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**AUTOMATIC SAFETY BELT SYSTEMS
OWNER USAGE AND ATTITUDES
IN GM CHEVETTES AND VW RABBITS**

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FINAL REPORT**

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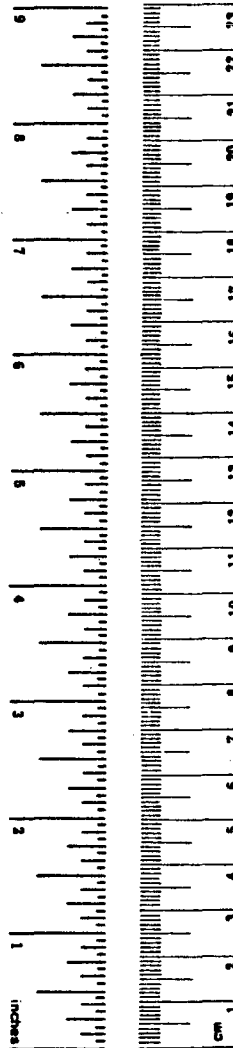
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16. Abstract This study was designed to: (1) evaluate the effectiveness of automatic restraint systems in increasing belt usage, and (2) determine owner attitudes toward the system. Information gathered from owners of vehicles with automatic systems will assist NHTSA in determining levels of acceptance, and problems or areas of resistance to these systems. Such information provides an "early warning" of critical problem areas that need to be resolved before automatic restraint systems become standard equipment in all cars. Data collected are derived from 2,341 telephone interviews with owners of GM Chevettes and VW Rabbits. Findings indicate that the automatic restraint system with an operative starter-interlock is highly effective as a use-inducing system. There are, however, certain comfort and convenience related problems with automatic systems that need to be resolved. Information programs directed at dealers and the public should help to ensure that the mandate for automatic belt systems is successful.			
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METRIC CONVERSION FACTORS

Approximate Conversions to Metric Measures

Symbol	When You Know	Multiply by	To Find	Symbol
LENGTH				
in	inches	2.5	centimeters	cm
ft	feet	30	centimeters	cm
yd	yards	0.9	meters	m
mi	miles	1.6	kilometers	km
AREA				
in ²	square inches	6.5	square centimeters	cm ²
ft ²	square feet	0.09	square meters	m ²
yd ²	square yards	0.8	square meters	m ²
mi ²	square miles	2.6	square kilometers	km ²
	acres	0.4	hectares	ha
MASS (weight)				
oz	ounces	28	grams	g
lb	pounds	0.45	kilograms	kg
	short tons (2000 lb)	0.9	tonnes	t
VOLUME				
tsp	teaspoons	5	milliliters	ml
Tbsp	tablespoons	15	milliliters	ml
fl oz	fluid ounces	30	milliliters	ml
c	cups	0.24	liters	l
pt	pints	0.47	liters	l
qt	quarts	0.96	liters	l
gal	gallons	3.8	liters	l
ft ³	cubic feet	0.03	cubic meters	m ³
yd ³	cubic yards	0.76	cubic meters	m ³
TEMPERATURE (exact)				
°F	Fahrenheit temperature	5/9 (after subtracting 32)	Celsius temperature	°C

*1 in = 2.54 (exactly). For other exact conversions and more detailed tables, see NBS Misc. Publ. 286, Units of Weights and Measures, Price \$2.25, SD Catalog No. C13.10-286.



Approximate Conversions from Metric Measures

Symbol	When You Know	Multiply by	To Find	Symbol
LENGTH				
mm	millimeters	0.04	inches	in
cm	centimeters	0.4	inches	in
m	meters	3.3	feet	ft
m	meters	1.1	yards	yd
km	kilometers	0.6	miles	mi
AREA				
cm ²	square centimeters	0.16	square inches	in ²
m ²	square meters	1.2	square yards	yd ²
km ²	square kilometers	0.4	square miles	mi ²
ha	hectares (10,000 m ²)	2.5	acres	
MASS (weight)				
g	grams	0.035	ounces	oz
kg	kilograms	2.2	pounds	lb
t	tonnes (1000 kg)	1.1	short tons	
VOLUME				
ml	milliliters	0.03	fluid ounces	fl oz
l	liters	2.1	pints	pt
l	liters	1.06	quarts	qt
l	liters	0.26	gallons	gal
m ³	cubic meters	35	cubic feet	ft ³
m ³	cubic meters	1.3	cubic yards	yd ³
TEMPERATURE (exact)				
°C	Celsius temperature	9/5 (then add 32)	Fahrenheit temperature	°F

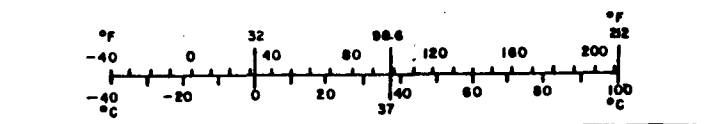


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Introduction and Purpose

The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation has mandated automatic restraint belt systems in all passenger cars on a phased-in schedule beginning September 1, 1981. To date, two automotive manufacturers--General Motors and Volkswagen--have offered automatic safety belts as an option or part of a luxury package in their sub-compact cars. GM introduced the system in their 1978 and 1979 Chevette while VW first equipped their Rabbits with this feature in 1975. Information gathered from owners of these vehicles can assist the Department in determining levels of acceptance, problems or any areas of resistance to the automatic restraint system. In addition, such information could provide an "early warning" of critical problem areas that should be prevented or circumvented before automatic restraint systems become standard equipment in all cars sold in the United States.

One notable contrast between the Chevette and Rabbit with automatic safety belts has been related to sales. While the sale of Automatic Rabbits has been acceptable to VW, those of the Chevette with comparable equipment have prompted GM to stop production and modify the belt system for their 1980 models. This may signify potential sales and related problems once the majority of new cars are equipped with automatic belt systems.

In this study, interviews were conducted with a random sample of owners of VW and GM automatic belt systems about (1) usage, comfort, convenience and reliability of these belt systems, and (2) difference between approaches being used in the sales of these particular belt systems.

For purposes of contract and comparability, a smaller sample of purchasers/drivers of these same model cars equipped with manual belts were interviewed. It was determined that the use of telephone interviews was the most efficient means to obtain this information.

Sample Design

The research findings for this study are derived from 2,431 telephone interviews with owners of GM Chevettes and of VW Rabbits. Four separate samples of owners were obtained:

	<u>Automatic Restraint Systems</u> <u>1978-1979</u> <u>Chevettes</u>	<u>1978</u> <u>Rabbits</u>	<u>Manual Restraint Systems</u> <u>1978</u> <u>Chevettes</u>	<u>1978</u> <u>Rabbits</u>
Total Interviews	1,002	1,010	216	203

The 1,002 interviews with owners of Chevettes with automatic restraint systems include 602 who owned a 1978 model and 400 who owned a 1979 model. Owners of 1979 models were interviewed because the list of 1978 model owners supplied by General Motors did not contain a sufficient number of names to complete the minimum of 1,000 interviews called for in the contract. An analysis of the attitudes and safety belt usage patterns between the 1978 and 1979 model year owners did not show any differences. There were virtually no interior or belt design differences between the two model year cars. Thus, the two samples have been combined for analytical purposes. All of the other three samples are comprised of 1978 model year owners.

All respondents interviewed for the study reported, in response to a screening question, that the decision to buy a particular model Chevette or Rabbit was theirs or that the decision to buy was shared equally with someone else in the family.

Names, addresses and zip codes of owners of Chevettes and Rabbits were obtained through NHTSA from General Motors Corporation and Volkswagen of America, Inc.

The contract stressed the importance of taking geographic location into account in the sample design in order to avoid any potential geographic bias. To accomplish this, the four samples of owners selected from the lists provided ORC were matched geographically as close as possible by the five-digit zip codes.

As the first step, the ORC WATS facility was provided with the complete list of owners of 1978 Chevettes with automatic restraint systems. Utilizing the full list, the WATS interviewers were able to contact 1,009 households which contained owners of Chevettes with automatic restraint systems and to complete 602 interviews. Next, the zip codes from the 602 completed interviews were matched with the zip codes from the list of owners of 1979 Chevettes. From the latter list, 501 contacts were made and 400 interviews were completed with 1979 Automatic Chevette owners. Finally, the zip codes from the 1,002 completed interviews with Automatic Chevette owners were matched with zip codes on the other three lists. Thus, the sample universe for all four car owners covers geographic areas where General Motors sold 1978 Chevettes with automatic restraint systems. Although a good geographic spread of interviews was obtained, the four samples of owners are not, nor were they intended to be, nationwide probability samples of Chevette and Rabbit owners.

A distribution of completed interviews by the four census regions is shown below:

	<u>Automatic Restraint Systems</u>		<u>Manual Restraint Systems</u>	
	<u>Chevettes</u>	<u>Rabbits</u>	<u>Chevettes</u>	<u>Rabbits</u>
Total interviews	<u>1,002</u>	<u>1,010</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>203</u>
Northeast	38%	38%	39%	39%
North Central	4	7	3	3
South	27	19	29	27
West	31	36	29	31

A table showing completion rates for each of the four samples follows:

	<u>Automatic Restraint Systems</u>		<u>Manual Restraint Systems</u>	
	<u>Chevettes</u>	<u>Rabbits</u>	<u>Chevettes</u>	<u>Rabbits</u>
Total households contacted with eligible respondents	<u>1,570</u>	<u>1,401</u>	<u>342</u>	<u>330</u>
Completed interviews	64%	72%	63%	62%
Refusals	24	18	18	18
Owners not available after four calls	10	10	17	20
Language barrier	2	*	2	0

Unless otherwise noted, the percentages in the reports are based on the total interviews completed among each of the four groups of car owners. These are:

Automatic Restraint Systems	<u>Base</u>
Chevettes	1,002
Rabbits	1,010
Manual Restraint Systems	
Chevettes	216
Rabbits	203

In the text and tables that follow, the following terms are used to describe cars with automatic restraint systems and cars with manual restraint systems: Automatic Chevette, Automatic Rabbit, Manual Chevette, and Manual Rabbit.

Sample Tolerance

The primary body of data in this report is based on the following number of interviews with owners of:

Chevettes with automatic restraint system	1,002
Rabbits with automatic restraint system	1,010
Chevettes with manual restraint system	216
Rabbits with manual restraint system	203

Throughout the report, tests of statistical significance (at the 95-in-100 confidence level) have been applied. Thus, any statements to the effect that one group of owners is larger (or smaller) than another group may be taken as having met the test of statistical significance. In the tables and charts, the symbol (s) is used to identify a given percentage as being significantly larger or smaller than other percentages.

Summary and Conclusions

1. Belt Usage

The findings of this research indicate that the automatic restraint system with an operative starter-interlock is highly effective as a use-inducing system on GM Chevettes and VW Rabbits. Models with automatic restraint systems have significantly higher belt usage rates than models with manual belt systems.

	<u>Percent Who Say They Wear * Safety Belt "Always" or "Almost Always"</u>
Automatic Rabbit owners	89%
Automatic Chevette owners	72%
Manual Rabbit owners	46%
Manual Chevette owners	34%

The higher usage rates for owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with automatic restraint systems does not appear to be related to a greater predisposition on their part than of owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with manual restraint systems. When asked about their use of safety belts in a second or previously owned car, owners of the automatic systems are no more inclined than owners of the manual systems to report that they "almost always" wear a safety belt.

The starter interlock no doubt plays a significant role in promoting use of the belt systems. The majority of Chevette owners (89%) and of Rabbit owners (88%) report that the interlock system in their car is still operative. The median length of ownership is 9 months for Chevette owners and 12 months for the Rabbit owners interviewed.

Thus, while belt usage among owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with automatic restraint systems are at reasonably high levels, there is no indication of what these usage levels might have been if the current models did not have interlock systems.

* These claimed usage rates as compared to actual observation of belt usage in cars so equipped (no data available on the automatic Chevette) are at least 10% high.

2. Owners' Knowledge of and Reactions to Automatic Restraint System at Time of Purchase

One of the primary objectives of the study was to determine the factors that might influence buyer's acceptance or nonacceptance of automatic restraint systems at the time of purchase and to provide information on the role played by GM and VW dealers and their salespersons with regard to promoting automatic restraint systems.

The survey findings indicate that in the purchase of Chevette- and Rabbit-type cars, the type of restraint system plays a very minor, if not an almost non-existent, role in the decision-making process. When owners of Chevetttes and Rabbits with automatic restraint systems were asked why they selected these models, only 2% of Chevette owners and 3% of Rabbit owners cite the automatic restraint system as a reason. However, 20% of Rabbit owners and 9% of Chevette owners requested the automatic belt system at the time of purchase.

The survey findings show that most new car buyers at the time of purchase knew automatic restraint systems were available. However, 55% of the Chevette owners and 37% of the Rabbit owners did not know they were to receive an automatic belt system until after they had bought their car.

3. Attitudes of Dealers/Salesmen Toward Automatic Restraint System

For the most part, GM and VW dealers and their sales personnel neither encourage nor discourage the purchase of Chevetttes and Rabbits with automatic restraint systems. On two questions relating to dealers' attitudes toward automatic restraint systems -- one measuring perceived favorability of the salesperson toward automatic seat belts; the other, the encouragement of their purchase -- salespersons appeared overwhelmingly neutral in the opinion of Chevette and Rabbit owners.

Sizable minorities of GM (43%) and VW (31%) dealers did not demonstrate or explain the automatic restraint system to their customers who purchased Chevetttes and Rabbits with automatic systems. Also, when questioned specifically about the knee cushion, only 12% of Chevette owners and 42% of Rabbit owners report that its purpose was explained to them by the dealer.

4. Owners' Attitudes Toward Automatic Restraint Systems

The survey data show rather marked differences in attitudes toward the automatic restraint system between Chevette owners and Rabbit owners. On many key issues regarding the system, Rabbit owners appear to be more favorably disposed toward the system than do Chevette owners.

When asked if their reaction was favorable or unfavorable when they first saw the automatic seat belt, 45% of Chevette owners say "favorable" compared with 67% of Rabbit owners who say this. Also, after having owned and driven the car for a period of time, the favorable vote for the automatic system stands at 84% among Rabbit owners compared with 51% among Chevette owners.

The higher level of favorability toward automatic restraint systems among Rabbit owners is again apparent when owners are asked which belt system -- automatic or manual -- they would choose if they were to purchase another new car. In response to this question, 80% of Rabbit owners say they would choose the automatic restraint system compared with 41% of Chevette owners who would choose this system.

In promoting the automatic restraint system to new car buyers, a number of sales points can be made to the prospective buyers based on survey findings. Chevette and Rabbit owners who say they would prefer an automatic restraint system, if purchasing another new car, cite the following reasons:

- It's safer because it forces one to be restrained.
- It's convenient because it's always fastened and eliminates buckling-up each time.
- It's automatic -- just get in and you're buckled-up.

It is also helpful to know what are likely to be the major objections to greater acceptance of automatic restraint systems among new car buyers. Asked what they like least about the automatic safety belt, Chevette and Rabbit owners most frequently cite the following:

- The interlock system.
- Makes entering/exiting the car more difficult.
- Poor fit of belt.

5. Comfort and Convenience Ratings

Turning to specific issues concerning the comfort and convenience aspects of automatic restraint systems, we again see marked differences in the attitudes of Rabbit owners vs. Chevette owners. The latter tend to be more critical of the automatic restraint system on points relating to comfort and convenience which, to some extent, might explain their lower usage and their less favorable attitudes toward the system as a whole.

Comfort-Related Factors

A major problem cited by about half of Chevette owners (47%) is that the automatic shoulder harness rests on or rubs across their face or neck. By comparison, one-fourth of Rabbit owners (24%) consider this to be a problem. Also, more Chevette owners than Rabbit owners (38% vs. 26%) say that the shoulder harness chafes or rubs across their chest or another part of the body.

Convenience-Related Factors

More than one-half of Chevette owners (54%) and one-third of Rabbit owners (33%) report that the automatic shoulder harness interferes with their opening the door and getting into or out of the car. Another problem reported by 26% of Chevette owners and 12% of Rabbit owners is that the shoulder harness interferes when reaching for the glove compartment or any of the controls on the dashboard.

Chevette owners are particularly critical of the position of the upper mounting for the shoulder harness: 32% say it comes too close to their face or head and 26% say it interferes with their vision. Responding to the same factors, 7% of Rabbit owners report face or head problems with the upper mounting and 4% report that it interferes with their vision.

6. Owner Characteristics and Policy Implications

When three demographic characteristics -- age, education and income -- of Chevette and Rabbit owners with automatic restraint systems were measured against safety belt usage, a composite picture was constructed for Chevette owners -- which we think can help to shape programs on driver education. Safety belt usage is significantly lower among these owners who are under 30 years old, have schooling that reaches high school or less, and report family earnings, before taxes, of less than \$30,000.

The picture of Rabbit owners is very different. First, the frequency of belt usage is highest among those owners whose education includes graduate school and whose income goes from a middle range to beyond \$30,000, per year. Second, under 30 Rabbit owners appear to be significantly more safety-minded than their Chevette counterparts when it comes to "almost always" belt usage (90% vs. 69%).

This last comparison is probably the most disturbing. Under 30 drivers also include teenage and high-risk insurance drivers. Despite the "automatic" aspect of their restraint system, many youthful Chevette owners apparently decide against the regular use of their seat belt.

To some extent, we see this pattern explained in the comfort and convenience ratings which all Chevette owners gave to their automatic seat belts. There are doubtlessly more design problems in the Chevette systems which should be corrected.

We do not feel, however, that these ratings tell the whole story. There also appears to be sales problems. Apart from our questions about dealer/salesman attitudes toward automatic restraint systems, we did not really attempt to establish a relationship between sales and safety. We were guided by market conditions which are matters of public record: (1) VW marketing strategies obliged buyers, faced with availability problems, to take automatic systems if they wanted deluxe model Rabbits, and (2) GM promptly discontinued production of Chevetttes with automatic seat belts when sales slackened.

Our conclusion now, however, is that more aggressive salesmanship may prove very helpful, in the future, in overcoming pockets of resistance (e.g., our composite picture of Chevette owners) to seat belt usage. We see a need to seek the cooperation of dealers/salesmen to ensure that the mandate for automatic restraint belt systems is successful. Drivers need to be "sold" on automatic seat belts like they are sold on other features of automobiles. Public information programs should also be developed to supplement this effort at dealer/customer communication.

I Safety Belt Usage

This section presents data on safety belt usage among owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with automatic belt systems and among owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with manual belt systems.

Information about belt usage provides an estimate of the impact of automatic belt systems on usage rates in current sub-compact models.

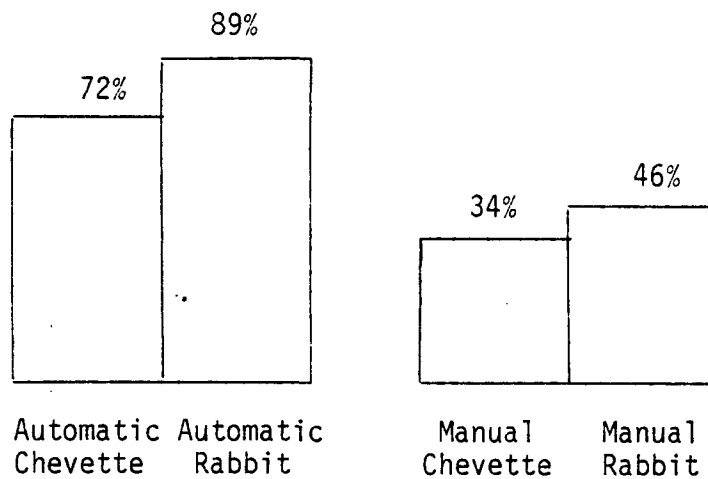
Also, determination of the reasons for belt nonuse helps to identify problems that might be corrected by the manufacturers directly and addressed in public information programs.

Belt Usage

Owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with automatic belt systems report markedly greater belt usage than owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with manual systems. As Figure 1 shows, the usage rate for automatic owners is about twice that for manual owners of both Chevettes and Rabbits. The reported usage rate for Rabbits with automatic systems is 17% higher than the usage rate for Chevettes with automatic systems (89% vs 72%). The usage rate for Rabbits with manual systems is 12% greater than that for Chevettes with manual systems (46% vs 34%).

Figure 1

% Who Wear Safety Belt "Always" or "Almost Always"



The reported belt usage of 89% for owners of Automatic Rabbits in Figure 1 above compares with an observed usage rate of 81% for Automatic Rabbit owners in the 19-city Safety Belt Usage Study being conducted for NHTSA by ORC. The reported usage rate of 46% for Rabbits with manual belt systems compares with an observed usage rate of 36% for manual Rabbit owners in the 19-city study. Differences may be due to a prestige factor, i.e., some people don't like to admit that they don't wear a safety belt. Another possibility is that the reported usage figure includes owners who do not always wear the belt, but say they wear the belt most of the time, i.e., "almost always." Current comparison usage data for Automatic Chevettes from the 19-city study are not available since none were observed. Observed usage rate for owners of Manual Chevettes was 11%. It appears reasonable to conclude that the reported usage figures for Automatic and Manual Rabbits are inflated by about 10% and by a higher percentage for Manual Chevettes.

Usage by Driver Characteristics

Figure 2 shows usage rates by personal characteristics of the owners and for 2- vs. 4-door models. For both the Automatic Chevette and the Automatic Rabbit, the percentage difference among subgroups is small and not significant. One exception is that the usage score for Automatic Chevette owners in the high school or less classification is significantly lower than the usage score for those who have gone beyond high school. In all of the subgroups below, safety belt usage is significantly higher among Rabbit owners than among Chevette owners.

Figure 2

	<u>Number of Cases</u>		<u>Percentage of Owners Who Say They Wear Safety Belt "Always" or "Almost Always"</u>	
	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Total	(1,002)	(1,010)	72%	89%
Male	415	511	71%	89%
Female	578	499	72%	88%
Under 30 years	288	236	69%	90%
30-49	453	516	75%	88%
50 or over	256	251	71%	87%
High school or less	392	230	65%	85%
Some college	452	463	76%	88%
Graduate school	130	281	81%	93%
Under 5'6"	422	341	71%	88%
5'6"-5'11"	422	475	74%	88%
6' or over	153	184	70%	90%
Under 140 lbs	414	375	73%	89%
140-179	388	424	73%	89%
180-199	118	114	64%	83%
200 or over	73	82	73%	92%
2-door	322	635	70%	87%
4-door	403	370	73%	91%

As previously reported, owners of Rabbits and Chevettes with automatic belt systems report about the same level of usage (31% vs. 32%), when questioned about their belt usage in a second or previously owned car. This pattern of response is also evident for each of the subgroups shown in Figure 2. That is, in none of the above subgroups is there a meaningful difference between Chevette and Rabbit owners in reporting belt usage in a second or previously owned car.

Belt Usage for Automatic System vs. Other Car

The importance of the automatic system in increasing belt usage is further demonstrated in Figure 3. Among owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with the automatic system, more than twice as many report that they "always" or "almost always" wear the belt in their new car than report this about a second or previously owned car. Note also that owners of Rabbits with the automatic systems are no more likely than owners of Chevettes with the automatic systems to say that they "always" or "almost always" wore a belt in a second or previously owned car.

The findings in Figure 4 are reinforced by the findings in Figure 3. A comparison of reported belt usage among owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with the manual systems with their usage in a second or previously owned car, although higher does not show the large gain in belt usage registered by the automatic systems in Figure 3.

Figure 3

% Who Wear Safety Belt "Always" or "Almost Always"

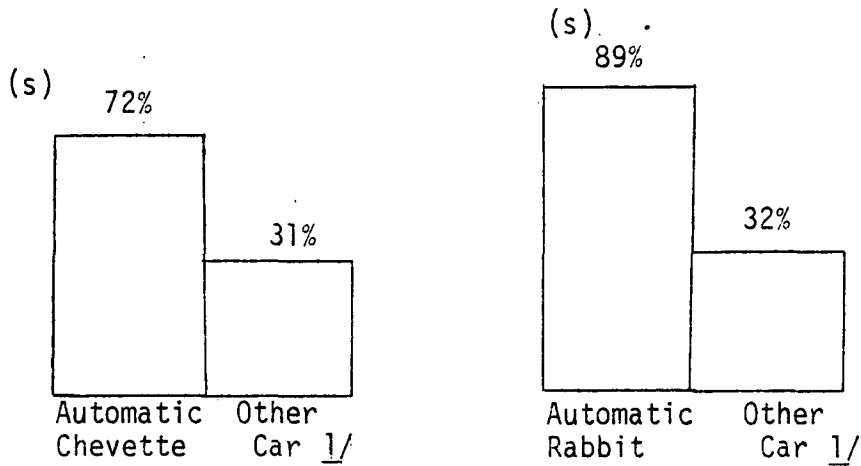
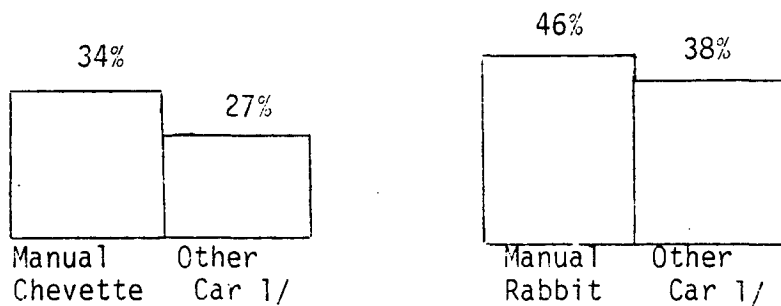


Figure 4

% Who Wear Safety Belt "Always" or "Almost Always"



1/ Second or previously owned car

Use of Lap Belt in Automatic Chevette

Use of the lap belt in the Chevette with the automatic restraint system appears to be limited. Unlike the Rabbit which has only an automatic shoulder harness, the Chevette also has a lap belt which may be used manually by front seat occupants. Asked how often they use the lap belt, 29% of Chevette owners say "always" or "almost always," 25% say about half the time, and 46% say "almost never" or "never."

The cross-tabulation below shows that, among Chevette owners who usually use the shoulder harness, only about a third (35%) report that they usually use the lap belt. Among owners who use the shoulder harness about half the time, 13% report that they "always" or "almost always" use the lap belt. Eleven percent report that they usually use the lap belt but "never" or "almost never" use the shoulder harness.

Figure 5

Use of Lap Belt in Automatic Chevette
(Read Percentage Across)

	<u>Always or Almost Always</u>	<u>Half & Half</u>	<u>Almost Never or Never</u>
Owners Who Use Shoulder Harness --			
Always or Almost Always	35%	24	41 (720)
Half and Half	13%	45	42 (128)
Almost Never or Never	11%	16	73 (148)

Reasons for Nonuse of Safety Belt

The main reasons Chevette and Rabbit owners give for not wearing the safety belt in their car with automatic restraint systems relate to comfort and convenience factors plus a number of reasons that are of a personal nature, i.e., "forget to wear it," "just going a short distance," "in a hurry," "too lazy," etc. In the area of comfort, a few owners say the belt fits poorly or is too tight, but most say that it is just too uncomfortable to wear. More detailed and specific information on comfort and convenience features, as they relate to automatic restraint systems, is reported in Chapter V. Owners who cite personal reasons for not using the safety belt (forget to wear, going a short distance, etc.) have either disconnected the interlock system or have found a way to circumvent the system. In the case of Chevette owners, some of the reasons for nonuse relate to the lap belt which must be manually operated. (Figure 6).

Figure 6

"When you don't use the safety belt in your (Chevette) (Rabbit), please tell me the main reason why you don't use it."

	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>	
Total owners	(1,002)	(1,010)	(s)
Always use safety belt	30%	66%	(s)
Uncomfortable	12	8	(s)
Inconvenient	10	4	(s)
Forget to wear	11	2	(s)
Going short distance	10	4	(s)
Lap belt unnecessary when wear shoulder harness	7	*	(s)
In a hurry	4	2	
Too confining	5	4	
Dislike being forced to use	5	3	
Too lazy	3	1	

(Principal Mentions)

*Less than ½%.

II
Factors Influencing Buyers' Acceptance
or Nonacceptance of Automatic Belt Systems
at Time of Purchase

Findings in this section focus on particular options, dealer pricing, and other factors influencing the buyers' decision to accept a car equipped with automatic or regular belts, to help us better understand why automatic belts may sell or not sell, and to provide an indication of differences between the two manufacturers in the marketing of the option.

Also included are findings pertaining to owners' knowledge about automatic belt systems before or at the point of sale. The data obtained will provide guidance to NHTSA's information programs on how effectively to inform the public about these systems.

Role of Safety Belt in Car Purchasing Decision

In the selection of a new Chevette or Rabbit, the type of belt system plays a very minor, if not almost non-existent, role in the decision-making process. This is evident in the survey data presented below and in owner responses to other questions regarding what took place at the time of purchase. For reasons not related to the restraint system, GM dealers were able to sell virtually all their Chevettes with automatic belt systems from cars they had in stock. By comparison, substantial numbers of owners of the other three types of cars report that the dealer didn't have the model they wanted and had to order it from the factory.

When asked why they selected the Chevette or Rabbit they bought rather than another Chevette or Rabbit, most owners cite the specific options they wanted such as, color, number of doors, type of transmission, air conditioning, etc. Other reasons given are availability and price. Only 2% of Chevette owners (3% of Rabbit owners) specifically mention the automatic belt as a reason for choosing the model they bought (Figure 8).

Figure 7

% Who Purchased Car "As Is -- Off Floor or Lot"
Rather Than "Ordering From Factory"

Automatic Chevette	<input type="text" value="94"/>	94%	(s)
Automatic Rabbit	<input type="text" value="67"/>	67%	
Manual Chevette	<input type="text" value="72"/>	72%	(s)
Manual Rabbit	<input type="text" value="61"/>	61%	

Figure 8

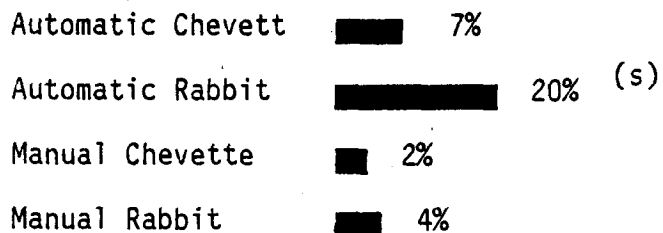
Principal Reasons for Choosing Model Bought
Rather Than Another Model of Same Make

		<u>Automatic</u>		<u>Manual</u>	
		<u>Chevette</u>	<u>Rabbit</u>	<u>Chevette</u>	<u>Rabbit</u>
Has desired options	(s)	65%	75%	62%	63%
Availability	(s)	14	11	13	14
Price/good deal	(s)	17	8	11	13
Has desired type of safety belt		2	3	0	0

In response to a direct question, 20% of Automatic Rabbit owners and 7% of Automatic Chevette owners say that they wanted and asked for the automatic seat belt at the time they were shopping for a new car. Among these who bought Rabbits and Chevetttes with manual belt systems, only a handful report that they wanted the automatic belt, but for one reason or another ended up buying a car with the manual belt system.

Figure 9

% of Owners Who Asked for Automatic Seat Belt at Time of Purchase

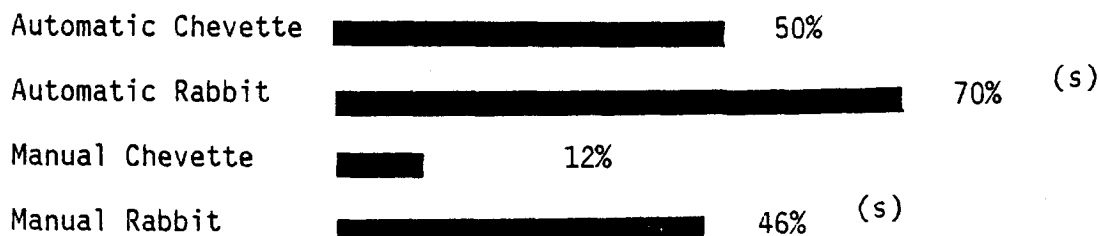


Knew Automatic System Available at Time of Purchase

At the time of purchase, many more Rabbit owners than Chevette owners say that they were aware of the automatic belt system. When asked if they knew the automatic belt system was available when they bought their car, 70% of Automatic Rabbit owners compared with 50% of Automatic Chevette owners claim that they knew about the system. Note also that almost as many Manual Rabbit owners as Automatic Chevette owners report that they knew the automatic system was available.

Figure 10

% of Owners Who Say They Knew Automatic Belt System Was Available at Time of Purchase



Knowledge of Automatic System vs. Usage

A special analysis indicates that there is little relationship between belt usage and knowledge of automatic systems prior to purchase. Chevette and Rabbit owners who say that they knew about the automatic belts before they bought their cars have belt usage scores of 75% and 90%, respectively. By comparison, Chevette and Rabbit owners who were not aware of these systems prior to purchase have belt usage scores of 68% and 84%, respectively.

Knowledge of Automatic Belt Systems

Although majorities of the owners of Chevettes (50%) and Rabbits (70%) with automatic systems report that they knew about the automatic belt system at the time of purchase, it is evident from a follow-up question that the remainder of the owners did not become aware of the system until after they purchased the car. In response to the question in Figure 11, 55% of Chevette automatic owners and 37% of Rabbit automatic owners give answers that indicate that they had no knowledge about the automatic belt up to the time they received their new car. That is, the customer purchased the car not knowing it would come equipped with the automatic belt system. Also, about a fourth of the owners report that they became aware of the system through the dealer/salesman. Among those who had prior knowledge of the automatic system, three times as many Rabbit automatic owners as Chevette automatic owners cite advertising as the source of their information (21% vs 7%). This latter finding could be expected because VW has been selling this system for several years.

Figure 11

"How did you find out about the automatic belt system?"

		Automatic			Manual	
		<u>Chevette</u>	<u>Rabbit</u>		<u>Chevette</u>	<u>Rabbit</u>
After Purchased Car	(s)	55%	37%	(s)	1%	7%
Dealer/Salesman		25%	24%	(s)	4%	12%
Advertising	(s)	7%	21%	(s)	1%	13%
Friends or Relatives	(s)	4%	7%		*	3%

(Principal Mentions)

*Less than ½%.

III

Attitudes of Dealers/Salesmen Toward
Automatic and Manual Belt Systems

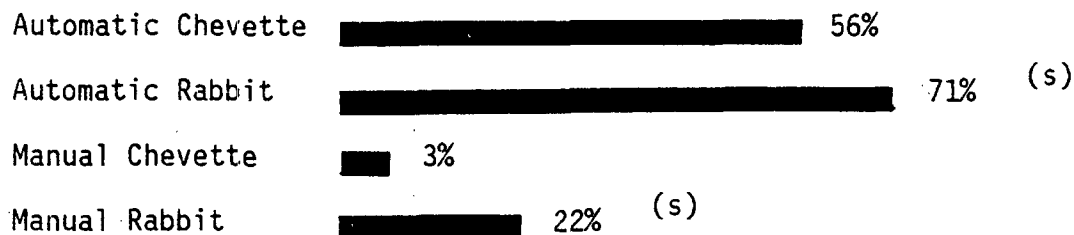
Findings in this section provide information about the role played by the car agencies' sales forces with regard to educating their customers and influencing them to purchase cars with automatic or manual belt systems. This allows for an evaluation of the dealers' performance in terms of promoting automatic restraint systems and an indication of how they might promote this option in the future.

Tried Automatic Belt Prior to Purchase

As Figure 12 indicates, the majority of owners of Chevettes (56%) and Rabbits (71%) with automatic belt systems report having tried the systems before purchasing their cars. Notably, owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with manual belt systems, who tried automatic belts before purchasing their cars, were a distinct minority -- 3% and 22% of respondents, respectively.

Figure 12

% of Owners Who Tried Automatic Belt
Before Purchasing Car



The number of owners who tried the automatic restraint system takes out added significance when compared with the number of owners reporting salespersons who explained or demonstrated the automatic features of shoulder belts. There is clear comparability between the percentages in both charts. In Figure 13, 57% of the owners of Chevettes with automatic systems and 69% of the owners of Rabbits with these systems report that the salesperson explained the automatic system to them; whereas 4% of Manual Chevette owners and 25% of Manual Rabbit owners, who knew the automatic system was available, cite this occurrence. Salespersons, who depend upon an effective combination of information and persuasion to do their jobs, were not to any sizable degree encouraging the eventual owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with manual belt systems to try automatic restraint systems before the point of purchase. As to an explanation of the knee cushion in association with the automatic restraint system (Figure 14), the evidence of salesmanship shows a sharper decline: 12% (Automatic Chevette), 42% (Automatic Rabbit), *% (Manual Chevette), and 13% (Manual Rabbit).

Figure 13

% of Owners Who Report That Salesperson Pointed Out Automatic Features of Shoulder Belt

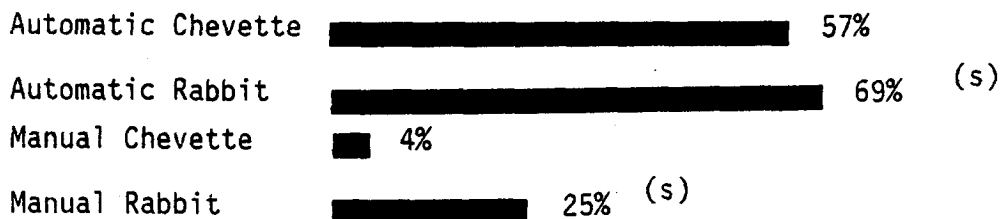
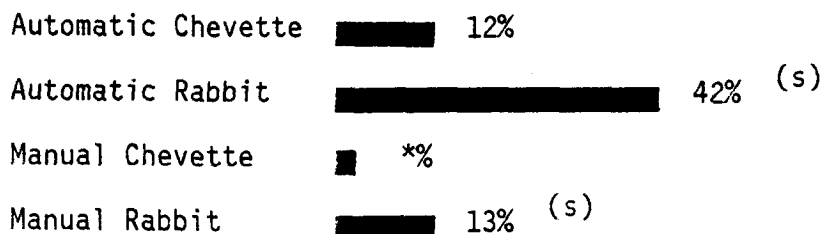


Figure 14

% of Owners Who Report That Salesperson Explained the Reason for the Knee Cushion



*Less than 1/2%.

Attitude of Salesperson Toward Automatic Belt

On two other questions relating to dealers' attitudes toward automatic restraint systems -- one measuring perceived favorability of salesperson, toward automatic seat belts; the other, the encouragement of their purchase -- salespersons appeared overwhelmingly neutral, in the opinion of Chevette and Rabbit owners. In Figure 15, the small margin of difference between neutrality and favorability (52% vs 46%) among Rabbit salespersons toward Rabbits equipped with automatic belt systems may reflect their own sense that these systems have not historically been counterproductive to Rabbit sales; however, as Figure 16 illustrates, this attitude appears to be largely neutral and does not translate into an active encouragement of purchase. In the latter instance, only 15% of the respondents agreed that their salespersons tried "to encourage" the purchase of Rabbits with automatic seat belts. On both tables, neutrality and unfavorability/ discouragement among GM salespersons, as perceived by the respondents, toward Chevetttes with automatic restraint systems are higher than the percentage cited for Rabbits with comparable systems.

Figure 15

Owners Describe Salesperson's
Opinion of Automatic Seat Belt

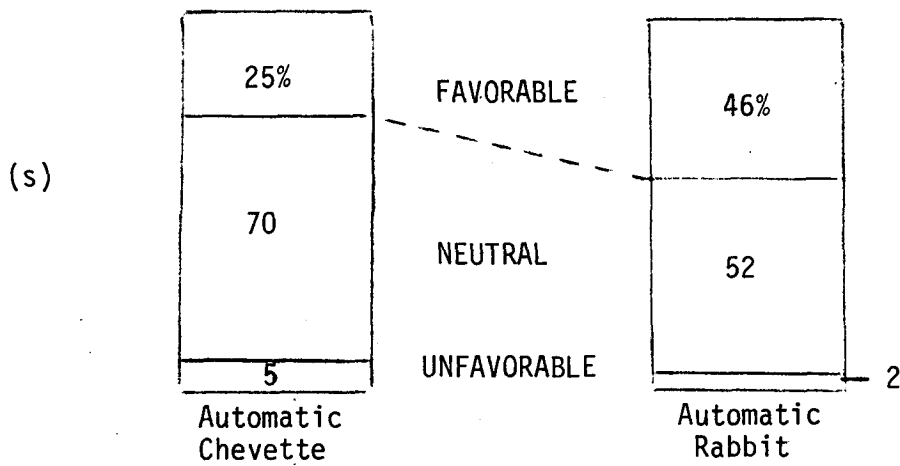
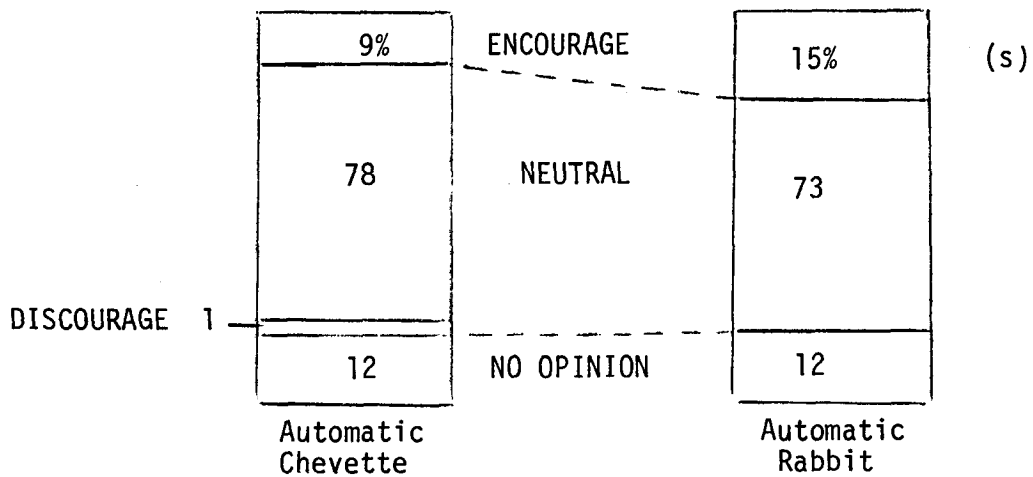


Figure 16

Did Salesperson Try to Encourage or Discourage
the Purchase of a Car With the Automatic Seat Belt?



IV

Attitudes of Chevette/Rabbit Owners Toward
Automatic and Regular Belt Systems

Data presented in this section include:

- A comparison of owners' attitudes toward automatic belt system initially and after exposure
- Factors cited by owners that they believe are most and least desirable about automatic and regular belt systems
- Findings pertaining to choice of automatic or regular belt systems in another new car to provide information concerning the effect of existing systems on the acceptance of future belt systems

The survey data reported provide guidance for NHTSA's public information programs.

Owners' Impressions of Automatic Seat Belt at Two Points in Time

Asked to compare impressions of the automatic seat belt at two points in time (when first saw belt vs. after having owned the car for awhile), owners of the Rabbit were more favorable to the automatic system when first exposed to it than owners of the Chevette (67% vs. 45%) and showed a significantly higher level of satisfaction after owning the car for a period of time. It is interesting to note that the acceptance of both automatic systems increased with length of exposure.

Figure 17

"Would you say your reaction was favorable or unfavorable when you first saw the automatic seat belt?"

		<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Favorable	(s)	45%	67%
Unfavorable	(s)	41	22
No opinion		14	11

"Would you describe your impression of the automatic seat belt as favorable or unfavorable now after having owned the car for awhile?"

		<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Favorable	(s)	51%	84%
Unfavorable	(s)	43	13
No opinion		6	3

Owners' Preferences for Type of Safety Belt If Purchasing Another New Car

The high level of favorability toward automatic restraint systems among Rabbit owners who now have this system appears to carry over to their preference for this type of belt system if they were to purchase another new car. As shown in Figure 18, four out of five owners of automatic Rabbits indicate a preference for this type of restraint system. This figure contrasts with the low rating given to automatic restraint systems by Automatic Chevette owners. Only 41% of this group would prefer the automatic system if purchasing another new car, while 49% say that they would prefer the manual belt system.

Figure 18

Owners' Preferences for Type of Belt System
If Purchasing Another New Car

		<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Prefer automatic	(s)	41%	80%
Prefer manual	(s)	49	12
Other or no opinion		10	8

In all subgroups shown in Figure 19, high proportions of owners of Rabbits with automatic restraint systems report that they would choose the automatic belt again if purchasing another new car. Among owners of Chevettes with the automatic system, preference for this system in another new car is close to the 40 percent level in most subgroups, but is well below average for owners 50 years of age or over and among those weighing 200 lbs. or over. Even though these owners apparently do not prefer to wear belts, the automatic systems were sufficient to motivate their use.

Figure 19

	<u>Number of Cases</u>		<u>Percent of Owners Who Would Choose Automatic Belt If They Were to Purchase Another New Car</u>	
	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Total	(1,002)	(1,010)	41%	80%
Male	415	511	39%	79%
Female	578	499	42%	81%
Under 30 years	288	236	45%	81%
30 - 49	453	516	45%	81%
50 or over	256	251	29%	77%
High school or less	392	230	34%	77%
Some college	452	463	46%	80%
Graduate school	130	281	48%	82%
Under 5'6"	422	341	42%	79%
5'6" - 5'11"	422	475	41%	82%
6' or over	153	184	40%	78%
Under 140 lbs.	414	375	44%	80%
140 - 179	388	424	39%	81%
180 - 199	118	114	40%	74%
200 or over	73	82	31%	84%
2-door	322	635	41%	77%
4-door	403	370	41%	84%

Reasons for Choosing Automatic Safety Belt If Purchasing Another New Car

Asked why they would choose the automatic seat belt rather than the manual seat belt, if purchasing another new car, owners of Automatic Chevettes favored safety-related factors over convenience factors (51% vs. 39%). Conversely, Rabbit owners cited convenience factors (56%) more often than safety-related factors (40%). For both Chevette and Rabbit owners, comfort did not figure prominently as a factor--cited by 5% and 11%, respectively.

Figure 20

Principal Reasons for Choosing Automatic Safety Belt
If Purchasing Another Car

		<u>Automatic Chevette (411)</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit (808)</u>
Total who choose automatic			
% Base		<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Safety-related factors	(s)	51%	40%
Forces one to wear		22%	16%
Safer (nonspecific)		19	15
Now use belt		7	9
Better protection		2	2
Convenience factors	(s)	39	56
More convenient		22	25
It's always fastened		12	24
Eliminates buckling		7	10
More comfortable		5	11

Reasons for Choosing Manual Safety Belt If Purchasing Another New Car

Unlike automatic restraint systems, manual systems allow the user to choose whether or not to wear safety belts. This element of choice, according to our data, appears to have the added impact of eliminating safety-related factors from the concerns of owners. As Figure 21 demonstrates, safety is not among the list of principal reasons cited by owners of both Automatic Rabbits and Chevettes who would choose manual restraints when purchasing another car. Rather, their reasons for this choice emphasize convenience, comfort, the absence of an interlock, and the freedom to wear or not to wear belts.

Figure 21

Principal Reasons for Choosing Manual Safety Belt
If Purchasing Another New Car

	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Total who choose manual	(491)	(121)
% Base	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Convenience factors	33%	25%
More convenient	24%	8%
Easier to enter/exit	10	8
Comfort factors	18	17
More comfortable	6	8
Belt fits better	4	8
Belt doesn't rub/cut neck	4	4
No interlock	16	17
Freedom to wear/not wear	16	17

Advantages of Automatic Safety Belt

Rabbit owners have more favorable opinions about the automatic safety belt than do Chevette owners. In response to the question, "What do you like most about automatic safety belts?", owners of the Automatic Rabbit mention convenience factors (50%), automatic features of the system (32%), safety aspects (17%), and comfort factors (14%). Only 8% say there is nothing they like about automatic safety belts.

By comparison, 30% of Automatic Chevette owners report that there is nothing they like about their belt system. Those who do feel the automatic system has merits cite as reasons the following: safety aspects (24%), automatic features of the system (20%), and convenience factors (19%).

Figure 22

"What do you like most about the automatic safety belt?"

		<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Convenience factors	(s)	19%	(50%)
Easy to use		9%	25%
No need to buckle up		8	22
More convenient		3	12
Safety aspects	(s)	(24)	17
Automatic feature	(s)	20	(32)
Comfort factors	(s)	6	(14)
Nothing	(s)	(30)	8

(Principal Comments)

Disadvantages of Automatic Safety Belt

Another indication that Chevette owners are less enthusiastic than Rabbit owners about their automatic belt system is evident in Figure 23. Asked what they like least about the automatic safety belt, Chevette owners cite the interlock system most frequently (26%), followed by difficulties entering/exiting the car (18%), poor belt fit (16%), retractor problems (9%), and poor door mounting (8%). Owners of Automatic Rabbits are much less negative in telling what they like least about their automatic restraint systems, only difficulties entering/exiting the car brought about the same percentage response (20%) as from Chevette owners.

To the extent that manufacturing differences exist between the automatic restraint systems in the Chevette and the Rabbit, design modifications in the former may decrease owner dissatisfaction in the future.

Figure 23

"What do you like least about the automatic safety belt?"

		Automatic Chevette	Automatic Rabbit
Interlock system	(s)	26%	12%
Have to connect/disconnect belt to door		20%	9%
Entering/exiting car		18	20
Difficult to get in		12	6
Difficult to get out		11	5
Difficult with packages		5	11
Poor belt fit	(s)	16	11
Rubs or cuts neck/throat		8	3
Uncomfortable		5	2
Rubs or cuts chest/shoulder		2	5
Retractor problems		9%	5%
Too much belt slack		3	1
Doesn't retract properly		3	*
Broken		*	2
Too much tension		2	2
Mounting on door	(s)	8	1
Blocks vision		3	*
Too close to head		3	*

(Principal Mentions)

* Less than ½%.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Manual Safety Belt

Among Rabbit and Chevette owners of cars equipped with manual safety belts, three categories emerged as most favorable toward this system: convenience, comfort, and safety.

Discomfort and inconvenient factors are cited most frequently when these same owners are asked what they like least about manual safety belts.

Figure 24

"What do you like most about the manual safety belt?"

	<u>Manual Chevette</u>	<u>Manual Rabbit</u>
Convenience factors	19%	26%
All one piece	8%	9%
Easy to use	7	15
Retracts easily	4	3
Comfort factors	(s) 14	23
Comfortable	8	14
Does not restrict	6	9
Safety aspects	10	14

(Principal Mentions)

Figure 25

"What do you like least about the manual safety belt?"

	<u>Manual Chevette</u>	<u>Manual Rabbit</u>
Uncomfortable	8%	10%
Rubs or cuts neck/throat	6	9
Difficult to use	6	6
Poor fit	4	4
Gets tangled	4	3
Inconvenient to use	4	2
Dislike buzzer	4	3

(Principal Mentions)

V

Comfort and Convenience Ratings

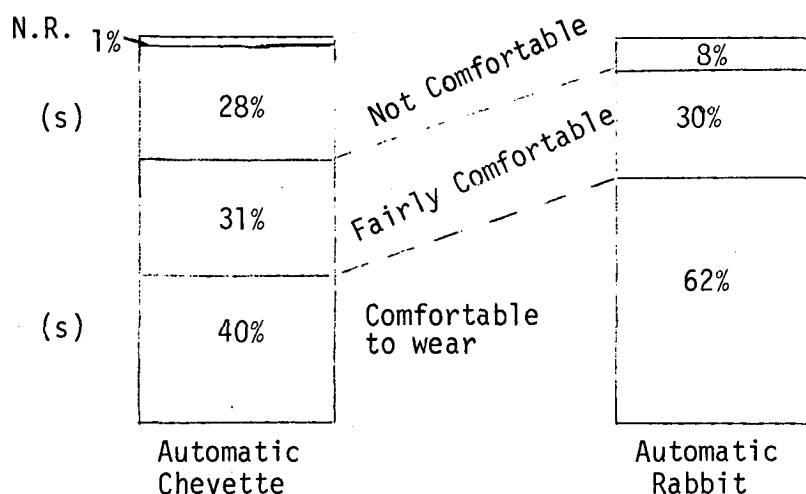
This sections reports findings from a number of questions designed to identify any specific comfort and convenience problems owners are having with automatic belt systems. The data will help clarify why differences occur in acceptance and usage patterns between Chevette and Rabbit owners. Also, the data will provide specific information to manufacturers to allow them to become aware of belt-related problems as expressed by recent car buyers.

Overall Comfort Ratings

In a summary rating of comfort, majorities of owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with the automatic belt systems rated their safety belts as either comfortable or fairly comfortable to wear. A substantial minority of Chevette owners (28%), however, characterize their automatic belts as not comfortable to wear. By comparison, only 8% of Rabbit owners describe their belt system as not comfortable (Figure 26).

Figure 26

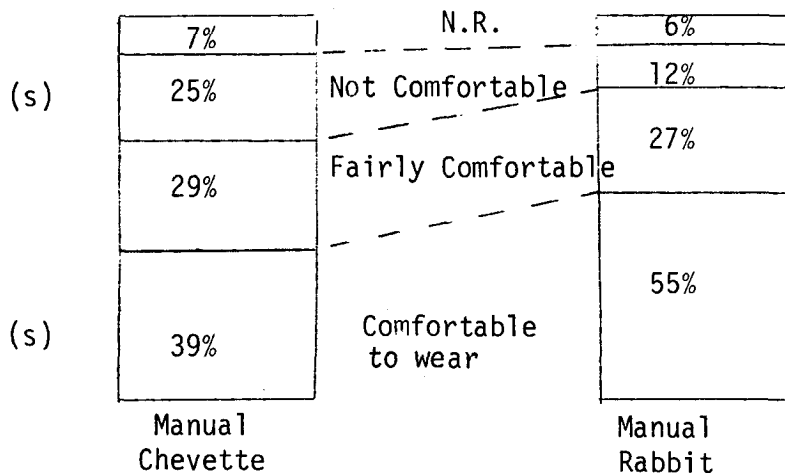
Overall Rating of Automatic Safety Belt on Comfort



As shown in Figure 27, the comfort ratings for the manual belt systems in Chevette and Rabbits are quite similar to those for the automatic belt systems. In the case of Chevettes, the percentages for the three classifications -- not comfortable, fairly comfortable, and comfortable -- are almost identified between the two systems. Owners of Rabbits with the automatic systems are slightly more favorable in rating their belt systems as comfortable than are owners of Rabbits with manual systems.

Figure 27

Overall Rating of Manual Safety Belt on Comfort



Usage vs. Comfort Factor

The present study, as well as previous studies conducted by ORC on safety belt usage, shows that usage and attitudes, in terms of perceived comfort of safety belts, are highly correlated. As shown in Figure 28, below, Chevette and Rabbit owners who say that the safety belt is comfortable or fairly comfortable to wear are much more likely to report that they use the safety belt "almost always" than are Chevette and Rabbit owners who perceive the belt to be uncomfortable.

Figure 28

Reported Usage By Comfort Ratings

Say belt is --	Percent Who Say They Wear Belt "Always" or "Almost Always"	
	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Comfortable to wear	87%	95%
Fairly comfortable	75	88
Not comfortable	48	44

Figure 29, opposite, shows the interrelationship of the safety belt comfort ratings and the sociodemographic characteristics of owners of Chevetttes and Rabbits with automatic restraint systems. Among all owners, the following subgroups are less inclined than others to say that the belt is comfortable to wear: females, owners 50 years of age or over, the less well educated, and those under 5'6" in height.

In each of the subgroups, comfort ratings for the automatic belt are significantly higher for Rabbit owners than for Chevette owners.

Figure 29

	Number of Cases		Percent Who Rate Belt "Comfortable to Wear"	
	Automatic Chevette	Automatic Rabbit	Automatic Chevette	Automatic Rabbit
Total	(1,002)	(1,010)	40%	62%
Male	415	511	47%	66%
Female	578	499	34%	59%
Under 30 years	288	236	43%	63%
30 - 49	453	516	40%	63%
50 or over	256	251	36%	61%
High school or less	392	230	37%	59%
Some college	452	463	38%	61%
Graduate school	130	281	54%	68%
Under 5'6"	422	341	35%	57%
5'6" - 5'11"	422	475	41%	65%
6' or over	153	184	50%	66%
Under 140 lbs	414	375	35%	59%
140 - 179	388	424	43%	64%
180 - 199	118	114	49%	66%
200 or over	73	82	37%	71%
2-door	322	635	40%	59%
4-door	403	370	43%	69%

Specific Comfort Ratings

On eight specific points relating to the comfort and convenience aspects of the safety belt, owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with automatic systems were asked if they considered the specific point mentioned to be a problem or not a problem. Findings related to three comfort-related issues are shown in Figure 30.

Among the three comfort-related issues, the percentage of "no problem" answers range from 81% to 51% for owners of Chevettes, and from 84% to 73% for owners of Rabbits. The major problems cited by about half of Chevette owners is that the automatic belt rests on or rubs across their face or neck. About one fourth of Rabbit owners also consider this to be a problem. Also, more Chevette owners than Rabbit owners (38% vs. 26%) say that the belt chafes or rubs across their chest or other part of the body. On the issue of the belt exerting too much pressure on the shoulder or chest, the proportions of Chevette and Rabbit owners who consider this a problem are about equal (17% vs. 15%).

Figure 30

Comfort-Related Issues

	<u>No Problem</u>	<u>Problem</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Belt resting on or rubbing across face or neck.			
(s) Automatic Chevette	51%	47	2
Automatic Rabbit	75%	24	1
Belt chafing or rubbing across chest or other part of body.			
(s) Automatic Chevette	60%	38	2
Automatic Rabbit	73%	26	1
Belt exerting too much pressure on shoulder or chest			
Automatic Chevette	81%	17	2
Automatic Rabbit	84%	15	1

Convenience-Related Issues

Among the five convenience-related issues, the percentage of "no problem" responses for owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with automatic systems tend to be on par with or exceed those percentages for the comfort-related questions. Rabbit owners, in particular, seemed most positive about convenience issues with a "no problem" spread of 94% to 64% on the five questions.

Findings are not as favorable for Chevette owners. Their "no problem" percentages are consistently lower than those of Rabbit owners in response to the five convenience issues. The tendency to report problems was greater. In fact, a majority (54%) agreed that the automatic belt systems in the Chevette presented a problem in opening the car door and entering and exiting the vehicle. Dissatisfaction was also indicated with the upper door mounting of the system. Thirty-two percent of the Chevette owners said it comes too close to their face or head while 26% claim the mounting interfered with their vision. Responding to the same question, only 7% of the Rabbit owners cite face or head problems with the mounting; 4% agreed that it obscured their vision.

This data seems to indicate that design and manufacturing changes in the Automatic Chevette may serve to ameliorate inconveniences which present owners of the vehicle report. To the extent that the automatic safety belts on the VW Rabbits present a superior system -- this indicates a need for an industry standard to ensure greater acceptance and usage of these systems.

Figure 31
Convenience-Related Issues

	<u>No Problem</u>	<u>Problem</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Closing door to enter/exit			
(s) Automatic Chevette	44%	54	2
Automatic Rabbit	64%	35	1
Interferes with reaching for glove compartment or dashboard controls			
(s) Automatic Chevette	71%	26	3
Automatic Rabbit	87%	12	1
Upper mounting inconvenient to face and head			
(s) Automatic Chevette	66%	32	2
Automatic Rabbit	92%	7	1
Damage/loss to jewelry or clothing			
Automatic Chevette	87%	11	2
Automatic Rabbit	88%	10	2
Upper mounting obscures vision			
(s) Automatic Chevette	72%	26	2
Automatic Rabbit	94%	4	2

VI

Status of the Starter-Interlock

This chapter reports on questions relating to the interlock system in Chevettes and Rabbits with automatic belt systems. Data provide information on the extent to which the interlock system is being defeated, how it is defeated, and the reasons for defeat of the system.

Chevette and Rabbit owners report on any malfunctions or mechanical failures they might have encountered with the interlock system.

Also included are Chevette owners' responses to questions concerning the tension-relieving device which is unique to the Chevette.

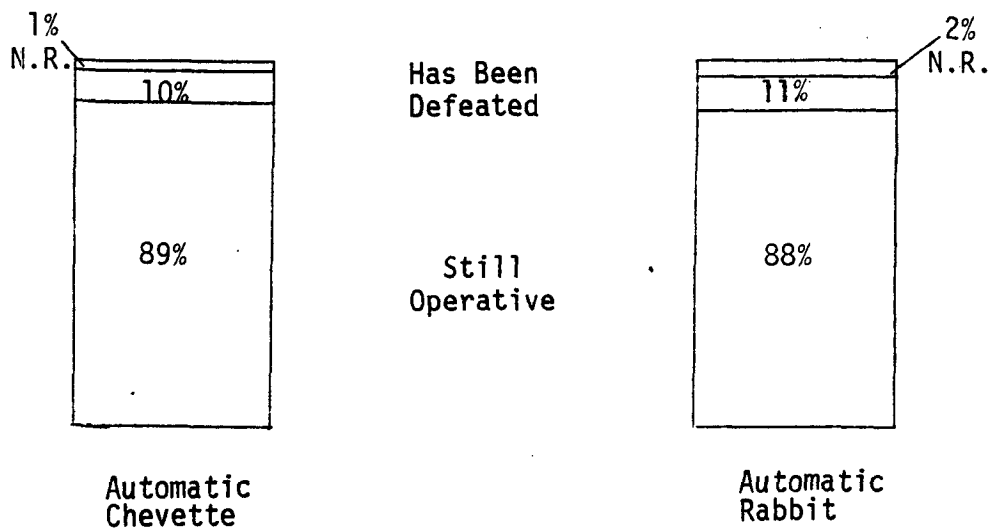
Status of Interlock in Automatic Chevettes and Rabbits

About nine out of every ten owners of Chevettes and Rabbits with automatic restraint systems say that the interlock system in their car has not been disconnected.

Following is the question asked:

"As you know, your automatic safety belt is connected to an interlock which is designed to prevent starting the engine if the belt is not buckled. Has the interlock system in your (Chevette) (Rabbit) been disconnected?"

Figure 32
Status of Interlock
at Time of Interview



Among Chevette and Rabbit owners, no subgroup of these owners are markedly above average, percentage-wise, in reporting that the interlock system in their car has been disconnected or is broken. This is true even when the data is analyzed by months the car has been owned. There is a greater tendency of those over 50 years old and those with less education to disconnect the interlock which is a similar pattern for nonusers of belts.

Figure 33

	<u>Number of Cases</u>		<u>% Who Say Interlock Has Been Disconnected or Is Broken</u>	
	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Total	(1,002)	(1,010)	10%	11%
Male	415	511	11%	11%
Female	578	499	8%	9%
Under 30 years	288	236	8%	8%
30 - 49	453	516	8%	9%
50 or over	256	251	13%	15%
High school or less	392	230	10%	14%
Some college	452	463	9%	11%
Graduate school	130	281	8%	6%
2-door	322	635	7%	11%
4-door	403	370	12%	9%
Months Owned:				
Under 12	657	323	8%	12%
12 - 17	336	480	11%	9%
18 or over	*	207	*	11%

* Too few cases for analysis.

Defeat of Interlock

As shown in Figure 34, in Chevettes and Rabbits that have had the interlock disconnected, about half the owners report that they (or a family member) disconnected it while the other half say it was disconnected by the dealer or by a mechanic not associated with the dealer.

Figure 34

"Who disconnected the interlock?"

	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
% who say disconnected	<u>9%</u>	<u>10%</u>
Respondent/owner	3%	2%
Dealer	2	3
Family member	2	2
Mechanic -- other than dealer	1	1

(Principal Mentions)

Asked why the interlock system was disconnected, owners cite reasons related to convenience or a general dislike of the interlock system.

Figure 35

"Why was the interlock disconnected?"

	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
% who say disconnected	<u>9%</u>	<u>10%</u>
Easier to start engine	1	2
Dislike interlock system	3	2
More convenient	2	1
Dislike buzzer	*	1

(Principal Mentions)

* Less than ½%.

How Interlock Disconnected

Asked how the interlock system was disconnected, Chevette and Rabbit owners respond with a variety of ways. A fairly common method, however, was either to cut or disconnect a wire leading to the system.

Typical Verbatim Comments:

"My wife took a pair of scissors and simply cut the strap."

"I cut the safety belt off and the lead part that is the connection."

"I cut the ground return wire."

"I have a key which fits into the slot where the shoulder belt was connected."

"Shorting out connection where belt fits into receiver of the door. Don't have to connect it."

"I unbolted it and disconnected the wires."

"A key was made to put under the seat to disconnect it."

"He snipped something around the top of the shoulder thing. He has been a mechanic so he knows what he did. I don't fully know. Just that he snipped something."

"He traced the wire and disconnected them."

"Just unplugged under dash."

"I just disconnected the wires under the seat."

"Open up the door and cut the wire."

"I cut the wire running from the box to the seat belt."

"They did it in the garage. It took about three or four of them to figure it out."

"By disconnecting wires."

"Stuck end of old seat belt in connector."

"With great difficulty. By trial and error. Took out all wires in the car. A mechanic had to put it back together."

"I put a stick of metal in the door post."

"Underneath the floor, pulled out a plug."

"He disconnected it down by the motor somewhere."

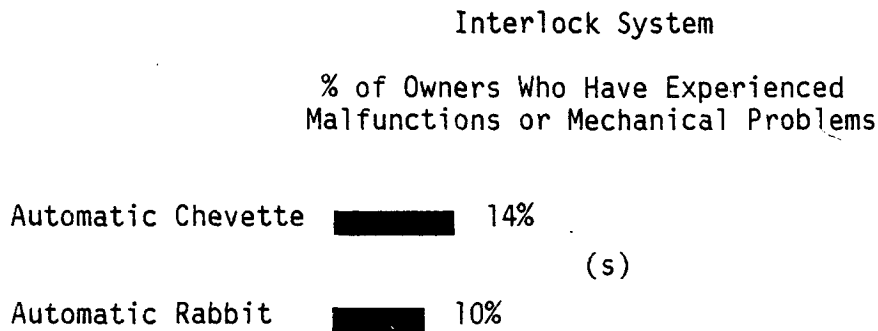
"I cut the wire going to the control system."

Malfunction/Failure of Interlock

Among Chevette owners, about one in seven (14%) and, among Rabbit owners, one in ten (10%) reports a malfunction or mechanical failure in the interlock system.

Figure 36

"Have you experienced any malfunctions or mechanical failures with the interlock system that you consider to be a problem?" PROBE: "Any problems for which the manufacturer might be responsible that have caused you some inconvenience or irritation?"



As might be expected, the reported incidence of malfunction or mechanical failure is highest for owners who have had the interlock disconnected.

	<u>Percent Who Report Malfunctions or Mechanical Failures</u>	
	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>	<u>Automatic Rabbit</u>
Say interlock has been disconnected	19%	23%
	(s)	

Automatic Chevette -- Tension Relieving Device

Presented here are owners' responses to questions dealing with a tension-relieving device that is unique to the Chevette. The device is designed to remove any pressure on the user's chest from the shoulder harness.

Responses to two lead off questions about this device indicate that a substantial minority of Chevette owners (32%) do not know the purpose of the tension-relieving device. Another 16% say they know about the device, but have never used it.

Figure 37

"Your shoulder belt is connected at one end to a retractor mounted on the floor between the front seats. There is a lever in front of the retractor. Do you know what it is used for?"

	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>
Yes	68%
No	32

"About how often do you use this device -- would you say frequently, occasionally, seldom, or never?"

	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>
Percent asked	<u>68%</u>
Frequently	26%
Occasionally	12
Seldom	13
Never	17

Ease of Use and Effectiveness of Tension-Relieving Device

The 52% of Chevette owners who say they have used the tension-relieving device were asked two follow-up questions relating to ease of use and its effectiveness if they were involved in a crash.

The consensus of opinion, as shown by the findings in Figure 38, is that the device is easy to use.

Figure 38

"Would you say this device is easy to use, or difficult to use?"

	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>
Percent who have used device	<u>52%</u>
Easy to use	42%
Difficult to use	9
No opinion	1

Among Chevette owners who have used the tension-relieving device, opinion is divided between those who believe use of the device would cause the shoulder harness to become so loose that they would not be restrained properly in a crash and those who believe that they would be properly restrained.

Figure 39

"When you use this device, does the shoulder belt sometimes become so loose that it would not restrain you properly in a crash, that is, the belt becomes loose when you don't deliberately want it to be loose?"

	<u>Automatic Chevette</u>
Percent who have used device	<u>52%</u>
Yes	20%
No	28
No opinion	4

VII

Owner Characteristics

Comparisons are made between owners of Chevettes with automatic restraint systems and owners of Rabbits with these systems on responses to questions pertaining to major demographic factors. The findings should provide a better understanding of group differences that exist in terms of belt usage and acceptance.

Owner Characteristics

Our analysis included owner demographics which allow us to determine if the owners of Rabbits with automatic restraint systems have different characteristics than Chevette owners with these systems and which of these differences, if any, account for belt usage within each group of owners. We sought specifically to document a relationship between belt usage and factors of age, education, and family income. If age, education, or income was found to influence automatic safety belt acceptance and usage, these factors could be used to "the best advantage" in any media or public educational efforts to gain acceptance of these systems.

For each factor, there is a chart showing a specific demographic breakdown of Rabbit and Chevette owners. In turn, we measured age, education, and income against the "almost always" response to our question on belt usage. The objective is to determine if a particular demographic pattern correlates to a high or low response of belt usage.

Figure 40 indicates a comparable age pattern between Rabbit and Chevette owners. Both owner groups show high percentages in the middle range, 30 - 49 years of age. Fifty percent of the Rabbit owners fall within this category compared to 46% for owners of Chevetttes.

When we move from age patterns to an age breakdown of belt usage, as shown in Figure 41, a very different picture develops. Rabbit owners in all age categories, who claimed to use their automatic safety belts "almost always," rank in the high 80 and 90 percentile. These responses exceed those of Chevette owners in the same categories by 13% to 21%. This last figure -- 21% -- separates Chevette and Rabbit owners in the under 30 age group. The significance of this difference is heightened by the recognition that this group contains both teenage and high-risk insurance drivers. Ninety percent of the under 30 Rabbit owners said they "almost always" used safety belts; whereas, only 69% of the Chevette owners in this group made the same claim.

The data suggest the importance of special public information programs and dealer/customer communication efforts, which emphasize the relation of belt usage to safety, toward youthful purchasers of Chevette-like automobiles. To this concern about certain "youthful purchasers," we can add some useful findings regarding educational and income levels.

Figure 40

"In which of these age groups are you?"

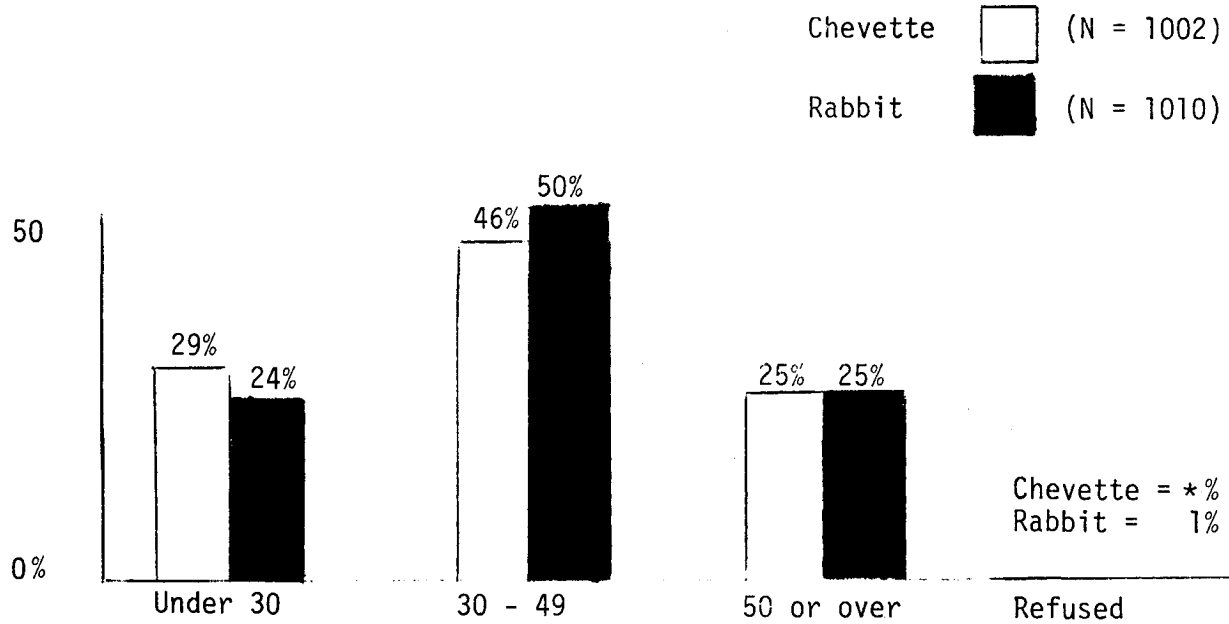


Figure 41

Belt Usage

"Almost Always"

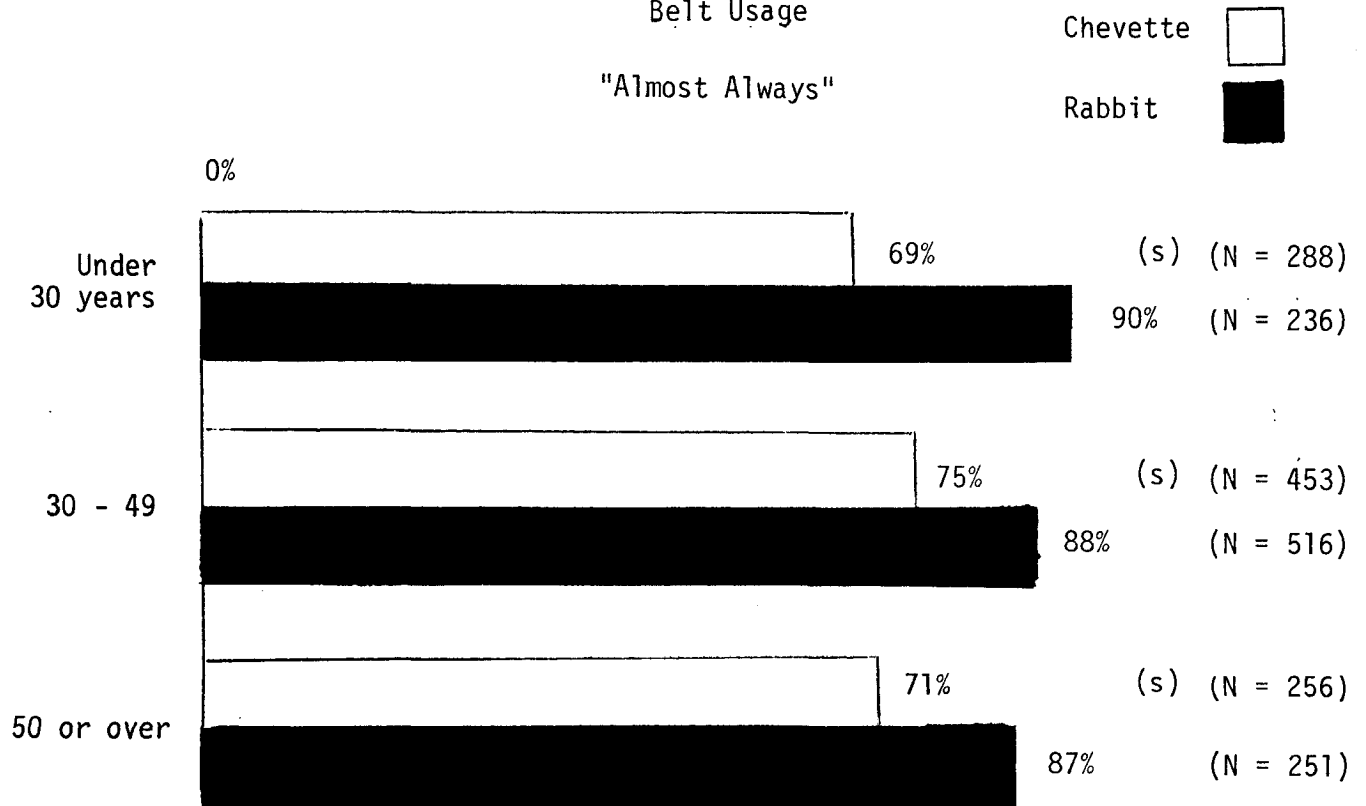


Figure 42 shows that nearly twice the number of Chevette to Rabbit owners (39% vs. 22%) fall in the group of "high school or less" as their last regular year of schooling; more than twice the number of Rabbit (28%) than Chevette (13%) owners reported graduate school as their last year of education. Rabbit owners, percentage-wise, have higher levels of educational attainment than their counterparts with Chevetttes, but does more education mean great frequency of belt usage?

Figure 43 answers affirmatively. Like the age correlation, Rabbit owners in all educational categories retain their high percentiles in belt usage. Unlike the age correlation, these percentiles are progressive. Ninety-three percent of the Rabbit owners, who cite graduate school as their last year of regular schooling, claim they "almost always" use safety belts. This figure compares with 88% who have some college education and 85% who completed high school or less.

While these percentages among Chevette owners are also progressive, they fall significantly below those cited for owners of Rabbits. Also, the numerical spread is far greater among Chevette owners in the three educational ranges. Sixteen percentage points separate Chevette owners with high school or less as their last year of schooling from Chevette owners with graduate school experience on the "almost always" response to belt usage (65% vs. 81%); this figure contrasts with an 8% spread between Rabbit owners in the same categories (85% vs. 93%).

The contrast between Rabbit and Chevette owners within the same educational range becomes less sharp, again, as one progresses to higher levels of schooling. The difference is most pronounced -- 20% -- between Rabbit and Chevette owners whose last year of schooling was high school or less. This datum permits a second conclusion. To our first factor of under 30 Chevette owners, we can add the educational element of "high school or less" for this group of owners as a significant indicator of relatively low belt usage.

Figure 42

Last Year of Regular Schooling

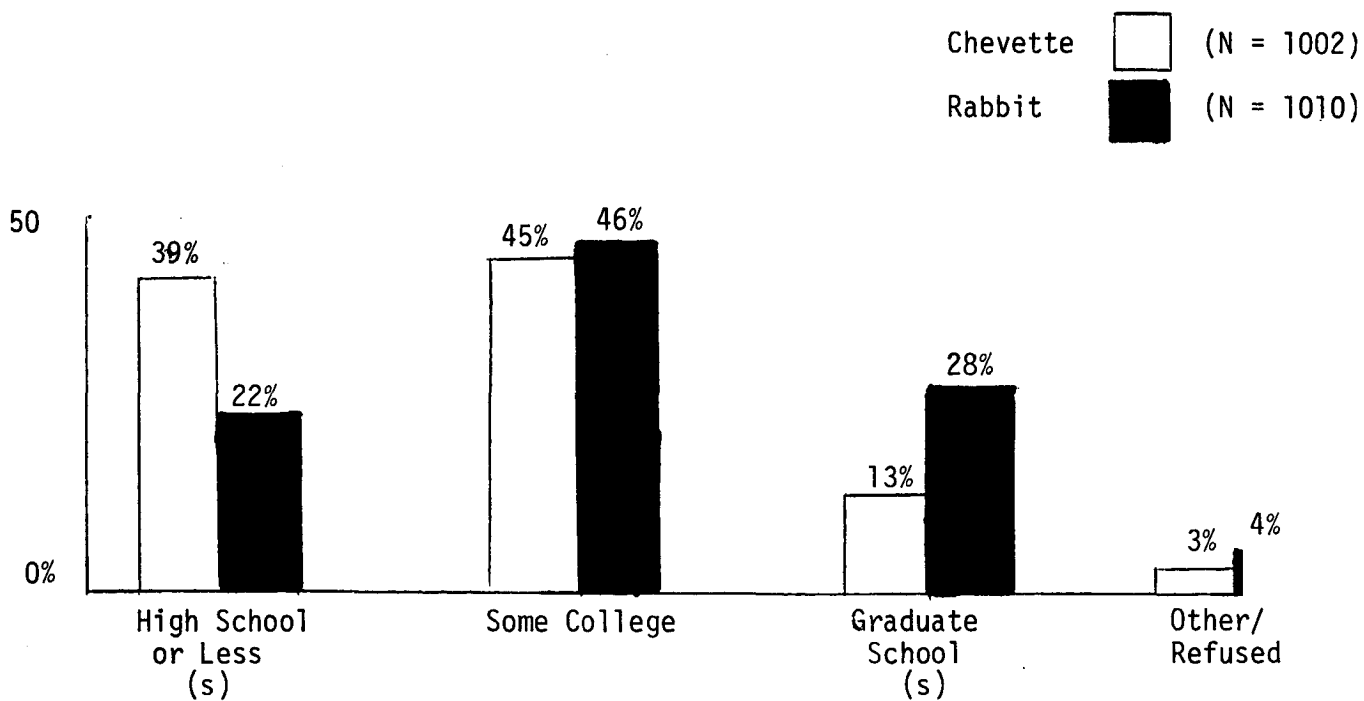
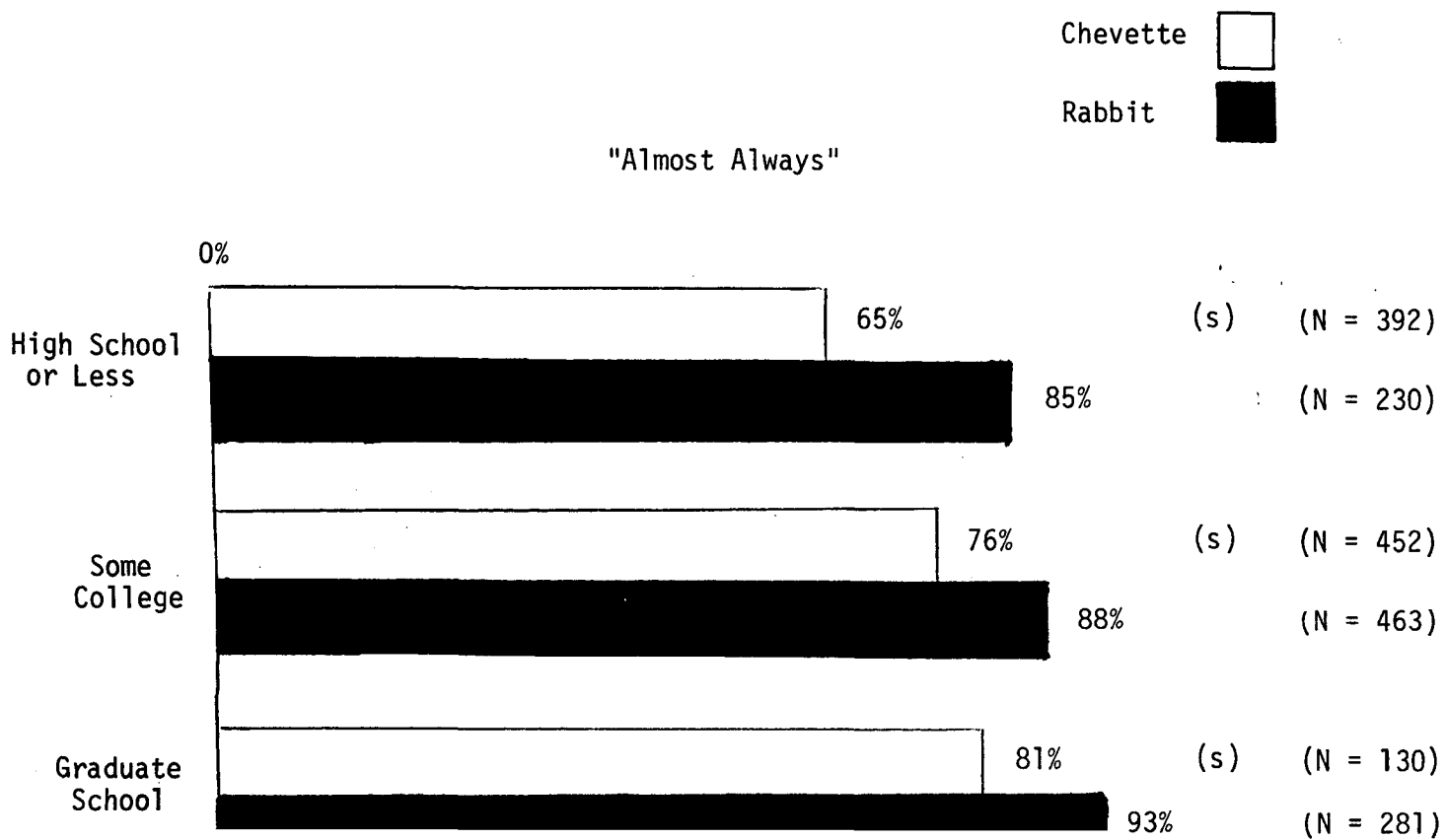


Figure 43

Belt Usage



Income supports a similar pattern to schooling. Figure 44 demonstrates that Rabbit owners tend to fall within higher income brackets. Thirty-five percent of the Rabbit respondents cite their family income, before taxes, as \$30,000 and over, compared to 22% in this category who own Chevettes. Chevette owners show higher percentages than Rabbit owners at the lower end of the income scale. In the under \$15,000 bracket, 27% are Chevette owners, compared to 12% who own Rabbits.

Like schooling, more income appears to support greater safety belt usage. Across income groups, Rabbit owners rank in the 80 and 90 percentiles in responding "almost always" to belt usage. Chevette owners likewise are at lower percentages, as Figure 45 illustrates.

While a correlation for Chevette owners is clear between lower income (under \$15,000) and lower "almost always" replies to questions of belt usage, the difference within this owner group is not appreciable between lower and middle (\$15,000 - \$29,999) income brackets (70% vs. 71%). This lack of a difference is important because a significant difference exists between Chevette and Rabbit owners in the middle-income category -- a category which, referring back to Figure 44, has a nearly equal ownership pattern. Thirty-nine percent of the Chevette owners in our sample say their income is in the \$15,000 - \$29,999 range, compared to 40% of the Rabbit owners who are in this bracket; however, nineteen percentage points separate Chevette and Rabbit owners in the same income bracket who respond "almost always" to safety belt usage.

While evidence of lower seat belt usage among Chevette owners with automatic restraint systems appears isolated to the "lower" segment of two demographic groupings, age and education, we see that lower belt usage seems to prevail among Chevette owners in both lower- and middle-income categories. Our composite picture of the problem group for belt usage thus becomes Chevette owners with automatic safety belts who are under 30 years old, have schooling that reaches high school or less, and report family earnings, before taxes, of less than \$30,000. With the exception of the age factor, ours is a portrait of a significant percentage of all Chevette owners having automatic restraint equipment.

Figure 44

Family Income Before Taxes for the Last Year

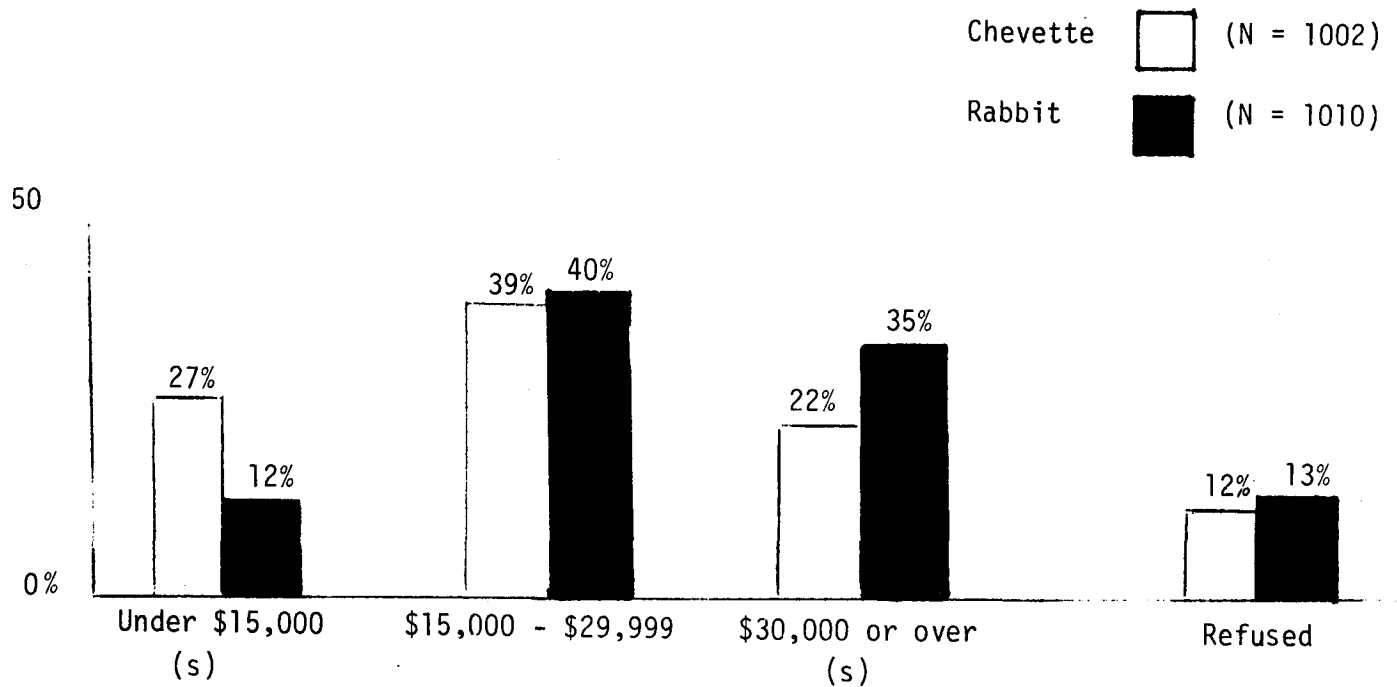
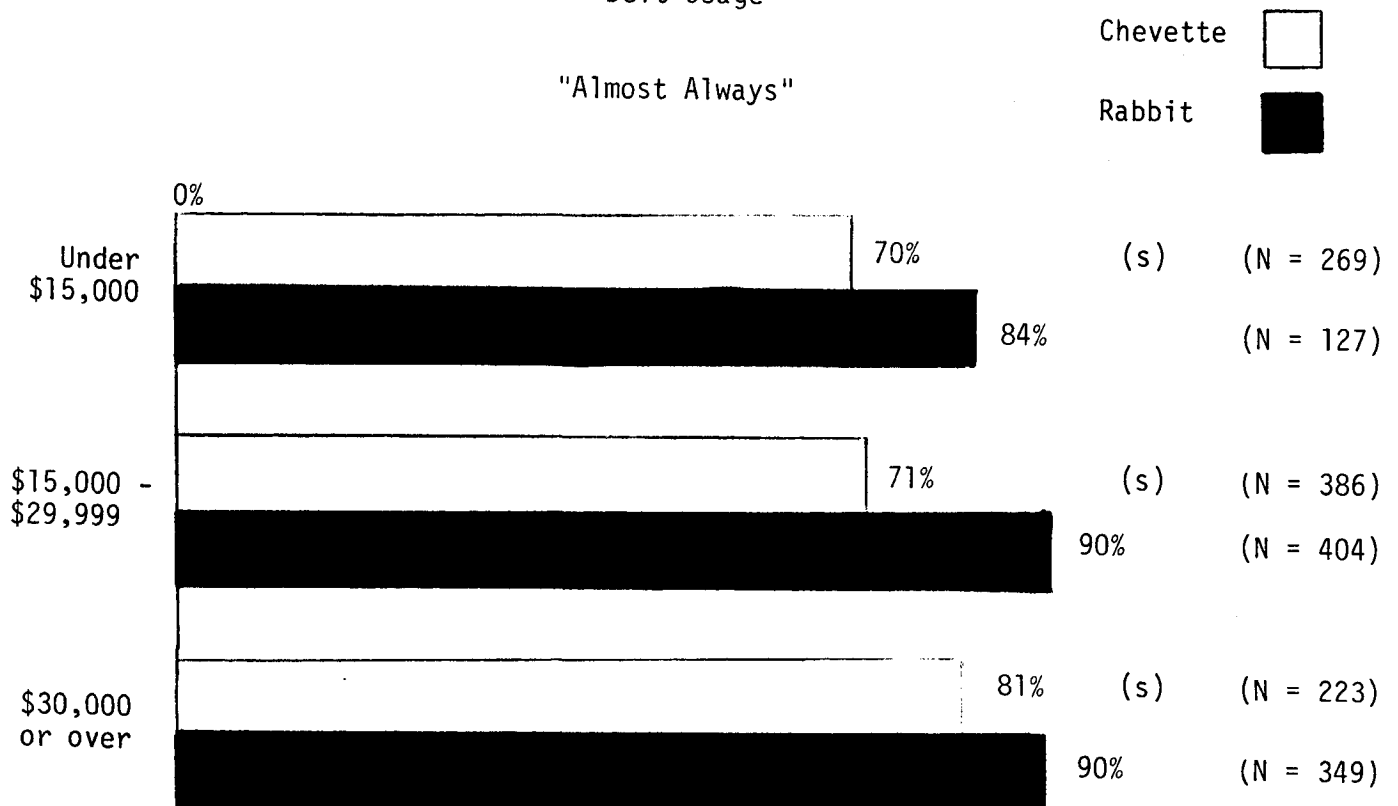


Figure 45

Belt Usage

"Almost Always"



Summary

The assumption that higher educational and income levels encourage a greater degree of automotive safety-mindedness, which we have chosen to express in terms of greater belt usage, seems to be supported by the data -- at least, among the owners of Rabbits with automatic safety belts who topped the list in both categories.

Our composite picture -- including the age factor -- is of Chevette owners, however, because, given the consistently lower usage of safety belts within this composite, we see a driver audience toward which a program of public education should be directed. Because this audience includes teenage drivers, we would suggest the need for programs on driver education which include units on the automatic safety belt. The cooperation of car dealerships in emphasizing the importance of safety issues to these owners might also be encouraged.

Apart from the demographic differences, one question remains: "Why did Chevette owners in all categories report significantly lower belt usage than those of Rabbit owners?" The answer, we believe, lies in part in the design of the Chevette automatic system, and a remedy should be sought from the manufacturer. Here, the conclusions found in Chapter V of this study ("Comfort and Convenience Ratings") become especially pertinent. We reported that a substantial minority of Chevette owners consider the automatic belts to be inconvenient and uncomfortable. This situation needs to be rectified in tandem with public and private efforts to promote greater belt usage.

In addition to comfort and convenience, there may be cultural and psychological determinants which distinguish the attitudes of Chevette and Rabbit owners toward personal safety and belt usage. Beyond our primary focus on safety belts, an objective analysis of these factors is outside the confines of this study. Future research into these areas may prove useful.

Chevette Passive Study

OMB # 04-579009
Expires Oct. 31, 1979

51576
Chevette Passive
072579

TELEPHONE: (_____)
 Area Code

TIME ENDED: _____

TIME STARTED: _____

ZIP CODE: _____

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: _____ (MINUTES)

DATE: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____ ID#: _____

Hello, I'm from Opinion Research Corporation, in Princeton, New Jersey. We are conducting a survey for the U.S. Department of Transportation. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, but we would really appreciate your cooperation and help. The survey is authorized by the Department of Transportation. Your responses will be kept completely confidential and will never be identified with you.

According to our records, you or someone else in your family bought a new Chevette within the last year or so. Is that correct?

1 YES → CONTINUE

2 NO → TERMINATE

1. Who made the decision to buy the new car? Was the decision mainly yours, did you share the decision about equally with someone else in the family, or was the decision mainly someone else's in the family?

1 RESPONDENT DECISION MAKER

2 RESPONDENT CO-DECISION MAKER

3 OTHER PERSON DECISION

→ CONTINUE

ASK TO SPEAK TO DECISION MAKER;
IF NOT AVAILABLE, ARRANGE FOR
CALLBACK

INTERVIEWER: Reintroduce yourself if necessary, and explain that you're aware the person recently purchased a new (MAKE OF CAR).

2. About how many months have you owned this car?

MONTHS _____

3. Did you buy your Chevette "as is -- off the floor or lot," or did you order the car from the factory because the dealer didn't have the model you wanted?

1 AS IS -- OFF FLOOR OR LOT

2 ORDERED FROM FACTORY

3 OTHER (Specify): _____

4. Thinking back to all the different Chevettes the dealer had to offer, why did you choose the one you bought rather than another Chevette? (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC ANSWERS.)

5. As you know, some cars have the automatic or passive safety belt system like the one in your car, while others have the one-piece combination lap and shoulder belt, which requires buckling up each time you use it. When you bought your Chevette, did you know the automatic belt system was available, or not?

1 YES

2 NO

6. How did you find out about the automatic belt system?

7. Did you try the automatic seat belt before you purchased the car?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

8. Did the salesperson explain or demonstrate the automatic features of the shoulder belt?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

3 DON'T RECALL

9. Did the salesperson explain the reason for the knee cushion?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

3 DON'T RECALL

10. Would you describe the salesperson's opinion of the automatic seat belt as favorable or unfavorable, or didn't he express an opinion one way or the other?
- 1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO OPINION--ONE WAY OR THE OTHER
11. Did the salesperson try to encourage you or discourage you from buying a car with the automatic seat belt or did he appear to be neutral?
- 1 ENCOURAGE
2 DISCOURAGE
3 NEUTRAL
4 NO OPINION
12. Would you say your reaction was favorable or unfavorable when you first saw the automatic seat belt?
- 1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO OPINION
13. Would you describe your impression of the automatic seat belt as favorable or unfavorable now after having owned the car for awhile?
- 1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO OPINION
14. What specifically do you like most about your automatic seat belt?
-
15. What specifically do you like least about your automatic seat belt?
-
16. When you bought your Chevette, did you want and ask for the automatic seat belt?
- 1 YES, DID
2 NO, DID NOT

17. If you were to purchase another new car and the model you wanted was available either with the automatic seat belt or the regular type of seat belt, which belt system would you choose?

- 1 AUTOMATIC → (GO TO Q. 18a)
- 2 REGULAR → (GO TO Q. 18b)
- 3 OTHER: _____
- 4 NO OPINION

GO TO Q. 19

18a. Why would you choose the automatic seat belt rather than the regular seat belt?

18b. Why would you choose the regular seat belt rather than the automatic seat belt?

19. On most trips where you do the driving in your Chevette, would you say that you use the safety belt -- (READ CATEGORIES.)

- 1 Always or almost always
- 2 More than half the time
- 3 Less than half the time
- 4 Almost never or never

20. How does this compare with your use of a safety belt in a second or previously owned car -- would you say you use the safety belt in that car -- (READ CATEGORIES.)

- 1 Always or almost always
- 2 More than half the time
- 3 Less than half the time
- 4 Almost never or never
- 5 No second or previous car
- 6 No belt in car

21. How about the lap belt in your Chevette, how often do you use the lap belt in your Chevette, would you say -- (READ CATEGORIES.)

- 1 Always or almost always
- 2 More than half the time
- 3 Less than half the time
- 4 Almost never or never

22. When you don't use the safety belt in your Chevette, please tell me the main reason why you don't use it. (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC ANSWERS.)

23. In general, would you describe yourself as a person who is very safety conscious, just somewhat safety conscious, or not very safety conscious?

- 1 VERY SAFETY CONSCIOUS
- 2 SOMEWHAT SAFETY CONSCIOUS
- 3 NOT VERY SAFETY CONSCIOUS
- 4 NO OPINION

24. As you know, your automatic safety belt is connected to an interlock which is designed to prevent starting of the engine if the belt is not buckled. Has the interlock system in your Chevette been disconnected?

- 1 YES, HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED
- 2 NO, HAS NOT
- 3 OTHER (Specify): _____
- 4 IT'S BROKEN
- 5 DON'T KNOW

IF "YES" ON Q. 24, ASK:

25. Who disconnected the interlock system?

- 1 DEALER
- 2 RESPONDENT
- 3 FAMILY MEMBER
- 4 MECHANIC--OTHER THAN DEALER'S
- 5 OTHER (Specify): _____

26. Why was this done?

27. How was this done?

28. Have you experienced any malfunctions or mechanical failures with the interlock system that you consider to be a problem? PROBE: Any problems for which the manufacturer might be responsible that have caused you some inconvenience or irritation?

- 1 YES, HAVE
- 2 NO, HAVE NOT

29. Your shoulder belt is connected at one end to a retractor mounted on the floor between the front seats. There is a lever in front of the retractor. Do you know what it is used for?

1 YES
2 NO

IF "YES" ON Q. 29, ASK:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 30. About how often do you use this device -- would you say frequently, occasionally, seldom, or never? | 1 FREQUENTLY
2 OCCASIONALLY
3 SELDOM
4 NEVER → (GO TO Q. 33) |
| 31. Would you say this device is easy to use, or difficult to use? | 1 EASY TO USE
2 DIFFICULT TO USE
3 NO OPINION |
| 32. When you use this device, does the shoulder belt sometimes become so loose that it would not restrain you properly in a crash, that is, the belt becomes loose when you don't deliberately want it to be loose? | 1 YES
2 NO
3 NO OPINION |

33. In general, would you say that the safety belt in your Chevette is -- (READ CATEGORIES.)

1. Comfortable to wear,
2 Fairly comfortable, (or)
3 Not comfortable

We would like your opinion on some specific points related to the comfort and convenience aspects of the safety belt in your new car when you are wearing the belt. For each one I mention, please tell me if you consider it a problem, or not a problem.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 34. The safety belt interferes when reaching for the glove compartment or any of the controls on the dashboard, would you say that is a problem for you, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 35. The belt resting on or rubbing across your face or neck -- is that a problem for you, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 36. The belt exerting too much pressure on your shoulder or chest -- is that a problem, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 37. The belt system in your Chevette interfering with your opening the door and getting <u>into</u> or <u>out of</u> the car -- is that a problem, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 38. The belt chafing or rubbing across your chest or some other part of the body -- is that a problem, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |

- 39. The belt causing jewelry, clothing, or other items worn to be damaged, broken, or lost -- is that a problem, or not?
 - 1 PROBLEM
 - 2 NO PROBLEM
 - 3 NO OPINION
- 40. The upper mounting of the shoulder belt interferes with vision out the side of the car -- is that a problem, or not?
 - 1 PROBLEM
 - 2 NO PROBLEM
 - 3 NO OPINION
- 41. The upper mounting of the shoulder belt comes too close to your face or head -- is that a problem or not?
 - 1 PROBLEM
 - 2 NO PROBLEM
 - 3 NO OPINION
- 42. As the last question about the safety belt in your Chevette, can you tell me about any other problem that you have had with the belt system that we haven't already discussed?



Now, just a few questions for background purposes.

- 43. As you know, a person's height, weight, and other measurements have a bearing on the comfort aspects of safety belts. For statistical purposes, would you please tell me your --

Height: _____ Ft. _____ In.

Weight: _____ Lbs.

- 44. In which of these age groups are you? (READ CATEGORIES.)
 - 1 Under 20
 - 2 20-24
 - 3 25-29
 - 4 30-39
 - 5 40-49
 - 6 50-59
 - 7 60 or over
 - 8 REFUSED
- 45. What was the last year of regular schooling you completed?
 - 1 GRADE SCHOOL GRADUATE OR LESS
 - 2 SOME HIGH SCHOOL
 - 3 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE, NO COLLEGE
 - 4 SOME COLLEGE
 - 5 COLLEGE GRADUATE
 - 6 GRADUATE SCHOOL
 - 7 OTHER (TRADE SCHOOL, ETC.)
 - 8 DON'T KNOW, REFUSED
- 46. Which one of these statements comes closest to your total family income before taxes for the last year? Please tell me the group at which to stop reading. (READ CATEGORIES.)
 - 1 Under \$7,000
 - 2 \$7,000 but under \$10,000
 - 3 \$10,000 but under \$15,000
 - 4 \$15,000 but under \$20,000
 - 5 \$20,000 but under \$30,000
 - 6 \$30,000 and over
 - 7 REFUSED
- 47. What is the model year of your Chevette?
 - 1 1978
 - 2 1979
- 48. RESPONDENT IS: 1 MALE 2 FEMALE

Thank you very much.

Rabbit Passive Study

OMB # 04-579009
Expires Oct. 31, 1979

51576
Rabbit Passive
080379

TELEPHONE: (_____)
Area Code

TIME ENDED: _____

TIME STARTED: _____

ZIP CODE: _____

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: _____ (MINUTES)

DATE: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____ ID#: _____

Hello, I'm from Opinion Research Corporation, in Princeton, New Jersey. We are conducting a survey for the U.S. Department of Transportation. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, but we would really appreciate your cooperation and help. The survey is authorized by the Department of Transportation. Your responses will be kept completely confidential and will never be identified with you.

According to our records, you or someone else in your family bought a new VW Rabbit within the last year or so. Is that correct?

1 YES → CONTINUE

2 NO → TERMINATE

1. Who made the decision to buy the new car? Was the decision mainly yours, did you share the decision about equally with someone else in the family, or was the decision mainly someone else's in the family?

1 RESPONDENT DECISION MAKER

2 RESPONDENT CO-DECISION MAKER

→ CONTINUE

3 OTHER PERSON DECISION →

ASK TO SPEAK TO DECISION MAKER;
IF NOT AVAILABLE, ARRANGE FOR
CALLBACK

INTERVIEWER: Reintroduce yourself if necessary, and explain that you're aware the person recently purchased a new VW Rabbit.

2. About how many months have you owned this car?

MONTHS _____

3. Did you buy your Rabbit "as is -- off the floor or lot," or did you order the car from the factory because the dealer didn't have the model you wanted?

1 AS IS -- OFF FLOOR OR LOT

2 ORDERED FROM FACTORY

3 OTHER (Specify): _____

4. Thinking back to all the different Rabbits the dealer had to offer, why did you choose the one you bought rather than another Rabbit? (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC ANSWERS.)



5. As you know, some cars have the automatic or passive safety belt system like the one in your car, while others have the one-piece combination lap and shoulder belt, which requires buckling up each time you use it. When you bought your Rabbit, did you know the automatic belt system was available, or not?

1 YES

2 NO

6. How did you find out about the automatic belt system?



7. Did you try the automatic seat belt before you purchased the car?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

8. Did the salesperson explain or demonstrate the automatic features of the shoulder belt?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

3 DON'T RECALL

9. Did the salesperson explain the reason for the knee cushion?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

3 DON'T RECALL

10. Would you describe the salesperson's opinion of the automatic seat belt as favorable or unfavorable, or didn't he express an opinion one way or the other?
- 1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO OPINION--ONE WAY OR THE OTHER
11. Did the salesperson try to encourage you or discourage you from buying a car with the automatic seat belt or did he appear to be neutral?
- 1 ENCOURAGE
2 DISCOURAGE
3 NEUTRAL
4 NO OPINION
12. Would you say your reaction was favorable or unfavorable when you first saw the automatic seat belt?
- 1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO OPINION
13. Would you describe your impression of the automatic seat belt as favorable or unfavorable now after having owned the car for awhile?
- 1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO OPINION
14. What specifically do you like most about your automatic seat belt?
-
15. What specifically do you like least about your automatic seat belt?
-
16. When you bought your Rabbit, did you want and ask for the automatic seat belt?
- 1 YES, DID
2 NO, DID NOT

17. If you were to purchase another new car and the model you wanted was available either with the automatic seat belt or the regular type of seat belt, which belt system would you choose?

- 1 AUTOMATIC (GO TO Q. 18a)
 2 REGULAR (GO TO Q. 18b)
 3 OTHER: _____
 4 NO OPINION _____

GO
TO
Q. 19

18a. Why would you choose the automatic seat belt rather than the regular seat belt?

18b. Why would you choose the regular seat belt rather than the automatic seat belt?

19. On most trips where you do the driving in your Rabbit, would you say that you use the safety belt -- (READ CATEGORIES.)

- 1 Always or almost always
 2 More than half the time
 3 Less than half the time
 4 Almost never or never

20. How does this compare with your use of a safety belt in a second or previously owned car -- would you say you use the safety belt in that car -- (READ CATEGORIES.)

- 1 Always or almost always
 2 More than half the time
 3 Less than half the time
 4 Almost never or never
 5 No second or previous car
 6 No belt in car

21. When you don't use the safety belt in your Rabbit, please tell me the main reason why you don't use it. (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC ANSWERS.)

22. In general, would you describe yourself as a person who is very safety conscious, just somewhat safety conscious, or not very safety conscious?

- 1 VERY SAFETY CONSCIOUS
- 2 SOMEWHAT SAFETY CONSCIOUS
- 3 NOT VERY SAFETY CONSCIOUS
- 4 NO OPINION

23. As you know, your automatic safety belt is connected to an interlock which is designed to prevent starting of the engine if the belt is not buckled. Has the interlock system in your Rabbit been disconnected?

- 1 YES, HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED
- 2 NO, HAS NOT
- 3 OTHER (Specify): _____
- 4 IT'S BROKEN
- 5 DON'T KNOW

IF "YES" ON Q. 23, ASK:

24. Who disconnected the interlock system?

- 1 DEALER
- 2 RESPONDENT
- 3 FAMILY MEMBER
- 4 MECHANIC--OTHER THAN DEALER'S
- 5 OTHER (Specify): _____

25. Why was this done?

26. How was this done?

27. Have you experienced any malfunctions or mechanical failures with the interlock system that you consider to be a problem? PROBE: Any problems for which the manufacturer might be responsible that have caused you some inconvenience or irritation?

- 1 YES, HAVE
- 2 NO, HAVE NOT

28. In general, would you say that the safety belt in your Rabbit is --
(READ CATEGORIES.)

- 1 Comfortable to wear,
- 2 Fairly comfortable, (or)
- 3 Not comfortable

We would like your opinion on some specific points related to the comfort and convenience aspects of the safety belt in your new car when you are wearing the belt. For each one I mention, please tell me if you consider it a problem, or not a problem.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 29. The safety belt interferes when reaching for the glove compartment or any of the controls on the dashboard, would you say that is a problem for you, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 30. The belt resting on or rubbing across your face or neck -- is that a problem for you, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 31. The belt exerting too much pressure on your shoulder or chest -- is that a problem, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 32. The belt system in your Rabbit interfering with your opening the door and getting <u>into</u> or <u>out of</u> the car -- is that a problem, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 33. The belt chafing or rubbing across your chest or some other part of the body -- is that a problem, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 34. The belt causing jewelry, clothing, or other items worn to be damaged, broken, or lost -- is that a problem, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 35. The upper mounting of the shoulder belt interferes with vision out the side of the car -- is that a problem, or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 36. The upper mounting of the shoulder belt comes too close to your face or head -- is that a problem or not? | 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION |
| 37. As the last question about the safety belt in your Rabbit, can you tell me about any other problem that you have had with the belt system that we haven't already discussed? | |



Now, just a few questions for background purposes.

38. As you know, a person's height, weight, and other measurements have a bearing on the comfort aspects of safety belts. For statistical purposes, would you please tell me your --

Height: _____ Ft. _____ In.

Weight: _____ Lbs.

39. In which of these age groups are you? (READ CATEGORIES.)
- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1 Under 20 | 5 40-49 |
| 2 20-24 | 6 50-59 |
| 3 25-29 | 7 60 or over |
| 4 30-39 | 8 REFUSED |
40. What was the last year of regular schooling you completed?
- | |
|------------------------------------|
| 1 GRADE SCHOOL GRADUATE OR LESS |
| 2 SOME HIGH SCHOOL |
| 3 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE, NO COLLEGE |
| 4 SOME COLLEGE |
| 5 COLLEGE GRADUATE |
| 6 GRADUATE SCHOOL |
| 7 OTHER (TRADE SCHOOL, ETC.) |
| 8 DON'T KNOW, REFUSED |
41. Which one of these statements comes closest to your total family income before taxes for the last year? Please tell me the group at which to stop reading. (READ CATEGORIES.)
- | |
|-------------------------------|
| 1 Under \$7,000 |
| 2 \$7,000 but under \$10,000 |
| 3 \$10,000 but under \$15,000 |
| 4 \$15,000 but under \$20,000 |
| 5 \$20,000 but under \$30,000 |
| 6 \$30,000 and over |
| 7 REFUSED |
42. What is the model year of your Rabbit?
- | |
|--------|
| 1 1978 |
| 2 1979 |
43. Is your Rabbit a 2-door or 4-door model?
- | |
|----------|
| 1 2-DOOR |
| 2 4-DOOR |
44. RESPONDENT IS: 1 MALE 2 FEMALE

Thank you very much.

Chevette Regular Belt Study

OMB # 04-579009
Expires Oct. 31, 1979

51576
Chevette Regular
080379

TELEPHONE: (_____)
Area Code

TIME ENDED: _____

ZIP CODE: _____

TIME STARTED: _____

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: _____ (MINUTES)

DATE: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____ ID#: _____

Hello, I'm from Opinion Research Corporation, in Princeton, New Jersey. We are conducting a survey for the U.S. Department of Transportation. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, but we would really appreciate your cooperation and help. The survey is authorized by the Department of Transportation. Your responses will be kept completely confidential and will never be identified with you.

According to our records, you or someone else in your family bought a new Chevette within the last year or so. Is that correct?

1 YES → CONTINUE

2 NO → TERMINATE

1. Who made the decision to buy the new car? Was the decision mainly yours, did you share the decision about equally with someone else in the family, or was the decision mainly someone else's in the family?

1 RESPONDENT DECISION MAKER

2 RESPONDENT CO-DECISION MAKER

→ CONTINUE

3 OTHER PERSON DECISION →

ASK TO SPEAK TO DECISION MAKER;
IF NOT AVAILABLE, ARRANGE FOR
CALLBACK

INTERVIEWER: Reintroduce yourself if necessary, and explain that you're aware the person recently purchased a new Chevette.

2. About how many months have you owned this car?

MONTHS _____

3. Did you buy your Chevette "as is -- off the floor or lot," or did you order the car from the factory because the dealer didn't have the model you wanted?

1 AS IS -- OFF FLOOR OR LOT

2 ORDERED FROM FACTORY

3 OTHER (Specify): _____

4. Thinking back to all the different Chevettes the dealer had to offer, why did you choose the one you bought rather than another Chevette? (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC ANSWERS.)

5. As you know, some cars have the one-piece combination lap and shoulder belt like the one in your car, which requires buckling up each time you use it; while others have the automatic or passive safety belt system. When you bought your Chevette, did you know the automatic belt system was available, or not?

1 YES

2 NO (GO TO Q. 13)

6. How did you find out about the automatic belt system?

7. Did you try the automatic seat belt in another car before you purchased your car?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

8. Did the salesperson explain or demonstrate the automatic features of the shoulder belt?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

3 DON'T RECALL

9. Did the salesperson explain the reason for the knee cushion?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

3 DON'T RECALL

10. Would you describe the salesperson's opinion of the automatic seat belt as favorable or unfavorable, or didn't he express an opinion one way or the other?
- 1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO OPINION--ONE WAY OR THE OTHER
11. Did the salesperson try to encourage you or discourage you from buying a car with the automatic seat belt or did he appear to be neutral?
- 1 ENCOURAGE
2 DISCOURAGE
3 NEUTRAL
4 NO OPINION
12. Would you say your reaction was favorable or unfavorable when you first saw the automatic seat belt?
- 1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO OPINION
13. Why didn't you buy a car that was equipped with an automatic or passive safety belt system?
14. When you bought your Chevette, did you want and ask for the automatic seat belt?
- 1 YES, DID
2 NO, DID NOT
15. What specifically do you like most about the seat belt in your Chevette?
16. What specifically do you like least about the seat belt?

17. If you were to purchase another new car and the model you wanted was available either with the automatic seat belt or the regular type of seat belt, which belt system would you choose?

- 1 AUTOMATIC (GO TO Q. 18a)
 2 REGULAR (GO TO Q. 18b)
 3 OTHER: _____
 4 NO OPINION _____

GO
TO
Q. 19

18a. Why would you choose the automatic seat belt rather than the regular seat belt?

18b. Why would you choose the regular seat belt rather than the automatic seat belt?

19. On most trips where you do the driving in your Chevette, would you say that you use the safety belt -- (READ CATEGORIES.)

- 1 Always or almost always
 2 More than half the time
 3 Less than half the time
 4 Almost never or never

20. How does this compare with your use of a safety belt in a second or previously owned car -- would you say you use the safety belt in that car -- (READ CATEGORIES.)

- 1 Always or almost always
 2 More than half the time
 3 Less than half the time
 4 Almost never or never
 5 No second or previous car
 6 No belt in car

21. When you don't use the safety belt in your Chevette, please tell me the main reason why you don't use it. (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC ANSWERS.)

22. In general, would you describe yourself as a person who is very safety conscious, just somewhat safety conscious, or not very safety conscious
- 1 VERY SAFETY CONSCIOUS
2 SOMEWHAT SAFETY CONSCIOUS
3 NOT VERY SAFETY CONSCIOUS
4 NO OPINION
23. In general, would you say that the safety belt in your Chevette is -- (READ CATEGORIES.)
- 1 Comfortable to sear,
2 Fairly comfortable, (or)
3 Not comfortable

We would like your opinion on some specific points related to the comfort and convenience aspects of the safety belt in your new car when you are wearing the belt. For each one I mention, please tell me if you consider it a problem, or not a problem.

24. Reaching for and being able to grasp the latch plate, would you say that is a problem for you, or not?
- 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION
25. Moving the latch plate over to the buckle to fasten the belt -- is that a problem for you, or not?
- 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION
26. The belt exerting too much pressure on your shoulder or chest -- is that a problem, or not?
- 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION
27. The belt chafing or rubbing across your chest or some other part of the body -- is that a problem, or not?
- 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION
28. The safety belt interferes when reaching for the glove compartment or any of the controls on the dashboard -- is that a problem, or not?
- 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION
29. The belt causing jewelry, clothing, or other items worn to be damaged, broken, or lost -- is that a problem, or not?
- 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION
30. The upper mounting of the shoulder belt interferes with vision out the side of the car -- is that a problem, or not?
- 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION
31. The upper mounting of the shoulder belt comes too close to your face or head -- is that a problem, or not?
- 1 PROBLEM
2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION
32. As the last question about the safety belt in your Chevette, can you tell me about any other problem that you have had with the belt system that we haven't already discussed?



Now, just a few questions for background purposes.

33. As you know, a person's height, weight, and other measurements have a bearing on the comfort aspects of safety belts. For statistical purposes, would you please tell me your --

Height: _____ Ft. _____ In.

Weight: _____ Lbs.

34. In which of these age groups are you? (READ CATEGORIES.)
- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1 Under 20 | 5 40-49 |
| 2 20-24 | 6 50-59 |
| 3 25-29 | 7 60 or over |
| 4 30-39 | 8 REFUSED |
35. What was the last year of regular schooling you completed?
- | |
|------------------------------------|
| 1 GRADE SCHOOL GRADUATE OR LESS |
| 2 SOME HIGH SCHOOL |
| 3 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE, NO COLLEGE |
| 4 SOME COLLEGE |
| 5 COLLEGE GRADUATE |
| 6 GRADUATE SCHOOL |
| 7 OTHER (TRADE SCHOOL, ETC.) |
| 8 DON'T KNOW, REFUSED |
36. Which one of these statements comes closest to your total family income before taxes for the last year? Please tell me the group at which to stop reading. (READ CATEGORIES.)
- | |
|-------------------------------|
| 1 Under \$7,000 |
| 2 \$7,000 but under \$10,000 |
| 3 \$10,000 but under \$15,000 |
| 4 \$15,000 but under \$20,000 |
| 5 \$20,000 but under \$30,000 |
| 6 \$30,000 and over |
| 7 REFUSED |
37. What is the model year of your Chevette?
- | |
|--------|
| 1 1978 |
| 2 1979 |
38. Is your Chevette a 2-door or 4-door model?
- | |
|----------|
| 1 2-DOOR |
| 2 4-DOOR |
39. RESPONDENT IS: 1 MALE 2 FEMALE

Thank you very much.

Rabbit Regular Belt Study

OMB # 04-579009
Expires Oct. 31, 1979

51576
Rabbit Regular
080379

TELEPHONE: (_____)
Area Code

TIME ENDED: _____

ZIP CODE: _____

TIME STARTED: _____

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: _____ (MINUTES)

DATE: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____ ID#: _____

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According to our records, you or someone else in your family bought a new Rabbit within the last year or so. Is that correct?

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1. Who made the decision to buy the new car? Was the decision mainly yours, did you share the decision about equally with someone else in the family, or was the decision mainly someone else's in the family?

1 RESPONDENT DECISION MAKER

2 RESPONDENT CO-DECISION MAKER

3 OTHER PERSON DECISION

→ CONTINUE

ASK TO SPEAK TO DECISION MAKER;
IF NOT AVAILABLE, ARRANGE FOR
CALLBACK

INTERVIEWER: Reintroduce yourself if necessary, and explain that you're aware the person recently purchased a new Rabbit.

2. About how many months have you owned this car?

MONTHS _____

3. Did you buy your Rabbit "as is -- off the floor or lot," or did you order the car from the factory because the dealer didn't have the model you wanted?

1 AS IS -- OFF FLOOR OR LOT

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3 OTHER (Specify): _____

4. Thinking back to all the different Rabbits the dealer had to offer, why did you choose the one you bought rather than another Rabbit? (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC ANSWERS.)

5. As you know, some cars have the one-piece combination lap and shoulder belt like the one in your car, which requires buckling up each time you use it; while others have the automatic or passive safety belt system. When you bought your Rabbit, did you know the automatic belt system was available, or not?

1 YES

2 NO (GO TO Q. 13)

6. How did you find out about the automatic belt system?

7. Did you try the automatic seat belt in another car before you purchased your car?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

8. Did the salesperson explain or demonstrate the automatic features of the shoulder belt?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

3 DON'T RECALL

9. Did the salesperson explain the reason for the knee cushion?

1 YES

2 NO, DID NOT

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GO
 TO
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2 Fairly comfortable, (or)
3 Not comfortable

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2 NO PROBLEM
3 NO OPINION
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35. What was the last year of regular schooling you completed?
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| 6 \$30,000 and over |
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37. What is the model year of your Rabbit?
- | |
|--------|
| 1 1978 |
| 2 1979 |
38. Is your Rabbit a 2-door or 4-door model?
- | |
|----------|
| 1 2-DOOR |
| 2 4-DOOR |
39. RESPONDENT IS: 1 MALE 2 FEMALE

Thank you very much.