



BRSI

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Summary

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Author: Uta Meesmann and Sofie Boets

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Meesmann, U. & Boets, S. (2014) *Usage de la ceinture de sécurité et des dispositifs de retenue pour enfants. Résultats de la mesure d'attitudes en matière de sécurité routière menée tous les trois ans par l'IBSR*. Bruxelles, Belgique : Institut Belge pour la Sécurité Routière – Centre de connaissance Sécurité Routière

Summary

The Belgian Institute for Road Safety (BIVV/IBSR) attitude survey 2012 is based on 1,540 interviews with drivers whose principal residence is in Belgium and who had driven a car or delivery van at least 1,500 km in the six months preceding the interview. The interviews were conducted verbally in September and October 2012.

In the attitude survey, respondents were asked to provide their opinion on a number of statements. For each attitude statement it was examined whether or not there was a relation between the answers on the statement and certain driver characteristics (gender, age and region). The analysis tested the existence of significant differences depending on the respondent's gender, age or region. Where possible the figures were compared with those from previous attitude surveys conducted by the BIVV/IBSR and with results from other sources.

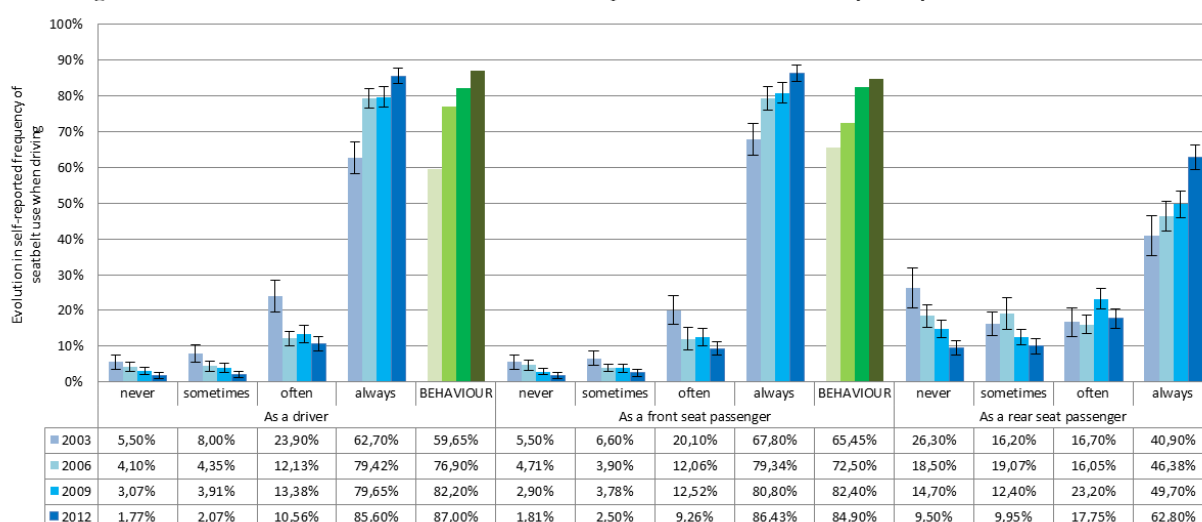
The attitude survey 2012 comprises several sections. This report only includes results related to seatbelt use and child restraint systems. The use of seatbelts and child restraint systems is considered to be one of the largest risk factors in road traffic. For this reason, the BIVV/IBSR has been specifically measuring experiences and opinions related to these themes since 2003.

SEATBELT USE BY DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS

Self-reported seatbelt use when driving

The main findings related to seatbelt use when driving (based on self-reported behaviour) are:

- Seatbelt use by drivers and front and rear seat occupants of cars has increased significantly between 2003 and 2012. In 2012, 86% of drivers, 86% of front seat occupants and 63% of rear seat occupants stated that they always wear their seatbelts. The largest safety issue related to seatbelt use still involves rear seat occupants in cars.
- These self-reported figures are highly consistent with observations in the “seatbelt use” road side survey conducted by the BIVV/IBSR in 2012 (Riguelle, 2013): 87% of drivers and 85% of front seat occupants of cars wore seatbelts in 2012 (total front seat occupants: 86% seatbelt users; see Figure). Given that the self-reported figures for front seat occupants (over the years) are reasonably consistent with observed seatbelt use, we may cautiously assume that the self-reported figures related to seatbelt use for rear seat occupants reflect the reality fairly.



Source: BIVV/IBSR

- In 2007, two of the objectives of the General Assembly for Road Safety were: 95% seatbelt use by front seat occupants and 80% seatbelt use by rear seat occupants. These targets were supposed to have been met by 2010 but had still not been achieved in 2012.

- Compared with other European countries, Belgium's performance is on the poor side regarding seatbelt use. Our neighbouring countries the Netherlands, Germany and France, are among the countries with the best performance for seatbelt use for front seat occupants (the Netherlands: 97%, Germany and France even achieving 98%). We can state that seatbelt use in Belgium should still improve significantly.
- The percentage of women who always wear their seatbelts when driving (90%) and as a front seat passenger (89%) is significantly higher in the attitude survey than for men (81% and 84% respectively). This gender contrast was also observed in the BIVV/IBSR road side survey 2012 (Riguelle, 2013).
- Significantly fewer people in the youngest age group (18-29-year-olds) state that they "always" wear their seatbelt when driving or as a passenger than the oldest age group (aged 63 and over). The percentage of "always" answers of 18-29 year-olds amounts to 83% when driving, 79% as a front seat passenger and 56% as a rear seat passenger. For the group aged 63 and over, the percentages are 90%, 92% and 66% respectively.
- The attitude survey reveals that self-reported seatbelt use does not differ according to region. This was however the case in the survey conducted in 2009, when Flemish residents reported significantly higher seatbelt use compared with Brussels and Walloon residents.

Opinions on seatbelt use

The survey also asked respondents how they felt about wearing a seatbelt. An analysis of the results included the following findings:

- In general, there is a positive evolution in opinions on seatbelt use. In comparison with the results of 2009, fewer respondents believe it is "not necessary for rear seat occupants to wear a seatbelt" and there are more drivers who "always ask their passengers to put on their seatbelts".
- Significantly more women (83%) than men (76%) always ask their passengers to put on their seatbelts. Compared with all the other age groups, significantly more people aged 63 and over (87%) always ask their passengers to put on their seatbelts (18-29 year-olds: 78%; 30-38 year-olds: 77%; 39-49 year-olds: 76%; 50-62 year-olds: 78%). Significantly more Walloon residents (23%) than Flemish residents (12%) and Brussels residents (9%) are of the opinion that it is not necessary for rear seat occupants to wear a seatbelt. Significantly fewer Flemish residents (76%) than Walloon residents (86%) and Brussels residents (85%) always ask their passengers to put on their seatbelts.
- Not wearing a seatbelt as a driver or front seat passenger in the car is ranked in 4th place in terms of unacceptable behaviour out of a total of 13 descriptions of dangerous driving behaviour. This risk behaviour is only surpassed by "driving under the influence of drugs", "driving without insurance" and "not restraining children when driving". It is considered more acceptable for rear seat occupants not to wear a seatbelt. The latter statement ranked at the 8th place in terms of unacceptable driving behaviour.
- We see an upward trend in terms of unacceptability related to not wearing a seatbelt in the car: the unacceptability of not wearing a seatbelt both as a rear and a front seat occupant increased in 2012 compared with 2009. Men (6%) find it significantly more acceptable for front seat occupants not to wear a seatbelt in the car than women (3%). Walloon residents (13%) find it significantly more acceptable for rear seat occupants not to wear a seatbelt in the car than Flemish residents (8%) and Brussels residents (6%).

Raising awareness of and enforcing seatbelt use

Despite improved seatbelt use in Belgium, we are still lagging far behind compared to our neighbouring countries. Therefore continued efforts in this field are needed - particularly with regard to rear seat occupants' seatbelt use in the car. There is a genuine need to raise awareness of the risks of not wearing a seatbelt. In this respect, the risk involved at low speeds must also be highlighted. Raising awareness and enforcement continue to be extremely important in the coming years. They must focus, among other things, on a change in behaviour among young and male drivers.

THE USE OF CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEMS***Self-reported use of child restraint systems***

The study reveals that the evolution in the use of child restraint systems is less pronounced than for seatbelt use:

- The results reveal a non-significant increase in the use of child restraint systems when transporting children smaller than 1.35m between 2012 (83%), 2009 (81%) and 2003 (76%). The highest figures are those for 2006 (90%). We remind that new legislation related to child restraint systems entered into force in 2006. That new legislation was accompanied by a major advertising campaign around the new law and about the available child restraint systems.
- However, we also see an upward trend in the percentage of respondents who state that they never use a child restraint system if they are transporting a child smaller than 1.35m (2012: 5%; 2009: 2%)
- Significantly more 30-38 year-olds (89%) than 39-49 year-olds (79%) state that they always use a child restraint system when transporting a child shorter than 1.35m. Significantly more Walloon residents (89%) than Brussels residents (80%) state that they always use a child restraint system when transporting children shorter than 1.35m. The number for Flemish residents is between these two values (84%).
- The BIVV/IBSR road side survey conducted in 2011 (Roynard, 2012 ; 2014) revealed that 1 in 10 children were not restrained at all in the car. This figure is consistent with findings in the attitude measurement survey, in which 5% of drivers (who occasionally transport children shorter than 1.35m) stated that they never used child restraint systems, 5% stated that they sometimes used child restraint systems and 6% stated that they usually but not always used child restraint systems.
- In 2002, one of the objectives of the General Assembly for Road Safety was for 95% of children to be properly restrained in the car. This target was supposed to have been achieved by 2005 but had still not been achieved in 2012.

Opinions on restraining children in the car

The evolution of opinions regarding child restraint systems is less positive than for opinions on seatbelt use in general:

- The acceptability of transporting children while not using a child restraint system barely changed between 2009 and 2012.
- If we compare the results from 2009 with those from 2012, we observe a downward trend in the percentage of respondents who agree or largely agree with the statement that it is dangerous to transport a child who is not restrained in the proper manner. In this context we would point out that the BIVV/IBSR road side survey from 2011 (Roynard, 2012 ; 2014) established that drivers often minimise the risk of the incorrect use of child restraint systems.
- What is positive though is that the percentage of drivers who agree or largely agree with the statement that it is not really necessary to use proper child restraint systems for short journeys fell significantly compared with 2009. Significantly more Walloon residents (10%) agree or largely agree with the statement that it is not really necessary to use the proper child restraint systems for short journeys than Flemish residents (4%) and Brussels residents (5%). Still the BIVV/IBSR road side survey on child restraint systems (Roynard, 2012 ; 2014) established that these security systems are still not always used, especially not always during short journeys.
- Transporting children without using a child restraint system is ranked in 3rd place in terms of unacceptability out of a total of thirteen descriptions related to dangerous driving behaviour. This means that not using child restraint systems is considered less acceptable than not wearing a seatbelt while occupying a front or rear car seat (ranked in fourth and eighth place out of thirteen).

Raising awareness of and enforcing the use of child restraint systems

Based on the BIVV/IBSR attitude measurement survey results and additional results from the BIVV/IBSR road side survey, we conclude that raising awareness about child restraint systems should predominantly focus on the proper use of child restraint systems and risk assessment in general, and more particularly risk assessment for short journeys. Furthermore, raising awareness about the use of seatbelts in general could also have an impact on the use of child restraint systems.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Based upon the present results and based on the actual scientific knowledge in this field the BRSI recommends further research in the following areas:

- continuing attitude surveys and road side surveys regarding seat belt use and child restraint system use;
- analysing the impact of educational level and socio-economic status on the use of seat belt and child restraint systems;
- enlarging the scope of research on the motives of specific at risk groups for seat belt and child restraint system use, and on the adequate measures to influence these groups.



Belgian Road Safety Institute
Chaussée de Haecht, 1405
1130 Brussels
info@ibsr.be

Tel.: 0032 2 244 15 11
Fax: 0032 2 216 43 42