

**PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TEXAS MANDATORY  
SAFETY BELT USE LAW**

by

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## Executive Summary

Since the enactment of the 1985 Texas Mandatory Use Law, a large percentage of Texans have been using their safety belts. According to a 1988 Texas Transportation Institute survey of 18 cities, the combined average of safety belt use was approximately 59 percent. A telephone survey of drivers in 2040 households in Texas was conducted in June of 1988 in order to better understand why Texans are buckling up in a relatively large numbers. Further, information was sought as to the reasons for noncompliance. The survey was designed to specifically assess attitudes toward and knowledge pertaining to the safety belt law, perceptions of enforcement, self-reported use, and opinions regarding techniques to improve safety belt use.

In general, Texans support the mandatory safety belt law. Approximately 83 percent of the survey respondents reported that they favored the law. Overall the law was more often favored by women, urban residents, Hispanics, respondents with lower and middle incomes, respondents who drive fewer miles per year, respondents who do not drive after drinking, respondents who have had few accidents, and seat belt users. The major reason for supporting the law was because they believed the law reduced injuries and saved lives. In fact, 41 percent of the respondents said the law is very effective in saving lives and reducing injuries, and another 47 percent said the law is somewhat effective. However, among those that opposed the safety belt law, 55 percent stated that the law was an infringement on their personal freedom, and approximately 17 percent responded that seat belts are uncomfortable or inconvenient to use.

Approximately 62 percent of the survey participants reported that they wear their safety belts all the time, while 88 percent said they wear their seat belts at least most of the time, if not all of the time. The respondents who were more likely to report wearing their seat belts tended to be older, women, urban residents, college graduates, people who do not drive, those who do not drink and drive or ride others that do, and those who have

fewer accidents and violations.

In general, the respondents were aware of the penalties for not wearing seat belts. However, 31 percent of those surveyed over-estimated the fine for not wearing a seat belt, while 15 percent could not give an estimate for the correct fine. A large percentage (78 percent) of the respondents knew that Texas is a primary enforcement state, and about 64 percent perceived that the law is being enforced as strictly or more strictly than immediately following its implementation. The most preferred method to increase seat belt usage was to publicize stories about people who had been saved by wearing seat belts. Thus, promotional efforts through usage policies were more often supported than consequential measures.

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**Public Attitudes Toward The  
Texas Mandatory Safety Belt Use Law**

INTRODUCTION

The Texas Transportation Institute began collecting safety belt use data in 12 urban areas in 1985, prior to the enactment of the Texas Mandatory Use Law. At that time, voluntary safety belt use ranged from three percent to 28 percent across the 12 cities. In December of 1985, the Mandatory Use Law was implemented. Safety belt observations in 1986 for 14 cities (including the original 12 cities) jumped to an average of 67 percent, with several cities showing usage rates in the 70 percent range. Only one city fell below the 60 percent range. During successive survey years, the combined average usage rates have decreased somewhat, as would be expected, based on the experience of other States. There has also been a great deal more variance between the averages for the individual cities since the 1986 survey. However, the combined average for 18 cities surveyed in 1988 was 59 percent, and three cities were greater than 70 percent.

The Texas experience has not been unique with regard to changes in response to the safety belt law. For example, North Carolina experienced an increase of 52 percentage points from a pre-law observed usage rate of 24 percent to a post-law rate of 70 percent immediately upon enactment. The fall-off in North Carolina has been to approximately 60 percent (Hunter, 1988) as well. However, as pointed out by Hunter (1988), different levels of usage have emerged in other States following safety belt

legislation. An example of minimal change is Idaho, where prior to their safety belt law, a usage rate of 16 percent was observed and post-law observations have shown rates of 25 percent or less.

A survey of Texas drivers was undertaken as a step toward understanding why Texans are buckling up in relatively large numbers. Further, information was sought as to reasons for non-compliance. The survey was designed to assess attitudes toward and knowledge pertaining to the safety belt law, perceptions of enforcement, self-reported use, and opinions regarding techniques to improve safety belt use.

## SURVEY METHOD

A telephone survey of drivers in 2024 households in Texas was conducted in June of 1988. The survey instrument used was an adapted version of a prototype instrument developed at the Highway Safety Research Center in North Carolina. Several questions were modified to more appropriately address the Texas situation, and the ordering of the questions was adjusted somewhat. However, the results from this survey were intended to be suitable for comparisons with other States that implement the North Carolina instrument.

The following topics were included in the questionnaire:

- Attitudes toward the safety belt law
- Primary reasons for attitudes toward the law
- Self-reported wearing behavior before and after the law
- Perceptions of belt usage
- Perceptions of enforcement of the safety belt law
- Awareness of belt issues through the media
- Strategies for increasing safety belt use
- Demographic characteristics
- Driver characteristics

The questionnaire and response frequencies are included as Appendix A.

### Survey Administration

The telephone survey was administered by the Public Policy Resources Laboratory at Texas A&M University. Calls were made between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., Monday through Friday and on weekends

between 1 p.m. and 9 p.m.

The survey sample was selected from among all working blocks of all telephone exchanges in Texas using a random sampling procedure whereby telephone numbers were computer generated. After a residential household was reached, randomization within the household was enhanced using the "last birthday" method. With this method, the interviewer asked to speak to the person 16 years of age or older who had the most recent birthday. This technique is intended to diminish the bias introduced into telephone surveys by the propensity of certain household members to answer the phone most often.

At least four attempts were made to reach a respondent at each telephone number. The cooperation rate was 82 percent. In other words, of all the households where contact was made, 82 percent responded to the survey.

The respondents were asked to answer 56 questionnaire items. Thirty-six questions were related to the topic of safety belts. These questions were followed by thirteen demographic questions. An additional seven questions concerned driver related characteristics and experiences. The telephone interviews averaged approximately 10 minutes in duration.

#### Sample Characteristics

The sample surveyed represented a reasonable approximation of the driving population of the State of Texas. The number interviewed, 2024, was of sufficient size that sampling error was 4 percent. In other words, in 95 of 100 such samples, the

results should differ by no more than 2 percentage points in either direction from what was obtained through this survey.

Over sampling was performed in 12 cities. These 12 cities were of special interest as sites where observation data, citation data, and information about program activities were available for several points in time. A sample size of at least 100 in each of these 12 cities was desired to enable analysis to be conducted at the city level. The results of this analysis are reported in Mounce (1988).

The completed data set was adjusted to account for the over sampling in the 12 cities. A weight factor was applied to adjust the value of each response from the 12 cities so that when the data is used to describe statewide opinions, each respondent's contribution is given the proportion it should have based on its share of the population.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of demographic variables for the sample. As indicated in the table, 45 percent of the respondents were male and 55 percent of the respondents were female. Females are more likely to be over-represented in telephone surveys for several reasons. First, there are slightly more females than males in the population. Second, there are more single person households that are female, thus increasing the likelihood of contacting females. Finally, previous research has shown that females are less apt to refuse to participate in surveys than males.

The ethnic composition of the survey sample was fairly comparable to the statewide population composition. In the 1985

Census Bureau estimates Hispanics represented 21 percent of the Texas population and Blacks represented 12 percent. Therefore, the sample representation is only about two and four percent less than the approximate representation for the State for Blacks and Hispanics. Anglos were over-represented by about three percent.

The age breakdown of the survey sample was not skewed toward any singular age group. Respondents were asked to report their age in years and the data was subsequently grouped. The median age was 37.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Sample

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<u>Gender</u>	
	%
Male	45.2
Female	54.8
<u>Ethnicity</u>	
Anglo	67.2
Black	8.4
Hispanic	19.4
Other	5.0
<u>Age</u>	
16-25	20.1
26-35	25.8
36-45	18.2
46-55	11.6
56-65	10.0
Over 65	14.0

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Table 2 describes several socioeconomic characteristics of the survey sample. Again, the sample was not skewed toward any particular socioeconomic level, and all were reasonably represented in the survey.

Other informational characteristics of the survey sample were obtained. These data indicated that 57 percent of the respondents were married. At least 58 percent of the respondents were native Texans. Seventy-seven percent reported they were registered to vote.

Table 2. Survey Sample Socioeconomic Characteristics

---

<u>Education Levels</u>	
	%
Less than high school	22.5
High school graduate	32.3
Some college	23.1
College degree(s)	22.1
<u>Income Levels</u>	
Under \$10,000	18.8
\$10,000 to \$19,999	20.3
\$20,000 to \$29,999	21.2
\$30,000 to \$39,999	14.4
\$40,000 to \$49,999	8.4
\$50,000 and above	16.9
<u>Occupations</u>	
White Collar	
Blue Collar	

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In summary, the sample characteristics were, on the whole, fairly representative of the Texas adult household population. Although more females than males were surveyed, this can be considered an anomaly associated with the telephone survey technique. However, this characteristic of the sample should be noted because females have been found to be more frequent safety belt users in Texas and therefore would be expected to have more favorable attitudes toward safety belt use. This over-

representation was not considered to be a problem since the focus of the survey was on the determination of prevailing attitudes and their relationships to demographic characteristics of the population. Although any attitude reported for the entire sample may have been influenced by the female contribution, the analysis documents differences by gender where they were significant.

## OVERVIEW OF SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the survey were divided into six subject areas. Each subject area is enumerated and highlights of the results are summarized below. Detailed results and crosstabulation analyses are included in the following chapter.

1. Attitudes Toward the Law--Texans overwhelmingly support the seat belt law. This was demonstrated by the fact that over 83 percent of those surveyed reported they favor the law. Specifically, the percentages for each response category concerning the Texas law requiring drivers and front seat passengers to use seat belts were the following:

<u>Attitude Toward the Law</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Favor	66.7
Favor	16.5
Neutral	4.0
Oppose	5.2
Strongly Oppose	7.5
Don't Know	0.1

In general, the law was more often favored by respondents with the following demographic characteristics:

- females
- urban residents
- Hispanics
- lower and middle income
- respondents who drive fewer miles per year
- respondents who do not drive after drinking
- respondents who have had few accidents
- seat belt users

Most people who favor the law do so because they believe that seat belts save lives and/or reduce injuries. This was further

shown by the participants responses to the following opinion that "Seat belts save lives and reduce injuries":

<u>Seat Belts Save Lives And Reduce Injuries</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Agree	42.9
Agree	48.9
Neutral	5.2
Disagree	1.8
Strongly Disagree	0.6

Many of those who oppose the law see the law as an infringement on their personal freedom (mentioned by 55 percent of the respondents). However, when the respondents were specifically asked their opinion concerning "The decision to wear a seat belt should be a matter of personal choice, not required by law" the responses were the following:

<u>Seat Belt Usage Should be a Personal Choice</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Agree	12.8
Agree	28.0
Neutral	8.2
Disagree	40.9
Strongly Disagree	9.2

Others oppose the law because they feel that seat belts are uncomfortable or inconvenient to use (mentioned by 17 percent of the sample). Overall, about half of the respondents agreed that seat belts are inconvenient or uncomfortable to use. Specifically the percentages for each response for the opinion "Seat belts are inconvenient or uncomfortable to use" were:

<u>Seat Belts are Inconvenient or Uncomfortable</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Agree	8.1
Agree	40.4
Neutral	8.4
Disagree	34.1
Strongly Disagree	8.4
Don't Know	0.5

The telephone survey did not focus on the mandatory child restraint use law. However, one question was included for comparison purposes. Although observation surveys in Texas have not revealed high usage rates for child restraints corresponding to seat belt usage rates, the Texans surveyed reported almost unanimous support for the child restraint law. The percent reported categories for support of child restraint law were:

<u>Support of Child Restraint Law</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Agree	50.6
Agree	45.9
Neutral	0.8
Disagree	1.8
Strongly Disagree	0.2

Opinions of safety belt effectiveness and safety belt use were generally positive. Forty-one percent of the respondents said the law is very effective in saving lives and reducing injuries, and another 47 percent said the law is somewhat effective. The responses were specifically the following with regard to the effectiveness of the seat belt law:

<u>Effectiveness Of Seat Belt Law</u>	<u>%</u>
Very Effective	41.0
Somewhat Effective	47.0
Not Very Effective	4.2
Not At All Effective	1.2
Don't Know	6.6

The responses to statements regarding various seat belt issues are summarized below:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Percent Agreed</u>
Belts are an infringement on rights.	40.8
I support the child restraint law.	96.7
Belts save lives and reduce injuries.	91.8
The seat belt law will reduce the cost to society of accidents and injuries.	78.2
Belts are uncomfortable or inconvenient to use.	48.5
Belts are too loose to protect you in an accident.	16.2
Belts are needed to offset increased injuries due to the higher 65 mph speed limit on Interstate highways.	75.3

It is apparent from the above responses that even though respondents regard the mandatory use of seat belts as a government intrusion, and many feel that the act of wearing belts is inconvenient or uncomfortable, the benefits of wearing safety belts are recognized.

2. Reported Seat Belt Use--61.5 percent of the respondents reported they wear their seat belts all the time. This is very similar to the observed usage rate for 18 cities surveyed in June of 1988 (59.2 percent use). Respondents indicated that a much higher percentage of their friends wear seat belts than the general population of Texas. The average estimate given for seat belt use in Texas by the survey respondents (59 percent) accurately estimated what has been observed in the most recent usage survey.

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents said they wear their seat belts at least most of the time, if not all of the time. Additionally, over 75 percent said they had asked other vehicle occupants to wear seat belts during the previous six months.

Observation surveys have shown that seat belt users are more often in the older age group and female. This pattern also emerged for self-reported use. Other self-reported demographic descriptors of belt wearers included: urban residents, college graduates, people who do not drive, and low risk drivers (i.e., those who do not drink and drive or ride with others that do, those who have fewer accidents and violations).

3. Knowledge of the Safety Belt Law--Only about a third of those surveyed knew the correct fine for a seat belt violation. The fine was over-estimated by 31 percent of the respondents. Essentially the participants responded as follows concerning what they thought the correct fine is for not wearing a seat belt in Texas:

<u>Fine for not Wearing Seat Belt</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than \$50	22.1
\$50-\$60	32.4
\$61-\$99	6.0
\$100-\$200	22.4
Greater than \$200	2.5
Don't Know	14.6

Over 78 percent knew that Texas is a primary enforcement State. In general, their opinion concerning the statement that "police can stop you just for not wearing a seat belt" was as follows:

<u>Police Stop You for Not Wearing Seat Belt</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	78.1
No	14.5
Don't Know	7.4

4. Perceptions of Enforcement--Over 38 percent of those surveyed thought the law was being enforced more strictly at the

time of the survey than when first implemented. The percentages for each response category were:

<u>Strictness of Law Enforcement</u>	<u>%</u>
Much More Strictly	16.7
Somewhat More Strictly	21.7
About The Same	25.8
Somewhat Less Strict	19.9
Much Less Strict	9.0
Don't Know	6.9

Furthermore, 39 percent had either received or knew of someone else who had received a citation or warning for not wearing a seat belt. Specifically the responses for the question asking "Have you, or anyone you know, ever received a ticket or warning for not wearing a seat belt?" were as follows:

<u>Received Ticket or Warning for Not Wearing Safety Belt</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	39.0
No	60.5

5. Strategies for Increasing Safety Belt Use--When asked to evaluate techniques that would be effective in increasing seat belt use, respondents most often supported the suggestion that the media publicize stories about people who were saved by using their belts. Each technique posited was supported by more than half of the respondents. However, the least attractive strategy was to increase the fine for not wearing belts. Promotional efforts through usage policies were more often supported than consequential measures.

6. Belts and the Media--Respondents were queried as to whether or not they had been exposed to seat belt issues via the media. Of particular interest was the finding that 80 percent of

those surveyed had heard something in the media during the previous six months about seat belts having saved someone's life.

### Conclusions

Texans support the mandatory use law for safety belts and they report high rates of usage. This conclusion is not surprising, based on previous observational studies. While most of the characteristics associated with those who favor the law and who wear belts generally followed expected patterns, a few exceptions were found. Hispanics tended to agree more often with positive statements about seat belts and the seat belt law. They also reported more experience with seat belt violations. Miles driven per year yielded some interesting findings as well. Those who drove the most miles tended to have the least favorable attitudes about wearing seat belts. A possible reason for this attitude is the increased discomfort (i.e., back and neck pain) for the seat belt that is associated with long distance driving.

In general, Texans are aware of the penalties for not wearing seat belts, although a significant number perceive them to be greater than they are. For the most part, they are also aware that Texas is a primary enforcement State and perceive that the law is being enforced as strictly or more strictly than immediately following its implementation. Techniques to increase seat belt use other than increasing the fine or the level of enforcement were preferred.

The most preferred method to increase seat belt use was to publicize stories about people who had been saved by wearing seat belts. However, 80 percent of the respondents had heard this

message during the previous six months. The belief that seat belts are effective in saving lives was a primary reason for support of the law and for belt use.

## DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the attitude survey were analyzed according to subject matter. The six areas of interest are described separately in the sections that follow. Chi-square tests of significance were used to identify significant relationships among the variables, with a significance level set at  $p < .05$ .

### Attitudes Toward The Texas Belt Law

The first question that was asked during the interview was: "The Texas law requires drivers and front seat passengers to use seat belts. Please tell me if you favor or oppose the seat belt law." Respondents were then asked how strongly they felt about their opinion. A very high percentage of those surveyed said they strongly favor the law. Overall, 83.2 percent favored the law. The percentages for each response category were:

<u>Attitude Toward the Law</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Favor	1079	66.7
Favor	266	16.5
Neutral	65	4.0
Oppose	84	5.2
Strongly Oppose	121	7.5
Don't Know	2	.1

Demographic and driver characteristics were used to investigate differences among respondent attitudes. The strongest associations were found between favoring the law and females ( $p < .000$ ), persons who travel fewer vehicle miles per year, ( $p < .000$ ), residents of urban areas ( $p < .001$ ), and low risk drivers (i.e., respondents who reported they never drive after

drinking,  $p < .000$ , those who have had fewer accidents with injuries,  $p < .003$ ), and drivers who reported they always wore their seat belts ( $p < .000$ ). Additionally, a greater percentage of Hispanic respondents were in favor of the law ( $p < .01$ ), and there was a relatively moderate association between income and support for the law, with lower and middle income respondents tending to be more in favor of it. Table 3 gives the percentages for each of the demographic and driver related relationships.

When asked for the primary reason they favor or oppose the safety belt law, 73.4 percent of the respondents who favored the law gave a response that indicated they believe belts save lives and/or reduce injuries. Although reasons were given in the respondent's own words, they were coded into the following categories:

<u>Primary Reason For Favoring The Law</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Safety belts save lives/reduce injury	985	73.4
The law will get more people to wear belts	16	1.2
Protection for me and my family	129	9.7
Makes people more safety conscious	11	0.9
Reduces costs (to society) of accidents and injuries	7	0.5
Other	180	13.4
Don't know	12	0.9

Those who opposed the law most often gave as their primary reason the belief that the safety belt law is an infringement of their personal rights. This response was given by 54.9 percent of those who opposed the law. Other reasons given for opposing the law were:

**Table 3. Attitude about the Seat Belt Law by Demographic and Driving Behavior Variables**

	Percent Response				
	<u>Strongly Favor</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>
<u>Gender**</u>					
Male	59.2	18.7	4.6	7.0	10.5
Female	73.1	14.7	3.5	3.7	5.1
<u>Ethnicity *</u>					
Anglo	65.3	16.2	4.5	5.4	8.6
Black	63.8	18.5	2.7	3.5	11.5
Hispanic	74.3	14.0	3.2	5.0	3.6
Other	64.0	26.0	3.3	4.2	2.5
<u>Urban/Rural**</u>					
Urban	70.3	16.0	3.1	4.5	6.1
Rural	61.5	17.2	5.3	6.3	10.0
<u>Seat Belt Usage**</u>					
Always	81.5	11.2	2.0	2.5	2.8
Most of the time	56.6	25.4	5.5	6.0	6.5
Somtimes	17.7	30.3	16.4	19.7	15.9
Rarely	11.4	23.5	8.5	21.3	35.4
Never	5.4	11.8	5.0	8.7	69.1
<u>Miles Driven**</u>					
Don't Drive	77.6	11.5	6.7	4.0	0.3
Less than 10,000	69.6	14.6	4.5	4.0	7.4
10,000 to 30,000	67.6	16.6	3.6	5.1	7.2
Over 30,000	47.8	22.2	4.0	12.5	13.5
<u>Drive After Drinking Alcoholic Beverages**</u>					
Fregently	33.0	36.6	7.8	7.1	15.6
Occasionally	56.4	20.2	4.2	11.1	8.1
Seldom	64.5	18.5	3.8	4.8	8.4
Never	69.7	14.8	3.7	4.6	7.2

Table 3 (con't.).

	Percent Response				
	<u>Strongly Favor</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>
<u>Ride With Other Drivers Drinking Alcoholic Beverages*</u>					
Frequently	62.9	19.6	0.6	12.1	4.9
Occasionally	54.7	21.3	5.9	9.4	8.6
Seldom	65.3	18.6	3.6	4.4	8.0
Never	70.4	14.0	4.0	4.7	7.0
<u>Automobile Accidents in Past 5 Years*</u>					
None	67.4	16.0	4.2	5.1	7.3
1	65.9	18.4	3.0	3.7	9.1
2	67.0	16.3	5.9	3.3	7.5
3 or more					
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>7.5</b>

\*p < .01

\*\*p < .001

<u>Primary Reason For Opposing The Law</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Infringement on rights/Adults should have a choice	114	54.9
Seat belts are uncomfortable/inconvenient	35	16.9
Safety belts don't work/don't help in an accident	12	5.8
Law is not enforceable	3	1.4
There shouldn't be a fine	2	1.1
Other	40	19.4
Don't know	1	0.5

Several of the open-ended responses listed in the two tables above were given as statements in a subsequent section of the questionnaire. Using a Likert scale format, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with statements about the law and statements about seat belts and their use. These questions and the percent response to each are given in Table 4.

As indicated in Table 4, 40.8 percent of the sample agreed with the statement that the seat belt law is an infringement on individual's rights. The number of respondents that agreed with this statement was 662, compared with the 114 who gave this as their primary reason for opposing the law. Although far more people favored the law than opposed it for various reasons, there was still a substantial sentiment that seat belt use should be a matter of personal choice. This sentiment did not extend to the issue of child restraint use, however. Almost 97 percent of the respondents said they supported the Texas law that requires infants and children under four years old to be restrained. Furthermore, this statement received the highest percentage of "strongly agree" responses.

**Table 4. Attitude Questions Pertaining to Seat Belts and the Law**

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neu- tral	Dis- agree	Strongly Disagree
	Percent				
The decision to wear a seat belt should be a matter of personal choice, not required by law.	12.8	28.0	8.2	40.9	9.2
I support the law that requires infants and children under 4 years old to be restrained.	50.8	45.9	0.8	1.8	0.5
Seat belts save lives and reduce injuries.	42.9	48.9	5.2	1.8	0.6
The seat belt law will reduce the costs to society of accidents and injuries.	13.0	65.2	7.4	11.3	0.8
Seat belts are inconvenient or uncomfortable to use.	8.1	40.4	8.4	34.1	8.4
Seat belts don't seem to work--they feel too loose to protect you in an accident.	1.7	14.5	6.2	57.2	18.2
Seat belts are needed to offset the likelihood of increased injuries due to the higher 65 mph speed limit on some Interstate highways.	16.1	59.2	6.7	14.3	1.7

Very few people disagreed with the statement that seat belts save lives and reduce injuries. While only five percent said they had a neutral opinion about it, 92 percent agreed, and two percent disagreed.

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents agreed that the seat belt law will reduce the costs to society of accidents and injuries. Additionally, 75 percent said that seat belts are needed to offset increased injuries due to the increase in the maximum speed limit on interstate highways.

Other arguments often given against belts refer to comfort features. These type arguments were given by 35 respondents as the primary reason they opposed the law. However, 785 (48.5 percent) respondents agreed with the statement that seat belts are inconvenient or uncomfortable to use. This statement had the highest percentage of neutral responses (8.4 percent).

A small percentage of the respondents were of the opinion that seat belts seem too loose to protect vehicle occupants in the event of an accident. The majority (75 percent) disagreed with this statement.

Tables 5 through 11 show the significant relationships between each of the responses to the statements about seat belt issues and the demographic and driving characteristics of the respondents. Table 5 indicates that those most likely to believe that wearing seat belts should be a matter of personal choice were male, Black or Hispanic, older drivers, less educated, blue collar, lower income, rural residents, and native Texans. Further, these were more often people who drove domestic

**TABLE 5. OPINION THAT WEARING A SEAT BELT SHOULD BE A MATTER OF PERSONAL CHOICE BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES**

	Percent Response				
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
<u>Gender***</u>					
Male	18.5	29.2	7.8	35.7	8.8
Female	8.2	27.5	8.7	45.9	9.7
<u>Ethnicity**</u>					
Anglo	14.4	25.7	8.7	40.9	10.2
Black	11.6	34.5	6.7	36.2	11.0
Hispanic	9.8	35.0	7.4	42.6	5.2
Other	6.6	28.5	7.4	49.4	8.2
<u>Age***</u>					
Less than 25	11.6	25.9	12.3	40.8	9.4
25-55	14.1	27.9	8.8	39.0	10.2
>55	11.4	31.3	3.4	46.9	7.0
<u>Education***</u>					
Less than high school	10.5	39.7	7.1	38.4	4.4
High school graduate	14.3	28.5	6.8	44.4	6.0
Some college	12.8	26.1	11.3	36.7	13.2
College graduate	13.5	18.7	8.7	44.2	15.0
<u>Occupation***</u>					
White collar	12.8	23.6	8.5	42.5	12.7
Blue collar	13.9	32.9	7.5	39.0	6.7
<u>Income**</u>					
Under \$10,000	12.5	37.5	6.7	37.3	5.9
\$10,000-\$20,000	10.9	29.1	8.3	42.2	9.5
\$20,000-\$30,000	14.9	25.8	11.4	40.1	7.8
\$30,000-\$40,000	12.2	19.0	4.9	51.8	12.1
\$40,000-\$50,000	12.1	23.6	11.8	38.9	13.6
\$50,000 & over	15.3	27.6	8.8	39.2	9.1

Table 5 (cont'd)

	Percent Response				
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
<u>Urban/Rural***</u>					
Urban	10.6	28.5	7.8	42.1	11.0
Rural	16.4	27.8	9.1	39.9	6.8
<u>Texas Residence*</u>					
Less than 6 years	9.2	21.3	10.1	45.7	13.7
All My Life	13.5	29.0	8.7	41.0	7.9
<u>Seat Belt Usage***</u>					
Always	7.0	23.6	8.2	48.8	12.5
Most of the time	13.1	33.2	11.4	36.4	6.0
Sometimes	25.1	49.4	3.4	22.1	0.0
Rarely	59.2	30.6	1.9	8.3	0.0
Never	62.1	36.8	0.0	1.1	0.0
<u>Miles Driven***</u>					
Don't Drive	4.2	47.5	1.3	41.8	5.1
Less than 10,000	13.0	27.9	7.5	44.8	6.8
10,000-30,000	12.2	25.6	9.9	40.8	11.5
Over 30,000	25.0	31.9	6.6	27.2	9.3
<u>Imported/Domestic Vehicle***</u>					
Imported	9.3	24.9	12.8	39.1	14.0
Domestic	13.9	27.9	7.6	41.9	8.7
<u>Traffic Ticket*</u>					
None	11.9	26.7	8.5	43.0	9.9
1	17.5	25.3	9.4	37.9	10.0
2	17.1	37.8	9.8	31.8	10.8
3 or more	20.8	31.8	4.8	31.8	10.8
<u>Drinking &amp; Driving*</u>					
Frequently	23.8	45.3	8.7	17.8	4.4
Occasionally	17.3	27.5	8.1	41.2	6.0
Seldom	15.1	28.6	11.2	36.6	8.5
Never	11.7	26.1	7.9	43.6	10.6

Table 5 (cont'd)

	Percent Response				
	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
<u>Automobile Accidents**</u>					
None	12.3	28.6	8.3	42.5	8.4
1	14.5	26.1	9.9	40.5	9.1
2	16.2	29.3	4.0	29.9	20.7
3 or more	16.0	34.8	6.7	18.3	24.2
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>9.2</b>

\*p<.05

\*\*p<.01

\*\*\*p<.001

vehicles, drove more miles per year, and were more often involved in high risk driving behavior. Virtually all of those who reported they never wore their seat belts agreed that seat belt use should be a matter of personal choice.

The largest group to disagree with the child restraint law was Blacks (see Table 6). Those over 55 years of age and those who drove more than 30,000 miles per year also disagreed more often. Support for the child restraint law was positively associated with higher socioeconomic status. Drivers of imported cars and those who reported they usually drive more than ten miles per hour above the speed limit were more apt to "strongly agree" with the child restraint law than others.

As indicated in Table 7, respondents who agreed that seat belts save lives and reduce injuries were more often Hispanic, less than 25 years old, college graduates, higher income, white collar, urban, voters, seat belt users, and persons who drive an average of 10,00 to 30,000 miles per year. Similar associations were found for those who believed seat belts reduce the cost to society of accidents and injuries (see Table 8) and those who believed seat belts are necessary to offset the increase in injuries due to the 65 mile per hour speed limit on some Interstate highways (see Table 11).

Overall, 48.5 percent of the respondents said seat belts were inconvenient or uncomfortable for them to use. These were more often Black, older, less educated, rural, native Texans. These were also drivers who wore their seat belts rarely or never and drove over 30,000 miles per year (see Table 9). Note that

**TABLE 6. OPINIONS CONCERNING SUPPORT OF THE LAW THAT REQUIRES INFANTS AND CHILDREN UNDER 4 YEARS OLD TO BE RESTRAINED**

**Percent Response**

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
<b><u>Ethnicity***</u></b>					
Anglo	55.3	41.8	0.9	1.7	0.2
Black	40.9	55.6	0.2	3.3	0.0
Hispanic	41.7	56.5	0.1	1.4	0.3
Other	46.7	49.3	1.2	2.7	0.0
<b><u>Age***</u></b>					
Less than 25	53.9	42.7	1.5	1.9	0.0
25-55	54.8	43.2	0.5	1.4	0.1
>55	39.7	56.1	0.9	2.7	0.6
<b><u>Education***</u></b>					
Less than high school	38.4	57.7	0.7	2.9	0.3
High school graduate	44.5	52.7	0.4	2.2	0.2
Some college	61.0	37.2	0.9	1.0	0.0
College graduate	62.8	34.2	1.4	1.2	0.4
<b><u>Occupation*</u></b>					
White collar	55.6	41.1	1.0	2.2	0.1
Blue collar	47.7	49.7	0.5	2.0	0.2
<b><u>Income***</u></b>					
Under \$10,000	39.8	56.4	0.1	3.0	0.8
\$10,000-\$20,000	50.7	47.8	0.4	1.1	0.1
\$20,000-\$30,000	57.6	41.2	0.8	0.4	0.0
\$30,000-\$40,000	60.1	37.7	0.0	2.2	0.0
\$40,000-\$50,000	58.1	39.3	1.5	1.1	0.0
\$50,000 & over	58.2	38.7	1.5	1.2	0.4
<b><u>Imported/Domestic Vehicle**</u></b>					
Imported	62.6	34.8	1.1	1.1	0.4
Domestic	49.3	47.8	0.7	2.0	0.2

Table 6 (cont'd)

	Percent Response				
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
<b><u>Miles Driven***</u></b>					
Don't Drive	38.0	59.6	0.0	2.4	0.0
Less than 10,000	43.0	54.2	0.6	2.1	0.0
10,000-30,000	57.7	40.1	0.7	1.2	0.3
Over 30,000	56.3	37.2	2.6	3.9	0.0
<b><u>Speed Limit***</u></b>					
At the speed limit	42.5	53.2	1.1	2.8	0.4
Up to 5 mph above the speed limit	56.8	41.2	0.5	1.3	0.2
5-10 mph above the speed limit	56.4	41.5	0.6	1.5	0.0
More than 10 mph above the speed limit	62.2	35.2	2.7	0.0	0.0
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>

\*p&lt;.05

\*\*p&lt;.01

\*\*\*p&lt;.001

**TABLE 7. OPINION THAT SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES AND REDUCE INJURIES BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES**

	Percent Response				
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
<u>Ethnicity***</u>					
Anglo	47.0	45.2	5.7	1.5	0.6
Black	37.2	49.1	8.4	4.3	1.1
Hispanic	34.6	60.4	2.8	1.7	0.4
Other	32.2	59.5	4.7	3.7	0.0
<u>Age**</u>					
Less than 25	43.6	49.7	5.5	0.9	0.3
25-55	46.3	46.5	5.0	1.7	0.4
>55	35.2	54.9	5.6	3.1	1.2
<u>Education***</u>					
Less than high school	28.7	60.6	7.5	1.7	1.5
High school graduate	36.1	54.9	6.5	2.0	0.6
Some college	48.7	46.3	2.9	1.8	0.3
College graduate	62.3	32.3	3.6	1.8	0.0
<u>Occupation***</u>					
White collar	50.2	43.1	5.0	1.2	0.6
Blue collar	37.4	54.0	5.8	2.1	0.8
<u>Income***</u>					
Under \$10,000	33.5	56.8	5.8	2.6	1.3
\$10,000-\$20,000	38.5	53.5	5.7	2.0	0.4
\$20,000-\$30,000	45.8	45.4	4.6	3.1	1.3
\$30,000-\$40,000	51.5	44.0	2.3	1.6	0.5
\$40,000-\$50,000	47.2	48.2	4.6	0.0	0.0
\$50,000 & over	53.7	40.5	5.3	0.4	0.0
<u>Urban/Rural*</u>					
Urban	45.5	48.2	4.1	1.5	0.7
Rural	39.7	50.6	7.0	2.3	0.5
<u>Registered to Vote*</u>					
Yes	44.6	48.2	4.6	2.1	0.6
No	36.7	54.0	7.3	1.5	0.5

Table 7 (cont'd)

	Percent Response				
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
<u>Seat Belt Usage***</u>					
Always	50.2	45.4	3.4	3.4	0.3
Most of the time	39.5	52.5	5.7	1.7	0.6
Sometimes	23.8	63.2	8.5	4.5	0.0
Rarely	7.9	66.0	17.7	8.5	0.0
Never	3.9	52.4	21.4	13.5	8.8
<u>Miles Driven***</u>					
Don't Drive	33.8	64.4	1.6	0.3	0.0
Less than 10,000	37.1	53.2	6.6	2.1	1.0
10,000-30,000	48.9	45.3	4.2	1.3	0.4
Over 30,000	38.1	49.1	7.1	5.75	0.0
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0.6</b>

\*p<.05  
 \*\*p<.01  
 \*\*\*p<.001

**TABLE 8. OPINION THAT THE SEAT BELT LAW WILL REDUCE THE COSTS TO SOCIETY OF ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES**

	Percent Response					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<u>Gender***</u>						
Male	15.7	60.5	6.3	13.7	1.7	2.1
Female	10.8	69.1	8.3	9.2	0.1	2.5
<u>Ethnicity**</u>						
Anglo	14.9	63.5	7.4	10.9	0.8	2.6
Black	12.0	57.6	12.0	15.3	1.5	1.6
Hispanic	9.4	73.9	5.4	9.3	0.6	1.3
Other	4.6	66.1	7.1	18.3	0.0	4.0
<u>Age***</u>						
Less than 25	11.2	67.1	9.7	10.1	0.4	1.5
25-55	14.9	63.0	7.4	12.3	1.1	1.3
>55	10.4	68.6	5.2	9.9	0.6	5.3
<u>Education***</u>						
Less than high school	7.7	73.1	6.6	7.5	0.4	4.8
High school graduate	9.0	67.6	6.9	14.5	0.9	1.2
Some college	15.0	62.8	8.6	11.0	0.7	2.0
College graduate	22.4	56.3	7.5	10.7	1.4	1.8
<u>Occupation**</u>						
White collar	17.4	60.3	9.2	10.2	1.4	1.5
Blue collar	12.0	64.8	6.1	13.2	0.8	3.0
<u>Income***</u>						
Under \$10,000	6.7	67.9	7.3	11.5	1.2	5.3
\$10,000-\$20,000	11.1	67.3	8.4	11.9	0.5	0.8
\$20,000-\$30,000	12.4	64.9	6.9	13.2	0.8	1.9
\$30,000-\$40,000	14.6	68.4	6.4	8.0	1.0	1.7
\$40,000-\$50,000	13.2	63.9	6.7	11.4	2.6	2.3
\$50,000 & over	21.8	60.3	7.3	9.9	0.5	0.1

Table 8 (cont'd)

	Percent Response					
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Urban/Rural*</u>						
Urban	13.9	66.5	6.8	10.7	0.8	1.4
Rural	11.7	63.3	8.2	12.1	0.9	3.7
<u>Registered to Vote**</u>						
Ye	14.9	64.1	7.5	10.6	0.9	2.1
No	7.0	67.6	7.0	14.4	0.7	3.3
<u>Seat Belt Usage***</u>						
Always	15.7	69.3	5.6	6.7	0.7	2.0
Most of the time	11.8	62.4	10.1	12.9	0.8	1.9
Sometimes	3.5	60.3	12.8	22.1	0.2	1.1
Rarely	0.0	47.0	8.4	34.6	2.4	7.6
Never	0.0	33.8	7.2	45.8	4.6	8.6
<u>Miles Driven***</u>						
Don't Drive	4.0	83.6	4.5	5.2	0.0	2.9
Less than 10,000	9.3	70.3	6.7	10.7	0.2	2.8
10,000-30,000	16.5	62.1	8.2	10.8	1.3	1.1
Over 30,000	13.0	59.0	4.3	19.0	0.4	4.2
<u>Imported/Domestic Vehicle*</u>						
Imported	17.6	66.1	6.7	7.1	1.3	1.3
Domestic	12.6	64.0	7.6	12.5	0.8	2.5
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>65.2</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>2.3</b>

\*p&lt;.05

\*\*p&lt;.01

\*\*\*p&lt;.001

**TABLE 9. OPINION THAT SEAT BELTS ARE INCONVENIENT OR UNCOMFORTABLE TO USE BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DINING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES**

	Percent Response					
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Ethnicity***</u>						
Anglo	9.4	40.6	9.0	31.9	9.1	
Black	12.0	44.2	9.7	25.0	9.2	
Hispanic	3.2	41.3	6.0	43.4	6.1	
Other	5.3	31.8	9.4	46.7	6.8	
<u>Age***</u>						
Less than 25	5.2	36.6	10.4	37.2	10.7	
25-55	8.1	39.3	8.7	35.1	8.9	
>55	11.1	47.2	6.4	29.7	5.5	
<u>Education***</u>						
Less than high school	6.5	48.1	9.6	29.9	5.9	
High school graduate	9.9	41.6	7.8	36.0	4.7	
Some college	7.7	40.2	9.7	31.2	11.2	
College graduate	7.8	32.0	7.1	39.4	13.7	
<u>Urban/Rural**</u>						
Urban	6.7	38.5	8.4	36.8	9.5	
Rural	10.3	43.7	8.6	30.5	6.9	
<u>Texas Residence*</u>						
Less than 6 yrs	8.8	32.3	6.8	43.0	9.2	
All my life	8.1	44.1	8.4	31.9	7.6	
<u>Seat Belt Usage***</u>						
Always	4.3	34.1	7.0	42.8	11.9	
Most of the time	7.8	49.5	12.6	26.1	4.1	
Sometimes	15.9	62.6	8.2	13.3	0.0	
Rarely	38.9	46.6	10.0	4.5	0.0	
Never	44.6	47.2	2.2	3.9	2.2	

Table 9 (cont'd)

	Percent Response					Don't Know
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
<b>Miles Driven**</b>						
Don't Drive	5.8	43.4	6.5	40.2	4.0	
Less than 10,000	9.1	44.4	7.6	32.8	6.1	
10,000-30,000	6.9	37.6	9.7	35.7	10.1	
Over 30,000	13.5	44.4	4.7	27.0	10.5	
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>

\*p<.05  
 \*\*p<.01  
 \*\*\*p<.001

**TABLE 10. OPINION THAT SEAT BELTS DON'T SEEM TO WORK - THEY FEEL TOO LOOSE TO PROTECT YOU IN AN ACCIDENT BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR**

	Percent Response					
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Ethnicity**</u>						
Anglo	1.3	12.8	6.1	56.6	20.9	2.3
Black	4.1	23.7	8.7	44.7	16.5	2.4
Hispanic	2.5	16.2	5.6	63.8	10.6	1.3
Other	0.0	15.9	7.2	59.2	15.0	2.8
<u>Age**</u>						
Less than 25	1.5	9.7	7.4	58.7	22.0	0.7
25-55	1.7	11.9	5.0	59.1	21.1	1.1
>55	1.8	24.6	7.9	51.7	8.2	5.9
<u>Education**</u>						
Less than high school	2.8	24.3	6.5	53.7	8.3	4.3
High school graduate	2.0	14.9	6.3	63.0	12.5	1.3
Some college	1.3	10.3	6.3	56.4	24.1	1.6
College graduate or greater	0.6	8.2	5.8	53.3	30.4	1.8
<u>Occupation</u>						
White collar	0.4	11.9	6.5	56.8	22.7	1.7
Blue collar	2.4	16.4	7.0	57.6	14.5	2.1
<u>Income***</u>						
Under \$10,000	3.6	22.4	4.3	55.7	11.4	2.6
\$10,000-\$20,000	1.5	17.0	8.9	58.8	12.6	1.3
\$20,000-\$30,000	1.5	13.0	6.9	54.6	22.3	1.7
\$30,000-\$40,000	2.2	9.9	5.8	59.2	22.4	0.6
\$40,000-\$50,000	0.0	8.5	2.9	64.7	23.9	0.0
\$50,000 & over	0.9	8.6	7.3	55.7	26.3	1.2
<u>Urban/Rural**</u>						
Urban	1.4	13.4	5.6	57.5	20.6	1.5
Rural	2.1	16.0	7.1	56.9	14.7	3.1

Table 10 (cont'd)

	Percent Response					
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Registered to Vote***</u>						
Yes	1.8	15.3	6.3	54.2	20.0	2.4
No	1.7	13.4	4.6	67.0	11.7	1.7
<u>Seat Belt Usage***</u>						
Always	1.3	12.0	4.8	58.2	22.2	1.5
Most of the time	1.1	15.0	7.9	58.8	14.3	2.9
Sometimes	2.2	24.1	7.6	53.2	8.5	4.5
Rarely	7.8	27.8	10.0	49.3	3.4	1.9
Never	8.0	27.8	13.5	39.0	6.4	5.3
<u>Miles Driven***</u>						
Don't Drive	1.3	23.6	3.7	60.8	6.0	4.5
Less than 10,000	1.3	17.1	6.2	60.0	12.2	3.3
10,000-30,000	1.5	11.1	6.4	56.6	23.3	1.2
Over 30,000	4.3	15.1	7.9	52.4	20.2	0.2
<u>Imported/Domestic Vehicle***</u>						
Imported	1.9	5.8	6.7	58.1	27.2	0.4
Domestic	1.7	15.6	6.3	56.9	17.1	2.4
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>57.2</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>

\*p<.05  
 \*\*p<.01  
 \*\*\*p<.001

**TABLE 11. OPINION THAT SEAT BELTS ARE NEEDED TO OFFSET THE LIKELIHOOD OF INCREASED INJURIES DUE TO THE HIGHER 65 MPH SPEED LIMIT ON SOME INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES**

	Percent Response					
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Gender**</u>						
Male	13.6	55.3	5.7	20.6	3.0	2.0
Female	18.3	62.6	7.5	9.1	0.6	2.0
<u>Ethnicity**</u>						
Anglo	17.8	54.0	7.4	16.9	2.1	1.8
Black	11.9	67.2	8.3	10.0	0.7	1.9
Hispanic	13.1	75.3	3.2	5.4	0.9	2.1
Other	15.2	56.1	5.4	17.4	1.2	4.7
<u>Age**</u>						
Less than 25	12.2	64.3	7.4	13.1	1.1	1.8
25-55	18.7	54.5	7.4	16.1	2.4	1.0
>55	13.5	65.6	4.5	11.4	0.6	4.4
<u>Education**</u>						
Less than high school	8.2	76.4	3.3	8.5	0.7	2.9
High school graduate	14.4	61.2	6.9	14.0	1.3	2.2
Some college	21.2	53.3	7.2	15.2	1.8	1.3
College graduate or greater	21.4	45.0	9.1	19.9	3.2	1.5
<u>Occupation**</u>						
White collar	18.0	52.5	9.3	17.2	2.9	0.2
Blue collar	14.3	61.3	5.7	14.6	1.3	2.8
<u>Income**</u>						
Under \$10,000	13.1	69.0	6.2	7.2	0.5	4.1
\$10,000-\$20,000	11.6	67.9	5.8	12.4	0.9	1.5
\$20,000-\$30,000	17.6	55.4	6.5	17.6	2.2	0.7
\$30,000-\$40,000	22.9	54.9	7.6	10.2	3.8	0.6
\$40,000-\$50,000	21.5	43.5	11.2	20.0	3.0	0.9
\$50,000 & over	20.1	52.4	6.2	19.5	1.4	0.4

Table 11 (cont'd)

	Percent Response					
	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
<u>Registered to Vote*</u>						
Yes	17.6	56.4	7.0	15.4	1.9	1.7
No	12.7	65.5	5.5	12.3	1.2	2.9
<u>Seat Belt Usage**</u>						
Always	18.6	59.9	6.2	11.9	1.4	2.0
Most of the time	16.2	59.5	6.7	15.3	1.5	1.0
Sometimes	3.5	64.1	3.6	23.2	1.4	4.3
Rarely	3.4	54.9	17.2	18.8	0.0	5.7
Never	3.2	36.7	9.7	36.0	12.3	2.2
<u>Miles Driven**</u>						
Don't Drive	10.5	76.4	1.5	4.7	0.0	6.9
Less than 10,000	15.2	67.7	4.8	10.0	1.5	1.3
10,000-30,000	18.1	53.7	8.1	16.5	2.0	1.7
Over 30,000	12.0	47.9	8.5	26.1	2.9	2.6
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>59.2</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>

\*p<.05  
\*\*p<.001

11.9 percent of those who said they always wore their seat belt strongly disagreed that they are uncomfortable or inconvenient to use. Similar characteristics were observed for those who thought that seat belts seemed too loose to work effectively (Table 10).

Survey respondents were asked their opinion of the effectiveness of the Texas seat belt law in reducing injuries and saving lives. Forty-one percent said the law is very effective, 47 percent said it is somewhat effective, and 5.4 percent said it is not very, or not at all effective in saving lives and reducing injuries. Over six percent answered "don't know" to this question. Frequent belt wearers were the ones that thought seat belts are effective (87 and 91 percent of the "usual" and "always" wearers thought belts are effective). Respondents who rarely or never wore their belts said seat belts are not very effective 22 and 12 percent of the time, respectively. As indicated in Table 12, the opinion that seat belts are effective in reducing injuries and saving lives was shared by more females than males, and by more respondents in the under 25 age group than other ages. Non-drivers said seat belts are very effective more often than drivers, and 11.3 percent of those who drove the most miles in a year said seat belts are not very effective.

#### Reported Seat Belt Use

Respondents were asked how often they currently wear their seat belts and if they had changed their seat belt use before and after the Texas law went into effect. The categories provided to the respondent and the response percentages for current use were:

**Table 12. OPINION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LAW IN REDUCING INJURIES AND SAVING LIVES BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES**

	Percent Response				
	<u>Very Effective</u>	<u>Somewhat Effective</u>	<u>Not Very Effective</u>	<u>Not At All Effective</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<b><u>Gender*</u></b>					
Male	35.3	49.9	5.6	1.8	7.4
Female	45.7	44.5	3.1	0.7	6.0
<b><u>Age*</u></b>					
Less than 25	38.9	51.7	4.0	0.4	4.9
25-55	39.4	50.0	3.9	1.4	5.3
>55	46.5	35.7	5.1	1.6	11.2
<b><u>Seat Belt Usage*</u></b>					
Always	50.2	41.0	2.6	0.8	5.5
Most of the time	31.0	56.6	3.6	1.5	7.3
Sometimes	22.1	58.1	10.3	2.4	7.2
Rarely	11.6	53.4	22.3	0.0	12.7
Never	8.2	56.1	12.2	7.1	16.4
<b><u>Miles Driven*</u></b>					
Don't Drive	59.4	32.0	1.6	0.5	6.5
Less than 10,000	41.3	47.0	3.9	1.2	6.6
10,000 to 30,000	40.4	50.0	3.3	0.7	5.8
Over 30,000	31.3	44.8	11.3	3.6	8.9
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>6.6</b>

\*p < .001

<u>Current Use</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Always	995	61.5
Most of the time	431	26.6
Sometimes	93	5.8
Rarely	52	3.2
Never	47	2.9

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents said they wore their seat belts always or most of the time. This percentage is approximately 30 percentage points higher than the most recently observed usage rates in 18 urban areas of the state (Womack, 1988).

According to the responses given, belt wearing behavior has been somewhat consistent from before the implementation of the MUL until the present. This was documented by the fact that 40.6 percent said their belt use was the same immediately after the law passed as before the law passed, and 50.1 percent said their use was the same now as it was when the law first was implemented. Over 48 percent said their use increased immediately after the law went into effect, and 47 percent said they wear their seat belts more often now than when the law first went into effect.

As expected, there were many variables related to seat belt use. Significant relationships were found for gender, education, city size, miles driven per year, and drinking and driving behaviors. Table 13 shows that females were more likely than males to wear seat belts. Sixty-seven percent of the college graduates and urban residents in the sample reported they always wore their seat belts. Respondents who said they did not drive

TABLE 13. FREQUENCY OF SEAT BELT USAGE BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES

	Percent Response				
	<u>Always</u>	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
<u>Gender**</u>					
Male	54.8	29.4	7.7	4.2	3.9
Female	67.1	24.4	4.1	2.5	1.9
<u>Education*</u>					
Less than high school	58.6	29.2	5.3	3.1	3.7
High school graduate	61.1	25.1	7.1	3.3	3.3
Some college	59.6	26.7	8.1	3.3	2.3
College graduate or greater	67.0	26.2	1.7	3.1	1.9
<u>Urban/Rural**</u>					
Urban	66.9	23.4	4.7	2.6	2.4
Rural	53.5	31.4	7.3	4.3	3.5
<u>Miles Driven*</u>					
Don't Drive	81.2	14.2	1.3	1.6	1.7
Less than 10,000	59.9	27.3	6.7	2.7	3.5
10,000-30,000	62.5	26.7	5.2	3.3	2.3
Over 30,000	51.3	29.9	8.3	6.0	4.5
<u>Drive after Drinking**</u>					
Frequently	25.2	40.2	23.4	2.9	8.4
Occasionally	43.8	33.3	11.2	8.8	2.9
Seldom	56.6	30.6	6.5	3.3	3.0
Never	65.4	25.0	4.4	2.3	2.7
<u>Ride with Other Drivers after Drinking**</u>					
Frequently	35.9	56.8	3.8	2.2	1.4
Occasionally	41.2	38.5	11.2	5.2	3.8
Seldom	59.8	26.2	7.4	4.0	2.6
Never	67.5	23.4	3.8	2.4	2.9
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.9</b>

\*p<.05  
\*\*p<.001

reported wearing their seat belts 81 percent of the time.

Finally, those who said they never drove or rode with others who drove after drinking alcoholic beverages were much more likely to say they always wore their seat belts.

For those who said they did not always wear their seat belts, a question was posed to ascertain the principle reason.

The response percentages were:

<u>Reason For Not Always Wearing Seat Belt</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Forget	176	29.0
Uncomfortable/Inconvenient	106	17.4
Don't wear it for short distances	171	28.1
I get in a hurry and don't put it on	43	7.0
Afraid of being killed or seriously injured wearing a belt	7	1.3
Haven't formed the habit	8	1.4
Think belts are ineffective	2	0.4
Other	86	14.2
Don't know	8	1.3

A segment of the questionnaire pertained to the respondent's perception of seat belt use among various groups. First, they were asked what percent of Texas drivers currently wear seat belts. This was followed by the same question about their city or town, and then about their friends. In response to the question, "what percent of Texas drivers currently wear seat belts," the median response was about 59 percent which is identical to the current (June 1988) State rate for 18 urban areas. The percent given most frequently was 50, given by 384 of the respondents.

The responses were very similar for estimates of seat belt use in the city or place of residence of the respondent as those

given for the State. The median response was about 59 percent and 345 respondents said 50 percent of the drivers in their home town wore seat belts.

In contrast with the two previous estimates, respondents, on average, reported about 80 percent of their friends wore seat belts. Furthermore, the response given most often was that 100 percent of their friends wore seat belts while driving (given by 387 respondents). A comparison of the three estimates by percentage groups yielded the following:

	<u>Percent Estimated to Wear Seat Belts</u>		
	<u>0-50%</u>	<u>51-75%</u>	<u>76-100%</u>
Texas drivers	40.1	38.6	15.4
City of residence	43.0	34.4	17.4
Friends	28.7	16.1	52.4

The data above reflect the fact that perception of belt use increased the closer one got to home. While over half the respondents said over 75 percent of their friends wore belts, this estimate decreased to 15.4 percent for all Texas drivers.

Table 14 shows the cross tabulations between the estimated percent of friends who wore belts and the demographic characteristics of the respondent. A significantly greater number of females than males reported that more of their friends wear seat belts ( $p < .01$ ). Friends of the 16-25 year old group were least likely to buckle up. In terms of other demographics, those who reported that their friends wore belts were quite similar to those who reported they they wore seat belts as well.

**TABLE 14. PERCENT OF FRIENDS ESTIMATED TO BE WEARING SEAT BELTS  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR**

	Percent Response			
	Less than 51%	51% to 75%	76% and over	Don't Know
<u>Gender**</u>				
Male	32.0	20.7	44.4	3.0
Female	25.9	12.3	59.0	2.8
<u>Ethnicity***</u>				
Anglo	27.1	17.0	53.1	2.8
Black	30.6	15.8	49.1	4.5
Hispanic	35.1	13.8	49.3	1.8
Other	22.1	13.4	62.0	2.5
<u>Age***</u>				
Less than 25	45.0	16.5	36.6	2.0
25-55	28.4	14.9	55.3	1.5
>55	14.8	18.5	59.8	6.9
<u>Education***</u>				
Less than high school	36.2	13.1	44.5	6.2
High school graduate	34.8	15.6	48.0	1.6
Some college	24.8	16.2	56.6	2.4
College graduate or greater	16.1	19.7	62.4	1.8
<u>Occupation*</u>				
White collar	21.3	19.9	57.2	1.7
Blue collar	33.4	16.6	46.4	3.6
<u>Income*</u>				
Under \$10,000	32.5	12.8	49.0	5.6
\$10,000-\$20,000	31.6	13.8	53.3	1.3
\$20,000-\$30,000	28.4	20.0	50.8	0.9
\$30,000-\$40,000	23.8	19.4	55.8	1.1
\$40,000-\$50,000	22.4	21.3	55.3	1.0
\$50,000 & Over	25.3	16.3	57.2	1.2

Table 14 (cont'd)

	Percent Response			
	Less than 51%	51% to 75%	76% and over	Don't Know
<u>Married/Single</u>				
Married	26.5	16.5	54.9	2.1
Single	31.6	15.5	49.4	3.6
<u>Urban/Rural*</u>				
Urban	25.0	15.1	57.1	2.9
Rural	34.1	17.6	45.4	2.9
<u>Seat Belt Usage***</u>				
Always	20.5	13.5	63.0	3.0
Most of the time	33.0	21.3	43.2	2.5
Sometimes	49.9	22.7	25.0	2.4
Rarely	77.2	8.6	10.4	3.8
Never	66.4	17.2	12.0	4.3
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>2.9</b>

\*p<.05  
 \*\*p<.01  
 \*\*\*p<.001

Two questions were included in the questionnaire to assess another aspect of seat belt wearing behavior. Respondents were asked if they had been reminded by another driver or passenger to buckle up during the past 6 months, and if they had reminded others to buckle up during the past 6 months. Although only 38 percent said they had been asked to buckle up, slightly over 75 percent reported they had asked others to buckle up. As with other behavioral variables concerning seat belt use, those that had asked others to wear seat belts had demographic characteristics that typified seat belt users (see Table 15).

TABLE 15. RESPONSE TO "HAVE YOU TOLD OR ASKED DRIVERS OR PASSENGERS TO BUCKLE UP?" BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES

	Percent Response	
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
<u>Gender*</u>		
Male	72.8	27.2
Female	77.2	22.8
<u>Race*</u>		
Anglo	73.6	26.5
Black	77.1	22.9
Hispanic	81.5	18.5
Other	70.0	30.0
<u>Age***</u>		
Less than 25	75.3	24.7
25-55	79.9	20.1
>55	64.0	36.0
<u>Registered to Vote</u>		
Yes	76.1	23.9
No	69.7	30.3
<u>Seat Belt Usage</u>		
Always	81.4	18.6
Most of the time	75.7	24.3
Sometimes	58.0	42.0
Rarely	29.5	70.5
Never	22.7	77.3
<u>Miles Driven</u>		
Don't Drive	56.5	43.5
Less than 10,000	72.1	27.9
10,000-30,000	79.0	21.0
Over 30,000	74.2	25.8
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>24.8</b>

\*p<.05  
 \*\*p<.01  
 \*\*\*p<.001

Knowledge of the Safety Belt Law--The Fine for Not Wearing a Safety Belt

The amount of fine imposed by the Texas safety belt law is \$50, with a \$10 court fee added to this fine. Thus, the appropriate answer to the question concerning the amount of fine for non-use of seat belt could either be \$50 or \$60 if the court cost is taken into account. Overall, only 32 percent of the respondents correctly answered the question (Table 16). About 22 percent thought the fine was less than \$50, while 31 percent thought the fine was greater than \$61. Approximately 15 percent indicated that they did not know what the correct fine was for not using a seat belt.

Table 16 also indicates the statistically significant demographic and driving behavior variables. About 31 percent of men compared to approximately 33 percent of the women gave the correct response ( $p = .000$ ). However, 28 percent of the females thought the fine was over \$100, while only 21 percent of the males gave this response. Respondents between the ages of 25 and 55 were more likely to give the correct response (35 percent) than the other age groups, while respondents greater than 55 years of age were more likely to respond that they "don't know" (25 percent) than the other age categories ( $p = .000$ ). Thirty-four percent of the respondents residing in urban areas indicated the correct answer, compared to 30 percent of those residing in rural areas ( $p = .037$ ).

There were also significant differences in regard to average miles driven ( $p = .000$ ). Respondents averaging between 10,000

**TABLE 16. RESPONSE CONCERNING THE FINE FOR NOT WEARING A SEAT BELT IN TEXAS BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES**

	Percent Response					
	Less than \$50	\$50-\$60	\$61-\$99	\$100-\$200	Greater than \$200	Don't Know
<u>Gender***</u>						
Male	24.6	31.3	8.2	19.1	2.2	14.6
Female	20.1	33.4	4.0	25.2	2.7	14.6
<u>Age***</u>						
Less than 25	19.7	32.7	6.4	26.1	3.9	11.1
25-55	22.3	35.1	6.4	22.6	2.1	11.4
>55	23.9	25.9	4.5	18.6	2.0	25.1
<u>Marital Status***</u>						
Married	23.9	32.6	6.4	20.9	2.0	14.2
Single	21.1	33.3	5.9	25.9	3.4	10.8
Widowed	18.9	23.3	1.7	18.8	3.9	33.4
Divorced	18.5	37.4	8.7	21.9	1.3	12.4
Separated	8.2	46.4	4.1	39.2	0.0	2.0
<u>Urban/Rural*</u>						
Urban	19.4	34.1	6.5	23.0	2.3	14.7
Rural	26.2	30.0	5.2	21.5	2.7	14.4
<u>Miles Driven***</u>						
Don't Drive	18.4	20.6	2.6	21.2	4.8	32.4
Less than 10,000	19.0	30.1	6.5	25.9	3.3	15.4
10,000-30,000	23.4	36.3	6.5	20.4	2.1	11.3
Over 30,000	30.5	22.5	5.0	26.7	1.2	14.0
<u>Automobile Type*</u>						
Small car	17.6	39.7	5.5	23.0	2.2	11.9
Mid-size car	22.7	30.1	6.7	24.1	1.4	15.0
Large car	25.3	25.6	5.3	23.0	2.5	18.3
Pick-up or light truck	26.8	35.2	7.2	19.2	2.7	8.9
Van	22.9	34.1	0.4	24.7	5.4	12.6
Heavy truck	26.8	32.4	6.0	22.4	2.5	14.6
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>14.6</b>

\*p<.05  
\*\*p<.001

and 30,000 miles a year were more likely to give the correct amount for the fine (36 percent) than the other average miles driven categories. Generally, the more miles the respondents averaged on the road, the more likely they were to suggest that the fine was less than \$50. Also a larger percentage of respondents who do not drive (32 percent) than those who drive indicated that they "don't know" the correct amount of fine for non-use of seat belts. Significant differences were further found for the type of automobile the respondents drive ( $p = .011$ ). Small car owners were more likely to give the correct response (40 percent) than the other vehicle owners. A greater proportion of large car owners than the other vehicle owners indicated that they "don't know" the correct answer to the fine question (18 percent).

#### Primary Enforcement of the Seat Belt Law

One question concerning the knowledge of the law asked whether the police could stop motorists just for not wearing a safety belt. Overall, slightly more than three-fourths of the respondents indicated the correct answer of "yes," 15 percent had given the answer "no," and approximately 7 percent suggested they "don't know" that the police could stop a motorists for not wearing a safety belt (Table 17).

Table 17 also indicates that none of the driving behavior variables are statistically significant, and that the only demographic variables found to be statistically significant are age, occupation, length of residence in Texas, and registered to vote. Whereas 73 percent of the respondents less than 25

TABLE 17. RESPONSE TO "CAN POLICE STOP YOU JUST FOR NOT WEARING SEAT BELTS?" BY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

	Percent Response		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Age*</u>			
Less than 25	73.2	17.7	9.2
25-55	79.8	14.2	6.0
>55	78.6	12.5	8.9
<u>Texas Residence***</u>			
Less than 6 years	66.9	24.2	8.8
All my life	79.6	12.7	7.7
<u>Registered to Vote*</u>			
Yes	79.6	13.6	6.8
No	73.3	17.3	9.4
<u>Occupation*</u>			
White collar	77.0	15.1	7.9
Bluc collar	82.8	11.7	5.5
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>78.1</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>7.4</b>

\*p<.05  
\*\*p<.001

years of age gave the correct response, some 80 percent of respondents 25 to 55 years old and 79 percent of those greater than 55 years gave the correct answer ( $p = .047$ ). Surprisingly, blue collar workers were more likely to give the correct reply to the question than white collar workers ( $p = .041$ ). There were also significant differences in length of Texas residence, where some 67 percent of respondents residing less than 6 years in Texas and about 83 percent of native Texas respondents indicated the appropriate answer ( $p = .000$ ). Last, those registered to vote were more likely than those not registered to suggest that the police could stop a motorists for not wearing a seat belt ( $p=.040$ ).

#### Perception of Enforcement of the Safety Belt Law

Comparison of how strictly the safety belt law was being enforced at the time of the survey with the time in which the law first came into effect revealed considerable variation among all the respondents (Table 18). Overall, roughly 26 percent indicated that they perceived that the seat belt law was being enforced at the same level at the time of the survey as at the time when the law first came into effect. Approximately 38 percent of the respondents felt that the law was being more strictly enforced at the time of the survey, while 29 percent indicated that the law was being enforced less strictly. Nearly 7 percent of the respondents did not have an opinion concerning this issue.

**TABLE 18. PERCEPTION OF STRICTNESS OF CURRENT LAW ENFORCEMENT  
 COMPARED WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT WHEN LAW FIRST CAME INTO  
 EFFECT BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND MILES DRIVEN VARIABLES**

	Percent Response					
	<u>Much more Strictly</u>	<u>Somewhat more strict</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>Somewhat less strict</u>	<u>Much less strict</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Gender**</u>						
Male	13.4	17.6	28.7	23.9	9.9	6.5
Female	19.4	25.2	23.3	16.6	8.3	7.2
<u>Ethnicity*</u>						
Anglo	11.8	20.7	28.0	21.5	9.8	8.3
Black	26.8	21.8	19.7	20.7	8.8	2.2
Hispanic	29.4	25.8	21.0	16.2	5.6	2.0
Other	15.6	22.8	25.6	14.5	10.6	10.9
<u>Age**</u>						
Less than 25	16.0	20.6	28.1	21.3	11.3	2.7
25-55	13.6	21.8	27.1	21.9	10.2	5.5
>55	24.5	22.6	20.8	14.0	4.2	13.8
<u>Occupation**</u>						
White collar	10.4	19.8	28.5	22.3	10.6	8.5
Blue collar	19.3	21.5	25.1	20.2	8.2	5.7
<u>Income**</u>						
Under \$10,000	28.8	23.5	21.4	12.3	4.2	9.9
\$10,000-\$20,000	17.3	22.2	24.1	22.5	9.5	4.4
\$20,000-\$30,000	13.2	24.8	26.5	21.5	9.8	4.2
\$30,000-\$40,000	8.9	22.0	28.9	23.1	11.7	5.5
\$40,000-\$50,000	5.7	18.3	36.2	22.7	10.5	6.5
\$50,000 & over	9.2	19.1	32.0	22.5	10.2	6.9
<u>Texas Residence**</u>						
Less than 6 years	8.5	23.1	29.6	19.6	12.9	6.3
All my life	18.9	22.3	26.1	19.6	7.5	5.6

Table 18 (cont'd)

	Percent Response					
	<u>Much more</u> <u>Strictly</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>more strict</u>	<u>About the</u> <u>same</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>less strict</u>	<u>Much</u> <u>less strict</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
<b><u>Miles Driven**</u></b>						
Don't Drive	43.4	19.7	15.8	7.4	1.3	12.4
Less than 10,000	20.0	22.0	24.6	17.0	8.3	8.1
10,000-30,000	12.3	20.7	29.3	22.0	10.1	5.6
Over 30,000	9.9	20.4	23.5	28.3	12.2	5.7
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>6.9</b>

\*p<.05

\*\*p<.001

An analysis of the demographic and driving behavior variables suggests that gender, ethnicity, age, occupation, income, length of Texas residence, and average miles driven were found to be statistically significant. Women were more likely than men to perceive higher levels of enforcement since the seat belt law went into effect ( $p = .000$ ). Approximately 45 percent of women thought that the law was being more strictly enforced, while only 31 percent of the men had this same perception. With regard to ethnicity, Hispanics more likely to indicate increased enforcement than the other ethnic groups ( $p = .000$ ). The Anglo ethnic group, however, were more likely to perceive that the law enforcement was being enforced about the same (28 percent) or less strictly (32 percent) than the other ethnic groups since the law first came into effect. The Other and Anglo groups were more likely to not indicate an opinion than the Black and Hispanic groups. In general, respondents greater than 55 years of age tended to suggest that the law was being more strictly enforced (48 percent) than the other age groups ( $p = .000$ ). Approximately 14 percent of the older adults, however, responded "don't know" to the enforcement question, while only 3 percent of the youngest age group responded in this manner.

Review of the responses by respondent occupation ( $p = .000$ ) showed that the blue collar group thought the law was being more strictly enforced (41 percent) than the white collar group (30 percent). Also the respondents with white collar occupations (9 percent) were more likely to respond "don't know" to the enforcement question than those with blue collar occupations (6

percent). In general, the higher the income level of the respondents the more likely they were to perceive that the law is enforced about the same or less strictly, with the exception of the \$50,000 and over income group which was less likely to respond in this manner than the \$40,000 to \$50,000 group ( $p=.000$ ). Respondents that have lived in Texas all their life (41 percent) were more likely than respondents who have lived in Texas less than 6 years (32 percent) to have indicated that the law is being more strictly enforced than when the law first came into effect ( $p = .017$ ). With regard to average miles driven in a year, the respondents who don't drive were more likely to have suggested that the law was being more strictly enforced than the other driving categories, however, 12 percent indicated that they "don't know" compared to 6 percent respectively of the 10,000 to 30,000 and over 30,000 miles driven groups ( $p = .000$ ). Among those respondents who do drive, the fewer the average miles they have driven, the more likely they are to perceive a more stricter enforcement of the law since it first went into effect.

#### Safety Belt Tickets or Warnings

Assessment of respondents' experience or knowledge about tickets or warnings received for not wearing safety belts has revealed that 39 percent had either received or knew about someone who had been given a ticket or warning for not wearing a safety belt (Table 19). The variables that were found to vary significantly were the following: ethnicity, age, education, occupation, urban/rural residence, seat belt usage, and average miles driven.

**TABLE 19. RESPONSE TO QUESTION ASKING "HAVE YOU, OR ANYONE YOU KNOW, EVER RECEIVED A TICKET OR WARNING FOR NOT WEARING A SEAT BELT?" BY DEMOGRAPHIC AND DRIVING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES**

	Percent Response	
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
<u>Ethnicity*</u>		
Anglo	37.5	62.5
Black	41.7	58.4
Hispanic	46.3	53.7
Other	32.2	67.9
<u>AGE**</u>		
18-25	47.9	52.1
26-25	40.6	59.4
55+	28.1	71.9
<u>Education**</u>		
Less than high school	39.5	60.5
High school graduate	43.7	52.3
Some college	41.2	58.8
College graduate or greater	30.1	70.0
<u>Occupation*</u>		
White collar	35.8	64.3
Blue collar	42.6	57.4
<u>URBAN/RURAL*</u>		
Urban	34.7	65.4
Rural	45.9	54.1
<u>Seat Belt Usage**</u>		
Always	34.8	65.3
Most of the time	46.1	53.9
Sometimes	47.8	52.2
Rarely	51.0	49.0
Never	40.0	60.0

Table 19 (cont'd)

	Percent Response	
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
<b><u>MILES DRIVEN*</u></b>		
Don't Drive	23.1	76.9
Less than 10,000	34.1	65.9
10,000 to 30,000	41.2	58.9
Over 30,000	52.5	47.5
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>60.5</b>

\*p<.05  
 \*\*p<.001

Although Hispanics (46 percent) were more likely to have received or known someone given a ticket or warning than the other ethnic groups, a large percentage of Blacks (43 percent) also responded the same ( $p = .020$ ). Respondents who were older (28 percent) were considerably less likely to have received or known someone given a ticket than those less than 25 years of age and than those 25 to 55 years of age ( $p = .000$ ). College graduates (30 percent) were less likely to have known about tickets or warnings given than those with fewer years of education ( $p = .001$ ). Respondents working in blue collar jobs (43 percent) were more likely than respondents employed in white collar occupations (36 percent) to have received or known about tickets or warnings given since the law came into effect ( $p = .015$ ). Review of the urban/rural responses has shown that respondents residing in rural areas are more likely than those residing in urban areas to have indicated that they received or knew of someone given a ticket or warning ( $p = .000$ ).

With regard to the driving behavior variables, only seat belt usage and average miles driven was found to be statistically significant in relation to the ticket-warning variable. Those respondents who were "always" wearing their seat belts (35 percent) were the least likely seat belt usage category to have received or known someone given a ticket or warning, while the "rarely" seat belt usage group was the most likely category to have received or known about a ticket or warning (51 percent). In the case of average miles driven in a year, the greater the average miles driven, the more likely the respondents would have

indicated that they have received or known someone given a ticket or warning.

Strategies For Increasing Safety Belt Use

Respondents were provided with a list of suggested techniques to increase safety belt use and asked to identify those they thought would be effective. The seven suggested strategies and response frequencies for each one are provided below.

	% YES	% NO	% MAYBE	% DON'T KNOW/ NO ANSWER
1. Have police write more tickets for not wearing a belt	65.1	19.9	13.7	1.3
2. Increase the fine for not wearing belts	54.2	30.8	12.7	2.3
3. Provide more information about the effectiveness of seat belts	66.7	16.8	15.5	1.0
4. Make sure local police use their belts	83.5	9.9	4.6	2.0
5. Have police tug on their shoulder strap when they see an unbuckled motorist	65.6	16.7	14.7	2.9
6. Encourage employers to have strong belt use policies for on-the-job automobile use	83.9	7.7	5.9	2.4
7. Have media publicize stories about people who were saved by using their safety belts	84.6	6.0	8.5	0.9

The majority of respondents said they thought each suggestion would work as a way to increase safety belt use. The

least acceptable suggestion was to increase fines for not wearing belts. It is not surprising that a punitive measure would be least acceptable. One factor that may have contributed to the lack of appeal for this strategy was the degree of misconception about what the fine is in Texas. As mentioned previously, 31 percent of the respondents had a perception of the fine as higher than it actually is and 20 percent believed the fine to be over twice what it is.

A greater number of people believed that encouraging safety belt use and publicizing specifics about safety belt effectiveness were workable ways to increase belt use. The most favored approach was to have media publicize stories about people who were saved by using their safety belts.

The analysis of responses in terms of demographic characteristics revealed a number of highly significant relationships. These can be summarized with the following general statements:

- 0 Females were more likely than males to think the various techniques would be effective.
- 0 Respondents with less education were more likely to say yes to suggested strategies, with one notable exception. Higher educated respondents were more likely than lower educated respondents to agree that having police officers tug on their shoulder straps would increase usage.
- 0 Current users of safety belts were more likely than non-users to think the various techniques would be effective.
- 0 Lower income respondents were more likely to think the

strategies would work than higher income respondents.

0 A greater percentage of Hispanics than the other racial groups surveyed believed the suggested strategies would work.

0 Different age groups responded differently to each suggestion. Issuing more tickets was more appealing to the older age group. The younger age group was more likely to agree with increasing the fine, making sure police wear their belts, and encouraging employers to have belt use policies. The middle age group disagreed most with the idea of providing more information about the effectiveness of safety belts, and agreed most with having police tug on their shoulder strap when they see unbuckled motorists.

#### Belts And The Media

Several questions were included in the survey pertaining to the seat belt issue in the media. Of particular interest was whether or not Texans had recently seen or heard anything about the safety belt law in the media, whether or not they had heard about accidents and belt use in the media, and whether or not they had heard anything about repeal of the Texas safety belt law.

Slightly over half (53.3 percent) of those surveyed said they had seen or heard something about the seat belt law during the past six months. However, approximately 82 percent said they had not heard any mention of attempts to repeal the Texas law.

Furthermore, 80 percent said they had seen or heard something in the media about seat belts having saved someone's life or reduced an injury in an accident during the past six months.

Hispanics, belt users, and native Texans were most apt to have seen something in the media about the safety belt law, as reflected in Table 20. Similar associations between Hispanics, belt users, and having heard about seat belts saving someone's life or reducing injuries from accidents were found.

Additionally, voters more often heard about safety belt life saving examples than non-voters (see Table 21).

Those who had heard about attempts to repeal the Texas safety belt law were most often from rural areas or smaller cities in Texas. Respondents who said they had heard about repeal attempts were more frequently voters and elderly respondents.

Respondents were also asked if they had recently received any printed material about seat belts, and if so, what was the source of the material. Twenty-five people said they did not know if they had received any material, and 200 people (or 12.4 percent of the survey sample who knew) said they had received material during the past six months. From the choices given, a community organization was most often given as the source of the printed material. This and other sources are shown in the table below.

TABLE 20. HEARD OR SEEN ANYTHING IN THE MEDIA ABOUT THE TEXAS SEAT BELT LAW DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS BY RACE, BELT WEARING, AND RESIDENCE

	Percent Response	
	<u>% YES</u>	<u>% NO</u>
<u>Ethnicity**</u>		
Anglo	50.0	50.0
Black	62.2	37.8
Hispanic	67.1	32.9
Other	52.3	47.7
<u>Seat Belt Usage**</u>		
Always	83.0	17.0
Most of the time	78.9	21.1
Sometimes	75.0	25.0
Rarely	77.5	22.5
Never	67.7	32.3
<u>Texas Residence**</u>		
0-5 years	58.2	41.8
All my life	43.2	56.8

OVERALL

\*p<.05  
\*\*p<.01

TABLE 21. HEARD OR SEEN ANYTHING ABOUT BELTS SAVING LIVES BY RACE, BELT WEARING, AND VOTING

	Percent Response	
	<u>% YES</u>	<u>% NO</u>
<u>Ethnicity*</u>		
Anglo	79.3	20.7
Black	79.8	20.2
Hispanic	87.4	12.6
Other	79.8	20.2
<u>Seat Belt Usage*</u>		
Always	83.0	17.0
Most of the time	78.9	21.1
Sometimes	75.0	25.0
Rarely	77.5	22.5
Never	67.7	32.3
<u>Voters**</u>		
Voters	83.5	75.3
Non-voters	16.5	24.7

OVERALL

\*p<.05  
\*\*p<.01

<u>Source of Material</u>	<u>% YES</u>	<u>% NO</u>	<u>% DON'T KNOW</u>
Employer	17.6	78.9	3.5
Community Organization	28.6	65.5	5.8
School	22.9	71.7	5.4
Law Enforcement Officer	15.1	79.3	5.7
Doctor or Health Dept.	14.1	80.3	5.6
Other	45.8	41.3	12.9

Those who recalled receiving printed materials about seat belts were more often 18-25 years of age and from the Hispanic population. Further, a significant number of those who reported that they always wore their seat belts said they had received printed material from a law enforcement officer.

#### Employer Belt Policies

Thirty percent of those asked said their employers had a policy that required them to wear a seat belt for on-the-job automobile use. Not surprisingly, these were also many of the same people who said they always wore their safety belts ( $p < .000$ ). There were more males ( $p < .000$ ) and more of the middle age group ( $p < .05$ ) who were subject to on-the-job safety belt use requirements.

### Reported Driving Behavior

In this section respondents' reported accident and violation history, drinking and driving behavior, and usual highway driving speed are examined. Overall, approximately three-fourths of the respondents reported they have not been in an accident in the past 5 years and have not received a moving violation ticket in the past 2 years (Table 22). Approximately 67 percent stated they never drive after drinking alcoholic beverages, while only about 37 percent reported that they drive the speed limit on the highway.

Table 22 also shows the demographic variables which were found to be significantly associated with the driving behavior variables. To begin with, gender was strongly related to moving violations ( $p = .000$ ), drinking and driving behavior ( $p = .000$ ), and highway driving speed ( $p = .000$ ). As expected, women were more likely than men not to have moving violations, never to have drunk alcoholic beverages before driving, and to have driven the speed limit on highways. The respondents' ethnicity was found to be significantly associated to accident ( $p = .001$ ) and moving violation ( $p = .004$ ) histories, and their usual highway driving speed ( $p = .004$ ). Generally, Hispanics tended to report more often that they did not have any accidents (81 percent) than the other ethnic groups, however, they were more likely to have moving violations than the other ethnic groups. With regard to driving speed, Blacks were more likely to drive the speed limit (54 percent) than Hispanics (40 percent), Anglos (35 percent), and the Other ethnic category (39 percent). The demographic variable, age, was shown to be significantly related to each of the driving behavior variables at

REPORTED DRIVING BEHAVIOR BY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Percent Response\*

	Accidents		Violations		Drinking		Driving Speed	
	None	3 or >	None	3 or >	Never	Frequently	Speed Limit	>10mph

Gender

Male	--	--	66.9	5.2	54.9	5.1	32.1	6.6
Female	--	--	80.5	1.5	78.1	1.0	41.9	2.2

Ethnicity

Anglo	77.3	2.3	74.9	3.3	--	--	34.5	5.1
Black	78.8	0.7	73.5	1.1	--	--	53.5	0.8
Hispanic	80.9	0.3	68.1	4.4	--	--	39.9	2.4
Other	77.0	4.3	86.3	2.5	--	--	39.4	4.4

Age

<25	62.8	5.5	63.4	7.9	65.4	4.3	23.5	7.4
25-55	80.4	1.3	71.7	2.6	61.2	3.4	32.6	4.2
>55	87.1	0.0	91.5	0.4	84.7	0.2	63.5	1.4

Education

Less than high school	--	--	82.8	3.1	79.5	0.3	51.4	3.5
High school graduate	--	--	75.4	2.5	68.7	3.3	39.7	3.1
Some college	--	--	65.7	6.5	60.2	5.9	30.0	5.4
College graduate or greater	--	--	73.7	1.1	61.4	1.6	29.8	5.6

Table (cont'd)

	Percent Response							
	Accidents		Violations		Drinking		Driving Speed	
	None	3 or >	None	3 or >	Never	Frequently	Speed Limit	>10mph
<u>Income</u>								
Under \$10,000	81.3	0.9	75.7	3.0	79.5	1.8	65.8	1.8
\$10,000-\$20,000	74.2	2.4	77.3	3.4	67.2	2.5	38.7	2.8
\$20,000-\$30,000	76.6	0.9	71.5	3.9	64.5	4.0	30.7	5.7
\$30,000-\$40,000	83.6	4.6	73.5	1.7	63.8	2.0	27.1	4.8
\$40,000-\$50,000	72.8	2.1	66.0	0.8	62.1	2.7	18.0	4.2
\$50,000 & over	78.2	1.3	68.9	6.2	56.1	4.6	22.2	7.3
<u>Marital Status</u>								
Married	82.7	0.7	77.1	1.8	--	--	39.2	2.7
Single	72.4	3.5	70.0	5.3	--	--	34.5	6.5
<u>Urban/Rural</u>								
Urban	--	--	--	--	64.4	3.1	--	--
Rural	--	--	--	--	71.3	2.6	--	--
<u>Registered to Vote</u>								
Yes	80.2	1.3	--	--	--	--	--	--
No	76.1	3.3	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>78.2</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>74.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>67.2</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>

\*Percentages are presented for demographic variables that are statistically significant at the .05 level.

the .000 level. In general, the oldest age group of respondents was more likely than the younger age groups to have reported that they did not have any accidents (87 percent) or moving violations (92 percent), to have never consumed alcoholic beverages before driving (85 percent), and to drive the speed limit on the highway (64 percent).

The level of education was shown to be highly related to the violations ( $p = .000$ ), drinking and driving ( $p = .000$ ), and speed limit ( $p = .000$ ) variables. Essentially, the lower the education level of the participants, the greater the possibility that they were to indicate that they had no violations, never drank before driving, and drove the highway speed limit. In addition, income was found to be statistically related to accidents ( $p = .005$ ), violations ( $p = .03$ ), drinking and driving behavior ( $p = .001$ ), and driving speed limit ( $p = .000$ ). A larger percentage of respondents with incomes between \$30,000 and \$40,000 (84 percent) than the other income categories tended to report that they did not have any accidents in the past 5 years, while respondents with incomes between \$10,000 and \$20,000 had the largest percent responding that they have not had a moving violation in 2 years. With regard to the other driving behavior variables, the lower the respondents' income level, the more likely they were to respond that they never drank before driving and that they usually drove at the speed limit on the highway.

Assessment of the respondents' marital status suggested that a larger percentage of married respondents than single participants reported they had not had an accident in the past 5 years

( $p = .000$ ), had not received a moving violation ticket in the past 2 years ( $p = .000$ ), and they usually drove the highway speed limit ( $p = .000$ ). Residence in urban or rural areas was found to be only significantly related to the drinking and driving question ( $p = .042$ ), while registered to vote was only statistically associated to the accidents variable ( $p = .033$ ). Basically, respondents residing in rural areas (71 percent) were more likely than those residing in urban areas (64 percent) to indicate that they never drink and drive. Eighty percent of respondents who were registered to vote noted that they never have had an accident in the past 5 years compared to 76 percent of those not registered to vote.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Texas Transportation Institute, in conjunction with the Public Policy Resources Laboratory at Texas A&M University, conducted a telephone survey of Texans' attitudes toward the safety belt law in June of 1988. The purpose of this survey was to determine why Texans do or do not buckle up, what the current level of knowledge is concerning seat belts and the seat belt law, perceptions of enforcement of the seat belt law, if and how the seat belt issue is being presented in the media, and the public's opinion of suggested ways to improve seat belt use.

### Summary of Results

The results of the survey were divided into six subject areas. Each subject area is enumerated and highlights of the results are summarized below.

1. Attitudes Toward the Law--Texans overwhelmingly support the seat belt law. This was demonstrated by the fact that over 83 percent of those surveyed reported they favor the law. In general, the law was more often favored by respondents with the following demographic characteristics:

- females
- urban residents
- Hispanics
- lower and middle income
- respondents who drive fewer miles per year
- respondents who do not drive after drinking
- respondents who have had few accidents
- seat belt users

Most people who favor the law do so because they believe that seat belts save lives and/or reduce injuries. Many of those

who oppose the law see the law as an infringement on their personal freedom (mentioned by 55 percent of the respondents). Others oppose the law because they feel that seat belts are uncomfortable or inconvenient to use (mentioned by 17 percent of the sample).

The telephone survey did not focus on the mandatory child restraint use law. However, one question was included for comparison purposes. Although observation surveys in Texas have not revealed high usage rates for child restraints corresponding to seat belt usage rates, the Texans surveyed reported almost unanimous support for the child restraint law.

Opinions of safety belt effectiveness and safety belt use were generally positive. Forty-one percent of the respondents said the law is very effective in saving lives and reducing injuries, and another 47 percent said the law is somewhat effective.

Responses to statements regarding various seat belt issues are summarized below:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Percent Agreed</u>
Belts are an infringement on rights.	40.8
I support the child restraint law.	96.7
Belts save lives and reduce injuries.	91.8
The seat belt law will reduce the cost to society of accidents and injuries.	78.2
Belts are uncomfortable or inconvenient to use.	48.5
Belts are too loose to protect you in an accident.	16.2
Belts are needed to offset increased injuries due to the higher 65 mph speed limit on Interstate highways.	75.3

It is apparent from the above responses that even though respondents regard the mandatory use of seat belts as a government intrusion, and many feel that the act of wearing belts is inconvenient or uncomfortable, the benefits of wearing safety belts are recognized.

2. Reported Seat Belt Use--61.5 percent of the respondents reported they wear their seat belts all the time. This is very similar to the observed usage rate for 18 cities surveyed in June of 1988 (59.2 percent use). Respondents indicated that a much higher percentage of their friends wear seat belts than the general population of Texas. The average estimate given for seat belt use in Texas by the survey respondents (59 percent) accurately estimated what has been observed in the most recent usage survey.

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents said they wear their seat belts at least most of the time, if not all of the time. Additionally, over 75 percent said they had asked other vehicle occupants to wear seat belts during the previous six months.

Observation surveys have shown that seat belt users are more often in the older age group and female. This pattern also emerged for self-reported use. Other demographic characteristics of belt wearers included: urban residents, college graduates, people who do not drive, and low risk drivers (i.e., those who do not drink and drive or ride with others that do, those who have fewer accidents and violations).

3. Knowledge of the Safety Belt Law--Only about a third of those surveyed knew the correct fine for a seat belt violation.

The fine was over-estimated by 31 percent of the respondents. Over 78 percent knew that Texas is a primary enforcement State (or as stated in the survey, that "police can stop you just for not wearing a seat belt").

4. Perceptions of Enforcement--Over 38 percent of those surveyed thought the law was being enforced more strictly at the time of the survey than when first implemented. Furthermore, 39 percent had either received or knew of someone else who had received a citation or warning for not wearing a seat belt.

5. Strategies for Increasing Safety Belt Use--When asked to evaluate techniques that would be effective in increasing seat belt use, respondents most often supported the suggestion that the media publicize stories about people who were saved by using their belts. Each technique posited was supported by more than half of the respondents. However, the least attractive strategy was to increase the fine for not wearing belts. Promotional efforts through usage policies were more often supported than consequential measures.

6. Belts and the Media--Respondents were queried as to whether or not they had been exposed to seat belt issues via the media. Of particular interest was the finding that 80 percent of those surveyed had heard something in the media during the previous six months about seat belts having saved someone's life.

## Conclusions

Texans support the mandatory use law for safety belts and they report high rates of usage. This conclusion is not surprising, based on previous observational studies. While most of the characteristics associated with those who favor the law and who wear belts generally followed expected patterns, a few exceptions were found. Hispanics tended to agree more often with positive statements about seat belts and the seat belt law. They also reported more experience with seat belt violations. Miles driven per year yielded some interesting findings as well. Those who drove the most miles tended to have the least favorable attitudes about wearing seat belts.

In general, Texans are aware of the penalties for not wearing seat belts, although a significant number perceive them to be greater than they are. For the most part, they are also aware that Texas is a primary enforcement State and perceive that the law is being enforced as strictly or more strictly than immediately following its implementation. Techniques to increase seat belt use other than increasing the fine or the level of enforcement were preferred.

The most preferred method to increase seat belt use was to publicize stories about people who had been saved by wearing seat belts. However, 80 percent of the respondents had heard this message during the previous six months. The belief that seat belts are effective in saving lives was a primary reason for support of the law and for belt use.

**APPENDIX A**

**SEAT BELT TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS**

1. Do you favor or oppose the law requiring drivers and front seat passengers to use seat belts? (N=2023)

% Favor	83.2
% Oppose	12.7
% Neutral	4.0

2. What is the main reason you favor the seat belt law? (N=1672)

	%
Safety belts save lives/reduce injury	73.4
Protection for me and my family	9.7
The law will get more people to wear belts	1.2
Makes people more safety conscious	0.9
Reduces costs to society of accidents and injuries	0.5
Don't know	0.9
Other miscellaneous reasons	13.4

3. What is the main reason you oppose the seat belt law? (N=262)

	%
Infringement on rights/adults should have a choice	54.9
Seat belts are uncomfortable/inconvenient	16.9
Safety belts don't work/don't help in an accident	5.8
Law is not enforceable	1.4
There shouldn't be a fine	1.1
Other miscellaneous reasons	19.4

4. How often do you wear your seat belt? (N=2024)

	%
Always	61.5
Most of the time	26.6
Sometimes	5.8
Rarely	3.2
Never	2.9

5. What is the main reason you do not always wear you seat belt? (N=767)

	%
Forget	29.0
Don't wear it for short distances	28.1
Uncomfortable/inconvenient	17.4
I get in a hurry and don't put it on	7.0
Haven't formed the habit	1.4
Afraid of being killed or seriously injured wearing a belt	1.3
Don't know/No answer	1.3
Other miscellaneous reasons	14.2

6. When the law first went into effect, did you use your seat belt more often, less often, or about the same as before the seat belt law? (N=2023)

	%
More often	48.3
About the same	40.6
Less often	10.5
Don't know/No answer	0.6

7. Now that the law has been in effect for several years, would you say you wear your seat belt more often, less often, or about the same as when the law first went into effect? (N=2017)

	%
More often	47.1
About the same	50.1
Less often	2.7

8. What is the main reason you are wearing your seat belt less? (N=65)

	%
Forget	22.4
Uncomfortable/inconvenient	13.1
Don't wear it for short distances	9.5
Police aren't enforcing the law as much	10.0
Haven't formed the habit	4.6
Afraid of being killed or seriously injured in an accident	7.4
I get in a hurry and don't put it on	3.7
Other miscellaneous reasons	20.2
Don't know/No answer	7.0

9. What is your opinion of the effectiveness of the Texas Seat Belt Law in reducing injuries and saving lives? (N=2024)

	%
Effective	88.0
Not effective	5.4
Don't know	6.6

10. What percent of Texas Drivers would you say currently wear seat belts? (N=2024)

Average of responses given: 56.4%

11. What percent of drivers in your city would you say wear their seat belts? (N=2024)

Average of responses given: 55.5%

12. What percent of your friends wear seat belts? (N=2024)

Average of responses given: 69.3%

13. What is the fine for not wearing a seat belt in Texas? (N=2022)

\$	%
20	1.0
25	6.9
30	1.6
35	3.0
40	3.4
45	2.3
50	29.2
60	2.3
75	3.7
100	6.6
150	1.7
200	13.7
250	1.1
Don't know	14.8

14. How strictly do you think the law is being enforced now compared to when the fine first came into effect? (N=2023)

	%
More strictly	38.4
Less strictly	28.9
About the same	25.8
Don't know	6.9

15. Have you been asked or told to buckle up by a driver or passenger during the past 6 months? (N=2024)

	%
yes	38.0
no	61.9

16. Have you told or asked drivers or passengers to buckle up? (N=2024)

	%
yes	75.1
no	24.8

17. Does your employer have a policy that requires you to wear a seat belt for on-the-job automobile use? (N=2021)

	%
yes	30.1
no	65.6
don't know	0.1
no answer/not applicable	4.2

18. Can police stop you just for not wearing a seat belt? (N=2023)

	%
yes	78.1
no	14.5
don't know	7.4

19. Have you, or anyone you know, ever received a ticket or warning for not wearing a seat belt? (N=2024)

	%
yes	39.0
no	60.5

20. Have you heard or seen anything in the media about the Texas seat belt law in the past 6 months? (N=2024)

	%
yes	53.3
no	44.7
don't know	2.0

21. Have you seen or heard anything about attempts to repeal the Texas seat belt law during the past 6 months? (N=2023)

	%
yes	17.1
no	81.6
don't know	1.2

22. Have you seen or heard anything in the media about seat belts having saved someone's life or reduced an injury in an accident during the past 6 months? (N=2024)

	%
yes	80.2
no	19.0
don't know	0.8

23. Have you received any brochures or other printed material about seat belts at any time during the past 6 months? (N=2022)

	%
yes	12.4
no	86.1
don't know	1.5

24. Printed material was from:

	<u>N</u>
Employer	17.6
Community Organization	28.6
School	22.9
Law enforcement officer	15.1
Doctor or health dept.	14.1
Other	45.8

25. Suggested ways to increase belt use:

	<u>PERCENT</u>			
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Don't know No answer</u>
Have police write more tickets for not wearing a belt	65.1	19.9	13.7	1.3
Increase the fine for not wearing belts	54.2	30.8	12.7	2.3
Provide more information about the effectiveness of seat belts	66.7	16.8	15.5	1.0
Make sure local police use their belts	83.5	9.9	4.6	2.0
Have police tug on their shoulder belts when they see an unbuckled motorist	65.6	16.7	14.7	2.9
Encourage employers to have strong belt use policies for on-the-job auto use	83.9	7.7	5.9	2.4
Have media publicize stories about people who were saved by using their safety belts	84.6	6.0	8.5	0.9

26. Seat belts save lives and reduce injuries.

	<u>%</u>
Agree	91.8
Disagree	2.4
Neutral	5.2

27. Seat belts are inconvenient or uncomfortable to use.

	<u>%</u>
Agree	48.5
Disagree	42.5
Neutral	8.4

28. Seat belts are needed to offset the likelihood of increased injuries due to the 65 mph speed limit on some Interstate highways.

	%
Agree	75.3
Disagree	16.0
Neutral	6.7

29. Seat belts don't seem to work--they feel too loose to protect you in an accident.

	%
Agree	16.2
Disagree	75.4
Neutral	6.2

30. The seat belt law will reduce the costs to society of accidents and injuries.

	%
Agree	78.2
Disagree	12.1
Neutral	7.4

31. The decision to wear a seat belt should be a matter of personal choice, not required by law.

	%
Agree	40.8
Disagree	50.1
Neutral	8.2

32. I support the law that requires infants and children under 4 years old to be restrained.

	%
Agree	96.7
Disagree	2.0
Neutral	0.8

## DRIVING BEHAVIOR QUESTIONS

Within the past 2 years, how many times have you received a moving violation traffic ticket? (N=1941)

	%
none	74.2
1	16.8
2	5.8
3 or more	3.2

In general, how often do you drive after drinking alcoholic beverages? (N=1937)

	%
Frequently	2.9
Occasionally	8.5
Seldom	21.4
Never	67.2

How often do you ride with other drivers after they have been drinking alcoholic beverages? (N=2024)

	%
Frequently	2.3
Occasionally	10.5
Seldom	32.7
Never	54.5

On the highway do you usually drive: (N=1936)

	%
At the speed limit	37.2
Up to 5 mph above the speed limit	35.5
5 to 10 mph above the speed limit	23.0
More than 10 mph above the speed limit	4.3

**Within the past 5 years, how many automobile accidents have you been involved in? (N=2021)**

	%
None	78.2
1	16.1
2	3.8
3 or more	1.9

**How many of these accidents resulted in personal injuries? (N=449)**

	%
None	75.4
1	23.0
2	.7
3 or more	.9

**After being involved in an accident, did your seat belt use increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (N=445)**

	%
Increase	25.2
Decrease	1.3
Stay same	72.9

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

### Age Breakdown

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
16-19	179	9.4
20-25	231	10.7
26-35	504	25.8
36-45	369	18.2
46-55	229	11.6
56-65	210	10.0
66-75	172	9.0
76+	103	5.3

### Gender

Males	45.2%
Females	54.8%

### Ethnicity

	%
Anglo	67.2
Black	8.4
Hispanic	19.4
Other	5.0

### Education Levels

	%
Less than high school	21.1
High school graduate	31.5
Some college	23.9
College graduate	14.7
Graduate work	8.1

### Income Levels

	%
Under \$10,000	18.8
\$10,000 to \$20,000	20.3
\$20,000 to \$30,000	21.2
\$30,000 to \$40,000	14.4
\$40,000 to \$50,000	8.4
\$50,000 and above	16.9
Don't know	7.1
No answer	4.7

### Occupation Levels

	%
White collar	44.9
Blue collar	55.1

### Population

	%
Outside city limits	0.5
Less than 5,000	14.0
5,000 - 10,000	5.2
10,001 - 50,000	20.3
50,001 - 100,000	12.8
100,000 - 500,000	28.1
Over 500,000	19.1

### Marital Status

	%
Married	57.1
Single	27.5
Widowed/Divorced/Separated	15.4

### Texas Residency Status

	%
Native Texan	58.0
Resident 1 year or less	1.7
Resident 1 to 5 years	5.9
Resident 5 to 10 years	8.4
Resident more than 10 years	28.1

**Registered Voters**

	%
Yes	77.2
No	22.8

**Miles Driven Per Year**

	%
Don't drive	4.3
Less than 10,000	30.1
10,000 - 15,000	27.8
15,000 - 20,000	13.6
20,000 - 30,000	10.7
Over 30,000	8.1
Don't know	5.3