

SEAT BELT USE AND INJURY OUTCOMES

Data are from the
CRASH OUTCOME DATA EVALUATION SYSTEM (CODES): 1995 - 2001

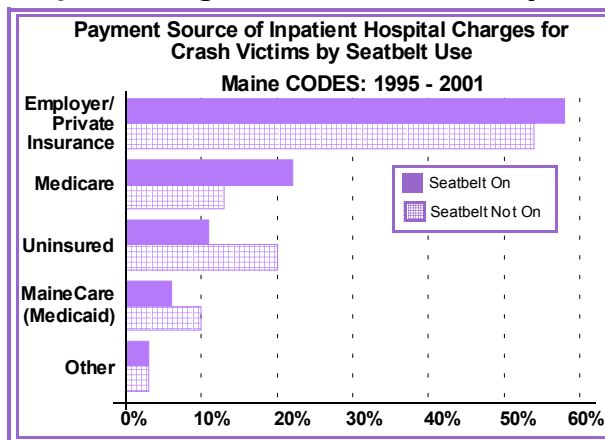
Number 6

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

SEAT BELT USE AND INJURY OUTCOMES FACT SHEET

- ➔ Nearly 80% of U.S. residents wear seat belts when riding in, or driving, a motor vehicle. In Maine, the seat belt use rate is approximately 60%. Not only is Maine's seat belt use rate well below the national average, it has been unchanged since 1997.
- ➔ During 1995 - 2001, drivers and passengers who did not wear seat belts were more likely to be injured during a crash than those who did wear seat belts. Unbelted crash vehicle occupants were a third more likely to need transport to the hospital emergency room, to be hospitalized, or to die than belted occupants, and more than twice as likely to be hospitalized or die with a head injury.
- ➔ Crash vehicle occupants who did not wear a seat belt were more likely to have longer hospital stays and higher hospital charges as a result of their injuries than those who did wear a seat belt.
- ➔ Crash victims who were ejected from their vehicles were 41 times more likely to be hospitalized or die with a head injury than those who remained in the vehicle. More than a quarter (28%) of Maine's crash fatalities during 1995 - 2001 were residents who had been ejected from their vehicle during the crash.
- ➔ More than half of the inpatient hospital charges related to crash injuries were paid by employer-paid and private insurance. Unbelted occupants were more likely to be uninsured - 20% compared to 11% - or covered by MaineCare (Medicaid) - 10% compared to 6% - than those who wore seat belts.
- ➔ During the period 1995 - 2001, an estimated 850 hospitalizations could have been prevented if unbelted occupants had worn seat belts. These hospitalizations resulted in \$17 million in hospital charges alone.

Principal Injury	Average Length of Stay (days)		Hospital Charges	
	Belted	Unbelted	Belted	Unbelted
Traumatic Brain Injury	6.3	7.0	\$22,000	\$25,900
Other Head, Face, Neck	3.0	3.9	\$8,500	\$13,500
Spinal Cord Injury	10.0	12.2	\$32,200	\$63,100
Vetebral Column	4.9	5.0	\$10,900	\$13,100
Injuries to Torso	6.0	7.2	\$17,000	\$22,200
Injuries to Extremities	5.5	5.8	\$15,000	\$17,700
ALL INJURIES	5.6	6.2	\$16,200	\$20,400



Notes: CODES is a data network comprised of information from traffic crash reports, hospital discharges, ambulance reports, and death certificates. The Office of Data, Research, and Vital Statistics, Emergency Medical Services, the Bureau of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Department of Transportation, and the Maine Health Information Center cooperated in this effort.

For further data on this topic, please contact:
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For further information, please contact Karl Finison at the Maine Health Information Center: 623-2555
Visit our website at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhs/bohodr/index.htm>

For prevention information, please contact: Diane Arbour at 287-3265

John Elias Baldacci
Governor



John R. Nicholas
Commissioner

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