Seat Belt Usage by Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers (SBUCMVD) 2008 Survey

Final Report
December 2008
Executive Summary

The Seat Belt Usage by Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers (SBUCMVD) Survey is a nationally representative field data collection program that provides estimates of safety belt restraint use by drivers and other occupants of medium and heavy duty commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). This is the second year a survey of CMVs has been conducted using the sample design and field data collection methodologies used in the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) of passenger vehicle occupants. Restraint use studies were conducted in 2002, 2005, and 2006 that focused on drivers of class 7 and 8 vehicles observed primarily at truck stops in 12 states. The 2007 and 2008 studies were based upon a statistically valid research design that included medium duty, class 7, and class 8 CMVs observed from roadsides in a randomly selected sample of Primary Sampling Units (PSUs, which are a county or groups of counties) across the United States. As this is the second year with a statistically valid research design, analysis of changes between the two years is possible.

The 2008 overall safety belt usage rate for drivers of all medium and heavy duty trucks and buses combined was 72%. The usage rate for CMV other occupants was 61%. A total of 20,818 CMVs, 20,818 drivers, and 1,422 CMV other occupants were observed at 830 sites. Safety belt use was observed to be higher in states governed by primary belt use laws (80%) than secondary belt use laws (64%). Safety belt usage among drivers and other occupants in units identified as part of a regional or national fleet (75%) was also observed to be higher than independent owner-operators (62%). All of these estimates show an increase from 2007.

Observations on the use of safety belts were conducted on a sample of arterial roads (ART) and limited access highways (LAH) using trained data collectors. All data were collected on Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) with a customized data collection program. Independent traffic counts were also recorded to help calibrate the estimates. Additional data items collected included:

- Type of CMV: e.g., straight van, articulated single tanker, hazmat carrier, commercial bus, etc.
- Location: urban, suburban, or rural
- Weather conditions: clear, light precipitation, or light fog
- Speed of observed vehicle: 30 miles per hour (mph) or less, 31-50 mph, or over 50 mph
- Drivers and other occupants characteristics: race, gender, approximate age
- Driver use of cell phones and other handheld electronic devices
- Time of day

The target population can be viewed as a 'snapshot' of all medium and heavy duty CMVs on the road at a particular point in time. This report describes the overall design of the study, the methods used to collect the data, and the estimation and tabulation processes. Highlights from the analyses are contained in the body of the report. Tables of the results of the study have been reported to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration under a separate cover.

To obtain a copy of the full report, Seat Belt Usage by Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers (SBUCMVD) 2008, contact Brian Ronk, FMCSA Share the Road Safely Program Manager, at 202-366-1072 or brian.ronk@dot.gov