2013 LOUISIANA SEAT BELT AND MOTORCYCLE HELMET OBSERVATION SURVEY RESULTS

-FINAL REPORT-

LHSC Project No. 2012-20-08 FFY 13

STATE OF LOUISIANA
Bobby Jindal, Governor

LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION
John A. LeBlanc, Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report documents Louisiana's annual Statewide Seat Belt and Motorcycle Helmet Use Survey. The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC) is responsible for the State of Louisiana's Highway Safety Program. Occupant protection is among several significant program areas for which LHSC is responsible. A portion of LHSC's occupant protection program funding comes from the Federal Government, which requires administration of a statewide survey of seat belt use that must adhere to Federal Register Guidelines (Schneider, 2012).

The statewide seat belt and motorcycle helmet use survey work covered by this report was conducted by Preusser Research Group, Inc. (PRG). All of the survey work was completed in late May and throughout the month of June 2013, and the results that follow succeed in providing an accurate and reliable estimate of front and rear seat belt use and motorcycle helmet use in Louisiana.

Seat Belt Law and Seat Belt Use

The Louisiana State Legislature passed the first seat belt law in 1985 and it went into effect July 1, 1986. That law was a secondary enforcement law, meaning law enforcement officers could not stop a vehicle solely for a seat belt law violation. The law was changed to a primary enforcement law almost ten years later, in 1995, with the intention of allowing police to stop violators for the sole reason of not wearing a seat belt. However, in 1998, courts ruled that the wording of the bill did not allow violation of the law to be considered a primary offense. It was not until August 15, 1999 that a revised primary enforcement law became effective in Louisiana (McKenzie, III, 2011). An amendment was made to the law in 2008 that included rear seat passengers. According to the current Louisiana seat belt law, if a person is being transported by a motor vehicle, no matter the seating position, a proper restraint should be used.

Seat belt use rates in Louisiana have fluctuated over the past 14 years. From 1999 to 2002, statewide seat belt use rates increased very little from 67.0% to 68.6%. Louisiana first participated in the national *Click It or Ticket* campaign in 2003. A 5-point increase in the statewide use rate (73.8%) was measured that year (Schneider, 2004). Statewide seat belt use rates increased over the next two years peaking at 77.7% in June 2005. In 2006, statewide measurements of seat belt use were down 2.9 points to 74.8% (U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, July 2011). It should be noted that Louisiana sustained serious damage from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The property damage and displacement of many of the State's residents could have had an effect on seat belt use rates. Use rates climbed back to the peak level seen in 2005 by 2011. Last year's annual survey measured seat belt use at 79.3% (Elliott, 2012).

Helmet Law and Helmet Use

Louisiana has enacted and repealed motorcycle helmet laws several times. Louisiana first adopted an all-rider motorcycle helmet law in 1968, amended it in 1976 to require helmet use only by riders under the age of 18, and reenacted a universal helmet law in 1982. In 1999, the State amended that law to require helmet use only by motorcyclists under 18 and riders over 18 who did not have a minimum of $10,000 in medical insurance coverage. In 2004, Louisiana reinstated its universal helmet law that required all motorcyclists, including riders and passengers, to wear helmets all the time (Gilbert, Chaudhary, Solomon, Preusser, & Cosgrove, 2004).

Helmet use rates in Louisiana have changed dramatically with changes in the helmet law. In the years 1993-1999, when the mandatory helmet law was in effect, motorcycle helmet use ranged from 96.7% to 100%. Helmet use measured almost 45 points lower (51.8%) the year after the mandatory law was amended. Helmet use rates remained low, 46.4% to 58.6%, during the five years that the law did not require mandatory use for all riders (2000-2004). After reinstatement of the universal helmet law in 2004, motorcycle helmet use increased dramatically from 57.7% (2004) to 99.3% (2005) and has remained near 99% every year since (Elliott, 2012).

Statewide Survey Statistician

Dr. Helmut Schneider has developed all of the NHTSA approved seat belt survey designs used in the State of Louisiana, including the design Preusser Research Group, Inc. used in 2013. Dr. Schneider is a professor in the E. J. Ourso College of Business, Associate Dean of Research and Economic Development, Ourso Family Distinguished Professor, Chairman of Information Systems and Decision Sciences, and Director of the Highway Safety Research Group at Louisiana State University. Dr. Schneider received his degree in Operations Management and Statistics in 1978 and has taught statistics for 33 years including statistical sampling. He has published over 50 articles in peer reviewed journals and written two books. He has over 15 years of experience in working with crash data and has analyzed Louisiana's statewide seat belt survey results since 2003 (McKenzie, III, 2011).

Preusser Research Group planned and implemented Louisiana's 2013 seat belt survey using Dr. Helmut Schneider's redesign as a guide. The redesign is compliant with NHTSA's Uniform Criteria for State Observational Surveys of Seat Belt Use. [1]

[1]National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2011) Uniform Criteria for State Observational Surveys of Seat Belt Use. 23 CFR Part 1340, Docket No. NHTSA-2010-0002, RIN 2127-AK41, Federal Register Vol. 76 No. 63, April 1, 2011, Rules and Regulations, pp. 18042 – 18059.

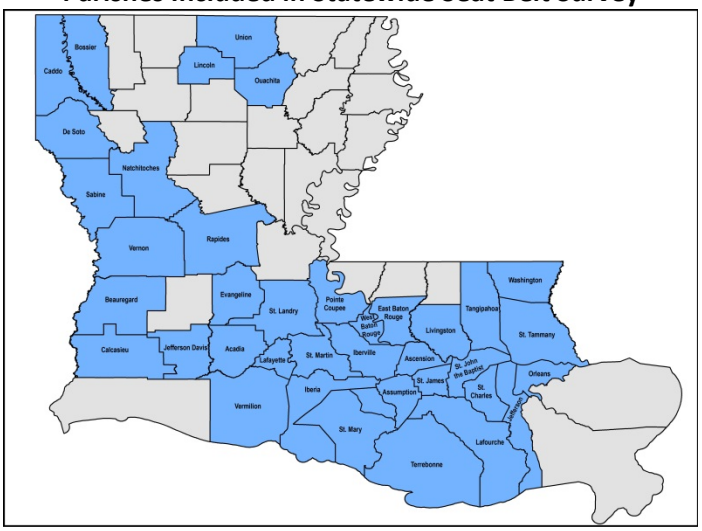
METHODOLOGY

Survey Design and Site Selection

The redesign for 2013 is very similar to the 2012 survey. The few differences are found in the number of overall sites and with the method of selecting local road segments. There are 54 fewer sites in the 2013 design (390 sites in 2012 and 336 sites in 2013). The 2013 redesign proves to be both efficient and reliable.

Crash-related fatality data from 2006-2009 were used in selecting the parishes included in the survey. According to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), 38 of 64 parishes account for 86% of crash-related fatalities in Louisiana. These 38 parishes were selected to be included in the survey (Schneider, 2013).

Figure 1.
Parishes Included in Statewide Seat Belt Survey



The 2013 redesign divides the sampling frame into eight statewide regions, the parishes within these regions, and the highway types. Dr. Schneider used a 2010 TIGER file and a road file from the Louisiana DOTD to identify parish road segments. The selected road segments were classified into three types: Interstates, US & State routes, and Local roads. A site number reflecting the region, parish, and highway type was assigned to each road segment. Rural roads were excluded from the sample in parishes that were not within Metropolitan Statistical Areas as well as other non-public roads, unnamed roads, unpaved roads, vehicular trails, access ramps, cul-de-sacs, traffic circles, and service drives. Probability sampling using vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in regions, parishes, and road segments was used to determine site locations for interstates and US and State highways. Local road segments were designated using simple random sampling (Schneider, 2013). The 2012 redesign used the number of crashes on local roads as a substitute for VMT. After implementation and analysis of the newly redesigned 2012 survey, it was determined that crash counts on local roads should not be used as a

reliable method of local road site selection due to misspellings of road names on crash reports (Schneider, 2013). As a result, the 2013 design used random sampling instead of VMT to select local road segments. This change in local road site selection resulted in the relocation of several local road sites used in the 2012 survey. The majority of Interstate and US and State road sites used in 2013 remained consistent with the 2012 survey. All the elements in the 2012-2013 redesigns were approved by NHTSA.

Road segment information provided in the redesign appendix was used to pinpoint each site (Schneider, 2013). The exact observation locations (i.e. where data collectors stood to observe vehicles) were selected by trained observers upon arrival to the sites. Site maps drawn by observers in 2012 were used to replicate exact observation locations on Interstate, US and State roads, and re-occurring Local road segments. Site maps were also drawn of the new local road site locations used in the 2013 survey. The site maps used and created this year will be used for the 2014 survey in an effort to replicate the methodology.

Scheduling

Observation sites were organized into clusters of two to seven sites based on geographical proximity. Each cluster was randomly assigned a single day of week for observation. The first site to be surveyed in each cluster was also randomly assigned. A time efficient route, starting with the randomly selected first site, was developed to determine the order of the remaining sites in the cluster.

Observers were given a schedule and mapped route for each cluster. The schedule specified site order, day of week, name and length of road segment to observe, and latitude and longitude. The direction of traffic to observe was determined randomly by a coin flip performed by the observer upon initial arrival to the site location.

Observations were prescheduled on all days of the week during daylight hours between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Observers were provided with a time frame to use as a guide to schedule sites throughout the day. Depending on the number of sites in a cluster, the time from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. was divided into nearly equal-length time periods. For example, for five-site days, time of day was specified as one of five time periods, such as 7:00 – 9:00 a.m., 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., and 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Also, for six-site days, time of day was specified as one of six time periods, such as 7:00 – 8:45 a.m., 8:45 – 10:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., 12:15 – 2:30 p.m., 2:30 – 4:15 p.m., and 4:15 – 6:00 p.m. Exact timing of the periods was subject to adjustment, but ultimately resulted in approximately an equal number of sites being observed throughout the individual 7 a.m. – 6 p.m. time frames. In all cases, each survey period lasted exactly one hour and was required to take place entirely within the broader allowable time period.

The time period and day of week of observation sites remained consistent with the 2012 survey. The time period and day of week assigned to each observation site will remain the same from year-to-year in as much as possible in order to replicate the previous year's survey.

Observers

Observers were hired and trained exclusively by PRG. Most have conducted seat belt observations for PRG in previous surveys, and all were trained to the specific requirements for the Louisiana survey. Prior to any data collection, procedures specific to the Louisiana survey were explained to observers in a training session. Observers participated in hours of supervised street-side practice prior to conducting observations in the field. Additionally, observers were trained how to handle themselves in conditions, such as bad weather or temporary traffic impediments, which can require observation rescheduling and what to do to reschedule sites. Eleven observers operated individually and two quality control monitors were utilized.

Data collectors documented details of each new site location upon arrival using a Site Map Form (see Appendix A). Site maps include information on where to stand to make observations, the direction of traffic flow to observe, a point of reference, and any prominent landmarks (names of intersecting roadways, traffic lights, nearby buildings, etc.). If an observer returned to a site used in the 2012 survey, the site map drawn last year was used to pinpoint the exact location to stand and conduct observations as was done by observers last year. Data collectors observed 60 minutes at each location.

Observation Site Details

Each location for data observation was tentatively selected based on detailed maps and available on-line information such as satellite images and ground-level photos. When convenient, potential site locations were visited in advance. The complete road segments were also described by map details such as road name or number and segment length.

Preference was given to observation points where traffic appeared to naturally slow or stop. For street locations, and assuming they represent segments with generally equivalent traffic along the entire segment, a suitable observation point closest to the latitude and longitude mapped pinpoint was sought but any location along the segment where accurate observations could be made was accepted. Preferred locations were those that are near intersections which may cause vehicles to slow, increasing the time for observation and improving data completeness and accuracy. However, observation sites were not confined to intersections only. In some cases, traffic was observed at or near exit ramps for limited access highway segments at a point where traffic slowed enough to allow reliable and accurate observations to be made.

Data Collection Procedures

Motorcycles and passenger vehicles with a gross vehicle weight up to 10,000 pounds were included in the survey. Passenger vehicle drivers, right front seat passengers (excluding children in child safety seats), rear seat passengers 13 years of age and older, as well as motorcycle operators and passengers, were observed for seat belt use or helmet use. Observers noted vehicle type (Car, Truck, SUV, Van, Motorcycle), sex of drivers and passengers, race (white, black, Hispanic, other) of drivers and passengers, and belt use on the data collection form. A copy of the data collection form can be found in Appendix A.

Observers recorded pertinent site information on the data collection form including site number and exact roadway location, observer's initials, date, day of week, time, weather condition, and direction of traffic flow. Each one-page form includes space to record information on 25 vehicles. When more than 25 observations were made at a site, additional sheets were used and all sheets for the observation site-period were fastened together. When qualified passengers were present, data was recorded even if "Unknown"; passenger fields in the data form are left blank only if no qualified passenger is present.

Observers were instructed to reschedule data collection at the same site for the same time of day and day of week if data could not be collected at a site due to a temporary problem such as bad weather or a traffic impediment. If the site could not be used due to a more permanent factor such as construction, an adjoining road segment was used. If the adjoining road segment was compromised, the next available alternate of the same road type in the same parish was used.

Quality Control

Quality control monitors conducted random, unannounced visits to 19 observation sites. The monitors ensured that the observer was in place and making observations during the scheduled observation period. As noted above, PRG has had extensive experience in training seat belt use observers. All observers, whether or not new to the task, received training which included both classroom instruction and field (road-side) practice.

All observation data were reviewed when received and no anomalies were found, suggesting the data does not reflect anything other than proper on-site seat belt use observations. Some cues to the contrary would include repeating patterns within the observation data, unusual proportions of vehicle type, driver or passenger sex, presence of passengers, seat belt use, excessive unknown seat belt use, or very high or low total numbers of observations. Some variation in these values is normal, of course. If any suspicious data patterns had been noted, PRG would have followed up to verify whether observations were done properly or not. Invalid data would be replaced in such cases. Again, no problems were detected and, thus, corrective actions were not necessary for these survey iterations.

Building a Data Set

Observation data were keypunched by Preusser Research Group, Inc. staff into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. A thorough check of the data indicated minimal coding or key-punch errors, all of which were corrected pre-analysis. The data set was then forwarded to Dr. Helmut Schneider for analyses and the calculation of weighted rates and results.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Data collectors observed seat belt and motorcycle helmet use at 336 sites in 38 parishes divided into 8 regions across the State. Table 1 delineates the site distribution by region. The eight regions represent the following areas: New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Houma, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Shreveport, and Monroe.

TABLE 1.
Number of Observation Sites by Region, 2013

Region	Sites per the Design	Sites Completed
1-New Orleans	62	62
2-Baton Rouge	86	86
3-Houma	32	32
4-Lafayette	54	54
5-Lake Charles	25	25
6-Alexandria	16	16
7-Shreveport	46	46
8-Monroe	15	15
State Total	**336**	**336**

There were no sites in the 2013 survey that resulted in zero belt use observations and no sites were compromised to the point that an alternative site needed to be used. Road construction was present at one site that compromised the exact location where the observer stood during the 2012 survey. This year the observer moved to an adjacent road segment and was able to collect the same flow of traffic as was measured in 2012.

Seat belt use information was recorded for 57,946 front seat occupants over the eight regions. The distribution of those occupants by region, including occupant type, is displayed in Table 2. Table 3 represents the distribution of observed vehicle types by region.

TABLE 2.

Number of Louisiana Front Seat Occupants Recorded by Region, 2013

Region	Drivers	Passengers	Total
1-New Orleans	9,306	2,045	11,351
2-Baton Rouge	13,610	3,296	16,906
3-Houma	5,254	1,306	6,560
4-Lafayette	5,783	1,300	7,083
5-Lake Charles	2,509	640	3,149
6-Alexandria	1,788	430	2,218
7-Shreveport	6,669	1,577	8,246
8-Monroe	1,966	467	2,433
LA Total	**46,885**	**11,061**	**57,946**

TABLE 3.

Distribution of Vehicle Type* by Region, 2013

Region	%Car	%Truck	%SUV	%Van
1-New Orleans	42.1%	22.6%	28.9%	6.3%
2-Baton Rouge	41.2%	27.6%	25.8%	5.4%
3-Houma	39.2%	33.6%	21.9%	5.3%
4-Lafayette	36.6%	36.2%	22.4%	4.8%
5-Lake Charles	34.1%	33.4%	27.1%	5.4%
6-Alexandria	37.7%	33.6%	23.2%	5.5%
7-Shreveport	38.8%	31.1%	24.2%	5.8%
8-Monroe	38.9%	29.3%	25.8%	6.0%
LA Total	**39.6%**	**29.5%**	**25.3%**	**5.6%**

**Unknown vehicle type not included*

Information was collected on occupant sex and race/ethnicity. Tables 4 and 5 display these characteristics by region for front seat occupants. In the event a characteristic was unclear to the observer, "unsure" was recorded on the data form.

TABLE 4.
Distribution of Occupant Sex* by Region, 2013

Region	%Males	%Females
1-New Orleans	55.7%	44.3%
2-Baton Rouge	53.0%	47.0%
3-Houma	57.5%	42.5%
4-Lafayette	56.5%	43.5%
5-Lake Charles	53.7%	46.3%
6-Alexandria	54.4%	45.6%
7-Shreveport	57.0%	43.0%
8-Monroe	52.8%	47.2%
LA Total	**55.1%**	**44.9%**

**Unsure sex not included*

TABLE 5.
Distribution of Occupant Race/Ethnicity* by Region, 2013

Region	%White	%Black	%Hispanic	%Other
1-New Orleans	65.9%	28.5%	4.2%	1.5%
2-Baton Rouge	67.5%	27.5%	3.7%	1.3%
3-Houma	69.8%	23.7%	5.8%	0.8%
4-Lafayette	72.6%	23.0%	3.4%	1.0%
5-Lake Charles	85.5%	11.0%	2.6%	0.9%
6-Alexandria	73.9%	22.7%	2.9%	0.5%
7-Shreveport	67.7%	29.3%	2.0%	1.0%
8-Monroe	73.5%	25.5%	0.6%	0.5%
LA Total	**69.6%**	**25.8%**	**3.5%**	**1.1%**

**Unsure race/ethnicity not included*

Occupant Seat Belt Use Estimates and Descriptive Results - Based on Weighted Calculations

The 2013 Louisiana seat belt use rate, for drivers and passengers combined, is 82.5%, with a standard error of 0.65%. This 2013 weighted estimate represents Louisiana's highest recorded statewide measurement to date, up 3.2 percentage points from 2012 (79.3%). Table 6 shows use rate by region, with their respective standard sample error. Usage varied from a low of 78.1% in the New Orleans area to a high of 91.0% in the Lake Charles area. These estimates and all other descriptive rates that follow are based on weighted results.

TABLE 6.
Front Seat Occupant Seat Belt Use Estimates by Region, 2013

Region	Estimate	STD Error
1-New Orleans	78.1%	1.3%
2-Baton Rouge	82.7%	1.4%
3-Houma	85.5%	2.0%
4-Lafayette	81.7%	1.5%
5-Lake Charles	91.0%	1.8%
6-Alexandria	83.4%	3.1%
7-Shreveport	83.6%	1.7%
8-Monroe	81.0%	3.2%
LA total	**82.5%**	**0.65%**

Table 7 examines overall occupant belt use weighted by roadway type and shows that belt use was highest on Interstates (87.1%) and US or State roadways (85.8%), which typically have higher traffic densities and higher rates of speed traveled. Observers measured the lowest usage on Local Roads (81.7%), which are roadways usually found within neighborhoods in city limits.

TABLE 7.
Louisiana Front Seat Occupant Belt Use Estimates by Road Type, 2013

Road Type	Estimate	STD Error
Interstate	87.1%	0.5%
US & State	85.8%	0.7%
Local Road	81.7%	0.8%

Louisiana has traditionally examined seat belt use rates by Louisiana State Police Troop area designations. Table 8 shows use rates per Troop area, along with their standard error.

TABLE 8.
Louisiana Front Seat Occupant Belt Use Estimates by Troop, 2013

Troop	Estimate	STD Error
A	82.8%	1.5%
B	75.9%	1.6%
C	88.5%	2.1%
D	91.0%	1.8%
E	83.2%	3.0%
F	81.1%	3.1%
G	83.7%	1.8%
I	81.7%	1.5%
L	80.1%	2.1%

Table 9 presents belt use estimates for drivers, passengers, and all occupants by parish. The parish use rates presented here, although weighted, should be interpreted with caution. The overall survey design was not intended to provide single parish belt use rates but rather a single, statewide use rate. There is larger variance and standard error with respect to occupant usage at the parish levels due to the lower sample sizes.

TABLE 9.
Louisiana Driver & Front Seat Passenger Seat Belt Use Estimates by Parish, 2013

Parish	Driver	STD Error	Passenger	STD Error	All Front Seat	STD Error
Acadia	70.0%	3.6%	84%	6%	72.5%	3.4%
Ascension	85.6%	5.5%	93%	3%	86.8%	4.8%
Assumption	79.8%	3.6%	67%	11%	78.2%	3.9%
Beauregard	96%	2%	96%	3%	95.8%	1.8%
Bossier	83.2%	4.9%	87%	9%	83.8%	4.3%
Caddo	83.7%	2.0%	84%	4%	83.7%	2.0%
Calcasieu	87%	3.2%	82%	7%	85.5%	3.3%
De Soto	80%	2.6%	81%	5%	80.5%	2.5%
East Baton Rouge	86%	1.5%	81%	3%	84.6%	1.5%
Evangeline	73.1%	4.5%	77%	7%	74.0%	4.1%

Parish	Driver	STD Error	Passenger	STD Error	All Front Seat	STD Error
Iberia	80.8%	3.5%	82%	6%	81.0%	3.3%
Iberville	80.8%	2.4%	84%	5%	81.3%	2.4%
Jefferson	80.2%	1.3%	82%	3%	80.5%	1.3%
Jefferson Davis	89.8%	3.7%	91%	7%	90.1%	3.3%
Lafayette	77.2%	3.2%	78%	8%	77.3%	3.3%
Lafourche	88.0%	2.3%	90%	5%	88.3%	2.1%
Lincoln	83.2%	2.3%	84%	6%	83.2%	2.0%
Livingston	83.7%	3.3%	64%	7%	79.2%	3.6%
Natchitoches	79.2%	2.0%	77%	4%	78.9%	2.0%
Orleans	74.9%	2.9%	71%	6%	73.9%	2.8%
Ouachita	81.4%	3.3%	80%	7%	81.1%	3.4%
Pointe Coupee	78.5%	3.0%	66%	6%	75.8%	3.1%
Rapides	81.3%	4.1%	86%	6%	82.5%	3.6%
Sabine	82.9%	2.4%	82%	5%	82.7%	2.4%
St. Charles	64.0%	6.8%	90%	9%	68.8%	6.3%
St. James	85.2%	2.9%	85%	6%	85.2%	2.9%
St. John	83.8%	4.2%	90%	6%	85.4%	4.0%
St. Landry	86.6%	2.0%	79%	4%	84.8%	2.1%
St. Martin	87.9%	1.9%	96%	2%	89.9%	1.5%
St. Mary	66.2%	7.0%	58%	16%	64.8%	7.5%
St. Tammany	81.0%	2.4%	75%	5%	79.8%	2.4%
Tangipahoa	83.5%	1.3%	82%	3%	83.1%	1.3%
Terrebonne	93.8%	1.6%	87%	2%	93.0%	1.6%
Union	81.7%	7.9%	77%	14%	80.4%	8.7%
Vermillion	86.6%	2.1%	90%	4%	87.2%	1.9%
Vernon	90.1%	1.5%	88%	3%	89.7%	1.5%
Washington	75.7%	3.0%	69%	11%	75.0%	3.1%
West Baton Rouge	79.3%	3.0%	65%	8%	77.0%	3.3%

The 2013 survey also captured occupant gender and race/ethnicity characteristics along with vehicle type. Table 10 provides both driver and passenger use rate estimates for these characteristics.

TABLE 10.
Louisiana Front Seat Belt Use Estimates by Sex, Race, and Vehicle Type, 2013

	% Use Rate					
	Driver		Passenger		All Front Seat	
	Estimate	STD Error	Estimate	STD Error	Estimate	STD Error
Sex						
Male	78.8%	1.0%	76.8%	2.2%	78.5%	1.0%
Female	87.8%	0.9%	84.3%	1.7%	87.0%	0.8%
Race						
White	84.9%	0.8%	85.8%	1.5%	85.0%	0.7%
Black	78.7%	1.3%	72.7%	2.7%	77.4%	1.3%
Hispanic	81.9%	5.4%	84.8%	8.2%	82.6%	4.7%
Other	85.5%	4.8%	89.0%	9.1%	85.9%	6.6%
Vehicle Type						
Car	85.0%	1.0%	81.5%	2.1%	84.3%	1.0%
Pick-up	76.4%	1.4%	73.7%	2.9%	75.9%	1.4%
SUV	86.1%	1.3%	87.2%	2.4%	86.3%	1.2%
Van	86.3%	2.7%	85.4%	4.6%	86.0%	2.8%

Rear Seat Belt Use

Rear seat belt use was estimated in response to Regular Session 2008, Senate Resolution No. 165 by Senator Walsworth.[2] A total of 409 rear seat occupants were observed in the 2013 survey. Table 11 presents the distribution of rear seat observations by vehicle type.

[2] Senate Resolution No. 165 (2008) directed the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission to study the need for all occupants of a motor vehicle thirteen years of age and older to wear a safety belt. An amendment to Louisiana's seat belt law was made during the 2009 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature. The amendment expanded the State's primary seat belt law to include rear seat occupants 13 years of age and older and went into effect August 15, 2009 (McKenzie, III, 2011). Prior to the law change, in 2008, rear seat belt use among rear seat passengers was estimated. The 2010 statewide survey was the first full-scale Louisiana statewide survey to cover both front and rear seat passengers. Statewide surveys in 2011 and 2013 also included rear seat occupants.

Table 11.
Number of Rear Seat Observations by Vehicle Type, 2013

Auto	Pickup	SUV	Van	Total
217	63	75	54	409

Weighted estimates of belt use for rear seat occupants, thirteen years of age or older, are presented in Table 12. The estimates presented in the table below display use rates by survey year and vehicle type. The use rate in 2013 is 53.0%, 0.8% lower than the 2011 estimate (53.8%) and still much higher than a pre-legislation estimate measured in 2008 (27.2%).

Table 12.
Louisiana Rear Passenger Seat Belt Use Rate, 2008-2011 & 2013

	Auto	Pickup	SUV	Van	Total
Rear Seat 2008	27.3%	12.5%	31.3%	29.4%	27.2%
Rear Seat 2010	50.0%	47.8%	77.2%	90.7%	58.4%
Rear Seat 2011	46.0%	40.3%	71.4%	93.6%	53.8%
Rear Seat 2013	33.3%	49.6%	72.6%	69.3%	53.0%

The raw, un-weighted use estimate for this group measured 54.8%. Table 13 shows the un-weighted rear seat use rates per region.

Table 13.
Louisiana Rear Passenger Seat Belt Use Rate by Region, 2013

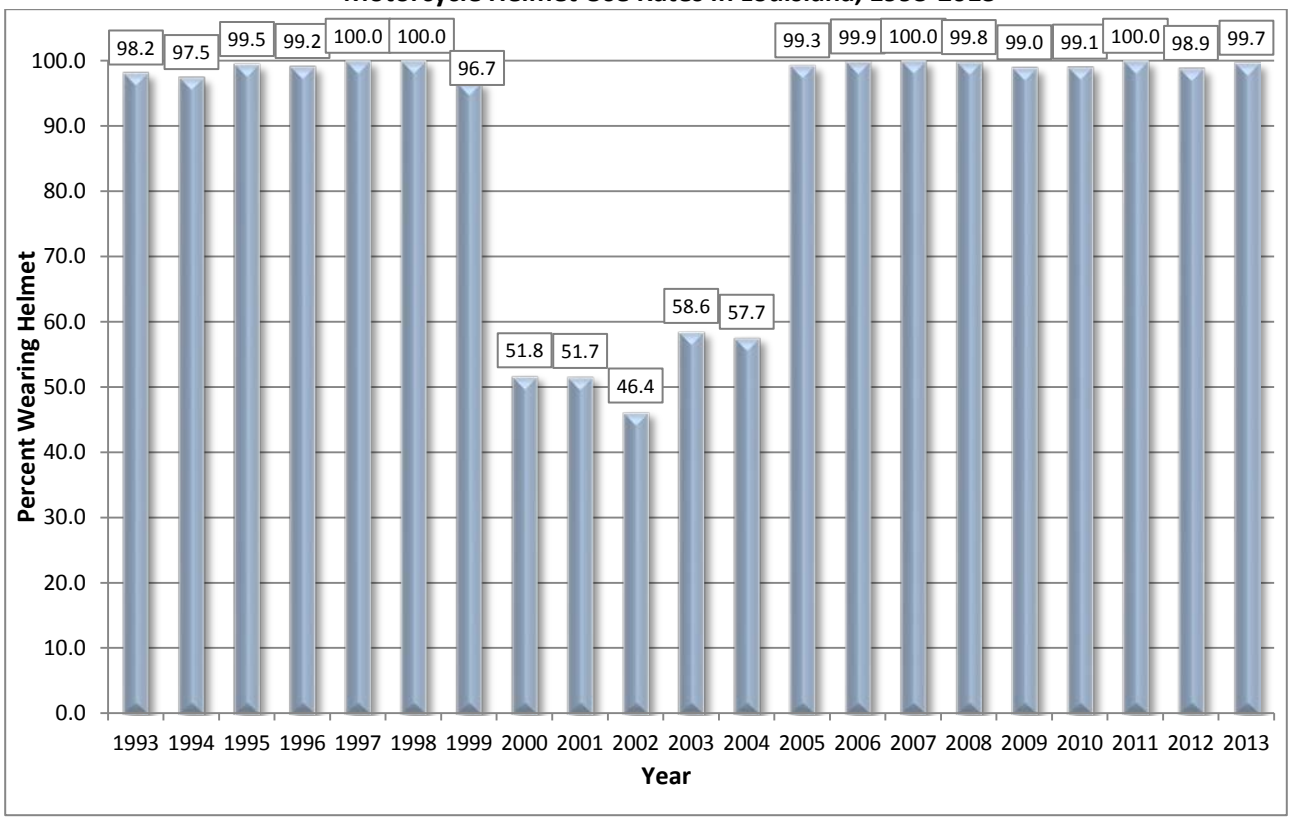
Region	Estimate*	STD Error
1-New Orleans	56.9%	6.1%
2-Baton Rouge	56.5%	4.3%
3-Houma	69.2%	9.1%
4-Lafayette	45.0%	7.9%
5-Lake Charles	70.0%	8.4%
6-Alexandria	66.7%	11.1%
7-Shreveport	40.8%	5.8%
8-Monroe	53.6%	9.4%
LA total	**54.8%**	**2.5%**

**Un-weighted*

Motorcycle Helmet Use

Observed helmet use consistently measured at high levels, from 1993 to 1999. However, soon after the 1999 measurement, the Louisiana legislature modified the then existing mandatory helmet law, providing exemption to those riders who could provide proof of adequate medical coverage. In the following year (2000), the recorded helmet use rate fell significantly and remained comparatively low until the year following the reinstatement of the law (2005). In 2013, surveyors recorded information on 335 motorcycles, including 335 operators and 47 passengers. The helmet use estimate, which includes both operators and passengers, is 99.7%. This rate is in line with helmet use rates measured after the reinstatement of the mandatory helmet law in August of 2004. Figure 2 presents a trend graph of helmet use over time.

Figure 2.
Motorcycle Helmet Use Rates in Louisiana, 1993-2013

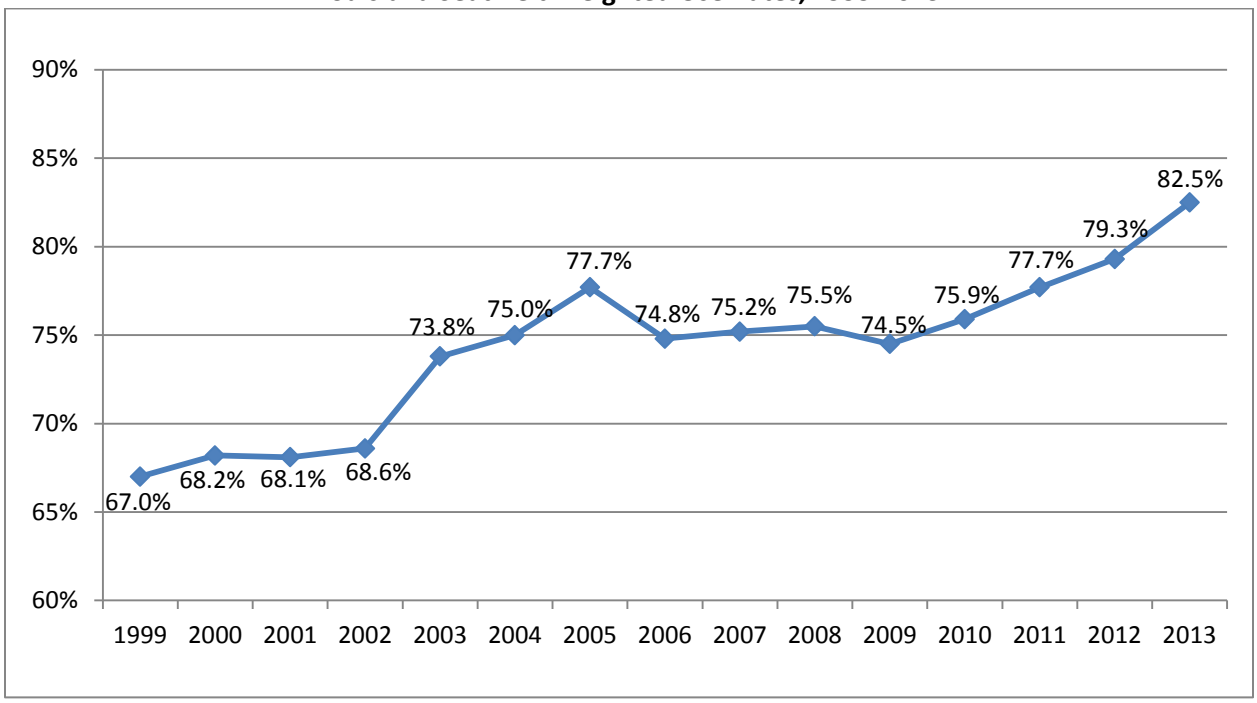


CONCLUSION

Louisiana achieved an all-time high in front seat belt use for 2013. The reported rate of 82.5% is an increase of 3.2 percentage points from the 2012 use rate of 79.3% (Figure 3). Seat belt use in Louisiana has increased 8.0 percentage points over the last four years.

Helmet use rates in Louisiana have changed dramatically with changes in the helmet law. After reinstatement of the universal helmet law in 2004, motorcycle helmet use has remained at or above 98.9%.

Figure 3.
Louisiana Seat Belt Weighted Use Rates, 1999-2013



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Appendix A

Copy of:

Seat Belt/Helmet Use Observation Data Form

Seat Belt/Helmet Use Observation Data Form

SITE NUMBER:_____ **SITE:**_____ **OBSERVER INITIALS:**_____

DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC FLOW: N S E W

CHECK ONE: _____**DAYTIME** _____**NIGHTTME**

DATE: _____-_____-_____ **DAY OF WEEK:**_____

START TIME:_____**AM / PM (Observation period will last exactly 60 minutes)**

WEATHER CONDITIONS

1 Clear/Sunny

4 Fog

	VEHICLE		DRIVER		PASSENGER			REAR SEAT
Veh. #	**Veh. Type** C=Car T=Truck S=SUV V=Van M=Motorcycle	**Sex** M=Male F=Female U=Unsure	**Race** W=White B=Black H=Hispanic O=Other U=Unsure	**Belt/ Helmet Use** + = Yes - = No U = Unsure	**Sex** M=Male F=Female U=Unsure	**Race** W=White B=Black H=Hispanic O=Other U=Unsure	**Belt/ Helmet Use** + = Yes - = No U = Unsure	**Sex/Race/Use** (13+ years old) Example: M W +
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
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24								
25								

Pg:_____ **of** _____

Seat Belt Observation Data Form (back)

Location:_____

(Street) **(Cross Street or other landmark)**

Site #: _____

Notes:

_____

_____

Diagram: