

## Governor Quinn Announces Record Seat Belt Usage in Illinois

Written by Erin Wilson

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### *State Achieves Nearly 94 Percent Usage Rate*

CHICAGO – August 31, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn today announced that Illinois has achieved an all-time high seat belt usage rate in 2012. Federal observational surveys showed that 93.6 percent of front-seat passengers were using seat belts as of June, up from 92.9 percent last year and above the national average of 84 percent. The governor credited this significant public safety achievement to impactful awareness campaigns, motorist compliance, strategic partnerships with state and local law enforcement, and strengthened traffic safety legislation. Governor Quinn also urged travelers to drive safely during the Labor Day weekend.

“Labor Day Weekend should be a time of parades, barbeques and baseball, not sitting in a hospital ER, wondering if a loved one will survive a crash,” Governor Quinn said. “Seat belts save lives, and Illinois’ high seat belt usage rate is the result of our comprehensive efforts to ensure that drivers in Illinois are buckling up. When traveling this Labor Day, make sure everyone is buckled up, including those in the back seat, and such precious cargo as infants, the elderly and pets.”

Prior to the primary safety belt law, police could not pull a driver over based solely on a seat belt violation. Since the primary belt law was enacted in July 2003, belt usage has climbed each consecutive year, going up 17.4 percentage points from 76.2 percent in 2003 to nearly 94 percent in 2012.

“Through our effective partnerships with law enforcement and advocacy groups across Illinois, we have been able to achieve a record rate of seat belt usage,” Illinois Transportation

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Secretary Ann L. Schneider said. “The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is working diligently toward 100 percent statewide usage and to help drive zero road fatalities to reality.”

Additional legislation signed by Governor Quinn last summer required that all passengers buckle up, including those riding in the back seat of vehicles, to help further prevent traffic accident-related injuries or fatalities. Along with successful awareness programs and enforcement efforts, these laws have helped lead to an overall reduction in fatalities on Illinois roads over the last ten years.

“State troopers work with IDOT and other organizations to promote safety awareness and enforce seat belt usage statewide, and we are pleased that more motorists are using their seat belts every year,” Illinois State Police Director Hiram Grau said. “We also want to remind the public to drive sober and safely as the holiday weekend approaches – remember, don’t text and drive and watch for road workers.”

For more information on IDOT’s Traffic Safety programs, including the Occupant Protection or Click It or Ticket campaigns, please visit [www.trafficsafety.illinois.gov](http://www.trafficsafety.illinois.gov).

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