 95.9 percent, which was the third-highest use rate in the nation.
- California’s front seat belt use rate for those aged 5 and older has been greater than 95 percent from 2014 to 2018.
- In 2017, seat belts saved 1,488 California passenger vehicle occupants, aged five and older, involved in traffic crashes. If all vehicle occupants used seat belts, an additional 89 lives would have been saved.
- The Summer 2018 Seat Belt Usage study reported that the combined use rate for drivers and front seat passengers was 96.0 percent. This is a decrease from 96.2 percent in 2017, 96.5 percent in 2016, and 97.3 percent in 2015.

Top Five Primary Collision Factors for Unrestrained Occupant Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes, California, 2018



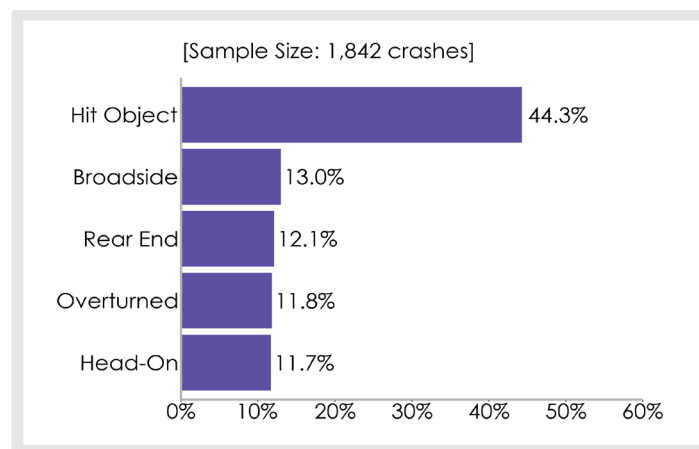
Source: FARS 2014-2017, FARS ARF 2018

Unrestrained Occupant Fatal and Serious Injury Number and Rate per 100K Population by County, California, 2018



Source: FARS ARF 2018; Provisional SWITRS 2018; California Department of Finance 2019

Top Five Crash Types for Unrestrained Occupant Fatal and Serious Injury Victims, California, 2018



Source: FARS ARF 2018, Provisional SWITRS 2018

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