

## **MEMORANDUM**

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Executive Director  
Traffic Safety Commission

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September 28, 2021.

### **Observational survey of car seat use, 2021**

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 2021. The CST also asked Estudios Técnicos, Inc., to measure the car seat or protected seat use in vehicles with occupants of 0 to 8 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 type<sup>1</sup>.

The fieldwork team was composed of twelve (12) members. All team members participated in a one-day training session on August 30, 2021 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

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<sup>1</sup> For details refer to the document *Puerto Rico Observational Survey of Safety Belt Use, 2020*.

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 September 1 to September 16, 2021. Seventeen (17) counties were visited, for a total of 6,800 vehicle observations. Of the 6,800 observed vehicles in the 68 segments, 168 occupants of 0 to 8 years were observed in 47 segments (in 21 segments no occupants of 0 to 8 years were observed). In 166 of the 168 cases a proper use of the car seat was observed, and two cases could not be determined, with a non-response rate of 1.2 percentage points.

All 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 that 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 these aspects, 90.2% of car seat usage is estimated, with a standard error of 6.8%.

<b>Rate of car seat use</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>95 Percent Confidence Interval</b>	
<b>90.2%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>n = 166</b>			

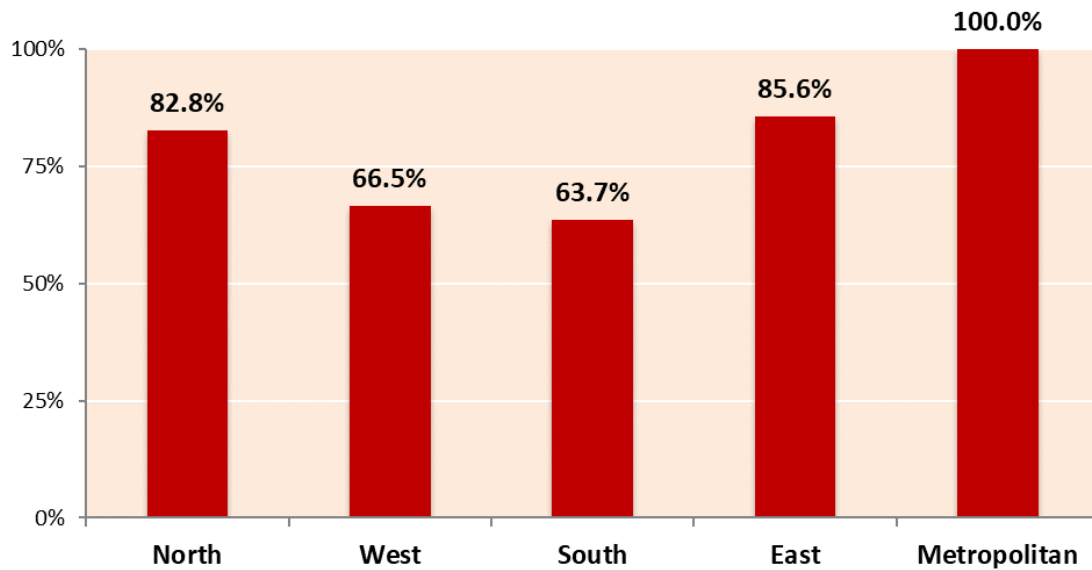
The standard error (SE) was calculated using a similar procedure as the Puerto Rico Observational Survey of Safety Belt Use, 2020, because both sample designs are the same. In the sample design, PSUs are stratified and selected with unequal probabilities (PPS) and may have large sampling fractions. According 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

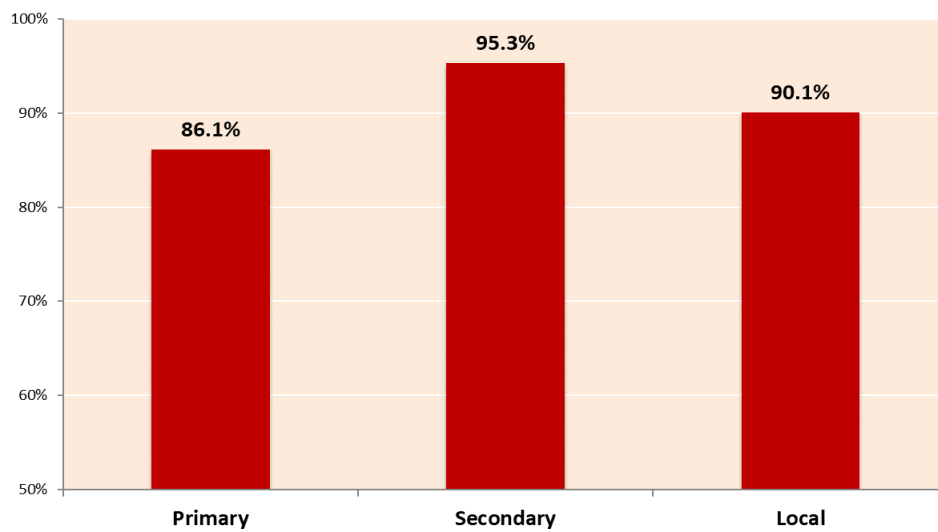


groups was taken in consideration. This is because in subgroups that are too small, with also the application of a certain weight, the results may conduct to an erroneous conclusion.

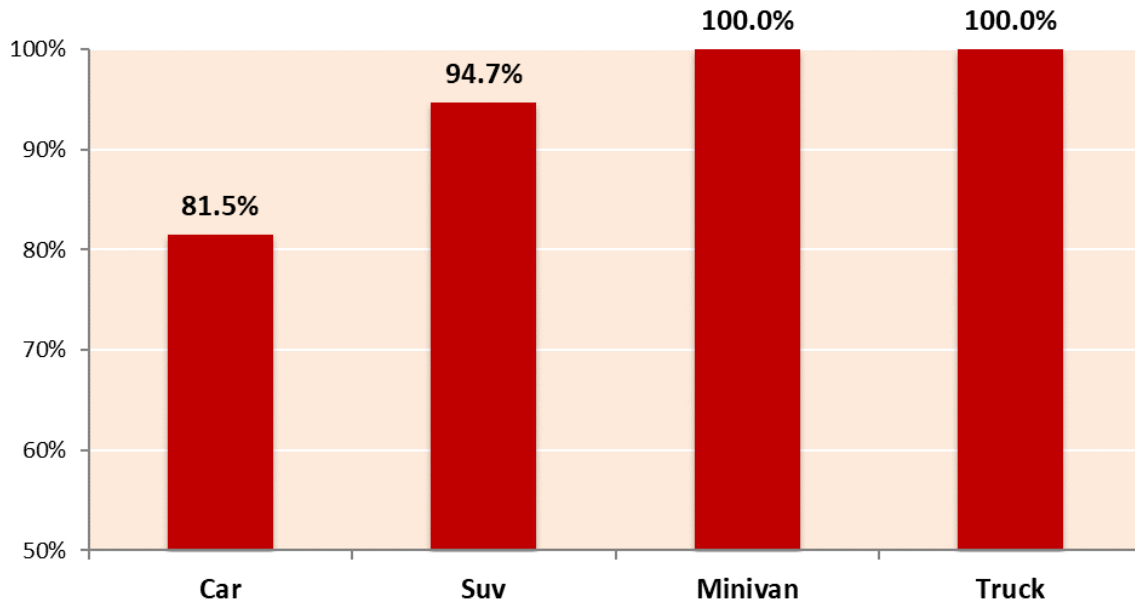
**Graph.1: Observed Car Seat Use by Region**



**Graph.2: Observed Car Seat Use by Road Type**



Graph.3: Observed Car Seat Use by Vehicle Type



Graph 4: Observed Car Seat Use by Time Intervals

