

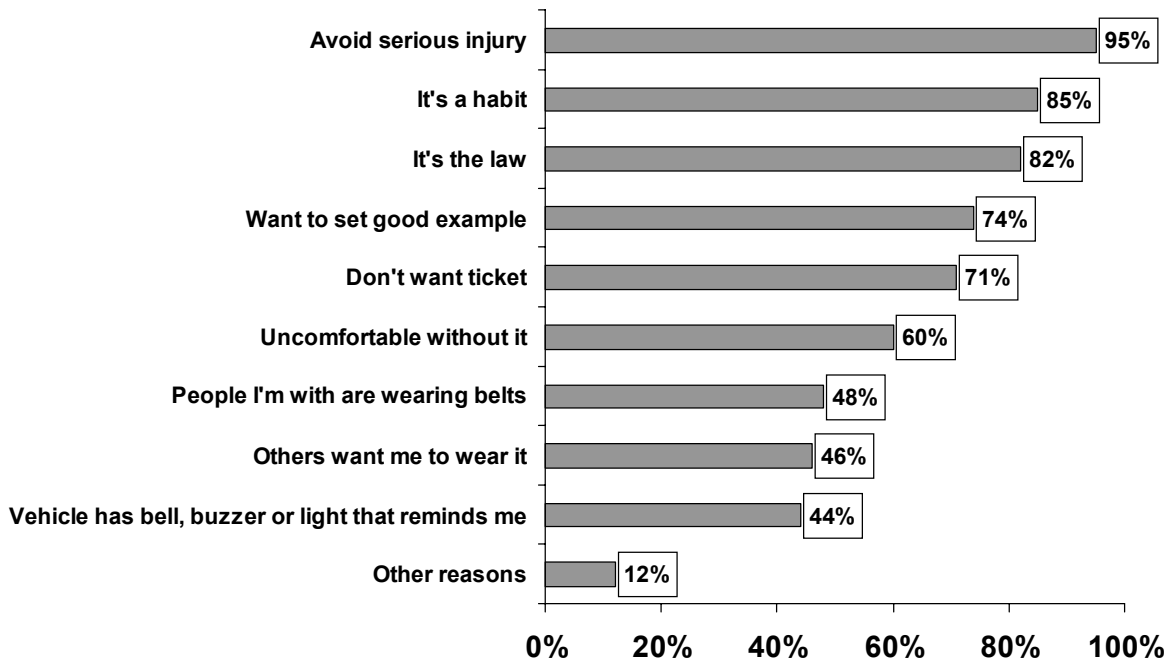
2003 SURVEY RESULTS

**CHAPTER 2: REASONS FOR SAFETY BELT USE
AND NON-USE**

Reasons For Safety Belt Use

Drivers who wore shoulder or lap belts at least on occasion were asked their reasons for wearing safety belts when they drove. Nine potential reasons for safety belt use were read to respondents. They were asked whether each reason was a factor in their use of safety belts. The respondents were then given an opportunity to volunteer other reasons for their safety belt use. Almost all drivers (95%) said that avoiding serious injury was a reason they wore their safety belts. **Injury avoidance ranked first regardless of the group to which persons belonged** (see following pages). The drivers also frequently attributed safety belt use to habit (85%), the law (82%), wanting to set a good example for others (74%), and not wanting a ticket (71%).

Figure 23
Reasons For Safety Belt Use - Drivers



Qx: When I wear my seat belt, I do so because...

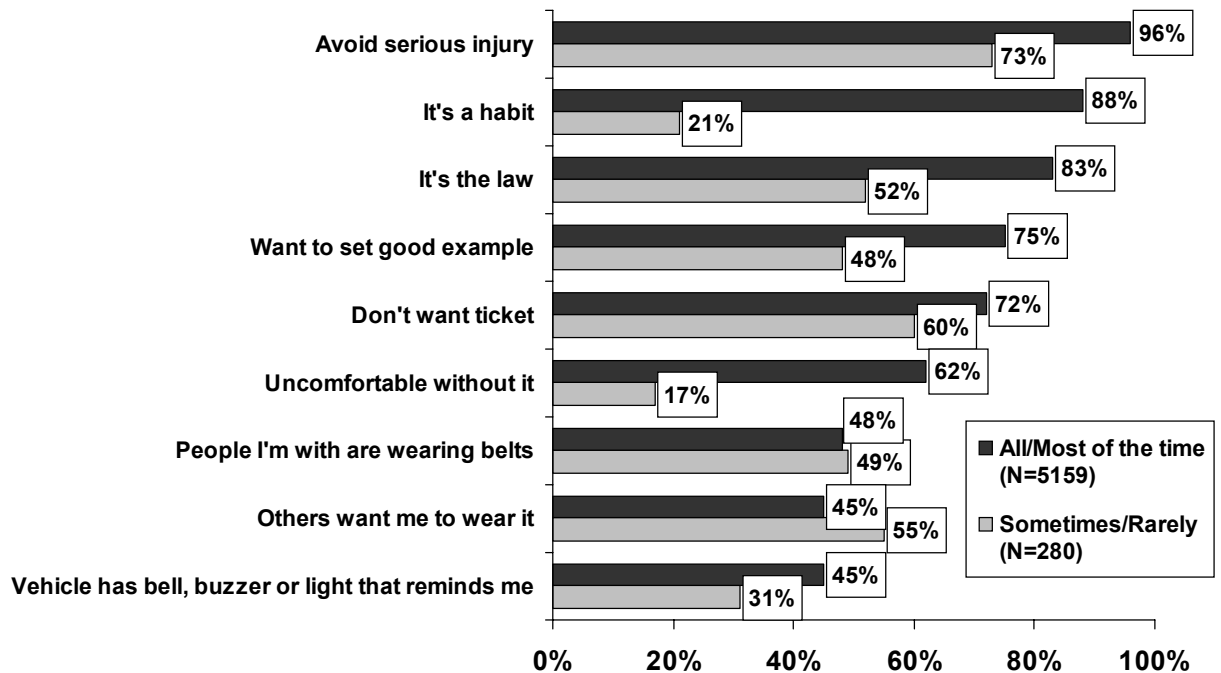
Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts, and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

Unweighted N=5439

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

While almost all drivers (96%) who said they wore their safety belts “all” or “most” of the time gave injury avoidance as a reason for use, only 73% of those who “sometimes” or “rarely” wore safety belts did the same. Frequent users also were more likely than infrequent users to mention the law, setting a good example, and characteristics of regular use (habit; uncomfortable without it). Infrequent users (55%) were more likely than regular users (45%) to report wearing their safety belts because others wanted them to do so.

**Figure 24
Driver Reasons For Safety Belt Use
By Reported Level Of Safety Belt Use**



Qx: When I wear my seat belt, I do so because...

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts, and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

Unweighted N's listed above.

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

Females, on average, gave more reasons for their safety belt use, as evidenced by the generally higher percentages. They were particularly more likely than males to report wearing their safety belt because they were uncomfortable without it (64% to 56%), wanted to set a good example for others (79% to 69%), and it was the law (86% to 77%).

Drivers ages 16 through 20 showed more concern about getting a ticket (80%) than did drivers ages 21 to 64 (71%) or 65 and older (66%). Younger drivers were more likely than the older age groups to say they wore their safety belt because others wanted them to wear it (57% versus 46% and 38%).

**Table 17
Driver Reasons For Safety Belt Use
By Gender And Age**

Qx: When I wear my seat belt, I do so because...

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

Reason	Gender		Age		
	Female	Male	16-20	21-64	65+
	(N=2836)	(N=2603)	(N=415)	(N=4318)	(N=634)
Avoid serious injury	95%	94%	95%	94%	96%
It's a habit	87%	83%	84%	85%	85%
It's the law	86%	77%	84%	81%	83%
Want to set good example	79%	69%	71%	75%	71%
Don't want ticket	73%	69%	80%	71%	66%
Uncomfortable without it	64%	56%	56%	60%	61%
People I'm with are wearing belts	49%	48%	52%	48%	48%
Others want me to wear it	46%	46%	57%	46%	38%
Vehicle has bell, buzzer or light that reminds me	47%	41%	46%	43%	51%

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

Blacks (79%) and Hispanics (80%) more frequently cited the threat of being ticketed as a reason for safety belt use than did Whites (70%) and non-Hispanics (70%). They also were more likely to refer to the law. Blacks were less likely than the other groups to wear safety belts out of habit, while Hispanics were more likely than the others to wear them because they wanted to set a good example for others.

Table 18
Driver Reasons For Safety Belt Use
By Race And Ethnicity

Qx: When I wear my seat belt, I do so because...

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

Reason	Race		Ethnicity	
	Black	White	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
	(N=434)	(N=4193)	(N=549)	(N=4861)
Avoid serious injury	94%	95%	97%	94%
It's a habit	80%	86%	83%	85%
It's the law	87%	80%	88%	81%
Want to set good example	72%	74%	79%	74%
Don't want ticket	79%	70%	80%	70%
Uncomfortable without it	55%	61%	60%	60%
People I'm with are wearing belts	48%	48%	49%	48%
Others want me to wear it	37%	48%	40%	47%
Vehicle has bell, buzzer or light that reminds me	50%	44%	43%	45%

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

Persons who had not attended college were more likely than those who had attended to attribute their belt use to the law and their not wanting to be ticketed. High school graduates were also slightly more likely to attribute belt use to wanting to set a good example or because of the people they were with. Conversely, aspects of regular use such as habit and being uncomfortable when not wearing the safety belt were slightly more common reasons among college graduates.

Table 19
Driver Reasons For Safety Belt Use By Education

Qx: When I wear my seat belt, I do so because...

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

Reason	Education			
	Grade 11 or less	High school grad	Some college	College grad
	(N=571)	(N=1532)	(N=1354)	(N=1956)
Avoid serious injury	94%	93%	94%	97%
It's a habit	81%	83%	84%	88%
It's the law	86%	86%	82%	76%
Want to set good example	74%	78%	74%	71%
Don't want ticket	78%	76%	73%	63%
Uncomfortable without it	57%	57%	58%	65%
People I'm with are wearing belts	50%	52%	47%	45%
Others want me to wear it	46%	48%	45%	44%
Vehicle has bell, buzzer or light that reminds me	44%	47%	43%	44%

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

Drivers of SUVs and vans or minivans were more likely than drivers of other vehicles to include wanting to set a good example as a reason for belt use. Pickup truck drivers were less prone than the others to refer to habit or feeling uncomfortable without the belt as reasons for use or because it's the law.

Table 20
Driver Reasons For Safety Belt Use
By Type Of Primary Vehicle

Qx: When I wear my seat belt, I do so because...

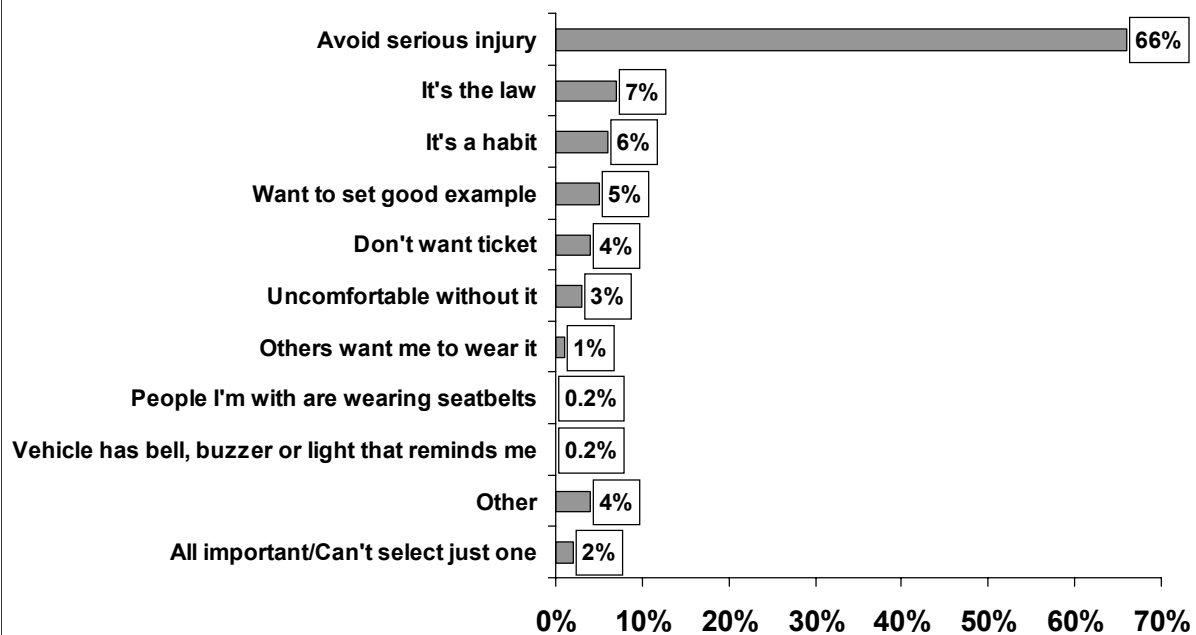
Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

Reason	Primary vehicle			
	Car	Van/Minivan	Pickup truck	SUV
	(N=3242)	(N=552)	(N=818)	(N=735)
Avoid serious injury	95%	95%	91%	96%
It's a habit	86%	84%	80%	88%
It's the law	82%	84%	77%	83%
Want to set good example	73%	79%	70%	80%
Don't want ticket	71%	69%	73%	72%
Uncomfortable without it	61%	64%	54%	63%
People I'm with are wearing belts	47%	52%	48%	54%
Others want me to wear it	44%	48%	49%	52%
Vehicle has bell, buzzer or light that reminds me	47%	39%	39%	46%

Most Important Reason For Safety Belt Use

Although a majority of drivers who wore safety belts identified multiple reasons for usage, they tended to give greatest weight to safety considerations. Roughly two-thirds of drivers (66%) said that avoiding serious injury was the most important reason why they wore their safety belt. No other single factor garnered more than 7% of the driver population when drivers were asked which reason was most important.

Figure 25
Most Important Reason For Safety Belt Use - Drivers

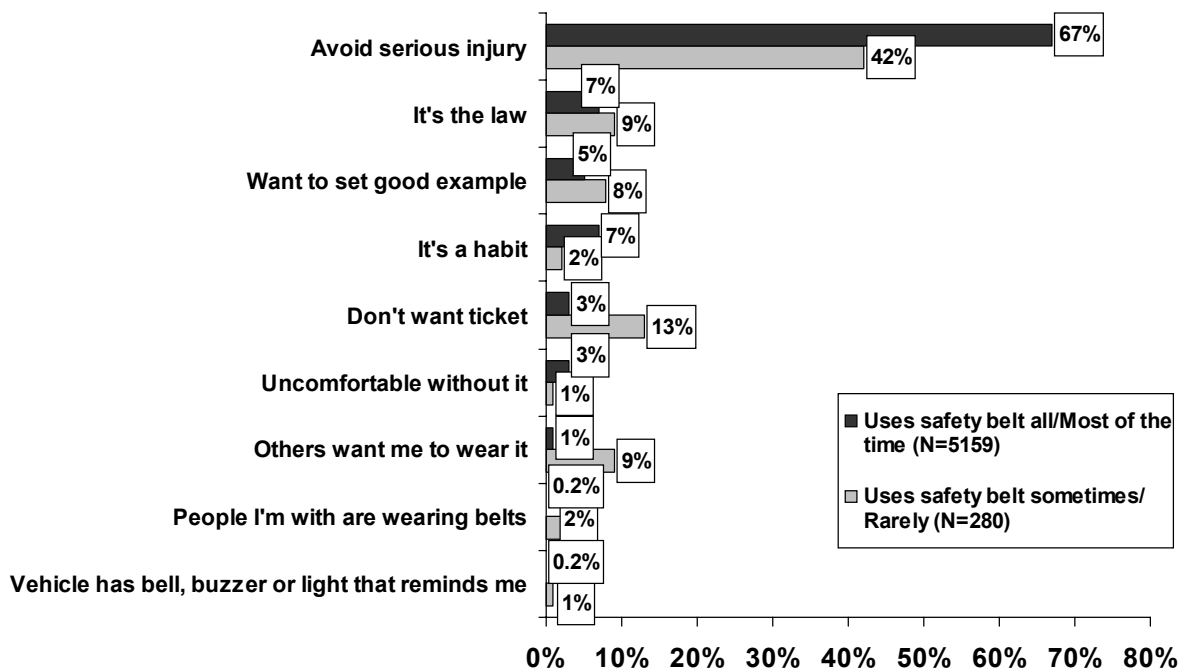


Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?
 Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts, and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.
 Unweighted N=5439

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

The primary reason drivers gave for wearing their safety belt differed according to the reported level of belt usage. Two-thirds (67%) of drivers who “always” or “most of the time” used their belts said that avoiding injury was their most important reason, compared to less than half of drivers who only “rarely” or “sometimes” wore their belts (42%). Just under one-third of the infrequent users (30%) indicated that not wanting a ticket, wanting to set a good example for others, or pressure from others was their primary reason for use, compared to 9% of those who said they usually wore their safety belt.

Figure 26
Most Important Reason For Driver Safety Belt Use
By Reported Level Of Safety Belt Use



Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts, and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

Unweighted N's listed above.

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

The survey found little difference between males and females in what they considered their most important reason for wearing safety belts. The youngest drivers were more likely than older drivers to say the most important reason they wear safety belts is to avoid serious injury (71% versus 66% and 62%).

Table 21
Most Important Reason For Driver Safety Belt Use
By Gender And Age

Qx: *Of the following reasons you just gave me for wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?*

Base: *Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.*

Reason	Gender		Age		
	Female	Male	16-20	21-64	65+
	(N=2836)	(N=2603)	(N=415)	(N=4318)	(N=634)
Avoid serious injury	67%	64%	71%	66%	62%
It's a habit	6%	7%	7%	6%	6%
It's the law	7%	8%	5%	7%	11%
Want to set good example	5%	5%	2%	6%	3%
Don't want ticket	3%	5%	6%	4%	3%
Uncomfortable without it	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
People I'm with are wearing belts	*	*	*	*	*
Others want me to wear it	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Vehicle has bell, buzzer or light that reminds me	*	*	*	*	*
Other	4%	4%	2%	4%	5%
Can't say one is most important/All are important	2%	2%	1%	2%	5%

*Less than 0.5%.

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

There was little difference between Blacks and Whites in their major reason for safety belt use. Hispanics (61%) were less likely to consider injury avoidance their primary reason for safety belt use compared to non-Hispanics (67%).

Table 22
Most Important Reason For Driver Safety Belt Use
By Race And Ethnicity

Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

Reason	Race		Ethnicity	
	Black	White	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
	(N=434)	(N=4193)	(N=549)	(N=4861)
Avoid serious injury	65%	67%	61%	67%
It's a habit	6%	6%	7%	6%
It's the law	9%	6%	12%	7%
Want to set good example	4%	5%	4%	5%
Don't want ticket	4%	4%	3%	4%
Uncomfortable without it	5%	3%	2%	3%
People I'm with are wearing belts	--	*	1%	*
Others want me to wear it	1%	1%	*	1%
Vehicle has bell, buzzer or light that reminds me	*	*	--	*
Other	4%	4%	4%	4%
Can't say one is most important/All are important	1%	2%	5%	2%

*Less than 0.5%. -- No cases.

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

The more years of formal education that persons had, the more likely they were to attribute their safety belt use primarily to injury avoidance. At the same time, they were less likely than persons with fewer years of schooling to cite the law as their main reason for safety belt usage.

Table 23
Most Important Reason For Driver Safety Belt Use
By Education

Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

Reason	Education			
	Grade 11 or less	High school grad	Some college	College grad
	(N=571)	(N=1532)	(N=1354)	(N=1956)
Avoid serious injury	61%	61%	64%	73%
It's a habit	6%	6%	6%	8%
It's the law	12%	10%	7%	4%
Want to set good example	4%	6%	6%	3%
Don't want ticket	5%	5%	4%	2%
Uncomfortable without it	4%	2%	4%	3%
People I'm with are wearing belts	*	*	*	*
Others want me to wear it	1%	1%	1%	1%
Vehicle has bell, buzzer or light that reminds me	1%	*	*	*
Other	3%	5%	4%	3%
Can't say one is most important/All are important	3%	3%	2%	2%

*Less than 0.5%.

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

Pickup truck drivers were slightly less likely than other drivers to attribute their belt use primarily to safety concerns.

Table 24
Most Important Reason For Driver Safety Belt Use
By Primary Vehicle Driven

Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion wear their safety belt.

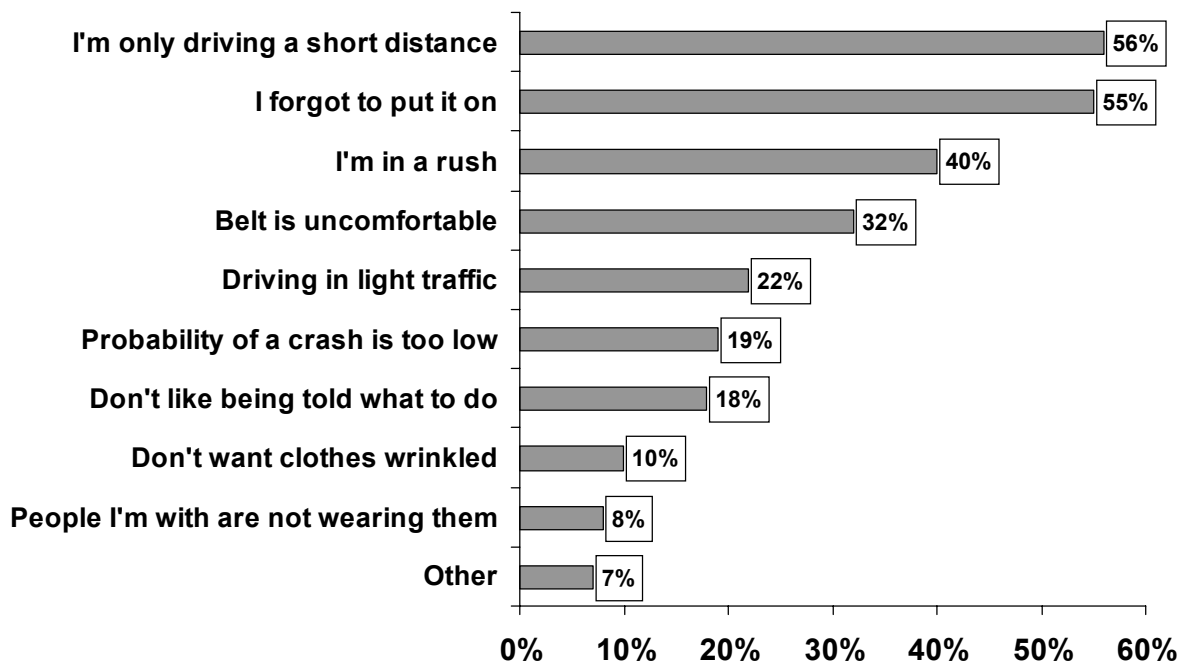
Reason	Primary vehicle			
	Car	Van/Minivan	Pickup truck	SUV
	(N=3242)	(N=552)	(N=818)	(N=735)
Avoid serious injury	67%	66%	62%	66%
It's a habit	6%	5%	6%	7%
It's the law	7%	8%	8%	6%
Want to set good example	4%	8%	5%	6%
Don't want ticket	4%	3%	6%	3%
Uncomfortable without it	3%	3%	3%	4%
People I'm with are wearing belts	*	--	*	*
Others want me to wear it	1%	2%	1%	2%
Vehicle has bell, buzzer or light that reminds me	*	--	1%	*
Other	4%	3%	4%	4%
Can't say one is most important/All are important	3%	2%	2%	2%

*Less than 0.5%. -- No cases.

Reasons For Non-Use Of Safety Belts

Drivers who did not always wear their safety belt during the past year were asked about their reasons for non-use, using methods identical to those described on page 46 (i.e., getting respondents to react to specific reasons, and then giving them the opportunity to add to the list). The most frequent reasons given for non-use by drivers were that they were only going a short distance (56%) or they forgot (55%). Two-in-five (40%) said that they were in a rush, while one-third (32%) attributed non-use at least in part to discomfort from the safety belt.

Figure 27
Reasons For Non-Use Of Safety Belts - Drivers



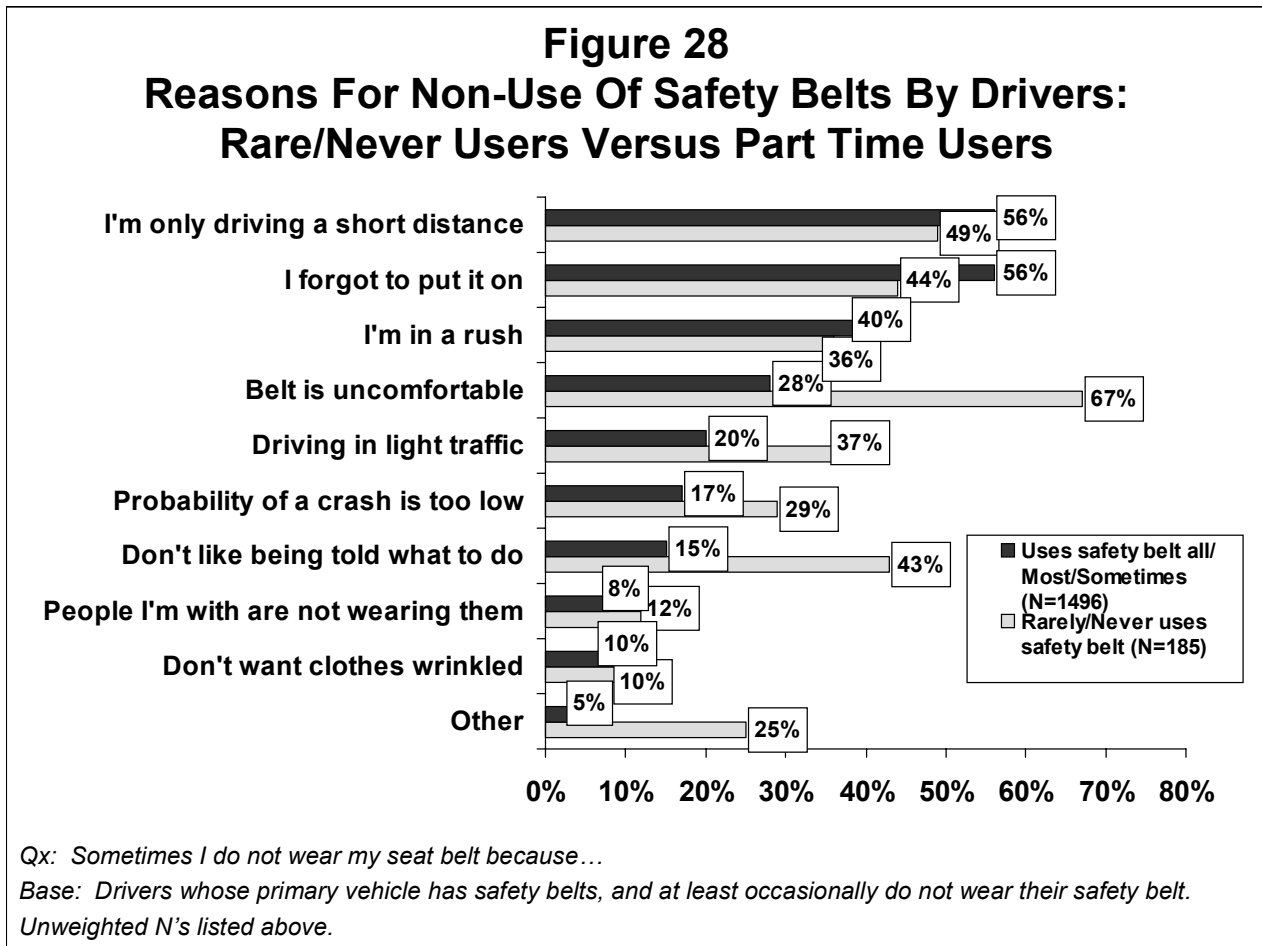
Qx: Sometimes I do not wear my seat belt because...

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts, and at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

Unweighted N=1685

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

The vast majority of the non-use described on the previous page came from persons who indicated at least occasional use of safety belts. However, Figure 27 also included a small number of persons (185) who said that they rarely or never wore their safety belt while driving. Their reasons for non-use may differ from that of more frequent (i.e., part-time) users. Figure 28 suggests that is the case as it shows that discomfort (67%), resistance to being told what to do (43%), driving in light traffic (37%), and “Other” reasons (25%) were far more prevalent among those who rarely or never wore safety belts.



2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

Differences between males and females in reasons for non-use were small, with discomfort accounting for the largest gap between the two groups (females 36%; males 29%). Males were more likely than females to say non-use was a result of light traffic (24% versus 19%), low probability of a crash (21% versus 16%) and they don't like being told what to do (20% versus 15%).

With respect to age, the youngest drivers were more likely than older drivers to say they did not wear safety belts because they forgot (65%), were in a rush (44%), the safety belt was uncomfortable (39%), or they were driving in light traffic (26%). However, readers are cautioned that there are fewer than 200 cases in both the age 16-20 and 65+ subgroups that did not wear their safety belts.

Table 25
Driver Reasons For Non-Use Of Safety Belts
By Gender And Age

Qx: Sometimes I do not wear my seat belt because...

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

Reason	Gender		Age		
	Female	Male	16-20	21-64	65+
	(N=725)	(N=960)	(N=175)	(N=1351)	(N=147)
I'm only driving a short distance	54%	56%	56%	55%	56%
I forgot to put it on	52%	56%	65%	53%	53%
I'm in a rush	38%	40%	44%	40%	33%
The seat belt is uncomfortable	36%	29%	39%	31%	31%
I'm driving in light traffic	19%	24%	26%	22%	20%
The probability of being in a crash is too low	16%	21%	17%	19%	18%
Don't want my clothes wrinkled	12%	9%	12%	9%	12%
People I am with are not wearing belts	7%	9%	11%	8%	9%
Don't like being told what to do	15%	20%	22%	18%	14%
Other	6%	8%	4%	8%	6%

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

As with some of the age groups, the number of Blacks and Hispanics in the survey who reported non-use of safety belts was small. Thus, caution should be exercised in interpreting the numbers. Whites were more likely than Blacks to attribute non-use to a dislike for being told what to do or they were in a rush. Hispanics were more likely than the comparison group to attribute non-use to low crash probability (24%). Hispanics were less likely than other groups to say they were only driving a short distance (43%).

Table 26
Driver Reasons For Non-Use Of Safety Belts
By Race And Ethnicity

Qx: *Sometimes I do not wear my seat belt because...*

Base: *Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.*

Reason	Race		Ethnicity	
	Black	White	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
	(N=145)	(N=1334)	(N=135)	(N=1541)
I'm only driving a short distance	55%	58%	43%	57%
I forgot to put it on	54%	55%	56%	55%
I'm in a rush	36%	41%	32%	40%
The seat belt is uncomfortable	28%	32%	25%	33%
I'm driving in light traffic	20%	23%	21%	22%
The probability of being in a crash is too low	18%	19%	24%	18%
Don't want my clothes wrinkled	15%	10%	5%	10%
People I am with are not wearing belts	7%	8%	10%	8%
Don't like being told what to do	12%	19%	20%	18%
Other	7%	7%	6%	8%

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

Drivers who had twelve or fewer years of formal schooling were less likely than those who had gone to college to give “driving only a short distance” as a reason for their non-use of safety belts. Meanwhile, college graduates were less likely than those with fewer years of formal education to cite discomfort. Safety belt non-users who had not completed high school composed only 203 cases in the study, thus once again readers should exercise caution in interpreting the numbers.

Table 27
Driver Reasons For Non-Use Of Safety Belts
By Education

Qx: Sometimes I do not wear my seat belt because...

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

Reason	Education			
	Grade 11 or less	High school grad	Some college	College grad
	(N=203)	(N=558)	(N=419)	(N=499)
I'm only driving a short distance	48%	52%	60%	60%
I forgot to put it on	59%	51%	55%	57%
I'm in a rush	38%	37%	43%	41%
The seat belt is uncomfortable	37%	34%	36%	23%
I'm driving in light traffic	21%	22%	24%	21%
The probability of being in a crash is too low	18%	18%	19%	19%
Don't want my clothes wrinkled	7%	10%	10%	12%
People I am with are not wearing belts	9%	9%	9%	7%
Don't like being told what to do	19%	20%	19%	15%
Other	5%	8%	9%	7%

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

Driving only a short distance and forgetting to put it on were the most frequent reasons given for non-use of safety belts by all the driver groups listed below. Pickup truck drivers were more likely to say they do not wear their safety belt because they don't like being told what to do. Once again, there are subgroups in the Table that contain 200 cases or less.

Table 28
Driver Reasons For Non-Use Of Safety Belts
By Primary Vehicle Driven

Qx: Sometimes I do not wear my seat belt because...

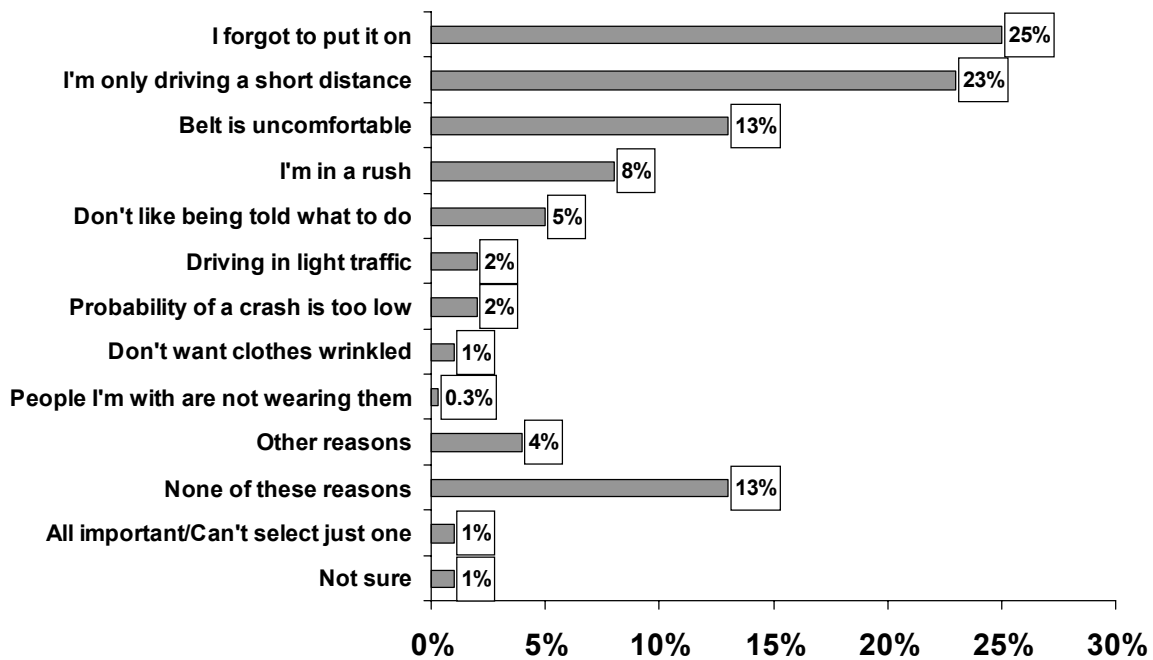
Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

Reason	Primary vehicle			
	Car	Van/Minivan	Pickup truck	SUV
	(N=912)	(N=156)	(N=357)	(N=200)
I'm only driving a short distance	54%	60%	57%	58%
I forgot to put it on	56%	52%	53%	51%
I'm in a rush	36%	43%	43%	48%
The seat belt is uncomfortable	30%	30%	34%	33%
I'm driving in light traffic	20%	28%	24%	25%
The probability of being in a crash is too low	19%	23%	18%	17%
Don't want my clothes wrinkled	10%	13%	9%	9%
People I am with are not wearing belts	8%	3%	11%	9%
Don't like being told what to do	16%	18%	24%	18%
Other	6%	8%	9%	8%

Most Important Reason For Non-Use Of Safety Belts

The most important reasons given for not wearing safety belts were usually that they forgot (25%) or were driving just a short distance (23%). About half as many drivers (13%) gave discomfort as their major reason for non-use. In addition, 13% of drivers did not agree that any of the listed reasons applied to them and also did not volunteer any reason for non-use. This inability or reluctance to provide a reason for non-use contrasts with data summarized earlier in this chapter showing that almost all drivers gave one or more reasons why they wore their safety belt.

Figure 29
Most Important Reason For Non-Use Of Safety Belts - Drivers



Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for not wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

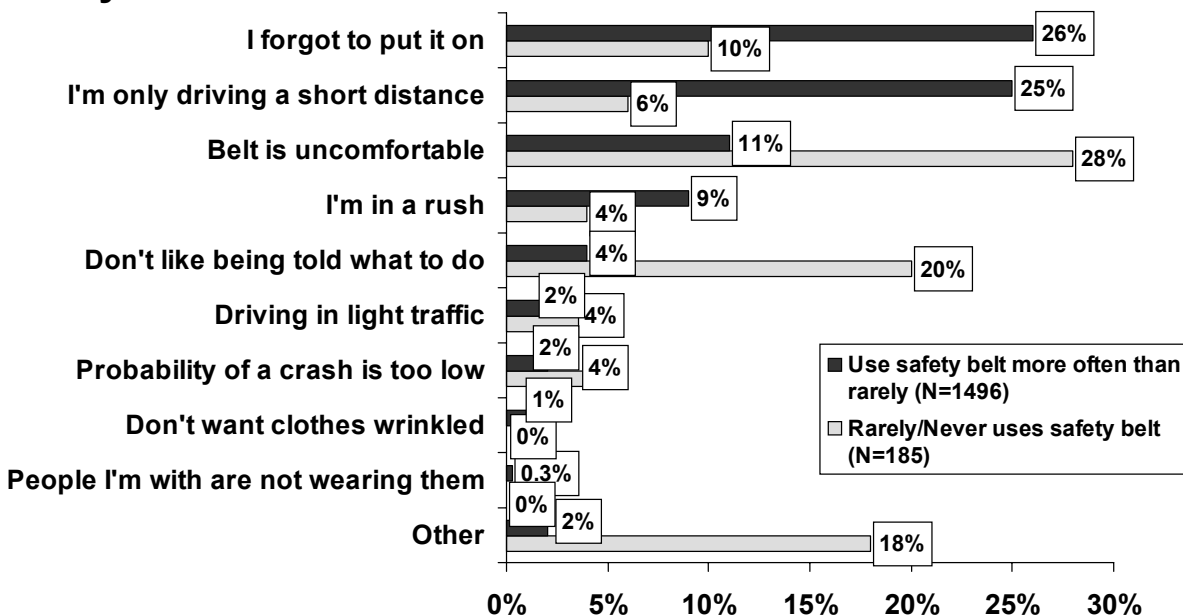
Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts, and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

Unweighted N=1685

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

As stated earlier, the vast majority of non-use occurred among persons who indicated at least some use of safety belts. Figure 30 shows that the most important reasons for non-use among part-time belt users were that they forgot (26%) or were only driving a short distance (25%). For those who rarely or never use their safety belt discomfort (28%) and the dislike of being told what to do (20%) predominated. "Other" reasons were mentioned by 18% of those rarely or never using safety belts. As in 2000, these "other" reasons tended to revolve around concerns about safety belts being dangerous, the absence of a habit of wearing safety belts, added complaints about discomfort, and the nonspecific argument that they just don't feel like wearing them.

Figure 30
Most Important Reason For Non-Use Of Safety Belts
By Drivers: Rare/Never Users Versus Part-Time Users



Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for not wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts, and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

Unweighted N's listed above.

Table 29 lists these “Other” reasons given by the rare and never users, as specified in the verbatim file constructed from the interviewers’ notes. Bracketed words indicate a minor change made to what was written in the verbatim file, usually a grammatical correction. Otherwise, the listed statements duplicate what is in the verbatim file, including instances where sentences were not completed.

Table 29
Most Important Reason For Non-Use Of Safety Belt:
Other Reasons Reported* By Rare/Never Users

Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for not wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Rare and never users of safety belts who said that some “other” reason besides those read to them was the most important reason for their non-use.

I feel it [puts me] in danger sometimes.	Car crash and the belt would have killed me.
Don't want to [get] stuck in my car in case of an accident.	Seat belt held them in place and kept them in place and severed their spine.
I'm scared that if I am in a wreck I may not be able to get out of the car.	I load logs if they come through I need to hit the floor.
Got stuck in one when I was a child.	If you're in an accident you might get stuck.
Because I was in an accident.	It's dangerous to wear them.
I hate them. I think they are overrated.	Rather be thrown from vehicle than be stuck inside.
Been hurt by them.	I just don't like to.
I don't feel like it.	My mother was seriously injured in an accident as a result of seat belt use.
Because I'm short and it hits me in the chin.	Friend was killed by one.
Doctor said I don't have to wear it.	If had a seat belt on when I got in my wreck it would have killed me.
Doesn't wear seatbelt due to accident which would have killed him.	Turned a tractor trailer over in Dec. and if I would have had it on I would have been injured (would have lost my head and upper torso).
I am a police officer and they are exempt, but now they want us to wear them so I am going to start putting them on.	Don't believe they work the way they claim because was in an accident.
I [have] seen too many people killed from wearing them.	I don't care for them.
I don't think about it.	When I started driving we didn't have to wear seat belts.
I'm a large person and it's hard to make a size 10 belt fit a size 15 body.	The seat belt gets stuck between the seats.
The school buses don't have them.	Just don't.
Not required to in a truck.	Just don't want to.
I don't want to.	
I just don't feel like wearing it.	

**Because of their self-report nature, the statements may be inaccurate when they refer to specific incidents.*

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

The largest differences between the genders in the primary reason for non-use of safety belts was that males more often attributed non-use to forgetting (26% to 23%) and females more often than males (15% to 11%) said that the safety belt is uncomfortable. Differences were also small between the three specified age groups.

Table 30
Most Important Reason For Driver Non-Use Of
Safety Belts By Gender And Age

Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for not wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

Reason	Gender		Age		
	Female	Male	16-20	21-64	65+
	(N=725)	(N=960)	(N=175)	(N=1351)	(N=147)
I'm only driving a short distance	23%	23%	19%	23%	25%
I forgot to put it on	23%	26%	31%	24%	23%
I'm in a rush	7%	9%	9%	9%	6%
The seat belt is uncomfortable	15%	11%	13%	12%	14%
I'm driving in light traffic	2%	3%	2%	3%	--
The probability of being in a crash is too low	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%
Don't want my clothes wrinkled	1%	1%	1%	1%	*
People I am with are not wearing belts	1%	*	*	*	*
Don't like being told what to do	5%	6%	6%	6%	4%
Other reason	2%	5%	2%	4%	4%
Can't say one is most important/All are important	1%	1%	--	2%	1%

*Less than 0.5%. --No cases.

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

There was little difference in percentages across the racial and ethnic groups listed in Table 31.

Table 31
Most Important Reason For Driver Non-Use Of Safety Belts By Race And Ethnicity

Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for not wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

Reason	Race		Ethnicity	
	Black	White	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
	(N=145)	(N=1334)	(N=135)	(N=1541)
I'm only driving a short distance	25%	23%	19%	23%
I forgot to put it on	27%	24%	29%	24%
I'm in a rush	9%	9%	5%	9%
The seat belt is uncomfortable	15%	13%	10%	13%
I'm driving in light traffic	--	2%	8%	2%
The probability of being in a crash is too low	2%	2%	4%	2%
Don't want my clothes wrinkled	2%	1%	1%	1%
People I am with are not wearing belts	--	*	--	*
Don't like being told what to do	3%	6%	7%	5%
Other reason	2%	4%	2%	4%
Can't say one is most important/All are important	--	2%	1%	1%

*Less than 0.5%. --No cases.

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College graduates were more likely than those who had not graduated college to say that “driving a short distance” was their primary reason for non-use of safety belts. Drivers who had not graduated high school were more likely than the other groups to identify “forgetting” or “discomfort” as their primary reason for non-use.

Table 32
Most Important Reason For Driver Non-Use Of
Safety Belts By Education

Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for not wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

Reason	Education			
	Grade 11 or less	High school grad	Some college	College grad
	(N=203)	(N=558)	(N=419)	(N=499)
I'm only driving a short distance	16%	20%	22%	31%
I forgot to put it on	30%	22%	26%	25%
I'm in a rush	7%	9%	9%	8%
The seat belt is uncomfortable	18%	13%	11%	11%
I'm driving in light traffic	3%	2%	2%	2%
The probability of being in a crash is too low	2%	3%	2%	1%
Don't want my clothes wrinkled	*	1%	1%	1%
People I am with are not wearing belts	*	*	1%	--
Don't like being told what to do	6%	6%	6%	3%
Other reason	2%	5%	4%	3%
Can't say one is most important/All are important	3%	1%	1%	1%

*Less than 0.5%. --No cases.

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SUV drivers were more likely to give “only driving a short distance” (29%) as their primary reason for non-use of safety belts. Drivers of passenger cars were more likely than the other groups to attribute their non-use of safety belts primarily to “forgetting.”

Table 33
Most Important Reason For Driver Non-Use Of
Safety Belts By Primary Vehicle Driven

Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for not wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers whose primary vehicle has safety belts and who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belt.

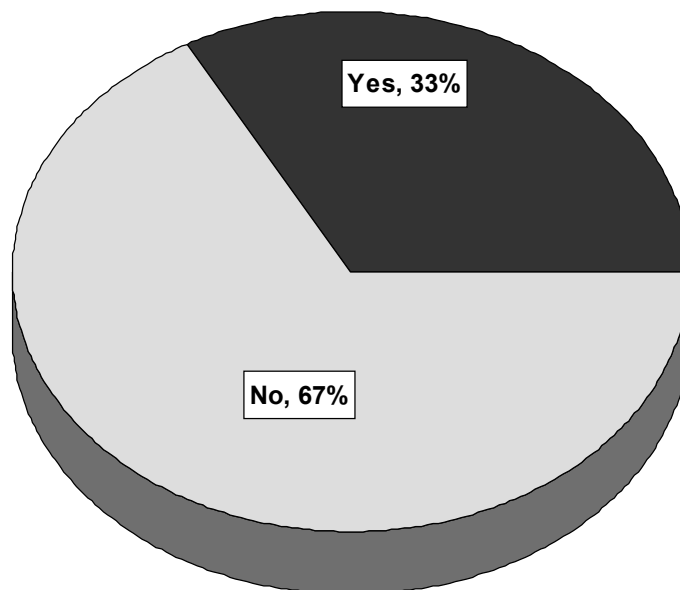
Reason	Primary vehicle			
	Car	Van/Minivan	Pickup truck	SUV
	(N=912)	(N=156)	(N=357)	(N=200)
I'm only driving a short distance	22%	24%	22%	29%
I forgot to put it on	28%	20%	23%	18%
I'm in a rush	7%	9%	9%	11%
The seat belt is uncomfortable	12%	14%	12%	14%
I'm driving in light traffic	2%	3%	2%	3%
The probability of being in a crash is too low	2%	1%	3%	1%
Don't want my clothes wrinkled	1%	--	1%	3%
People I am with are not wearing belts	1%	--	--	--
Don't like being told what to do	4%	5%	8%	4%
Other reason	3%	4%	5%	3%
Can't say one is most important/All are important	1%	2%	1%	--

*Less than 0.5%.

What Drivers Dislike Or Find Annoying About Safety Belts

All drivers, whether or not they wore their safety belts regularly, were asked if there was anything that they particularly disliked or found annoying about wearing them. One-third answered “Yes” (33%). Almost all of the rest responded that there was not any particular thing they disliked (67%). Less than 1 percent (0.1%) said they did not know.

Figure 31
Dislike Or Find Safety Belts Annoying: Drivers



Qx: Is there anything that you particularly dislike or find annoying about wearing your seat belt?

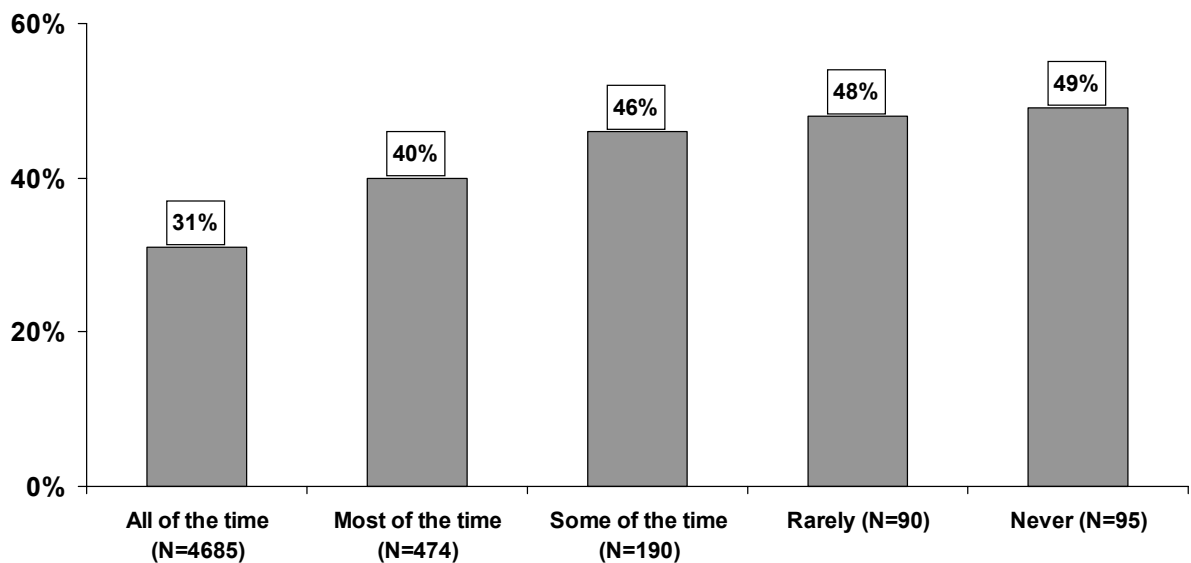
Base: Drives a motor vehicle that has safety belts.

Unweighted N=5540

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

Not surprisingly, persons who infrequently wore their safety belt were most likely to report annoyances. Whereas 31% of drivers who reported wearing their safety belts “all of the time” while driving said there was something particularly annoying about the belt, 40% of “most of the time” users and 46% of “some of the time” users voiced similar complaints. About one-half of those who rarely (48%) or never (49%) wore their safety belt said that there was something they disliked or found annoying about it.

Figure 32
Dislike Or Find Safety Belts Annoying
By Reported Belt Use: Drivers



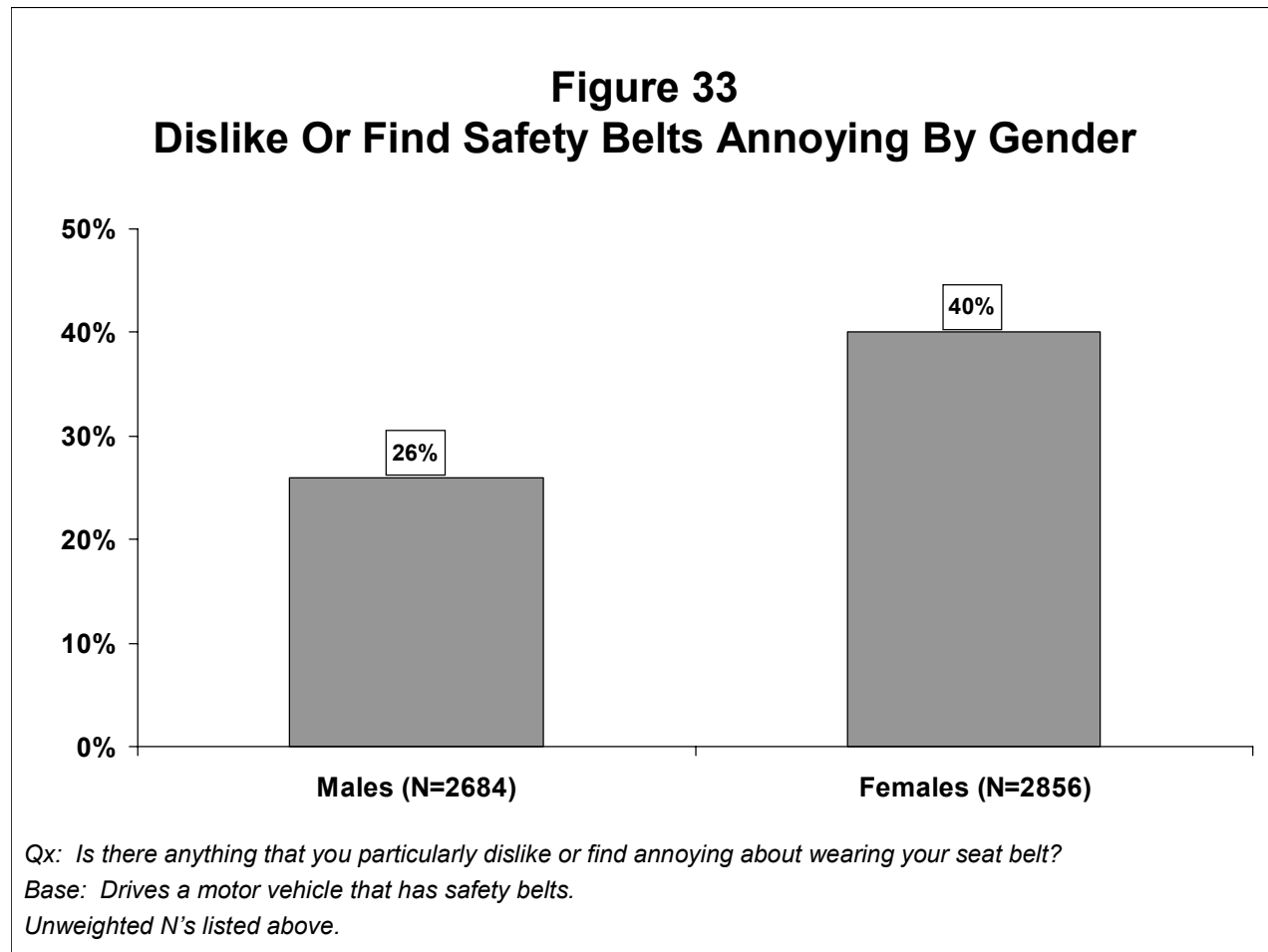
Qx: When driving this (car/truck/van) how often do you wear your (shoulder/lap) belt?

Qx: Is there anything that you particularly dislike or find annoying about wearing your seat belt?

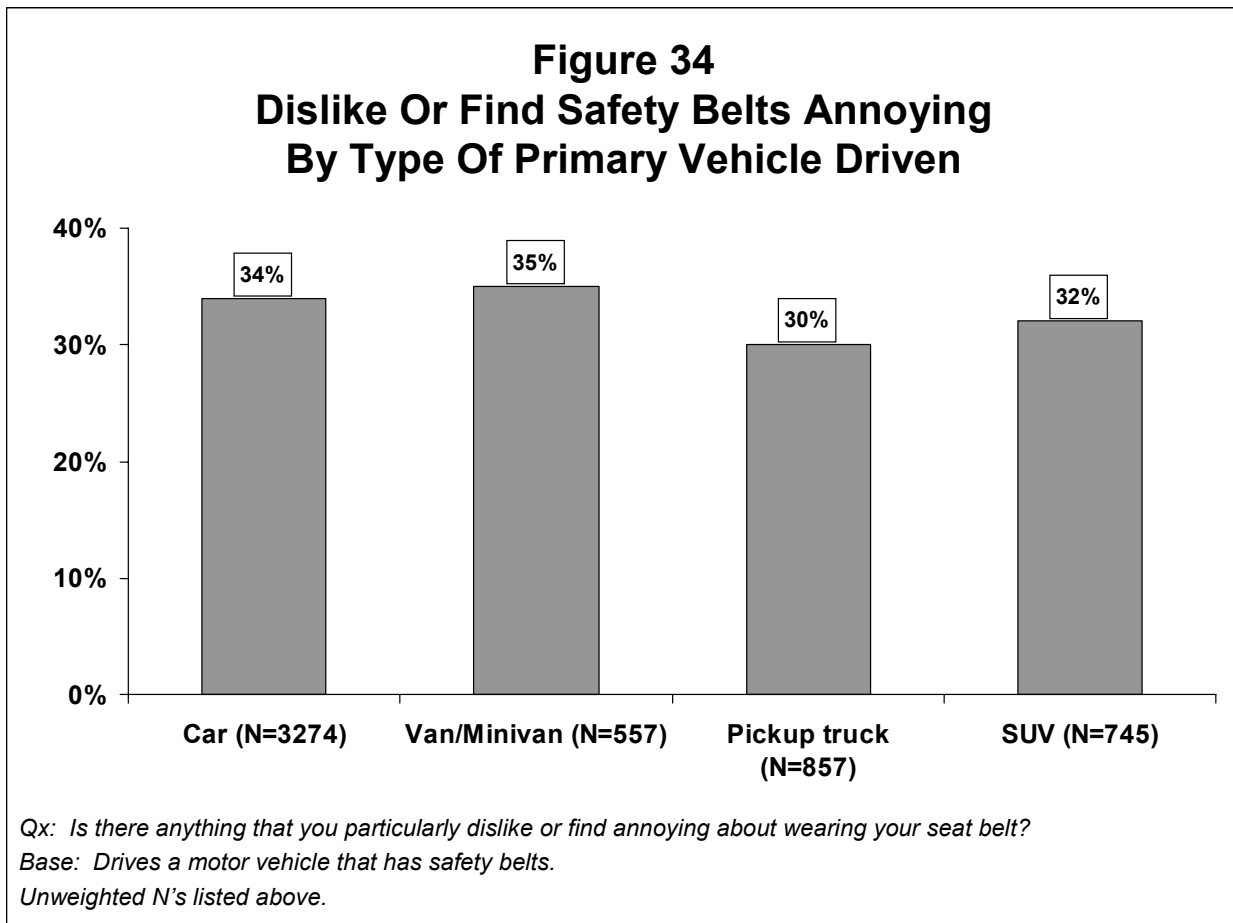
Base: Drives a motor vehicle that has safety belts.

Unweighted N's listed above.

Although the previous chapter showed females more likely than males to wear safety belts, females also were more likely to complain about the devices. Four-in-ten females (40%) said there was something they particularly disliked or found annoying about wearing their safety belt compared to one-in-four males (26%).

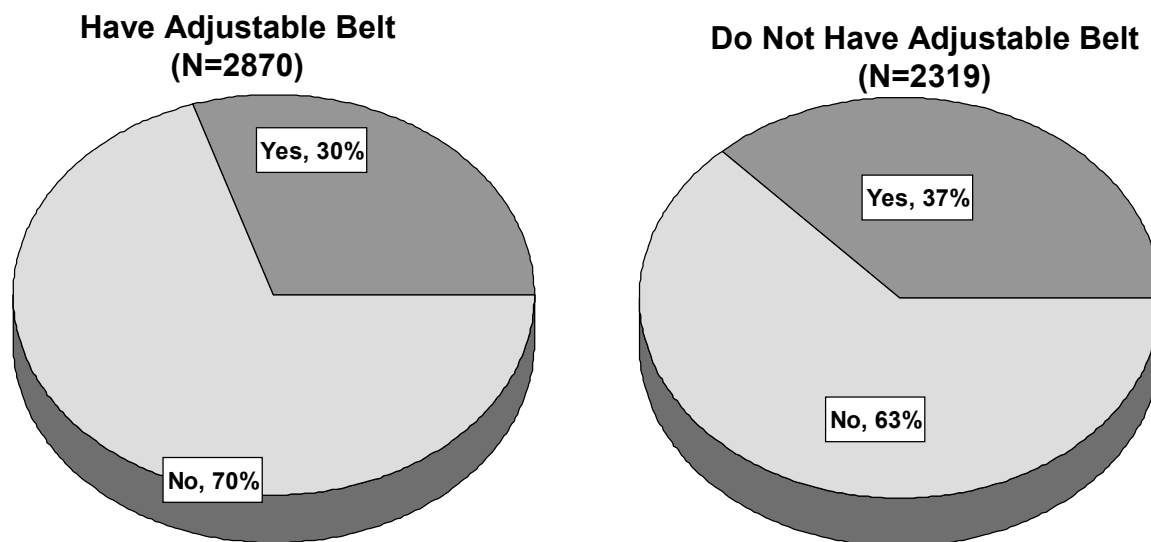


Pickup truck drivers had the fewest complaints about safety belts (30%) compared to the drivers of other passenger vehicle types.



If drivers reported that the shoulder belt in their primary vehicle was adjustable, they were less likely to express annoyance about safety belts. Whereas 30% of respondents with adjustable shoulder belts in their primary vehicle said there was something they particularly disliked or found annoying about wearing their safety belt, 37% without adjustable shoulder belts did the same. When only the drivers who said they had actually used the adjustable feature of their shoulder belts are considered, 31% expressed annoyance with safety belts.

Figure 35
Dislike Or Find Safety Belts Annoying By Presence Of Adjustable Shoulder Belt In Primary Vehicle



Qx: *Shoulder belts are usually attached to the door or frame behind the driver's left shoulder. In some vehicles, this attachment can be moved up or down to adjust the shoulder belt. Is this attachment adjustable in your vehicle?*

Qx: *Is there anything that you particularly dislike or find annoying about wearing your seat belt?*

Base: *Drives a motor vehicle that has safety belts across both the lap and shoulder or across the shoulder only. Unweighted N's listed above.*

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If respondents said there was something they particularly disliked or found annoying about safety belts, they were asked to specify what bothered them. The most common complaint involved pressure or pain on various parts of the body (52%). Females (61%) especially experienced this type of discomfort compared to males (38%), particularly being choked by the safety belt (48% to 25%). Males were more likely to say the safety belt was too confining (27%) than females (15%).

Table 34
What Drivers Dislike Or Find Annoying
About Safety Belts

Qx: *Is there anything that you particularly dislike or find annoying about wearing your seat belt?*

Qx: *What is it that you dislike or find annoying? Anything else?*

Base: *Drivers who dislike or find something annoying about seat belts.*

Dislikes/annoyances	Total (N=1805)	Males (N=717)	Females (N=1088)
Discomfort: body pressure/pain	52%	38%	61%
Pressure on my neck/Chokes me/Cuts across my neck	39%	25%	48%
Pressure on my shoulder/Shoulder strap too tight	7%	7%	7%
Pressure on my chest/Strap doesn't fit my chest	5%	3%	6%
Pressure on my stomach/Lap belt is too tight	1%	2%	1%
Painful for body ailments	*	*	*
Seat belt is too tight (unspecified)	3%	4%	2%
Any other body pressure mentions	1%	1%	2%
Discomfort: body irritation	12%	10%	13%
Irritates/chafes my skin/Rash	11%	9%	12%
Makes me perspire/Perspire when it's hot outside	*	1%	*
Seat belt should be padded/Material is too harsh	*	*	*
Any other body irritation mentions	*	*	*
Discomfort: other	10%	10%	10%
Uncomfortable (unspecified)	5%	5%	4%
Uncomfortable during pregnancy	1%	--	1%
Claustrophobia/Claustrophobic	1%	1%	*
Heavy/bulky winter clothes make it uncomfortable to wear	3%	3%	3%
Any other discomfort mentions	2%	1%	2%

*Less than 0.5%. -- No cases. Numbers do not add to 100% due to multiple response.

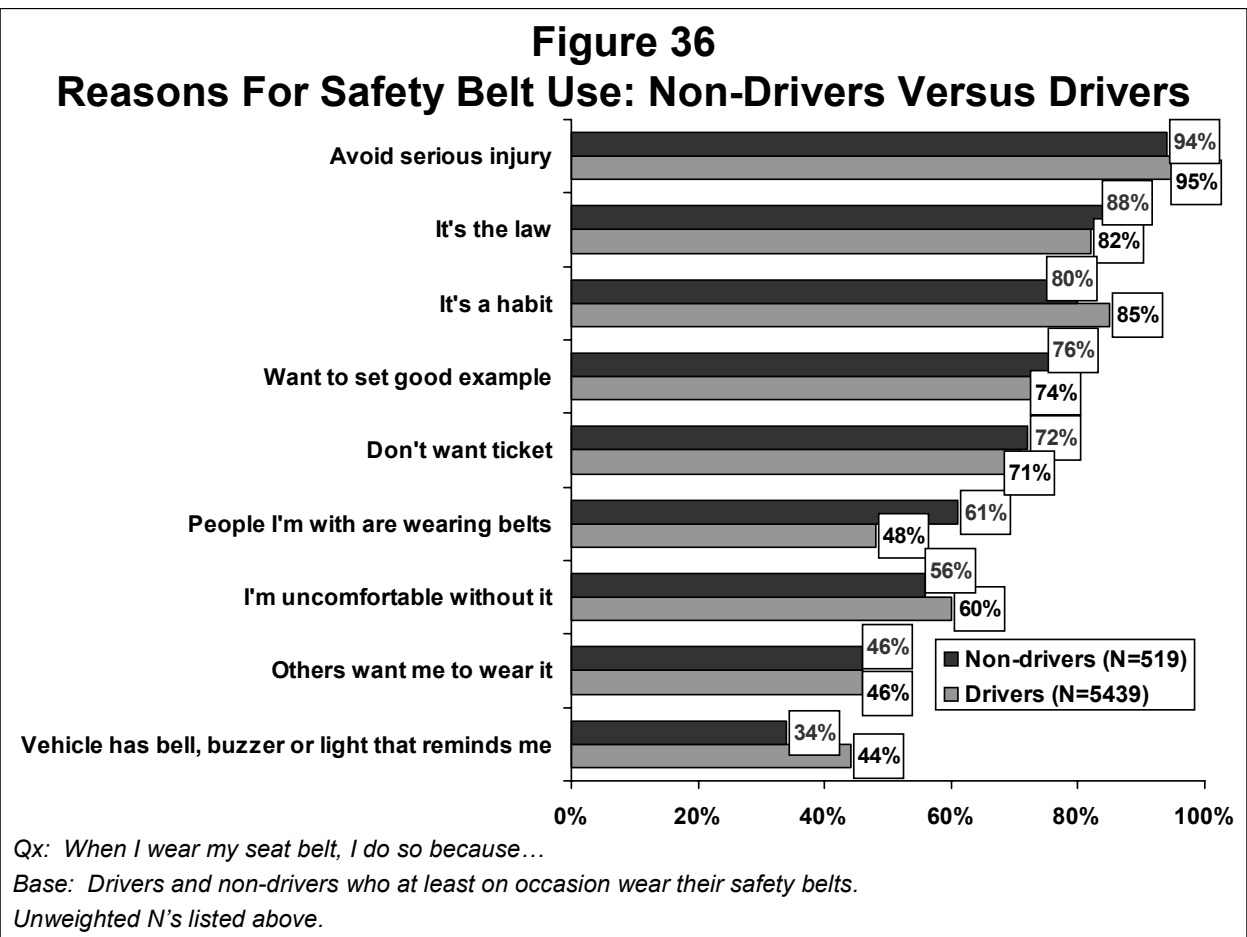
Table 34 (Continued)
What Drivers Dislike Or Find Annoying
About Safety Belts

Dislikes/annoyances	Total (N=1805)	Males (N=717)	Females (N=1088)
Confining	20%	27%	15%
Feel restricted/Too confining/Constricting	14%	20%	10%
Hard to turn around/look behind me when backing up	1%	1%	1%
Hard to lean forward	3%	3%	3%
In case of crash/emergency it's hard to get out of car	2%	2%	2%
Any other movement restrictions mentions	1%	1%	1%
Other	29%	35%	26%
Wrinkles my clothes	7%	3%	10%
Need to adjust seat belt for my size	1%	1%	2%
Seat belt is loose fitting	1%	1%	*
Seat belts are a nuisance/hassle/annoyance	5%	8%	3%
Invasion of privacy/Taking away constitutional rights	3%	6%	1%
Takes too much time to fasten seat belt	2%	2%	2%
Manual buckling/Release it manually	*	--	*
Any other seat belt adjustment mentions	5%	5%	6%
Seat belt gets stuck (unspecified)	*	*	*
Seat belt gets stuck in door	*	*	*
Any other seat belt malfunction	1%	2%	1%
Automatic seat belt gets in the way	*	*	*
Don't like automatic seat belts	*	1%	*
Any other miscellaneous mentions	4%	6%	3%
Not sure/No answer	1%	2%	1%

*Less than 0.5%.

Reasons For Safety Belt Use By Non-Drivers

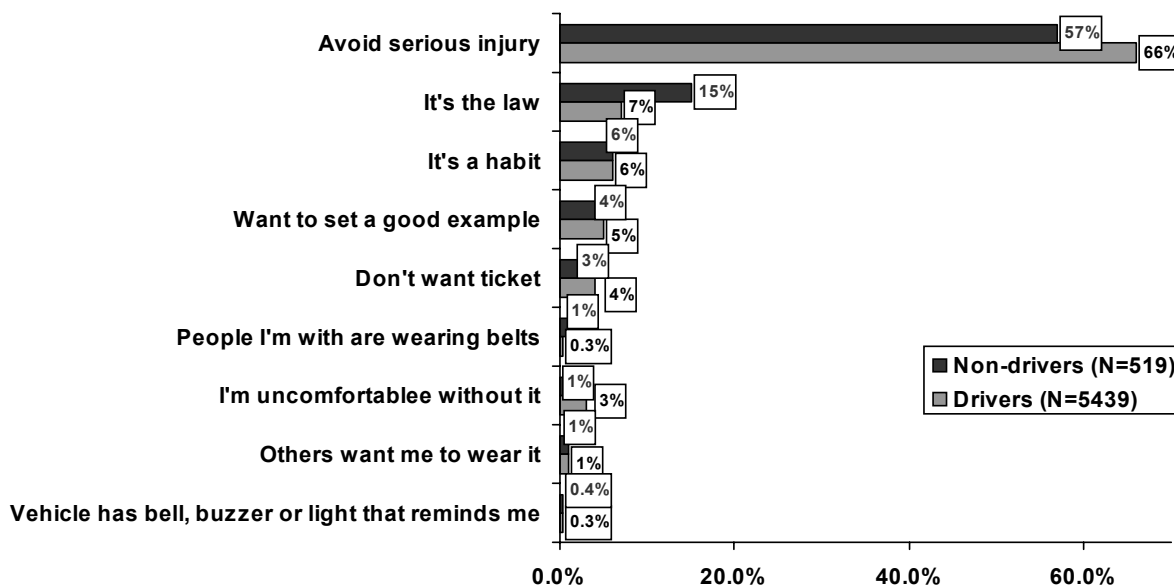
Interviewers asked non-drivers their reasons for safety belt use while riding as passengers in motor vehicles. The approach was the same as that used with drivers: nine different reasons were read, one at a time, and non-drivers were asked whether or not each reason was a factor in their use of safety belts. They were also given an opportunity to volunteer any reasons for their safety belt use. Drivers were more likely than non-drivers to say they wear their safety belt because the vehicle had a bell, buzzer, or light that reminded them, and because it was a habit. Non-drivers were more likely than drivers to say they wear their safety belt because it is the law and because other people in the vehicle were wearing safety belts.



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By far the most important reason for safety belt use by non-drivers (57%), as with drivers (66%), was to avoid serious injury. The “law” ranked a distant second for both groups.

Figure 37
Most Important Reason For Safety Belt Use:
Non-Drivers Versus Drivers



Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers and non-drivers who at least on occasion wear their safety belts.

Unweighted N's listed above.

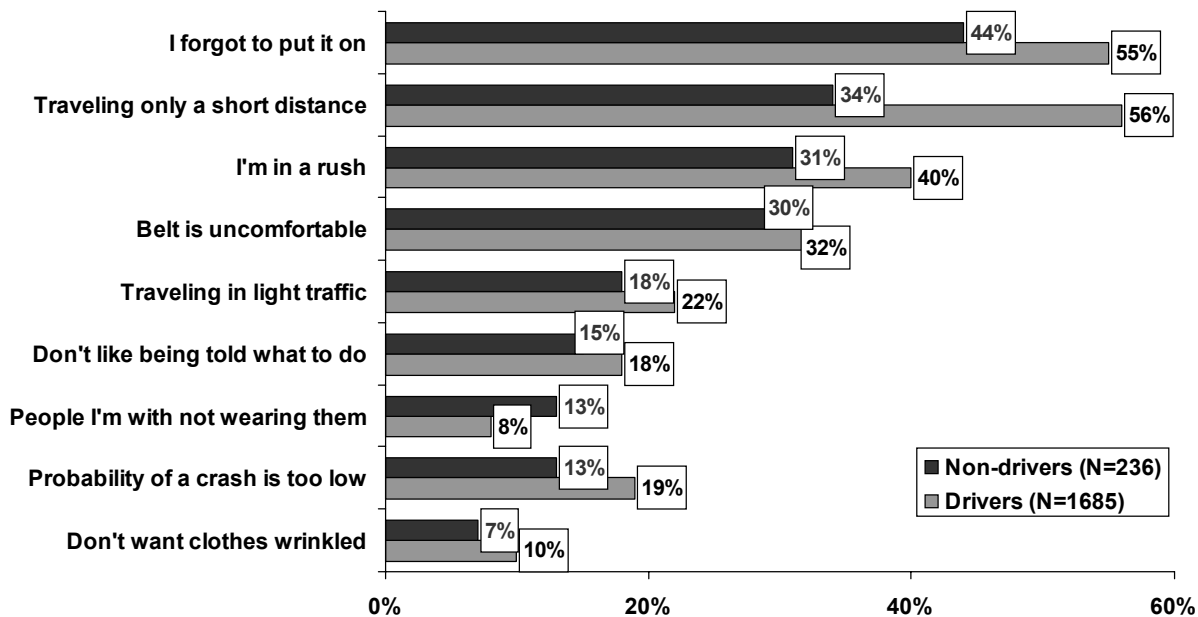
Non-Drivers' Reasons For Not Using Safety Belts

Non-drivers who at least sometimes did not wear a safety belt while riding were asked their reasons for non-use. As with drivers, interviewers read nine potential reasons to respondents. For each one, non-drivers were asked to agree or disagree that they sometimes did not wear their belt for that reason. They were then given an opportunity to volunteer other reasons why they did not use their safety belts. Readers are cautioned that the number of non-drivers (N=236) was relatively small in these analyses.

The most commonly cited reason was that they forgot to wear their safety belt (44%). Other frequently cited reasons were that they were only riding a short distance (34%), the safety belt was uncomfortable (30%), and they were in a rush (31%). Less than one-in-five non-drivers attributed at least some of their non-use to riding in light traffic (18%), they don't like being told what to do (15%), their companions were not wearing safety belts (13%), or the probability of a crash was too low (13%).

The largest differences between drivers and non-drivers in the reasons given for not wearing safety belts occurred in the "short distance," "forgot to put it on," and "rushed" response categories. Drivers were more likely to attribute non-use to traveling only a short distance (56% to 34%), forgetting to put it on (55% to 44%) and being in a rush (40% to 31%). Conversely, non-drivers (13%) were more likely than drivers (8%) to say they did not wear safety belts because the people they were with were not wearing them.

Figure 38
Reasons For Not Wearing A Safety Belt:
Non-Drivers Versus Drivers



Qx: Sometimes I do not wear my seat belt because...

Base: Drivers and non-drivers who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belts.

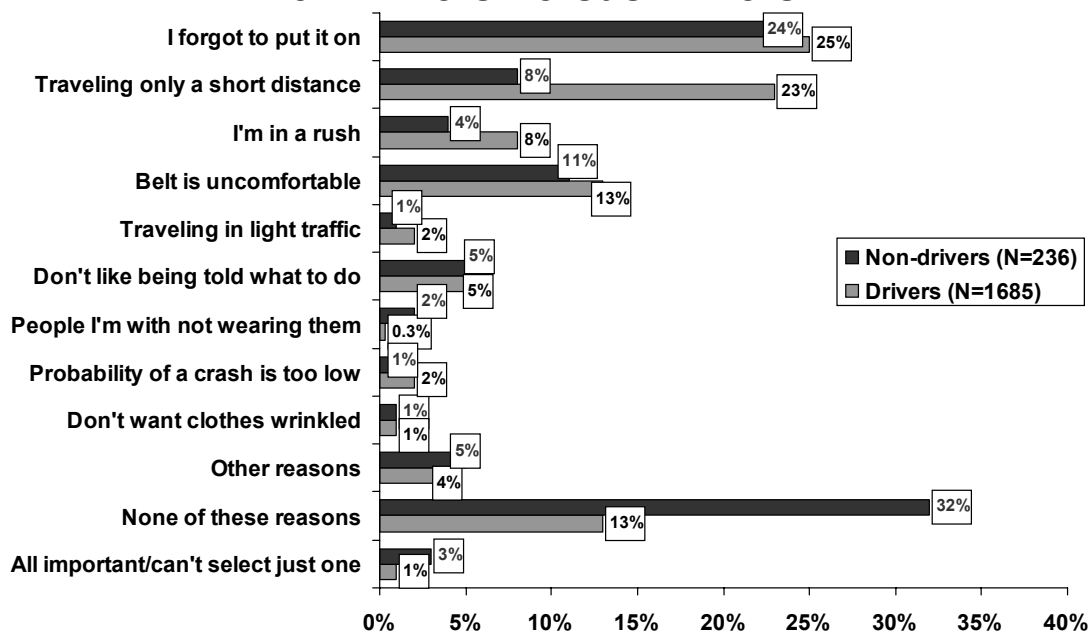
Unweighted N's listed above.

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY SURVEY: Safety Belt Report

When asked for the most important reason for not wearing safety belts, forgetting ranked first among non-drivers; about one-in-four (24%) gave it as the chief cause. Discomfort (11%), riding a short distance (8%), and disliking being told what to do (5%) followed in frequency. However, about one-in-three non-drivers (32%) did not agree that any of the listed reasons applied to them and also did not volunteer any reason.

Drivers were more than twice as likely as non-drivers to answer that the most important reason they did not wear their safety belt was because they were only going a short distance (23% versus 8%). Reluctance or inability to give a reason for non-use was more than twice as likely among non-drivers (32%) as among drivers (13%).

Figure 39
Most Important Reason For Not Wearing A Safety Belt:
Non-Drivers Versus Drivers



Qx: Of the following reasons you just gave me for not wearing your seat belt, which is the most important?

Base: Drivers and non-drivers who at least on occasion do not wear their safety belts.

Unweighted N's listed above.