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2026 Iowa Seat Belt Use Survey

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Executive Summary

- 84 sites in the state of Iowa were observed.
- The overall seat belt compliance rate in the state of Iowa is 87.51%.
- While this is lower than in previous years, this is likely due to a change in the observers contracted to collect the data, rather than a change in safety behavior.
- Polk County and secondary roads had the highest seat belt compliance rates. Mills County and local roads had the lowest.

Introduction

While vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death in the United States, seat belt use remains the single most effective way to reduce resulting fatalities and injuries.[1] In Iowa, data consistently reveals that roughly half of all statewide motor vehicle fatalities involved unbelted occupants.[2] To help address this pattern, the state of Iowa continuously monitors and evaluates seat belt compliance among drivers and front-seat passengers in motor vehicles.

The Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau (GTSB) in the Iowa Department of Public Safety (DPS) contracted the Iowa Department of Management, Division of Data, Planning, and Improvement (DOM-DPI) to analyze data collected on rates of seat belt use in the state. Previously, this report had been completed with the expertise of Iowa State University's Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology (CSSM).[3] To ensure consistency, the current analytical cycle maintained the precise statistical design, weighting methodologies, and county sampling models established by CSSM. While the statistical framework remained identical, the operational execution of the fieldwork shifted from a large team of academic surveyors to a streamlined, professional observation model.

Data collection and statistical analyses were conducted in strict adherence to the Uniform Criteria for State Observational Surveys of Seat Belt Use, as codified in 23 CFR Part 1340.[4] Under these specifications, a contractor for GTSB gathered observational data which was then provided to DOM-DPI for data validation and statistical analysis.

This report will outline the methodology, geographic distribution, and final seat belt metrics of the 2026 Iowa Seat Belt Use Survey.

Data Collection Methodology

Geographic Sampling and Site Selection

Field observations for the 2026 study were conducted across a pre-determined, randomized sample of 84 distinct road segments distributed

[1] https://www.cdc.gov/seat-belts/facts/index.html
[2] https://dps.iowa.gov/bureaus-iowa-department-public-safety/gtsb/be-traffic-safety-advocate
[3] https://www.cssm.iastate.edu/
[4] https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-23/chapter-III/part-1340

throughout 15 Iowa counties. To account for population density and ensure statistical representation, 14 segments were located in Polk County (Iowa's most populous county) while the remaining 70 road segments are equally distributed between 14 other counties in the state. All 84 road segments were confirmed to be safe and appropriate for 2026 data collection. The selected counties account for at least 85% of Iowa's passenger vehicle occupant fatalities, as required by section 1340.5(a) in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and were approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2022. No alternative sites were required.

Site Mapping

Each segment was identified by a Route ID and an Object ID. A Route ID defines the continuous segment of the chosen site while the Object ID is a unique identifier that defines the geographic coordinates (i.e., latitude and longitude) on the road segment where data collection will occur. Using Google Earth and Google Maps, GTSB prepared site information and driving directions for the field observer.

Training

A comprehensive 5-hour session was conducted in February 2026 focusing on regulatory compliance, site familiarization, and field safety. To ensure adherence to the federal standards, the session began with a thorough review of the CFR. The field observer was then familiarized with the observation sites and specific road segments. Using satellite view in Google Maps, the team identified the site and determined the safest place for the field observer to park. GTSB dropped digital pins at the correct locations allowing the field observer to easily navigate to the sites. Lastly, field safety was heavily emphasized. The field observer was trained in selecting the safest location to observe motorists as well as the use of safety equipment such as traffic cones and a high-visibility vest.

Observation Schedule

The observation schedule considered the field observer's availability but was otherwise randomly determined. Data collection primarily occurred in April and May 2026 and encompassed all seven days of the week with observation windows between the hours of 7:00 am and 5:00 pm. This observational plan was approved March 2022 and will be used through 2026. New sites will be chosen for the 2027 report per the requirements from (NHTSA).

Data Collection and Quality Control

To ensure maximum accuracy and adherence to the federal observation criteria, data collection was executed by a single, highly trained field observer with over 30 years of professional experience as an Iowa State Trooper. The field observer's decades of traffic enforcement experience uniquely prepared him to accurately, consistently, and reliably collect seat belt compliance data. To ensure unbiased driver behavior, the field observer wore civilian attire, no police vehicles were present, and no warning signage was used.

The observation criteria included all passenger vehicles and any commercial vehicles weighing under 10,000 pounds. To collect data from these types of vehicles, the Observation Site Form was utilized. This form documented the site name, date, day of the week, and time that the data was collected.

This form was also used to document seat belt compliance. For each vehicle, it was observed if the driver was 1) wearing a seat belt, 2) not wearing a seat belt, or 3) the seat belt status of the driver was unknown. The same was done for any front-seat passengers with the additional option of noting if there was no passenger.

Quality control monitors were deployed to 5 of the 84 observation sites, or 5.95%, exceeding NHTSA's minimum of 5% of sites serving as quality control checks. As a result of this quality control process, it was found that one observation site was not one of the approved sites. To address this, data was collected from the correct site in August 2026.

Data Cleaning and Entry

After data collection was completed, the Observation Site Forms were provided to data analysts in DOM-DPI to undergo a rigorous quality assurance and data cleaning protocol. Analysts systematically processed the raw field tallies by hand to aggregate compliance counts for drivers and, where applicable, front-seat passengers.

To ensure dataset integrity prior to statistical modeling, a comprehensive validation check was executed. This process included:

- **Completeness Review:** Verifying that all observation logs for the 84 assigned road segments were complete and had no missing data.
- **Data Alignment Checks:** Confirming that the subtotaled counts (i.e., number of people buckled, unbuckled, or if their status was unknown) matched the overall count of observed occupants.
- **Independent Cross-Validation:** Two data analysts independently tallied and aggregated the raw data metrics. Following the initial counts, the analysts cross-referenced their results, and any discrepancies found between the two independent tallies were thoroughly reviewed and resolved using the original raw observation logs.
- **Data Standardization:** Data analysts formatted and compiled the validated local tallies into a centralized database, preparing the clean baseline counts for the statistical analyses.

Results

Statewide Seat Belt Usage

Table 1 presents weighted seat belt usage rates and standard errors overall, as well as by driver and passenger. Based on the weighted data, **Iowa's overall seat belt use rate for 2026 is 87.51%** with an estimated standard error of 0.005 (±0.5%). The standard error for 2026 observations falls within

NHTSA's established limits of ± 2.5%.

Table 1: Iowa's Seat Belt Use Estimates and Standard Errors, 2026

Category	Estimate (%)	Standard Error (%)
Total Iowa	87.51	0.54
Driver	87.74	0.56
Passenger	86.34	1.36

In total, the observer evaluated 16,135 passenger vehicles. Of these, 3,430 vehicles had a right-front passenger, resulting in 19,565 total observations. Seat belt status could not be determined for 1,715 drivers and 5 passengers. This translates to an overall survey non-response rate of 8.79%, successfully remaining below NHTSA's maximum allowable threshold of 10%.

Overall weighted statewide rates since 2015 are shown in Table 2. Direct comparisons between 2026 and prior years should be made with caution due to a change in the observers contracted to collect the data. The recorded decline in seat belt use in 2026 compared to previous years is likely due to a shift in data collection methodology rather than a change in public behavior.

Table 2: Iowa's Annual weighted Seat Belt Use Rate 2015-2026

Year	Weighted Belt Use
2026	87.5%
2025	95.1%
2024	94.0%
2023	97.0%
2022	95.9%
2021	92.7%
2020	95.2%
2019	94.6%
2018	93.9%
2017	91.4%
2016	93.8%
2015	93.0%

Seat Belt Usage by County

Evaluating seat belt compliance across Iowa's counties reveals a sharp discrepancy between the percentage of total observed occupants and the percentage of known occupants (see Table 3). This variation is directly

driven by the volume of "Unknown" entries recorded by the surveyor, rather than a clear shift in safety compliance. The field observer noted that these unverified observations were mostly due to visibility obstacles such as heavy window tinting. However, because field conditions change rapidly, it is difficult to confirm window tint as the definitive cause behind every unknown status of an occupant.

When analyzing the unweighted data for total observed occupants, several counties appear to have notably lower seat belt compliance rates compared to the state overall. This is led by Mills County at 67.9%, Pottawattamie County at 68.9%, Cass County at 73.7%, and Scott County at 76.6%. Yet, when removing unverified occupants from the denominator to focus exclusively on known occupants, compliance rates in these exact areas experience a substantial increase: Mills County rises to 82.9%, Pottawattamie County to 83.3%, Cass County to 84.6%, and Scott County to 88.5%. This statistical gap underscores just how heavily a high concentration of unidentifiable occupants can suppress raw baseline percentages.

In counties where the surveyor logged fewer unverified occupants, the totals (which includes unknowns) and known compliance rates align much more closely. Polk County exhibits the state's highest baseline seat belt use with 86.0% total and 90.1% known occupant compliance, followed closely by Muscatine County (83.4% total vs. 88.3% known), Woodbury County (81.8% total vs. 87.7% known), Jasper County (81.3% total vs. 89.4% known), and Madison County (80.9% total vs. 88.9% known).

The remaining surveyed counties showcase highly stable, uniform safety habits when looking at confirmed occupants, including Clinton County at 86.8% (82.6% total), Hamilton County at 88.2% (81.0% total), Cedar County at 85.5% (80.2% total), Tama County at 85.8% (79.6% total), Hardin County at 85.7% (78.0% total), and O'Brien County at 84.9% (77.1% total). Ultimately, comparing these two metrics shows that regional drops in safety are primarily an artifact of missing data from unobservable cabins (likely due to regional differences in window tint usage) rather than a real-world refusal to buckle up.

Table 3 provides the raw breakdown of driver and passenger observations by county, while Table 4 shows the comparative unweighted percentages for total versus known occupants.

Table 3: 2026 Driver and Passenger Seat Belt Use by County (n)

	Driver				Right Front Passenger				Total			
County	**Total**	**Belted**	**Not Belted**	**Unkn.**	**Total**	**Belted**	**Not Belted**	**Unkn.**	**Total**	**Belted**	**Not Belted**	**Unkn.**
Cass	1,171	828	155	188	283	243	40	0	1,454	1,071	195	188
Cedar	1,243	990	163	90	220	184	36	0	1,463	1,174	199	90
Clinton	882	734	98	50	141	111	30	0	1,023	845	128	50
Hamilton	900	719	94	87	157	137	20	0	1,057	856	114	87
Hardin	428	334	52	42	49	38	10	1	477	372	62	43
Jasper	1,370	1,088	132	150	325	290	32	3	1,695	1,378	164	153
Madison	743	579	68	96	318	279	39	0	1,061	858	107	96
Mills	1,000	654	140	206	139	119	20	0	1,139	773	160	206
Muscatine	540	448	50	42	218	184	34	0	758	632	84	42
Obrien	323	247	43	33	35	29	6	0	358	276	49	33
Polk	4,102	3,493	382	227	920	824	95	1	5,022	4,317	477	228
Pottawattamie	983	665	125	193	137	107	30	0	1,120	772	155	193
Scott	1,371	999	145	227	324	300	24	0	1,695	1,299	169	227
Tama	245	191	34	20	35	32	3	0	280	223	37	20
Woodbury	834	682	88	64	129	106	23	0	963	788	111	64
TOTALS	**16,135**	**12,651**	**1,769**	**1,715**	**3,430**	**2,983**	**442**	**5**	**19,565**	**15,634**	**2,211**	**1,720**

Table 4: 2026 Driver and Passenger Seat Belt Use by County

(Unweighted Percentages)

County	% Drivers Belted	% Known Drivers Belted	% Total Passenger Belted	% Known Passenger Belted	% Total Occupants Belted	% Known Occupants Belted
Cass	70.7%	84.2%	85.9%	85.9%	73.7%	84.6%
Cedar	79.6%	85.9%	83.6%	83.6%	80.2%	85.5%
Clinton	83.2%	88.2%	78.7%	78.7%	82.6%	86.8%
Hamilton	79.9%	88.4%	87.3%	87.3%	81.0%	88.2%
Hardin	78.0%	86.5%	77.6%	79.2%	78.0%	85.7%
Jasper	79.4%	89.2%	89.2%	90.1%	81.3%	89.4%
Madison	77.9%	89.5%	87.7%	87.7%	80.9%	88.9%
Mills	65.4%	82.4%	85.6%	85.6%	67.9%	82.9%
Muscatine	83.0%	90.0%	84.4%	84.4%	83.4%	88.3%
Obrien	76.5%	85.2%	82.9%	82.9%	77.1%	84.9%
Polk	85.2%	90.1%	89.6%	89.7%	86.0%	90.1%
Pottawattamie	67.7%	84.2%	78.1%	78.1%	68.9%	83.3%
Scott	72.9%	87.3%	92.6%	92.6%	76.6%	88.5%
Tama	78.0%	84.9%	91.4%	91.4%	79.6%	85.8%
Woodbury	81.8%	88.6%	82.2%	82.2%	81.8%	87.7%
Total	**78.4%**	**87.7%**	**87.0%**	**87.1%**	**79.9%**	**87.6%**

Seat Belt Usage by Road Type

Interestingly, secondary roads see the highest overall occupant seat belt usage at 81.1%, even slightly outpacing primary highways, which stand at 79.0%. Local roads, however, present the most significant safety gap, dropping to a compliance rate of 77.9%. See Table 5 (counts) and Table 6 (rates) for a summary of these findings.

Table 5: 2026 Seat Belt Use by Road Type

(Unweighted Counts)

	Driver				Right Front Passenger				Total			
Road Type	**Total**	**Belted**	**Not Belted**	**Unkn.**	**Total**	**Belted**	**Not Belted**	**Unkn.**	**Total**	**Belted**	**Not Belted**	**Unkn.**
Primary	10,002	7,711	1,087	1,204	2,042	1,800	239	3	12,044	9,511	1,326	1,207
Secondary	5,167	4,188	546	433	1,228	1,058	168	2	6,395	5,246	714	435
Local	966	752	136	78	160	125	35	0	1,126	877	171	78
TOTALS	**16,135**	**12,651**	**1,769**	**1,715**	**3,430**	**2,983**	**442**	**5**	**19,565**	**15,634**	**2,211**	**1,720**

Table 6: 2026 Seat Belt Use by Road Type

(Unweighted Percentages)

Road Type	**% Drivers Belted**	**% Known Drivers Belted**	**% Total Passenger Belted**	**% Known Passenger Belted**	**% Total Occupants Belted**	**% Known Occupants Belted**
Primary	77.1%	87.6%	88.1%	88.3%	79.0%	87.8%
Secondary	81.1%	88.5%	86.2%	86.3%	82.0%	88.0%
Local	77.8%	84.7%	78.1%	78.1%	77.9%	83.7%
Total	**78.4%**	**87.7%**	**87.0%**	**87.1%**	**79.9%**	**87.6%**

Table 7 shows the number of drivers and front-right passengers who were belted and unbelted by day of the week and road type (i.e., primary, secondary, or local roads).

Table 7: 2026 Driver and Passenger Seat Belt Use by Day and Road Type

(n & unweighted %)

	Drivers			Right Front Passengers		
	Total (n)	Belted (n)	% Belted	Total (n)	Belted (n)	% Belted
Sunday	**3,804**	**3,007**	**79.0%**	**1,159**	**1,039**	**89.6%**
Primary	1,839	1,412	76.8%	453	414	91.4%
Secondary	1,848	1,501	81.2%	665	593	89.2%
Local	117	94	80.3%	41	32	78.0%
Monday	**1,243**	**990**	**79.6%**	**220**	**184**	**83.6%**
Primary	1,147	913	79.6%	203	168	82.8%
Secondary	66	54	81.8%	13	12	92.3%
Local	30	23	76.7%	4	4	100.0%
Tuesday	**2,666**	**2,163**	**81.1%**	**374**	**321**	**85.8%**
Primary	1,695	1,384	81.7%	248	210	84.7%
Secondary	725	586	80.8%	93	84	90.3%
Local	246	193	78.5%	33	27	81.8%
Wednesday	**834**	**682**	**81.8%**	**129**	**106**	**82.2%**
Primary	250	195	78.0%	55	46	83.6%
Secondary	436	362	83.0%	61	50	82.0%
Local	148	125	84.5%	13	10	76.9%
Thursday	**4,517**	**3,384**	**74.9%**	**767**	**650**	**84.7%**
Primary	2,682	1,919	71.6%	488	432	88.5%
Secondary	1,492	1,203	80.6%	230	178	77.4%
Local	343	262	76.4%	49	40	81.6%
Friday	**1,317**	**919**	**69.8%**	**307**	**258**	**84.0%**
Primary	1,043	737	70.7%	254	223	87.8%
Secondary	192	127	66.1%	33	23	69.7%
Local	82	55	67.1%	20	12	60.0%
Saturday	**1,754**	**1,506**	**85.9%**	**474**	**425**	**89.7%**
Primary	1,346	1,151	85.5%	341	307	90.0%
Secondary	408	355	87.0%	133	118	88.7%
Local	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**16,135**	**12,651**	**78.4%**	**3,430**	**2,983**	**87.0%**

Table 8 shows information for each site including the county, object ID, road name, and road type. It also shows the sampling weight for each site as well as counts for vehicles, the seat belt status of drivers, and, where applicable, front-right passengers.

Table 8: 2026 Seat Belt Usage by Site

County	Site Type	Object ID	Road Name	Road Type	Sample Weight	Vehicle Count	Drivers Belted	Drivers Not Belted	Drivers Unknown	Right Front Passenger Count	Right Front Passenger Belted	Right Front Passenger Not Belted	Right Front Passenger Unknown
CASS	Original	62869070	I 80 E	Primary	330.72	272	200	32	40	62	48	14	0
CASS	Original	62871013	I 80 E	Primary	47.76	476	328	52	96	133	120	13	0
CASS	Original	62873677	I 80 W	Primary	83.33	295	209	41	45	59	55	4	0
CASS	Original	62881404	10TH STREET, E/W	Local	1093.54	82	55	21	6	20	12	8	0
CASS	Original	62919461	IA 92 E/W	Secondary	381.52	46	36	9	1	9	8	1	0
CEDAR	Original	62798486	IA 130 E/W	Secondary	231.53	66	54	9	3	13	12	1	0
CEDAR	Original	62872668	I 80 W	Primary	33.35	363	293	52	18	47	36	11	0
CEDAR	Original	62873984	I 80 W	Primary	1400.62	396	313	50	33	86	70	16	0
CEDAR	Original	62876490	I 80 W	Primary	223.23	388	307	46	35	70	62	8	0
CEDAR	Original	62950525	ROSE AVENUE, N/S	Local	13505.22	30	23	6	1	4	4	0	0
CLINTON	Original	62797689	5TH AVENUE SOUTH, E/W	Secondary	6395.94	238	204	28	6	42	33	9	0
CLINTON	Original	62819116	US 30 E	Secondary	332.53	157	124	16	17	16	13	3	0
CLINTON	Original	62827550	US 61 S	Secondary	2553.60	166	140	16	10	31	26	5	0
CLINTON	Original	62900672	MILL CREEK PARKWAY, N/S	Local	468.26	121	99	16	6	14	14	0	0
CLINTON	Original	63002428	US 30 W	Secondary	227.27	200	167	22	11	38	25	13	0
HAMILTON	Original	62858913	I 35 N	Primary	62.44	299	243	31	25	62	55	7	0
HAMILTON	Original	62861630	I 35 N	Primary	23.44	274	216	26	32	44	37	7	0
HAMILTON	Original	62921261	I 35 S	Primary	48.50	288	229	32	27	47	41	6	0
HAMILTON	Original	62935472	US 69 N/S	Secondary	44004.13	36	29	4	3	4	4	0	0
HAMILTON	Original	63013008	ALFRED STREET, N/S	Local	7919.64	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
HARDIN	Original	62781357	US 20 W	Secondary	108.84	124	95	14	15	11	11	0	0
HARDIN	Original	62783085	US 20 W	Secondary	1807.73	122	99	10	13	12	6	5	1
HARDIN	Original	62845110	COUNTY HIGHWAY D35, E/W	Local	2149.93	12	9	1	2	0	0	0	0

County	Site Type	Object ID	Road Name	Road Type	Sample Weight	Vehicle Count	Drivers Belted	Drivers Not Belted	Drivers Unknown	Right Front Passenger Count	Right Front Passenger Belted	Right Front Passenger Not Belted	Right Front Passenger Unknown
HARDIN	Original	62997885	DEPOT STREET, N/S	Local	7903.23	44	34	9	1	4	4	0	0
HARDIN	Original	63014889	US 20 E	Secondary	114.05	126	97	18	11	22	17	5	0
JASPER	Original	62744348	IA 163 E	Secondary	1590.62	222	187	18	17	44	38	6	0
JASPER	Original	62868826	EAST 19TH STREET NORTH, N/S	Local	3203.20	23	20	3	0	5	3	2	0
JASPER	Original	62871279	I 80 E	Primary	124.69	364	281	37	46	90	82	6	2
JASPER	Original	62872270	I 80 E	Primary	103.23	394	319	35	40	112	101	11	0
JASPER	Original	62879158	I 80 E	Primary	46.75	367	281	39	47	74	66	7	1
MADISON	Original	62792082	NORTHEAST 4TH STREET, E/W	Local	11139.20	8	7	1	0	2	2	0	0
MADISON	Original	62873812	I 80 W	Primary	187.27	536	414	43	79	244	217	27	0
MADISON	Original	62910006	IA 92 E/W	Secondary	277.50	149	117	18	14	63	53	10	0
MADISON	Original	62920420	US 169 N/S	Secondary	1733.62	44	36	5	3	8	6	2	0
MADISON	Original	62946268	2ND AVENUE, N/S	Local	15010.89	6	5	1	0	1	1	0	0
MILLS	Original	62754731	221ST STREET, N/S	Local	4875.24	43	30	9	4	8	6	2	0
MILLS	Original	62782194	I 29 N	Primary	42.68	220	153	23	44	27	21	6	0
MILLS	Original	62858774	I 29 S	Primary	40.18	279	166	38	75	34	30	4	0
MILLS	Original	62861429	I 29 S	Primary	375.30	321	215	52	54	56	53	3	0
MILLS	Original	63036628	US 34 E/W	Secondary	816.53	137	90	18	29	14	9	5	0
MUSCATINE	Original	62846476	IA 38 N/S	Secondary	61.03	83	70	8	5	32	28	4	0
MUSCATINE	Original	62883673	US 6 E/W	Secondary	447.32	58	47	5	6	23	23	0	0
MUSCATINE	Original	62943188	US 61 N	Secondary	647.18	143	120	14	9	56	46	10	0
MUSCATINE	Original	62971371	US 61 N	Secondary	588.97	185	153	17	15	78	65	13	0
MUSCATINE	Original	63042421	200TH STREET, E/W in Scott County	Local	2209.66	71	58	6	7	29	22	7	0
OBRIEN	Original	62761855	390TH STREET, E/W	Local	267.93	21	15	3	3	0	0	0	0

County	Site Type	Object ID	Road Name	Road Type	Sample Weight	Vehicle Count	Drivers Belted	Drivers Not Belted	Drivers Unknown	Right Front Passenger Count	Right Front Passenger Belted	Right Front Passenger Not Belted	Right Front Passenger Unknown
OBRIEN	Original	62867037	IA 60 N	Secondary	1026.59	114	88	13	13	12	11	1	0
OBRIEN	Original	62886573	IA 60 S	Secondary	370.25	128	102	15	11	18	16	2	0
OBRIEN	Original	62948573	IA 10 E/W	Secondary	1259.32	22	15	5	2	0	0	0	0
OBRIEN	Original	63020223	NORTHWEST BOULEVARD, N/S	Local	942.91	38	27	7	4	5	2	3	0
POLK	Original	62828269	I 235 W	Primary	670.58	422	362	24	36	70	65	5	0
POLK	Original	62861559	I 35 N	Primary	334.85	394	341	39	14	62	58	4	0
POLK	Original	62873841	I 80 W	Primary	46.78	377	300	39	38	52	47	5	0
POLK	Original	62876189	I 80 W	Primary	867.93	457	396	55	6	43	30	13	0
POLK	Original	62876369	I 80 W	Primary	534.06	485	414	50	21	130	116	14	0
POLK	Original	62879911	I 80 E	Primary	131.37	467	396	53	18	149	133	16	0
POLK	Original	62748369	IA 163 E	Secondary	130.16	287	238	22	27	120	112	8	0
POLK	Original	62831528	FLEUR DRIVE, N	Secondary	578.79	321	277	22	22	95	85	9	1
POLK	Original	62884333	60TH STREET, N/S	Secondary	1019.36	228	196	16	16	77	70	7	0
POLK	Original	62924625	US 69 N/S	Secondary	338.50	239	207	27	5	36	31	5	0
POLK	Original	63029382	Ashworth Road, E/W	Secondary	334.40	180	159	14	7	56	48	8	0
POLK	Original	63081332	GRAND AVENUE, E/W	Secondary	239.18	116	100	8	8	13	13	0	0
POLK	Original	62772160	MUSKOGEE AVENUE, E/W	Local	11848.34	4	4	0	0	1	1	0	0
POLK	Original	62859653	NORTHWEST 9TH STREET, E/W	Local	12239.90	125	103	13	9	16	15	1	0
POTTAWATTAMIE	Original	62765549	10TH AVENUE, E/W	Local	1559.15	100	70	13	17	18	13	5	0
POTTAWATTAMIE	Original	62869130	I 80 E	Primary	1214.77	269	190	33	46	31	27	4	0
POTTAWATTAMIE	Original	62872327	I 80 W	Primary	159.86	200	141	24	35	23	20	3	0
POTTAWATTAMIE	Original	62875270	I 80 W	Primary	125.95	268	173	29	66	41	32	9	0
POTTAWATTAMIE	Original	62976124	NASH BOULEVARD	Secondary	899.95	146	91	26	29	24	15	9	0
SCOTT	Original	62826343	US 61 S	Secondary	3388.00	222	174	26	22	97	87	10	0

County	Site Type	Object ID	Road Name	Road Type	Sample Weight	Vehicle Count	Drivers Belted	Drivers Not Belted	Drivers Unknown	Right Front Passenger Count	Right Front Passenger Belted	Right Front Passenger Not Belted	Right Front Passenger Unknown
SCOTT	Original	62868688	I 80 E	Primary	570.86	456	327	49	80	95	89	6	0
SCOTT	Original	62877733	I 80 W	Primary	260.15	425	309	36	80	44	43	1	0
SCOTT	Original	62947974	EAST PLEASANT STREET, E/W	Local	15512.09	28	20	2	6	8	6	2	0
SCOTT	Original	63046770	EAST 53RD STREET, E/W	Secondary	849.01	240	169	32	39	80	75	5	0
TAMA	Original	62827370	US 63 N/S	Secondary	105.33	62	48	8	6	14	14	0	0
TAMA	Original	62828413	US 63 N/S	Secondary	1239.45	84	66	12	6	9	8	1	0
TAMA	Original	62893597	EAST STREET, N/S	Local	12978.58	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
TAMA	Original	62983342	IA 8 E/W	Secondary	1712.85	40	31	6	3	0	0	0	0
TAMA	Original	62991055	BUSINESS US 30 SIGNED ROUTE, N/S	Local	577.91	56	43	8	5	12	10	2	0
WOODBURY	Original	62774974	CHAMBERS STREET, N/S	Local	1935.16	148	125	16	7	13	10	3	0
WOODBURY	Original	62782484	US 20 W	Secondary	32059.85	113	91	11	11	15	13	2	0
WOODBURY	Original	62865471	I 29 S	Primary	39.27	250	195	27	28	55	46	9	0
WOODBURY	Original	62996218	US 20 E	Secondary	89.73	141	112	16	13	26	22	4	0
WOODBURY	Original	63042628	WESLEY PARKWAY, N	Secondary	565.41	182	159	18	5	20	15	5	0
Totals						**16,135**	**12,651**	**1,769**	**1,715**	**3,430**	**2,983**	**442**	**5**

Conclusion

The 2026 Iowa Seat Belt Use Survey demonstrates that seat belt compliance remains high across the state, with an estimated overall weighted usage rate of 87.51%. While this overall percentage reflects a lower figure than in recent prior years, the shift stems from the change in the observers contracted to collect the data rather than a decline in safety behavior. Further analysis shows that apparent regional variances are heavily skewed by high volumes of unverified observations due to field conditions like window tinting, as confirmed occupant compliance remains consistently high across surveyed regions. Additionally, seat belt usage shows slight variation by roadway category, with secondary roads logging the highest occupant usage (82.0% total) and local roads logging the lowest (77.9%). Moving forward, leveraging these data insights will support targeted traffic safety strategies to further reduce unbelted injuries and fatalities across Iowa roads.