

Press Release

How much do we care for kids' safety in cars? 2026 UAE seat belt survey – Part 2 (Children)

- The law: since 1-July-2017 it is mandatory for children aged 0-4 years to be transported in proper child car seats
- Knowledge: 95% think, kids are better protected in child seats in case of accidents
- Ownership: only 72% own a child seat for their kids aged 0-4
- Main reasons for non-ownership: my kids don't like to be strapped in; 'I am a safe driver'; holding children is as safe as a proper child seat
- Usage of owned child car seats: only 79% 'always' use them
- Main reasons for non-usage: 'I am a safe driver'; no need on short trips; my kids don't like to be strapped in
- Usage of child car seats in taxi, limousine, or a friend's car: only 52% state 'always'
- Trends: Overall positive trends vs. the same study conducted in 2017 prior to the new law

Dubai, 7th May 2026; The non-use of seat belts is the biggest hurdle to reducing road fatalities in the UAE and around the world. This is true for all car occupants, and especially for children. Child restraint systems can reduce the risk of death by up to 71% and injuries by up to 82%.

“Children are our future and our mission is to protect our customers, their families and children, and our entire eco-system. Since 1st July 2017, it is mandatory for children aged 0-4 years to be transported in proper child car seats. Proper restraint systems save lives and spare us from injuries in case of car accidents, and this is true for adults and children alike. Anecdotally, we all witness children roaming around in cars without proper protection occasionally, and we wanted to put figures and facts behind this topic of utmost importance. Hence, we teamed up once again with RoadSafetyUAE on this important research project in the spirit of our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commitment. It is vital to instill safety habits into our children as early as possible in their lives.”, states Muralikrishnan Raman, Chief Financial Officer, Al Wathba Insurance.

“We see almost one third of parents of children aged 0-4 years failing to provide child seats to their kids, however, is mandatory by law. More than twenty percent of owned child car seats are not 'always' used. The identified reasons for non-ownership and non-usage must be addressed by the stakeholders in charge. It is of key importance to educate parents about the undebatable benefits of child seats and about being in compliance with the law. The educational efforts directed at parents must happen in the pre-natal stage at hospitals, ideally coupled with a mandatory new-born discharge policy linked to providing proof of car seat ownership, like it is practiced in many other countries. Then at kindergarten stage and throughout the education stages. In addition to educational efforts, enforcement must be in place, as we need to make sure our children are cared for in the best possible way. The main message is a very simple one: 'IF YOU LOVE YOUR KIDS, BUCKLE THEM UP, ON ALL TRIPS!'", adds Thomas Edelmann, Managing Director of RoadSafetyUAE.

The survey was conducted in January 2026 with an international research house and is based on a representative sample of 1,010 UAE residents.

A) KNOWLEDGE:

Overall, the knowledge level of respondents is sound, with 95% understanding that kids are better protected with child seats and seat belts in case of accidents

'Do you think, kids are better protected with child seats and seat belts in case of accidents?'

Yes 95%	No 2%	Not sure 3%
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B) OWNERSHIP:

Only 72% of parents with children in the age bracket of 0-4 years state 'Yes', which should be 100%, as per the law.

'Do you actually have those proper child seats for your kid(s)?'

Yes 72%	No 28%
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C) REASONS FOR NON-OWNERSHIP OF CHILD CAR SEATS:

The reasons given for non-ownership are certainly violating the mandate for children to be protected as per the law and they must be addressed. It is of key importance to educate parents about the undebatable benefits of child car seats and to be in compliance with the law. This must happen in the pre-natal phase at hospitals, ideally coupled with a mandatory car seat discharge policy like in many other countries, then at kindergarten stage and throughout the education stages. The key stakeholders are hospitals, kindergartens / schools and public entities. In addition to educational efforts, enforcement must be in place, as we need to make sure our children are cared for in the best possible way.

'Why don't you have proper child seats for your kids aged 0-4 years?'

My kids don't like to be strapped in child seats	29%
Passengers holding kids is as safe as child seats	24%
I am a safe driver and I will not be involved in an accident, hence there is no need for child seats	23%
Too expensive	15%
I don't know which child seat to buy for my kid	15%
Other	15%
Child seats do not protect kids in the case of an accident	14%
It is not part of our culture	8%
Religious reasons	8%

D) USAGE OF OWNED CHILD CAR SEATS:

Parents who did invest in child car seats not always use them. Only 79% state to use them 'always'.

'Do you always ask your kids to use their child seat and put on the seat belt?'

Almost never 3%	Most of the time 18%	Always 79%
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E) REASONS FOR NON-USAGE OF OWNED CHILD CAR SEATS:

Like for non-ownership, the reasons for non-usage of existing car seats are certainly violating the opportunity for children to be protected as mandated by the law and they must be addressed by all concerned stakeholders.

'Why do your kids not always wear their seat belt in their child seat?'

I am a safe driver and I will not be involved in an accident, hence there is no need to buckle up my kid in the child seat	43%
My kids don't like to be strapped in their child seat	37%
On short trips, it is not needed to wear seat belts	30%
Child seats do not protect kids in the case of an accident	25%
Religious reasons	12%
It is not part of our culture	8%
Other	5%

F) USAGE OF CHILD SEATS IN TAXI, LIMOUSINE OR A FRIEND'S CAR:

The usage of child seats outside of the family car is alarmingly low, despite the fact that many taxi and limo fleets offer child seat options. The law is also applicable in these instances, as everyone in the vehicle must wear a seat belt.

'When your child rides in a taxi, limousine, or a friend's car, how often do they use a proper child seat?'

Never 12%	Often 36%	Always 52%
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G) TREND VERSUS BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE HOLISTIC SEAT BELT LAW (1-JULY-2017).

In February 2017, prior to the introduction of the new holistic seat belt law which makes the use of seat belts mandatory also for passengers on the rear-seats as per 1st July 2017, RoadSafetyUAE conducted the same survey. It is important to note, that all the surveyed dimensions are moving in the right direction, albeit not reaching the desired 100% mark which would be compliant with the law.

	2017 February	2026 January	Trend
	YES	YES	% points
'Do you think, kids are better protected with child seats and seat belts in case of accidents?'	93%	95%	2%
'Do you actually have those proper child seats for your kid(s)?'	64%	72%	8%

	2017 February	2026 January	Trend
	ALWAYS	ALWAYS	% points
'Do you always ask your kids to use their child seat and put on the seat belt?'	70%	79%	9%

Details of this study, commissioned by RoadSafetyUAE and Al Wathba Insurance, and conducted by TGM, can be found in the 'featured' section on: <http://www.roadsafetyuae.com/statistics/>.

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About Al Wathba Insurance:

For over 30 years, Al Wathba Insurance has been serving the UAE with a people-first approach, built on its promise of *Care Beyond Coverage*. Established in 1996, the company offers a comprehensive range of Motor, Health, Home, Travel, Cyber, and General Insurance solutions for citizens, residents, and visitors, backed by a strong capital base and leading international reinsurers. Recognized with the prestigious Sheikh Khalifa Excellence Award and rated BBB- with a positive outlook by S&P Global Ratings, Al Wathba Insurance continues to drive innovation through digital transformation, delivering reliable, customer-centric solutions while strengthening its position as the insurer of choice in the UAE.

For further information, please contact:

Zeeshan Haider

Head of Marketing & Communications

Tel: +971 2 4185301

Mob: +971 58 530 5200

Email: m_zeeshan@awnic.com

About RoadSafetyUAE:

RoadSafetyUAE's vision is to contribute to reducing the number of road traffic fatalities, injuries and accidents in the UAE. RoadSafetyUAE's mission is to raise the awareness for proper conduct on our roads, in an engaging manner and on a broadly communicated and permanent basis. RoadSafetyUAE's award-winning platform engages with the stakeholders traffic participants, governmental entities, the media, and more than 20 corporate social responsibility (CSR) minded partners. 'Tips & Tricks' are the content backbone, provided for more than 60 topics of road safety, all specifically relevant to the UAE. More can be found on www.RoadSafetyUAE.com

For further information, please contact:

Thomas Edelmann,
Founder and Managing Director
RoadSafetyUAE
Thomas@RoadSafetyUAE.com
Mob: +971 50 55 19 216