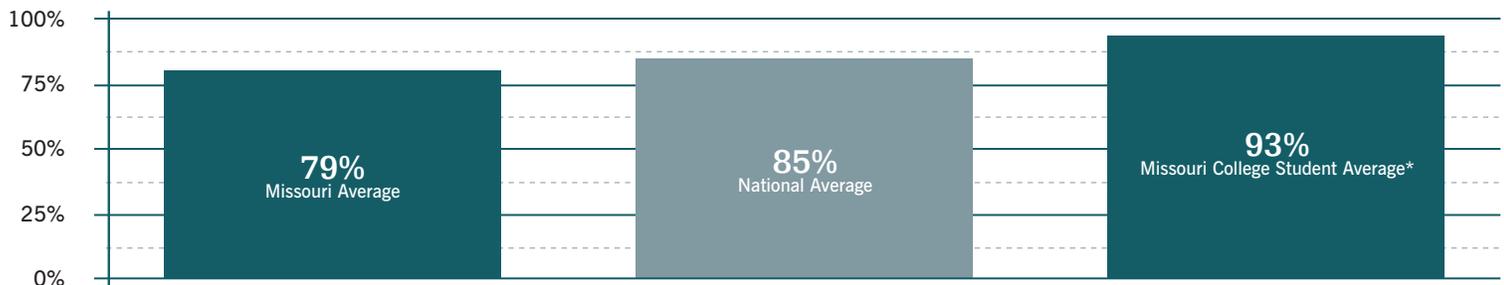


SAFETY BELT USAGE HIGH AMONG MISSOURI COLLEGE STUDENTS

Partners in Prevention is a statewide coalition dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses in Missouri. The coalition is comprised of 21 public and private colleges and universities across the state. Partners in Prevention focuses on reducing high-risk behaviors, and tracks such progress through the implementation of the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS). The MCHBS is implemented annually in the spring, and allows for examination of traffic safety behaviors of students, including safety belt usage.

Safety Belt Usage Rates for 2011



*Includes students who reported wearing a seatbelt "always" or "most of the time".

DISCUSSION

Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death for college aged individuals, and wearing a safety belt is one of the best ways to decrease the likelihood of dying in a crash. According to the Missouri Department of Transportation, in 2011, only 32.6% of drivers killed in traffic crashes on Missouri roadways were wearing safety belts. Conversely, of drivers involved in a crash where they were not killed or injured, 97.5% were wearing their safety belt at the time.

Each year a significant amount of data about safety belt usage is gathered by a number of different sources. According to an observational survey conducted by the Missouri Department of Transportation in 2011, 79% of Missouri drivers and passengers used their safety belts, compared to a national average of 85%. When looking at the MCHBS for 2011, 81% of Missouri college students reported "Always" wearing their safety belts, and an additional 12% reported wearing one "Most of the Time." In 2013, the MCHBS showed a slight decrease (77% for "Always", 11% "Most of the Time"), but added in an "I do not drive" category which accounts for 5%.

While these two surveys were conducted in a very different fashion, and thus can't be used for comparison purposes, it is still worth noting the high usage of safety belts among

Missouri college students across the state, and that the number of students wearing their safety belts at least most of the time is higher than the national average.

SUMMARY

Safety belt usage is an important way to ensure the safety of Missouri college students while they're driving. The majority of college students in the state are wearing their safety belt most of the time, but because traffic crashes are still the highest cause of death among college aged students and because safety belt usage is one of the best ways to prevent death in the case of a crash, it is important to continue to make sure students are educated on the subject.

There are a variety of resources available to colleges to continue to educate students on this important topic. Campus prevention professionals and law enforcement can have a large impact in continuing to ensure the safety of their students as it pertains to safety belt usage. For more information and resources, visit <http://drivesafesmart.missouri.edu> or <http://savemolives.com>.

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