



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

“To Protect and Serve”

Office of the Commissioner

VIPD RELEASE- 120422-335
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VI Seat Belt Compliance Takes a Downward Trend

Data generated through the VI Office of Highway Safety’s (VIOHS) annual Observational Seat Belt Use Survey indicate that Virgin Islands motorists and their front seat passengers are failing to consistently wear seat belts. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seat belts are proven to reduce risks for crash-related injuries and fatalities.

Each year, VIOHS hires an independent contractor to assess seat belt usage in the territory. When compared to the national seat belt usage rate which averages over 90%, the territory’s rate continues to reflect a deficient safety culture. After a statistically significant gain of 4.3 percentage points in 2021, 2022 survey data plummeted to a usage rate of 67.0% - a loss of 5.3 percentage points. “This is more than a law enforcement issue. Lack of seat belt compliance translates into significant and unnecessary injuries that our health care system may be unable to support,” expressed VI Police Department Commissioner, Ray A. Martinez. “Law enforcement will take immediate action to address this critical community concern.”

According to NHTSA, drivers who fail to wear their seat belts are more likely to transport unrestrained child passengers. A recent rear seat observational study concluded that over 79% of children in the territory under age 12 are transported unrestrained or improperly restrained. “The state of child passenger safety in our territory is grim with a staggering number of children transported unsafely,” shared VIOHS Director Daphne O’Neal. “It is critical that adults discontinue this risky behavior as it directly impacts the children in their care whose wellbeing should never rely on luck.”

Buckle up, VI! Every trip! Everyone! Every time! For more information on seat belts, child car safety seat use or other safe driving practices, contact the Virgin Islands Office of Highway Safety through Director O’Neal at daphne.oneal@vipd.vi.gov, or Occupant Protection Planner/Coordinator Denise Gomes at denise.gomes@vipd.vi.gov. You may also contact the office via telephone at (340) 772-3025 or (340) 473-7383.

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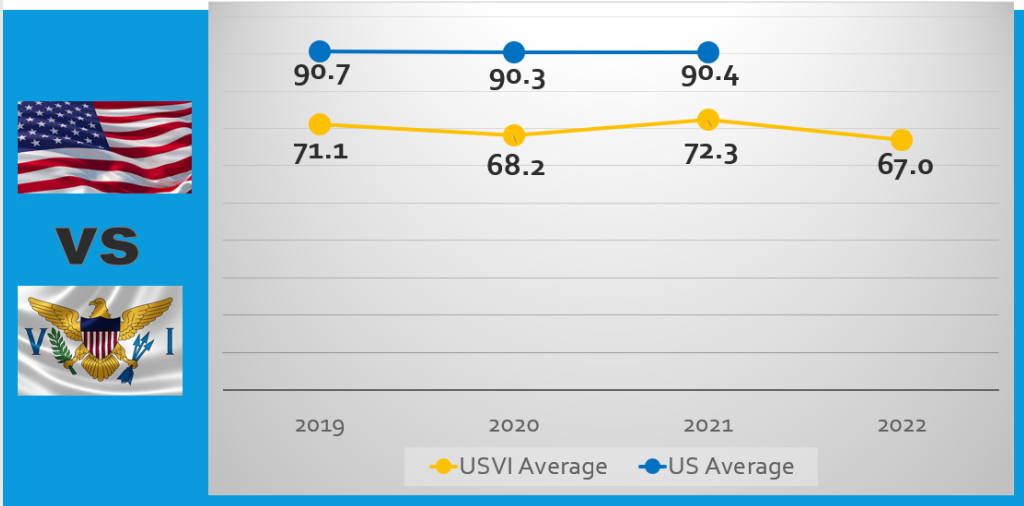
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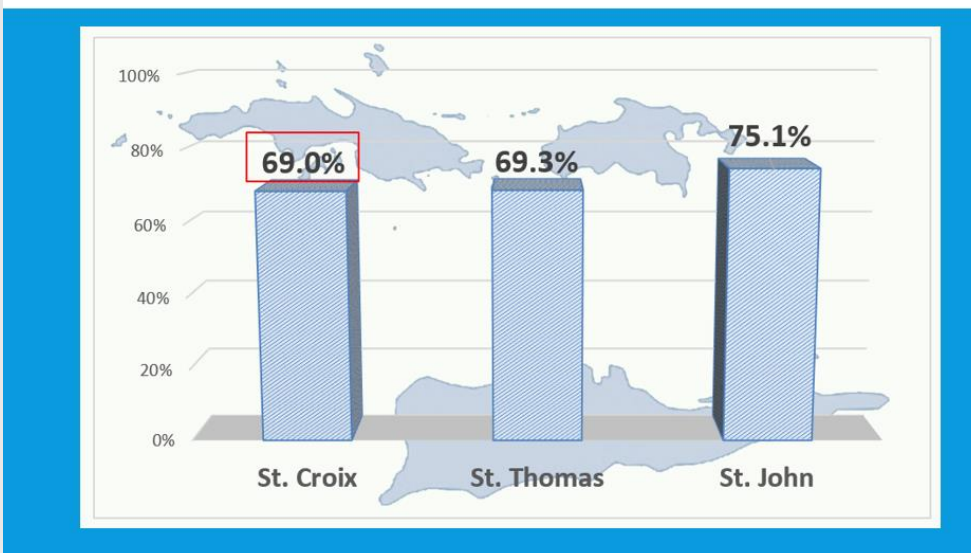
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SEAT BELT USAGE COMPARISON



2022 SEAT BELT USAGE BY ISLAND



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