

Are Montana's wireless-only adults different from their neighbors? Evidence from Montana Department of Transportation's 2008 Seat Belt Survey

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Introduction

Seat belt use is a vital policy issue in the United States. Government agencies use survey research, including random-digit dial telephone surveys, to gather information about seat belt use and about attitudes concerning seat belt use. Many state and local government agencies do not include wireless-only adults in RDD surveys about seat belt use.

Methods — 2008 Montana Department of Transportation Seat Belt Survey

- **Sponsor:** Montana Department of Transportation
- **Conducted by:** Bureau of Business and Economic Research, The University of Montana-Missoula
- **Study Population:** Montana residents age 18 and older who live in a home with a land-line or wireless telephone
- **Sampling Method:** Random-Digit Dial with in-household selection by Kish Table. List-based random sample of wireless telephone numbers purchased from Survey Samples, International. Sample stratified by five regions within the state
- **Sampling Error:** +/- 3.5% at 95 percent confidence level
- **N:** 824 landline and 129 wireless interviews completed during May and June 2008
- **Response Rate:** 51.1% calculated using AAPOR (2006) Response Rate 3, $e = 0.153$ based on FCC documents for Montana
- **Comparison Data Source:** National Centers for Disease Control Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Montana Survey; seat belt use question last asked in 2002

Abstract

We measure:

1. Self-reported seat belt use among adults who live in landline telephone or wireless only households.
2. Support for a proposed primary seat belt law among adults who live in landline telephone or wireless only households.

Researchers should include wireless-only households in telephone surveys that examine seat belt use to avoid undercoverage bias.



Discussion and Conclusions

- 27.9% of adult Montanans who lived in a wireless-only household reported never using seat belts or only using them once in a while. Only 9.1% of those who lived in a household with a landline reported never using seat belts or only using them once in a while. This difference is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square 36.970, degrees of freedom 4, significance .000).
- This difference remained significant when controlling for a respondent's age, sex, 2007 household income, education attainment, race, and region of residence within the Montana.
- 56.3% of adult Montanans who lived in a wireless-only household opposed proposed state legislation that allows law enforcement officers to stop a vehicle if the officer believes the occupants are not wearing seatbelts (a primary seat belt law). 47.0% of those who lived in a household with a landline opposed the legislation. This difference is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square 9.853, degrees of freedom 4, significance .024).
- This difference also remained significant when controlling for a respondent's age, sex, 2007 household income, education attainment, race, and region of residence within the Montana.
- These results are consistent with the findings of Blumberg and Luke (NCHS, 2007) that indicate wireless-only adults are more likely than others to engage in risk taking behaviors like binge drinking and smoking.
- The magnitude of difference in self-reported seat belt use and in attitudes toward regulating seat belt use found by this study implies that researchers should consider including a wireless telephone sample in any telephone survey that examines seat belt use to avoid undercoverage bias.

Figure 1.

Frequency of Self-Reported Seat Belt Use in Montana

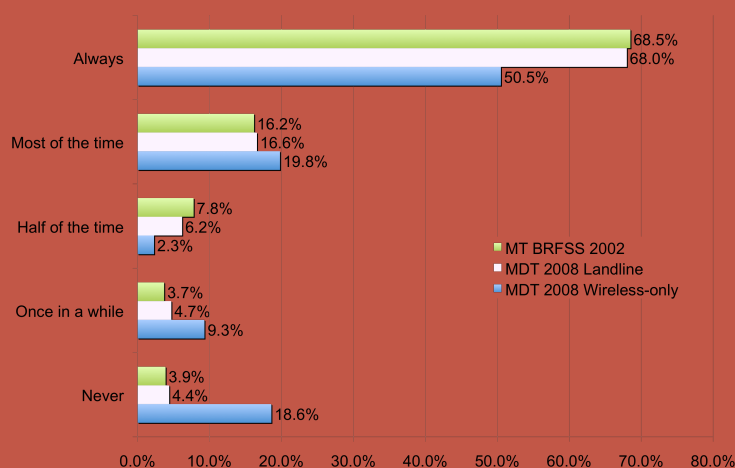


Figure 2.

Seat Belt Use Question:

Many people wear seatbelts regularly, while many others do not because seatbelts hinder their ability to do their job, or are uncomfortable for them, or for other reasons. Thinking back over the last week, that is, since May X, 2008, about how often did you (yourself) wear a seatbelt in a vehicle, if at all?

Always
Most of the time
Half of the time
Once in a while
Never

Figure 3.

Primary Seat Belt Law Question:

Some people favor a proposed Montana state law that allows law enforcement officers to stop a vehicle if the officer believes the occupants are not wearing seatbelts. Other people oppose this proposed law. Do you?

Strongly favor
Somewhat favor
Neither favor nor oppose
Somewhat oppose
Strongly oppose

Figure 4.

Support for a Primary Seat Belt Law in Montana

