

# **HAMPTON ROADS SAFETY STUDY EFFECTS OF SEAT BELTS AND CELL PHONES**

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# BACKGROUND

- **October 2007- MPO requested additional safety research on:**
  - **Primary Enforcement Seat Belt Law**
  - **Seat Belt Use**
  - **Cell Phones**

# PRIMARY ENFORCEMENT SEAT BELT LAW

- **Primary Seat Belt Laws allow law enforcement officers to stop and ticket someone when they see a violation of the seat belt law.**
- **1984: New York enacted the nation's first primary enforcement seat belt law.**
- **Since 1984, 26 states and DC have followed suit. (Virginia is not included among those states).**



# SEAT BELT USE IN UNITED STATES- 2007 Survey

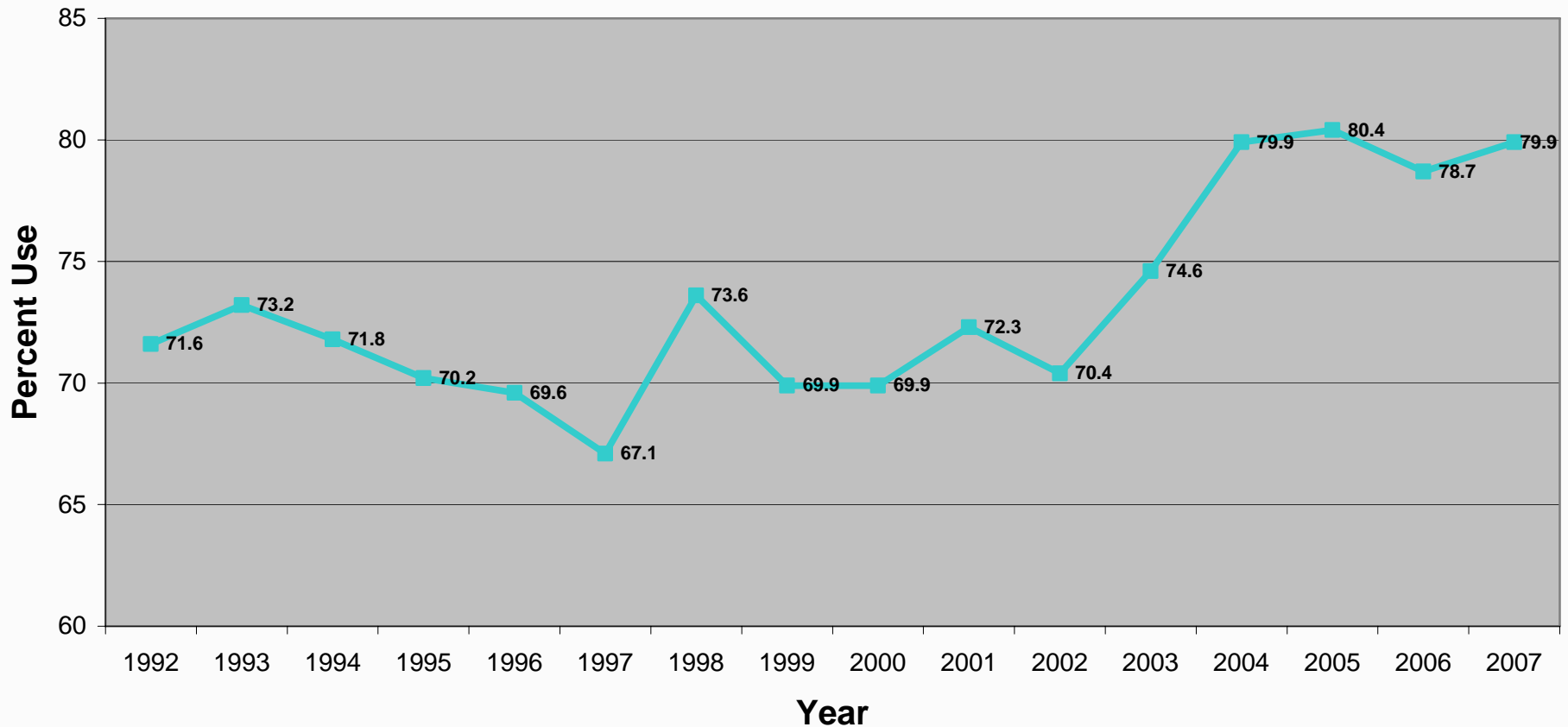
- **87%: Use in States with Primary Enforcement Law**
- **73%: Use in Other States**
- **82%: Overall Use**
- **Use by Geographic Region**
  - **Northeast – 78%**
  - **Midwest – 79%**
  - **South – 80%**
  - **West – 93%**

Source: Traffic Safety Facts, NHTSA, September 2007.

# SEAT BELT USE IN VIRGINIA - 2007 Survey

- **Seat Belt Use Rate : 79.9%**

# TRENDS IN SEAT BELT USE IN VIRGINIA, 1992-2007



Source: Virginia Transportation Research Council.

# EFFECTS OF SEAT BELT USAGE

- **Wearing a seat belt can reduce the risk of dying in a crash by 45% in a car and 60% in a truck or SUV.**

Source: [www.safeVAhighways.org](http://www.safeVAhighways.org)

# HAMPTON ROADS CRASHES - DRIVER ACTION

- **16.3% of all crashes in Hampton Roads were the result of driver distractions (2004-2006).**
- **Less than 1% of all crashes listed cell phones as the cause of the distraction.**

# CELL PHONE DRIVING LAWS

## United States:

- **Five states and DC have enacted cell phone laws prohibiting driving while talking on handheld cell phones.**
- **Seventeen states and DC have special cell phone driving laws for novice drivers.**

# CELL PHONE DRIVING LAWS

## Virginia:

**“Teen Cell Phone” – July 1, 2007**

- **Drivers holding an intermediate license may not use cell phones, including hands-free devices (except for emergencies).**

# SUMMARY

- **Seat belt use rate in Virginia is 79.9%.**
- **Wearing a seat belt can reduce the risk of dying in a crash by 45% in a car and 60% in a truck or SUV.**
- **16.3% of all crashes in Hampton Roads were the result of driver distractions (2004-2006)**
- **Less than 1% of all crashes listed cell phones as the cause of the distraction.**
- **Cell phones are contributing to 1% of traffic crashes in the U.S. and Hampton Roads.**

