



South Carolina Department of Public Safety

10311 WILSON BOULEVARD – P. O. BOX 1993
BLYTHEWOOD, SC 29016
www.scdps.gov

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

LEROY SMITH
DIRECTOR

April 22, 2016

Mr. Charles Appleby, Chief Counsel
House Legislative Oversight Committee
PO Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Chief Counsel Appleby:

I am writing to provide response to two questions that were asked of the SC Department of Public Safety at the HLOC Hearing on Thursday, April 21st by Representative Raye Felder and Representative “Eddie” Tallon respectively.

Representative Felder asked for information on the fees charged for Multi-Disciplinary Accident Investigation Team (MAIT) Reports. Below please find the chart used for this purpose.

AVAILABLE Multi-Disciplinary Accident Investigation Team (MAIT) ITEMS FOR REQUEST

	General requests	*MEDIA	** Traditional Victim
REPORT	\$100.00	\$25.00	\$0.00
AUDIO	\$100.00	\$25.00	\$100.00
CDR DOWNLOAD (EACH)	\$100.00	\$25.00	\$100.00
PHOTOS	\$100.00	\$25.00	\$100.00
VIDEO	\$100.00	\$25.00	\$100.00
MAPPING	\$100.00	\$25.00	\$100.00

MAIT items are offered to the media at a reduced rate in accordance with: Section 30-4-30: “Documents may be furnished when appropriate without charge or at a reduced charge where the agency determines that waiver or reduction of the fee is in the public interest because furnishing the information can be considered as primarily benefiting the general public.”

** Traditional victim: Article 1, Section 24(C)(2) of the South Carolina Constitution

(2) ‘Victim’ means a person who suffers direct or threatened physical, psychological, or financial harm as the result of the commission or attempted commission of a crime against him. The term ‘victim’ also includes the person’s spouse, parent, child, or lawful representative of a crime victim who is deceased, who is a minor or who is incompetent or who was a homicide victim or who is physically or psychologically incapacitated.



SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY PATROL



STATE TRANSPORT POLICE



BUREAU OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES



IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT UNIT



Internationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

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Next, Representative Eddie Tallon inquired as to the “methodology” used to ascertain the safety belt usage rate. Below please find a detailed explanation for his review and information.

III. Methodology

Study Design

South Carolina is comprised of 46 counties; 28 of which account for about 86% of the passenger vehicle crash-related fatalities according to Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data averages for the period 2007 to 2011. One of the 28 counties (Jasper) has an insufficient number of census tracts (census tracts form one level of our subsampling) for our study plan, and is excluded from the sampling frame. Two other counties, Marion County and Chester County are substituted instead for a final sampling frame of 29 counties.

We used the 2012 Statewide Highways database and 2012 Statewide Other Roads database available from South Carolina Department of Transportation for our sample. We excluded the following road segments based primarily on feature type: local road segments not part of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), unpaved road segments, private road segments, road segments of undocumented type, and road segments that were the only element of their type (S-Ramp). The final database included approximately 107,000 road segments.

County Selection

The state is divided into 3 geographic regions, the Upstate, the Midlands and the Lowcountry, each with approximately equal values for vehicle miles traveled. Within the geographic areas, each county is designated as either urban or rural; urban counties being those in which more than 50% of the residents live in urban areas, according to US Census Bureau data. The result is 6 strata: Upstate urban, Upstate rural, Midlands urban, Midlands rural, Lowcountry urban and Lowcountry rural. In each stratum, Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) are used to determine proportional allocation (based on stratum size) of the 16 counties to obtain the number of counties selected from each stratum. This allocation is adjusted to ensure at least two counties are selected from each stratum.

Within strata, counties are randomly selected with probability of selection proportional to size (pps). In this case, the value used to assign initial weights to each county is its VMT, though these values need to be adjusted to account for sampling of counties without replacement within stratum (see equations in the Appendix). Table 1 lists strata, stratum sample sizes, the counties, county VMT, and total VMT in each stratum, and county proportion to stratum size. The final sample of 16 counties is shown in Table 2, along with the inclusion probabilities, which were only computed for the sampled counties.

Data Collection

All passenger vehicles, including commercial vehicles weighing less than 10,000 pounds, are eligible for observation. In addition to recording observations, the data collection form specifies site information, including: date, site number, observer, number of lanes available and observed, rate of observation, direction of observation, start time for observation. Any changes in assigned information (including alternate site) are noted on the form.

The observation form is used to record seatbelt use by drivers and front seat passengers, as well as vehicle type, ethnicity, and gender. The shoulder belt *must* be in front of the subject’s shoulder in order for the subject to be counted as belted; if it is visible, but clearly either behind the shoulder or unbelted, the subject will be counted as unbelted. If the belt cannot be viewed, or the position of the belt cannot be determined, seat belt use will be marked as unknown.

At the predetermined start time, observers are told to count every vehicle possible. If traffic is too heavy to successfully observe 90% of all passengers, the observer, in consultation with the driver, adjusts their sampling rate and records the rate on the sampling form. Adjustments to inclusion probabilities for this method are discussed in

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the Appendix. The observer and driver will also discuss positioning the observer so that the observer has the best possible view of the driver from the perspective of environmental conditions at the site (e.g., direction of sun, relative elevation of viewing site to roadway—higher is better, etc.).

Observations will be made of all drivers and right front seat occupants. This includes children riding in booster seats. The only right front seat occupants excluded from this study are child passengers who are traveling in child seats with harness straps.

Helmet usage rate for motorcycle riders is also recorded and compiled.

CONCLUSIONS

The overall safety belt use has been at or above 90% for the past four years. Caution should be exercised when comparing usage rates over time though, since the observation methodology changed in 2013, primarily in ways that could lead to a higher estimated usage rate. In general, the patterns of use that have been observed in past years continued to be in evidence in June 2015. Females still had a higher use rate than males, white occupants had a higher use rate than non-whites, and car operators had a higher use rate than truck operators; the female/male gap and the car/truck gap were wider than the gaps in 2014, while white/non-white differences showed decreases this year. All major demographic groups have compliance rates at or above 85%.

I would appreciate this information being shared with the members. If I can answer any further questions, do not hesitate to let me know. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Signature
Redacted

Leroy Smith
Director

LS/bb