

Are you ready to drive?

SEAT BELTS AND HEAD RESTRAINTS

THE FACTS: BELTING UP

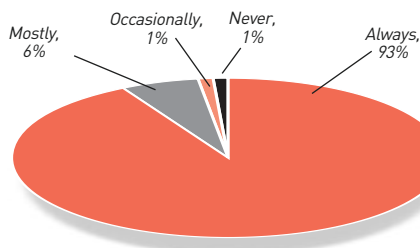
- Seat belts and child restraints (baby seats, child seats, booster seats and booster cushions) save many lives on roads.¹ You are twice as likely to die in a crash if you don't wear a seat belt.²
- By law, all occupants of cars, vans, trucks, buses and coaches must wear seat belts when fitted. There are a small number of exceptions, such as truck or van drivers making journeys of less than 50 metres for deliveries.³
- In Britain more than 60% of adult rear seat passengers and more than 90% of front car seat passengers wear seatbelts. Evidence suggests that nearly one life a day could be saved if everyone always wore their seatbelt.⁴
- UK law says all children under 12, who are under 135cm tall, must use a child restraint that is correct for their height and weight. The few exceptions include short journeys where there is an unexpected necessity and where two occupied child seats prevent the fitment of a third seat. The EU recommends all children under 150cm tall use a child restraint.⁵

Q1: Within the past 12 months, have you always belted up?

Wearing a seat belt is one of the most effective ways that people in vehicles can protect themselves in the event of a crash.⁶ Yet one in 12 (8%) admitted not belting up on every journey.

- 93% of drivers said yes, they always belted up
- 6% said they belted up most of the time
- 1% said they only belted up occasionally
- 1% said they never belted up

Figure 4: Do you always belt up?



ADVICE FOR DRIVERS: BELTING UP

You should ensure you check everyone in the vehicle is properly restrained before setting off, including:

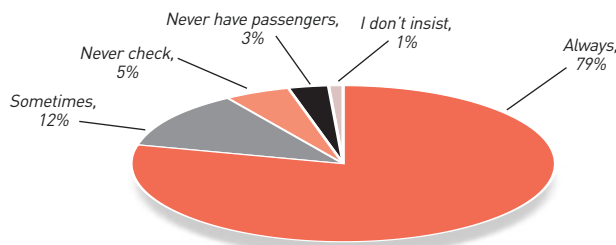
- Children under 150cm in height are correctly strapped into a child restraint that's right for their size and weight, and properly fitted. Buy restraints that meet modern safety standards.⁷
- All passengers over 150cm are wearing seatbelts and have a correctly positioned head restraint, so it is right up against the back of the head with the top level with the top of the head (so the head can't move backwards).
- All pregnant women must wear seat belts by law when travelling in cars. This applies to both front and back seats and pregnancy does not automatically provide exemption from the law. The safest way for pregnant women to wear a seat belt is to place the diagonal strap between the breasts (over the breastbone) with the strap resting over the shoulder. Place the lap belt flat on the thighs, fitting comfortably beneath the enlarged abdomen, and over the pelvis not the bump. The belt should be worn as tight as possible.⁸
- Any luggage or other items are safely packed in the boot out of harm's way and so they won't move about. Make sure your vehicle isn't overloaded.

Q2: When you drive with passengers age 12 or over, do you ensure they belt up?

In a crash, an unrestrained passenger risks killing themselves and other people in the vehicle.⁹ Yet one in five drivers (18%) fail to take the simple and important step of always checking their passengers are belted up before setting off, with young drivers under 25 particularly likely to fail to check (36%).

- 79% of drivers check before setting off, and would not set off before everyone is belted up (65% of young drivers and 80% of older drivers)
- 12% of drivers sometimes check and sometimes ask passengers to belt up, but not always (28% of young drivers and 12% of older drivers)
- 5% of drivers never check (3% of young drivers and 5% of older drivers)
- 1% of drivers know passengers that don't belt up in their vehicle and they don't insist on belting up (5% of young drivers and 1% of older drivers)
- 3% of drivers never drive with passengers (less than 1% of young drivers and 3% of older drivers)

Figure 5: Do you ensure adult passengers always belt up?



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Figure 6: Do young drivers ensure adult passengers always belt up?

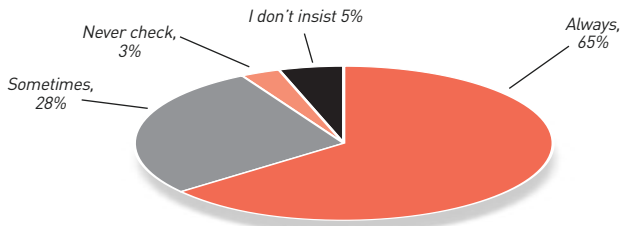
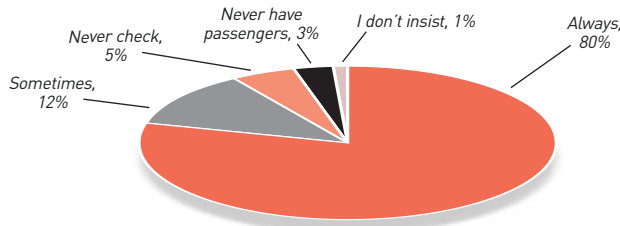


Figure 7: Do older drivers ensure adult passengers always belt up??



Q3: Before setting off on long journeys, do you always make sure your head restraint and those of any passengers are properly adjusted for safety?

Correctly-positioned head restraints can prevent severe whiplash injuries and even a broken neck in a crash.¹⁰ Yet less than one in three drivers (28%) always check head restraints before long journeys.

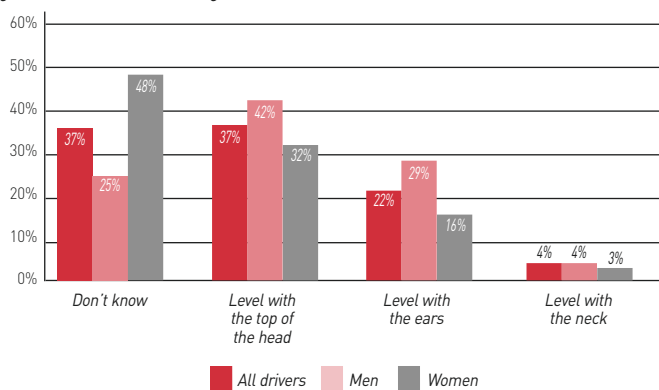
- 28% always check
- 37% sometimes check
- 29% never check
- 5% say their vehicle doesn't have head restraints

Q4: What is the correct height for a head restraint?

Nearly two thirds (63%) of people did not know the correct height for a head restraint is with the top level with the top of the head. Men were more likely than women to know the correct height, with four in ten (42%) correctly answering correctly, compared with less than a third (32%) of women.

- 37% knew the top of the head restraint should be level with the top of the head (42% of men and 32% of women)
- 22% incorrectly believed the top of the head restraint should be level with the ears (29% of men and 16% of women)
- 4% incorrectly believed the top of the head restraint should be level with the neck (4% of men and 3% of women)
- 37% did not know the correct height (25% of men and 48% of women)

Figure 8: What is the correct height for a head restraint?



IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

- There has been only a slight improvement in drivers' knowledge about the correct height for head restraints. Only 37% know the correct height for a head restraint, compared with 34% in 2008.
- The proportion of drivers who belt up on every journey has slightly increased (93%, compared to 90% in 2008). Drivers are only slightly more likely to check and insist all passengers are belted up (79%, compared to 78% in 2008).

Q5: If you have driven with children under 12 as passengers, did you ensure they used a child seat appropriate for their weight and height?

Nearly one in six (16%) of drivers admit having children as passengers without ensuring they are appropriately restrained, putting that child at risk.

- 48% said yes, every time
- 10% said most times
- 3% said occasionally
- 3% said no
- 35% said they never carried children as passengers

SAVED FROM INJURY

Jazmin Moxon, aged 5 weeks

Jazmin Moxon survived a horrific car crash in West Yorkshire without injury, thanks to her baby seat. The head-on smash on 3 November 2006 left her parents injured and the family car such a mangled mess that police officers attending the scene said they had expected to find the occupants had been killed.

End notes

1. <http://think.direct.gov.uk/seat-belts.html>
2. *ibid*
3. *Seat Belts: Law Fact Sheet, RoSPA 2005*
4. <http://think.direct.gov.uk/seat-belts.html>
5. *Seat Belts: Law Fact Sheet, RoSPA 2005*
6. <http://think.direct.gov.uk/seat-belts.html>
7. See for example, <http://www.childcarseats.org.uk/standards/index.htm>
8. *Seat Belt Advice and Information Fact Sheet, RoSPA, 2005*
9. Broughton, J. "The actual threat posed by unrestrained rear seat car passengers" *Accident Analysis and Prevention, TRL, 2004*
10. *Reigning in Whiplash, European Transport Safety Council, 2007*