Second Seat Belt Survey Conducted on GSU Campus

The Office of Alcohol & Other Drugs Programs conducted a seat belt survey on April 25, 2013. This observational study was done as part of a Young Adult grant from the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety. The findings are being shared with the campus community to promote the use of seat belts in and around campus. This is the second seat belt survey conducted this academic year with the first completed in November 2012.

The research team – including 2 students and one professional staff - observed 400 cars at three locations adjacent to campus; Southern Drive at main campus entrance, Southern Drive at Sweetheart’s circle and Akins Blvd near the Recreation Activity Center (RAC). The observations took place in the afternoon, in clear conditions and over a time period of approximately two hours.

Results of this observational study indicated that 81% of drivers (N=400) were wearing their seat belt when observed\(^1\). This is slightly lower than the national average of 84% for drivers although it is similar to results from rural and southern regions (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2011).

The research team also recorded gender, ethnicity and vehicle type as part of the study. Of these, only vehicle type was found to have a significant difference on seat belt use ($X^2 = 11.787, p < .01$). Those driving in trucks were 15% less likely to be wearing their seatbelt than those driving in cars.

These findings indicate that, while most people are wearing their seat belt, there is still room for improvement in overall seatbelt usage rates, particularly among those driving or riding in trucks. Wearing a seat belt is absolutely the single “most effective way to save lives and reduce injuries” (CDC, 2009). Since young adults have the highest crash-related injury rates of all adults, seat belt usage on and around a college campus is critical.

\(^1\) Confidence level=95%, Confidence interval=5%