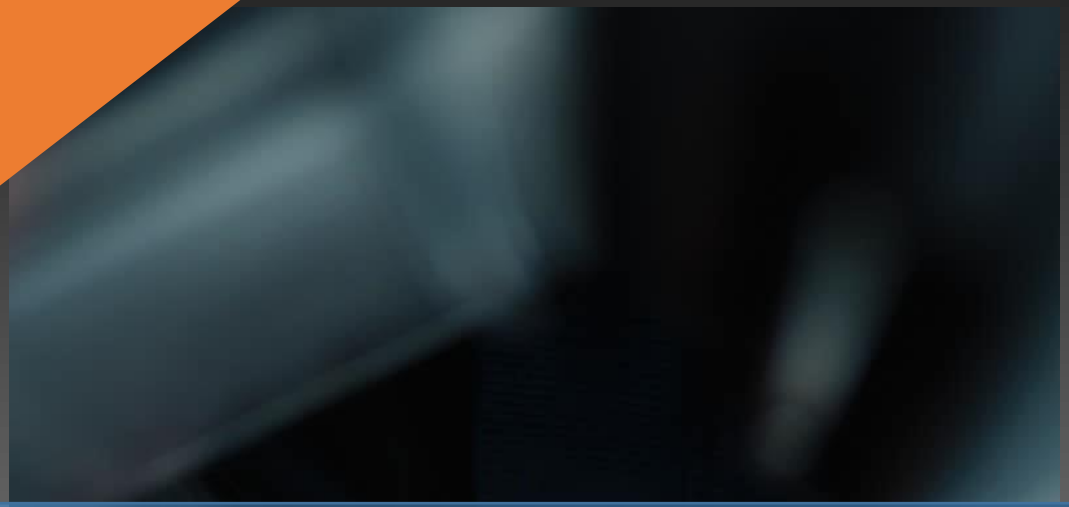
SEAT BELT SURVEY



2002

Table of Contents

List of Tables

INTRODUCTION

Anguilla had some 300 traffic accidents and two traffic causalities in 2001, according to Police Department statistics. In this same year there were 5,829 licensed vehicles on the road and 3,737 driver's licenses issued. A significant number of licensed drivers do not use seatbelts and use cell phones while driving. These two factors, lack of seatbelt use and cell phone use while driving, place both drivers and passengers at risk for traffic accidents, injury and even death.

During December 2002 the Primary Health Care Department (PHCD) in conjunction with the Statistics Department conducted a survey on seatbelt and cell phone use while driving. The study consisted of two components. The first was a short questionnaire conducted with motorist at the 6 gas stations around Anguilla that 1,134 drivers completed. To complement the questionnaire, an observation component was included, as the use of the gas stations alone may not have captured a real or representative picture of actual seatbelt use. The observation component was added to validate actual seat-belt use against what is reported by drivers at the gas stations during the interviews. During a 2-week period, 1,270 cars were observed.

It is important and timely that seatbelt use and controlled use of cell phones gain public acceptance. This survey, which was funded by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), provided information about people's beliefs and concerns in regard to seatbelt and cell phone use while driving. The information gained from the study will be used in developing public awareness campaigns about seatbelt use and controlled cell phone use while driving.

More specifically, the study was conducted to determine:

1) The prevalence of seatbelt use by motor vehicle drivers and passengers
2) Factors affecting seatbelt use
3) The prevalence of cellular phone use by drivers
4) Perceptions of risk or experience of accidents using cellular phones while driving.
5) How best to develop a public education campaign about seatbelt and cellular phone use.

METHODS

Questionnaire administrators were drawn from PHCD staff, a list of those seeking employment provided by the labour department, and former census enumerators. All questionnaire administrators attended a training session where the purpose of the study was explained and the survey instrument and data collection methods were reviewed.

From 30 November-4 December 2002, questionnaire administrators worked 3-hour shifts at the 6 gas stations on the island. As motorists filled their tanks the administrators completed the questionnaire with the driver. Completed questionnaires were then scanned by the Statistics Department into a database for analysis.

Between 30 November and 14 December 2002, four police officers from the Royal Anguilla Police Force assisted with the collection of observation data. The four officers attended a training session that included an explanation of the purpose of the study, instruction on the use of the handheld computers, and a review of the data collection methods and forms. The officers were stationed at the traffic light in the centre of town and at the roundabouts during random hours, where they observed motorists on the road. Observation data was collected using a data collection form. From these forms, the police officers entered the data into handheld computers, which were then taken to the Statistics Department and downloaded into a database for analysis.

FINDINGS

Seatbelt Use

The study revealed that most drivers in Anguilla do not wear seatbelts consistently. Only 17% of respondents reported always wearing their seatbelts while driving. Twenty-nine reported that they never wore a seatbelt while driving. More women (21%) than men (13%) reported always wearing a seatbelt. Those with higher levels of education were more likely to wear seatbelts. Drivers with tertiary education were most likely to always wear their seatbelts and least likely to never wear them, whereas drivers with only a primary school education were the least likely of those surveyed to always wear seatbelts and the most likely to never wear them.

Table 1 - Frequency of Seat Belt Use by Gender

Frequency of Seat Belt Use by Gender	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Always	116	77	193	16%	21%	17%
Nearly Always	65	36	101	9%	10%	9%
Sometimes	223	107	330	30%	29%	29%
Seldom	110	59	169	15%	16%	15%
Never	230	96	326	31%	26%	29%
Total	**744**	**375**	**1,119**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Missing			**15**			

Table 2 - Frequency of Seat Belt Use by Level of Education

Frequency of Seat Belt Use by Level of Education	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total
Always	24	92	78	194	12%	15%	24%	17%
Nearly Always	15	44	41	100	7%	7%	13%	9%
Sometimes	70	192	73	335	34%	32%	23%	30%
Seldom	32	86	51	169	16%	14%	16%	15%
Never	62	181	81	324	31%	30%	25%	29%
Total	**203**	**595**	**324**	**1,122**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Missing				**12**				

Fifteen percent of drivers always asked their front seat passengers to wear a seatbelt while 42% never did so. In regard to backseat passengers, only 6% always asked backseat drivers to wear seatbelts while the majority (66%) did not. As expected, when drivers always wore their seatbelts they were more likely to ask the front seat passenger to use a seatbelt as well. Fifty-four percent of drivers who always wear a seatbelt always asked front seat passengers to wear them compared to 4% of drivers who never wore seatbelts. There was no association between drivers' use of seatbelt and requesting that back seat passengers wear seatbelts.

Table 3 - Frequency of Driver Seatbelt Use by Frequency with which Front Seat Passengers are Asked to Wear Seatbelts

Frequency of Driver Seatbelt Use	Always	Nearly Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Always	54%	17%	15%	4%	11%
Nearly Always	16%	35%	28%	12%	9%
Sometimes	9%	3%	47%	14%	30%
Seldom	3%	5%	11%	43%	39%
Never	4%	.9%	4%	5%	86%

Forty-six percent of the drivers interviewed reported having been in a traffic accident. At the time of the accident, only 30% were wearing a seatbelt. While 40% reported being involved in an accident encouraged them to wear their seatbelts, a disturbing 57% reported that it did not change their behaviour at all. A small minority (3%) believed that seatbelts did not offer protection against vehicular accidents. In fact, when queried as to whether or not a seat belt would assist or trap you, 10% believed that they would be trapped and 40% were not certain.

Drivers were also queried about their feelings with regard to seatbelt legislation. Despite lack of consistent use, 91% of drivers were in favour of legislation that would make seatbelt use for front seat passengers compulsory. Seventy-six percent believed that such legislation should exist for back seat passengers, and 97% supported legislation for mandatory use of care seats for babies and toddlers.

The observation component of the study revealed that only 16% of drivers were wearing seatbelts at the time they were being observed. The difference in use between male and female drivers was consistent with the interview data. A mere 13% of front seat

passengers were found to be wearing a seatbelt. In the 1,270 vehicles observed, there were 99 child passengers, 51 of whom were riding in the front seat. It is troubling to note that of the total of child passengers only 10% were found to be wearing a seatbelt. Four percent were found to be using a car seat.

Cell Phone Use

Fifty-five percent of divers interviewed reported owning a cell phone. Of that number, 69% use their cell phones while they are driving. The majority (87%) reported that they have never lost concentration while using their cell phone and driving. Fifty-eight percent of all drivers reported that they would support legislation to ban all cell phone use while driving. There was even more support for legislation that would ban all but hands free cell phone use, with 63% supporting such legislation. The support for a ban on cell phone use increases with age. While only 36% of those in their teens and 48% of those in their twenties would support such legislation, 73% of those in the fifties would support banning cell phone use while driving.

Table 4 - Percentage of Drivers Supporting Legislation for Front Seat Belt Use

	15-19	**20-29**	**30-39**	**40-49**	**50-59**	**60-69**	**70 & over**	**Total**
Support	88%	88%	94%	93%	91%	92%	88%	91%
Against	3%	7%	4%	5%	6%	0%	6%	5%
Don't Care	9%	5%	2%	3%	3%	8%	6%	4%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that seatbelt use is extremely inconsistent and that cell phone use while driving is quite prevalent. The overwhelming support for legislation requiring seatbelts and restriction on cell phone use while driving, suggests that the public recognizes the importance of wearing seatbelts, and the danger of using cell phones while driving. The question then becomes, would people wear seatbelts and restrict cell phone use while driving if so legislated?

While the majority of drivers interviewed recognize the importance of seatbelts, there are still a significant number who are not sure if seatbelts are protective, and in fact, believe that they can be hazardous. Public Health campaigns that address these beliefs are necessary to effect behaviour change. In addition, awareness campaigns must educate parents about the dangers of multiple children in the front seat, not using car seats for small children, and not fastening their children's seatbelts.

The results from this study also send a strong message that perhaps it is time to make seatbelt use compulsory and impose some restriction on cell phone use while driving. Such legislation would offer protection to those who abided by the law and generate revenue from those who chose to endanger their lives and the lives of others.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 5 - Gender of Driver

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	749	66.6
Female	375	33.4
Sub-Total	1,124	100.0
NS	10	
Total	**1,134**	

Table 6 - Drivers by Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Valid Percent
15-19	33	2.9
20-29	299	26.4
30 -39	356	31.5
40 - 49	260	23.0
50 - 59	127	11.2
60 -69	40	3.5
70^{+}	16	1.4
Sub-Total	1,131	100.0
NS	3	
Total	**1,134**	

Table 7 - Completed Level of Education of Drivers

Level of Education Completed	Frequency	Valid Percent
Primary	203	18.0
Secondary	599	53.1
Tertiary	325	28.8
Sub-Total	1,127	100.0
NS	7	
Total	**1,134**	

Table 8 - Occupation Group of Driver

Occupational Group	Frequency	Valid Percent
Professional/managerial	290	25.7%
Skilled Labourer	200	17.7%
Salesperson	43	3.8%
Clerical	80	7.1%
Hotel/Restaurant worker	133	11.8%
Fisherman	50	4.4%
Unskilled labourer/domestic helper	21	1.9%
Do not work	70	6.2%
Other occupation	241	21.4%
Sub-Total	1,128	100.0%
NS	6	
Total	**1,134**	

Table 9 - Citizenship of Drivers

Citizenship	Frequency	Valid Percent
Anguillian	787	70
Immigrant Resident	282	25
Visitor	54	5
Sub-Total	1,123	100
NS	11	
Total	**1,134**	

Table 10 - Age of Vehicle Usually Driven

Age of vehicle	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than 2 years old	105	9.3
2 to 4 years	276	24.5
5 -9 years	521	46.2
10 years and older	225	20.0
Sub-Total	1,127	100.0
NS	7	
Total	**1,134**	

Table 11 - Type of Vehicle Normally Driven

Type of Vehicle	Frequency	Valid Percent
Car	691	61.3
Pick-up	146	13.0
Jeep	193	17.1
Bus/Van	52	4.6
Truck	45	4.0
Total	**1,127**	**100.0**