

SEATBELT INITIATIVE PROJECT

Background: The Indiana Governor's Council on Impaired and Dangerous Driving partnered with the Indiana Minority Health Coalition (IMHC) to address the issue of seat belt use in African American communities. The goal of this partnership was to develop and implement a seat belt campaign that would more effectively reach the African American communities in Indiana.

The Seatbelt Initiative Project was planned in three phases with the first phase consisting of the design and implementation of an observation survey to collect baseline data on the level of seat belt use in the African American community. The second phase would involve the development and implementation of an intervention program. While the third phase of the project would consist of the observational survey to measure the impact of the program. The IMHC completed the first phase of the project in 2001, and this document describes the results of this portion of the project.

Results: The observation survey was conducted in five Indiana counties including Marion, Vanderburgh, Vigo, St. Joseph and Elkhart during a three to four month period.

Drivers:

- A total of 6,688 were observed; of which, 67% wore seatbelts
- 49% were identified as African American
- 11.6% were categorized as youth (ages 16-25), 76.9% adults (ages 26-65) and 11.5% seniors (over 65)
- 52.5% of the youth wore seatbelts compared to 68.9% adults and 74.4% seniors
- 60.8% of the males wore seatbelts compared to 76.7% of the females
- 62% of African Americans wore seatbelts compared to 73.1% of non-African Americans

Passengers:

- A total of 1,635 were observed; of which, 59.9% wore seatbelts
- 57.5% were identified as African American
- 25.5% were categorized as youth (ages 16-25), 59.4% adults (ages 26-65) and 15.1% seniors (over 65)
- 57.0% of the youth wore seatbelts compared 58.6% adults and 79.3% of the seniors
- 49.4% of the males wore seatbelts compared to 71.3% of the females
- 55.0% of the African Americans wore seatbelts compared to 71.9% of non-African Americans

Conclusions: The results of the survey indicate there is a significant relationship in seatbelt use and driver's age, race and gender. The regression analysis reflected that youth, African Americans, and males were significantly less likely to wear a seatbelt when compared to other drivers in these demographic categories.

Limitations:

- Samples observed in counties did not consistently reflect all of the demographic categories studied
- County observations did not include all road types
- Age groups were determined by the surveyors' observations which were based on perception only
- The seatbelt surveyors observed a smaller percentage of youth for this study

Recommendations:

- Conduct future observational studies to include all road categories particularly less traveled roads
- Develop educational campaigns for African American males focusing on youth and seniors
 - Establish advisory groups for both age groups and develop tailored messages for each group
 - Conduct focus groups to gather input on the tailored educational messages
 - Widely disseminate the messages through age appropriate media (print and electronic)