

# Seat Belt Use in Nebraska

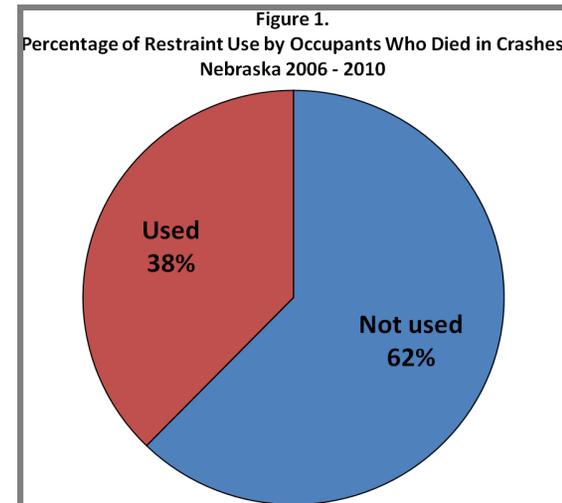
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## Why Seat Belts Are Important:

- Restraint use is the single most effective way to save lives and reduce injuries in motor vehicle crashes. Seat belts can reduce crash deaths by 45-60% and reduce crash injuries by 50-65%.
- Using seat belts greatly reduces the economic costs associated with crashes.
- Adults who use seat belts are significantly more likely to buckle their children as well.
- High-risk drivers (teens, young men, alcohol-impaired drivers) are the least likely to wear seat belts, and are at the greatest risk for crash injuries and deaths.

## Why Seat Belts Matter in Nebraska:

- Motor vehicle crashes occur every 16 minutes in Nebraska.
- In January 2012, 19 people died in crashes — 80% were not wearing seat belts.
- From 2006-2010, compared to restrained occupants, unrestrained occupants:
  - accounted for two-thirds of the 1,016 crash deaths (three-quarters of teen driver deaths) (figure 1)
  - were over 20 times more likely to be killed in a crash
  - were 5 times more likely to be treated in hospitals and 2 times more likely to be treated in emergency rooms (figure 2)
  - had double the average hospital charges (\$2,156 vs. \$1,127; figure 2)



## How Do Seat Belts Save Lives?

In a crash, seat belts:

- keep occupants where they are safest, inside the vehicle. So the vehicle, not the person, takes the force of the crash.
- keep an occupant's head from going through the windshield in a head-on crash.
- keep occupants from going out the side window in a side-impact crash.
- keep occupants conscious so they can unbuckle the seat belt and escape quickly in a crash involving fire or submersion (less than ½ of one percent of all serious crashes).
- keep the driver in place and help him/her maintain control of the vehicle in a slide.

If all occupants had been buckled up, approximately:

- 299 lives could have been saved
- 3,835 moderate to severe injuries could have been prevented

