

MEMORANDUM

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Observational survey of car seat use, 2017

The Traffic Safety Commission of Puerto Rico (CST by its Spanish acronym), with the collaboration of Estudios Técnicos, Inc., conducted the Puerto Rico Observational Survey of Seat Belt Use for 2017. The CST also asked Estudios Técnicos, Inc., to measure the car seat or protected seat use in vehicles with occupants of 0 to 4 years, using the methodology of the 2017 Observational Survey of Seat Belt Use.

The sample used in this study was a probabilistic multistage stratified sample with two units. The primary sample units (PSU) were composed by counties, and the secondary sampling units (SSU) were composed by road segments, followed by time segments, road directions, lanes and vehicles selection. The PSU were stratified using the five (5) geographical regions established by the Highway and Transportation Authority of Puerto Rico. Inside each county, the SSU stratification was established by road type¹.

The fieldwork team was composed of eleven (11) members. All team members participated in a one day training session on August 15, 2017 that included all the different aspects for the observations and quality control. The training was organized in two sections. The first section addressed the objectives of the survey, operational definitions concerning field observations, and data gathering protocols. The second section consisted of examples and the recreation of the

¹ For details refer to the document *Puerto Rico Observational Survey of Safety Belt Use, 2017*.

different situations and possible scenarios in the field. This second part also included role playing exercises for observers, counters and quality control monitors.

Observations were conducted from August 16 to September 14, 2017. Seventeen (17) counties were visited, for a total of 6,800 vehicle observations. Of the 6,800 observed vehicles in the 68 segments, 110 occupants of 0 to 4 years were observed in 48 segments (in 20 segments no occupants of 0 to 4 years were observed). In 106 of the 110 cases a proper use of the car seat was observed and one case could not be determined, with a non-response rate of 3.6 percentage points.

All of the procedures related with the estimated rate of car seat usage followed the sample design of the Puerto Rico Observational Survey Safety Belt Use, 2017. As established in this design, in the rate estimates of the car seat usage, weight was applied to each observation. For the weight criteria, the different sample units were used: counties (region to which it belongs), road segment (road type), time, road direction, total amount of lanes and vehicles (total amount of observed vehicles in relation with passing vehicles). Considering all of these aspects, 82.3 % of car seat usage is estimated, with a standard error of 8.3%.

Rate of car seat use	Standard Error	95 Percent Confidence Interval	
82.3%	8.3%	66.0%	98.6%
n = 106			

The standard error (SE) was calculated using a similar procedure as the Puerto Rico Observational Survey of Safety Belt Use, 2017, because both sample designs are the same. In the sample design, PSUs are stratified and selected with unequal probabilities (PPS) and may have large sampling fractions. According to NHTSA, a specialized software procedure may calculate the SE. This study uses the RTI International's SUDAAN software to calculate the SE. Given the sample design and sample rates of the first two stages of sampling (counties –PSU- and road segments – SSU -), the Taylor Method of Variance Estimation included in this software was used.

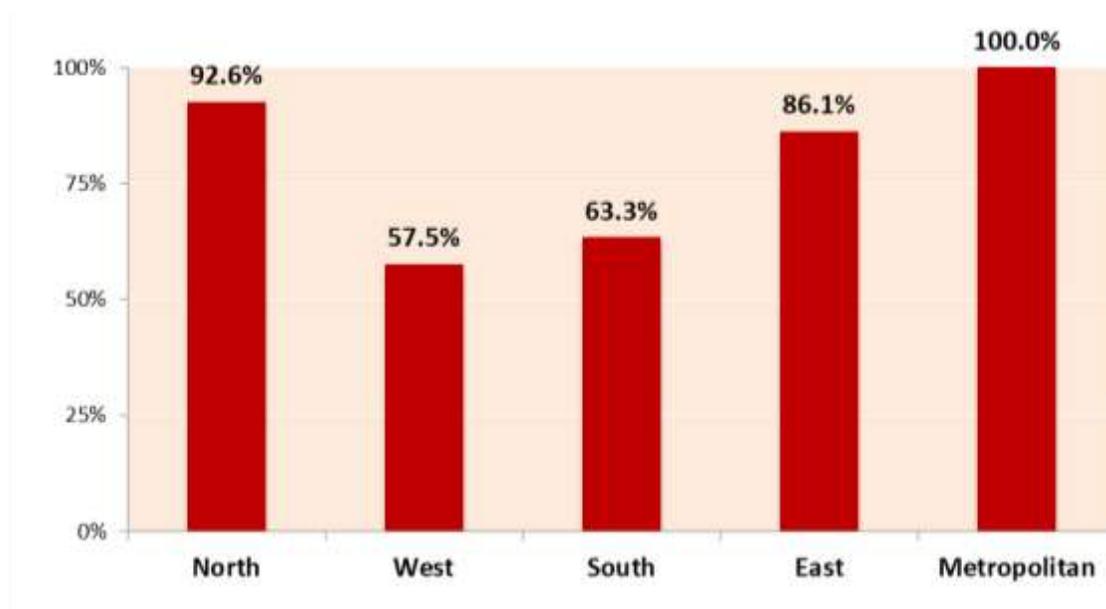
It is worth mentioning that when analyzing the results by different variables, such as type of road, type of vehicle or time intervals, the size of each of the sub-sample groups was taken in consideration (all sub groups have at least five (5)



observations). This is due to the fact that in subgroups that are too small, with also the application of a certain weight, the results may conduct to an erroneous conclusion.

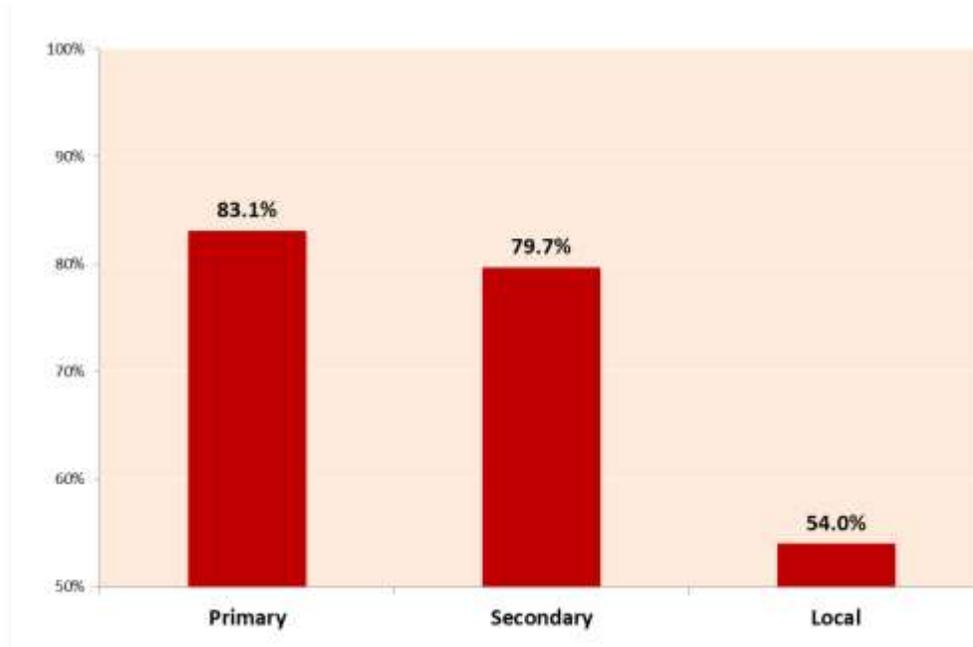
The car seat use rate is very high for all the regions with the exception of the south and the west regions. The west region measured 57.6 and the south region measured 63.3 percent, while in the rest of the regions it was over 86.1 percent.

Graph.1: Observed Car Seat Use by Region

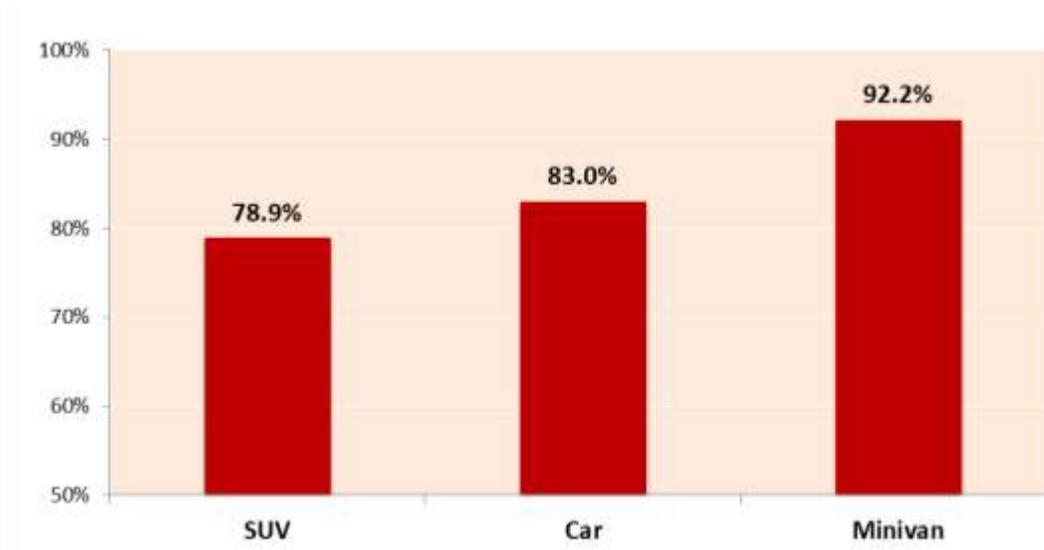


Local roads measured the lowest car seat use rate with 54.0%. Almost no difference was observed between primary and secondary roads, with a car seat use rate of 83.1 and 79.7 percent respectively.



Graph.2: Observed Car Seat Use by Road Type

Minivans are the type of vehicle with a higher percentage (92.2%) of use of the car seat, followed by cars (83.0%), while in the case of SUVs the observed percentage decreases to 78.9%.

Graph.3: Observed Car Seat Use by Vehicle Type

The Time intervals of 7:00 AM to 9:14 AM and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM measured a car seat usage of a 100%. The 9:15 AM to 11:29 AM time interval registered a car seat use of 96.2%, while the 11:30 AM to 1:44 PM registered 88.7%. The time interval with a lower percentage (54.3%) was from 1:45 PM to 3:59 PM.

Graph 4: Observed Car Seat Use by Time Intervals

