

Car crashes rank among the leading causes of death in the United States.



2015 Traffic Safety Culture Index

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About the Sponsor

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Introduction

In the quarter century from 1990 through 2014, the lives of 991,814 men, women, and children have ended violently as the result of motor vehicle crashes in the United States. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people ages 8, 13, 14 and 16-25.¹ Statistics from the United States Department of Transportation indicate that 32,675 people died in motor vehicle crashes in 2014.² This represents a slight decrease from 2013, however preliminary data from the first half of 2015 indicate fatalities increased 8.1 percent compared to the first half of 2014.³ An average of 90 lives per day are needlessly cut short as the result of crashes on our roads.

Since 2006, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has been sponsoring research to better understand traffic safety culture.⁴⁻¹⁵ The Foundation's long-term term vision is to create a "social climate in which traffic safety is highly valued and rigorously pursued."¹³ In 2008, the AAA Foundation conducted the first *Traffic Safety Culture Index*,¹⁰ a nationally-representative survey, to begin to assess a few key indicators of the degree to which traffic safety is valued and is being pursued.

As in previous years, this *Traffic Safety Culture Index* finds that Americans do value safe travel and desire a greater level of safety than they now experience. They perceive unsafe driver behaviors such as speeding and impaired driving as serious threats to their personal safety and generally support laws that would improve traffic safety by restricting driver behavior, even when such laws would restrict behaviors they admit to engaging in themselves.

As in previous years, the survey also highlights some aspects of the current traffic safety culture that might be characterized most appropriately as a culture of indifference, in which drivers effectively demonstrate a "Do as I say, not as I do" attitude. For example, substantial numbers of drivers say that it is completely unacceptable to drive 15 mph over the speed limit on freeways, yet admit having done that in the past month.

This report presents the methods for the AAA Foundation's eighth annual *Traffic Safety Culture Index* and summarizes major national-level results.

Summary of Major Findings

Personal exposure to crashes

- One in 5 drivers have been involved in a serious crash at some point in their lives where someone needed to go to the hospital, and 1 in 9 has been seriously injured in a crash.
- Nearly 1 in 3 Americans have had a friend or relative seriously injured or killed in a crash.

Impaired driving

- Drivers view drinking and driving as a very serious threat, and virtually all disapprove of drinking and driving and most acknowledge that others also disapprove of it. More than 1 in 8, however, admit to driving at least once in the past year when they thought their alcohol level might have been close to or possibly over the legal limit, and of these, more than 15 percent (2.0% of all drivers) said they did so in the past month.
- There is majority support for requiring alcohol-ignition interlocks for drivers convicted of DWI, even for first-time offenders (80.1%); requiring built-in interlocks for all new vehicles (70.3%); and lowering the legal limit for blood alcohol concentration (BAC) from 0.08 to 0.05 grams per deciliter (g/dL) (63.1%).
- A majority of drivers (57.3%) view people driving after using illegal drugs as a very serious threat, while much fewer (31.8%) say the same about people driving after using prescription drugs.
- Few drivers report driving after using marijuana: 4.2 percent of drivers reported having driven within one hour of using marijuana in the past year, and 1.8 percent reported having driven within one hour of using both marijuana and alcohol in the past year.

Cell phone use and texting

- Cell phone use while driving is widespread. More than 2 in 3 drivers report talking on their cell phone while driving in the past month, and nearly 1 in 3 say they do so fairly often or regularly. There is fairly strong disapproval toward using a hand-held cell phone while driving (68.6%), but more than 2 in 5 drivers believe incorrectly that most others actually approve of it. People are more accepting of hands-free cell phone use than hand-held (63.1% vs. 30.8%).
- Most drivers view texting or emailing while driving as a very serious threat to their own personal safety and consider it completely unacceptable. However, more than 1 in 8 drivers (14.1%) don't perceive social disapproval from others; nearly 1 in 3 (31.5%) admit to typing or sending a text message or email while driving in the past month; and more than 2 in 5 (42.3%) report reading a text message or email while driving in the past month.
- More than 2 in 3 drivers (70.3%) support restricting the use of hand-held cell phones while driving, but less than half (42.4%) support an outright ban on using any type of cell phone (including hands-free) while driving. There is strong support (87.7%) for laws restricting reading, typing, or sending a text message or email while driving.

Speeding

- Speeding on freeways is common. Nearly half of drivers (48.4%) say they have driven 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway in the past month, and 1 in 4 say they consider it acceptable to do so. Similarly, nearly half of drivers (45.0%) say they have driven 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street in the past month. There is greater social disapproval for speeding on a residential street than on a freeway (88.6% versus 74.1%).

Red-light running

- Most drivers (93.5%) view it as unacceptable to drive through a traffic light that just turned red when they could have stopped safely; however, more than 1 in 3 drivers (38.7%) admit doing this in the past month.

Drowsy driving

- Nearly all drivers (97.0%) view drowsy driving as a serious threat to their safety and a completely unacceptable behavior; however, nearly 1 in 3 (31.5%) admit to driving when they were so tired that they had a hard time keeping their eyes open at some point in the past month.

Seatbelts and helmets

- Most drivers (88.2%) view it as unacceptable to drive without wearing a seatbelt, and more than 4 in 5 (81.9%) say that they never do; however, nearly 1 in 5 (17.8%) admit that they have driven without wearing their seatbelt in the past 30 days, and more than 1 in 7 (15.2 %) say they have done this more than once.
- Four in 5 Americans (80.1%) support a law requiring all motorcycle riders to wear a helmet, and 59.8 percent strongly support this.

Methods

A sample of respondents ages 16 and older was recruited from KnowledgePanel^{®16}, an online research panel recruited and maintained by market research firm GfK. The panel consists of members of a representative sample of households recruited using standard probability-based random digit dial (RDD) and address-based sampling methods. The sampling frame includes all U.S. households reachable by telephone or by regular mail, irrespective of telephone or Internet access or use. If a sampled household lacks Internet access or an Internet-capable computer, GfK provides Internet access and a netbook computer at no cost to the household. Individuals not sampled by GfK cannot volunteer to join the panel. Because each individual respondent's probability of selection into the panel and probability of selection for a particular survey are known, statistics can be weighted to reflect the entire population from which the sample was drawn.

Sampled panelists received an invitation to complete the survey and were asked to do so at their earliest convenience. The questionnaire was made available in English and Spanish, and respondents were able to complete it in the language of their choice. The survey was administered between July 28 and August 12, 2015.

Respondents were sampled as follows: Respondents ages 19 and older were sampled directly from the membership of the panel across the 9 U.S. Census Divisions, with a target of a minimum of 200 completed interviews per division. The questionnaire was sent to 4,034 panelists ages 19 and older; 2,442 completed the questionnaire.

Respondents ages 16-18 were recruited indirectly from a sample of panel members whose existing household information indicated were parents of at least one teen in this age range. Sampled parents were asked to confirm that they had an eligible teen, provide consent for the teen to be included in the survey, and forward the survey to the teen. If a parent had more than one eligible teen, one was selected randomly by a computer algorithm. Invitations were sent to 3,822 parents of teens aged 16-18, and 963 respondents ages 16-18 completed the questionnaire.

Weighting

The data were weighted to account for probability of selection for recruitment into KnowledgePanel, probability of selection for this survey, non-response at both stages, and to align the characteristics of the respondents to those of the population of residents ages 16+ from which the sample was drawn with respect to gender, age, race/Hispanic ethnicity, education, census region, metropolitan/non-metro status, number of people ages 16 and older in the household, and household income using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey¹⁷. All analyses were based on weighted data.

The margin of error for the survey varies by question depending on the number of respondents that answered the question and the distribution of the responses. The margin of error is larger in this survey than it would have been for a simple random sample of the same size due to the design of the panel from which the sample was drawn and due to the stratification by Census Division and oversampling of respondents ages 16-18 in this survey. Table 1 shows the approximate margin of error for illustrative examples of

statistics derived from the entire national sample; the margin of error is larger for items asked of only a subset of respondents.

Table 1. Approximate Margin of Error (in Percentage Points) for Selected Percentages

Percentages near	Approx. margin of error
90 or 10	± 1.4
80 or 20	± 1.8
70 or 30	± 2.1
60 or 40	± 2.3
50	± 2.3

The margin of error reflects a range of percentages that would be expected to include the result that would be obtained if the survey were administered to the entire population from which the sample was drawn, rather than to a sample, 19 times out of 20. Note that the margin of error reflects only the statistical variability associated with using the survey sample to draw inferences about the entire population. It does not reflect errors related to systematic non-coverage of certain segments of the population (e.g., people who cannot read in English nor in Spanish), non-response (i.e., eligible respondents who either cannot be contacted or refuse to participate), differences in respondents' understanding of survey questions or response options, or deliberate misreporting of information (e.g., under-reporting of behaviors that may be perceived as undesirable).

In addition to the core set of questions collected annually for the *Traffic Safety Culture Index*, respondents were asked additional questions relating to other research project topics which are not reported here.

This report summarizes the main national-level results of the survey. Complete top-line national results are included in tables in Appendix A, along with the questions participants were asked. The descriptive statistics provided in this report were calculated for respondents who reported having a valid driver's license and having driven in the past 30 days. Selected results were previously released in late 2015 in *Prevalence of Self-Reported Drowsy Driving, United States: 2015*¹⁸.

Results and Discussion

Traffic safety as a social issue

A majority of drivers express some opinions consistent with a belief that traffic safety is a serious issue that warrants attention. They perceive unsafe driver behaviors such as speeding, talking on cell phones, texting and e-mailing, and red light running as serious threats to their personal safety (Table 5). Four in 5 drivers support their state adopting a vision to reduce the number of people killed in crashes to zero, and most express support for traffic safety laws. A law against reading, typing or sending a text message or email while driving received the greatest amount of support amongst the laws and regulations included in the survey, with 87.7 percent of drivers expressing support (Table 10).

Although many drivers seem to think traffic safety is important generally, the survey findings reveal some aspects of the current traffic safety culture that might be characterized as a culture of indifference, with drivers effectively saying “Do as I say, not as I do.” For example, substantial numbers of drivers say that it is completely unacceptable for a driver to drive when they’re so sleepy that they have trouble keeping their eyes open, yet many admit to doing so anyway.

Nearly half of all drivers have been touched in some way by a serious motor vehicle crash at some point in their lives. Specifically, 1 in 5 (19.6%) report having been involved in a motor vehicle crash in which someone had to go to the hospital, including 11.9 percent who have been seriously injured in a crash themselves. Nearly 1 in 3 drivers (30.9 %) report having had a friend or relative who was seriously injured or killed in a motor vehicle crash (Table 22). Overall, 2 in 5 drivers (40.5%) report having been involved in a serious crash, having had a friend or relative seriously injured or killed in a crash, or both.

Most drivers (83.0%) believe that they drive somewhat or much more carefully than other drivers on the roads they drive (Table 3), which indicates that many drivers overestimate how carefully they drive. Only 1.3 percent of drivers said they drive somewhat or much less carefully than most other drivers. Drivers ages 19-24 and 25-39 were the least likely to rate themselves as more careful than most other drivers. Slightly more than half of drivers (56.9%) believe they drive about as fast as most other drivers on the roads they drive (Table 4). Nearly 1 in 5 drivers (19.2%) said they drive somewhat or much faster than other drivers, though more than a quarter (28.5%) of drivers ages 25-39 and only 7.5 percent of drivers over 75 admitted the same.

Attitudes and behavior: Impaired driving

Drinking and driving is viewed as a very serious safety threat, social disapproval is almost universal, social stigma is felt strongly, and relatively few drivers admit to drinking and driving. There is majority support for requiring all DWI offenders to use alcohol-ignition interlocks on their vehicles, even for first-time offenses (Table 11).

Two in 3 drivers (66.3%) say that people driving after drinking alcohol are a very serious threat to their personal safety (Table 5), and 97.1 percent say that they personally consider it unacceptable (89.5% completely unacceptable) to drive when they think they may have

had too much to drink (Table 7). Additionally, 90.6 percent perceive that, where they live, most other people consider it unacceptable for motorists to drive when they think they may have had too much to drink (Table 6).

More than one in 8 drivers report having driven when they thought that their alcohol level might have been close to or possibly over the legal limit within the past 12 months; 9.3 percent said they did so more than once (Table 15). Of those who reported driving when their alcohol level may have been close to or over the legal limit in the past year, 15.3 percent (2.0% of all drivers) said they did so in the past month (Table 16). Nearly 1 in 3 drivers (30.5%) report having driven within 2 hours of drinking any alcohol in the past year; 7.1 percent report doing so fairly often or regularly (Table 17).

Four out of 5 drivers (80.1%) support requiring all drivers who have been convicted of DWI to use a device that won't let their car start if they have been drinking, even for first time offenders, called an alcohol ignition interlock device. A smaller but significant majority (70.3%) also support requiring all new cars to have built-in technology that won't let the car start if the driver's alcohol level is over the legal limit (Table 11). A slightly smaller majority (63.1%) of drivers support lowering the BAC limit from .08 to .05 g/dL (31.4% strongly; 31.7% somewhat). Support was lower among those who report drinking more, but even 48.9 percent of drivers who drink "a few times a week" and 57.4 percent of drivers who drink "a few times a month" supported lowering the BAC limit.

Slightly less than half (45.8%) of all respondents perceived that "drivers using drugs" are a somewhat or much bigger problem than 3 years ago (Table 2). More than half of drivers (57.3%) reported that people driving after using illegal drugs are a very serious threat, but fewer (31.8%) reported that people driving after using prescription drugs are a very serious threat (Table 5). Drivers aged 75 and older were the least likely to report that people driving after using prescription drugs are a very serious threat, and the most likely to report the same with regard to people driving after using illegal drugs.

More than 80 percent of licensed drivers reported that where they live, most people would say it is somewhat (32.4%) or completely (50.0%) unacceptable for a driver to drive one hour after using marijuana (Table 6), while 9 in 10 drivers (90.6%) said they personally feel it is unacceptable (Table 7). Among drivers who reported using marijuana at least once in the past year, 54.1 percent reported that they personally feel it is unacceptable to drive one hour after using marijuana.

Of all drivers surveyed, 4.2 percent reported having driven within one hour of using marijuana in the past year (Table 18). Drivers ages 19-24 were the most likely to report having driven within one hour of using marijuana in the past year (9.0%). Among those who reported having used marijuana at least once in the past year, 51.3 percent reported driving within one hour of using, and 23.7 percent reported doing so regularly or fairly often. Of those who reported driving within an hour of using marijuana in the past year, 49.53 percent (2.1% of all drivers) reported doing so in the past month (Table 19). Nearly all respondents (98.0%) reported that they did not drive within one hour of consuming both marijuana and alcohol in the past year (Table 20). Among those who reported using marijuana in the past year, 23.6 percent reported that they drove within one hour of using both it and alcohol in the past year, and 9.0 percent reported doing so fairly often or regularly.

More than four out of five drivers (81.6%) support having a *per se* law for marijuana, which makes it illegal to drive with a certain amount of marijuana in one's system (Table 11). Drivers who reported having used marijuana in the last year were less likely to support such a law, but nearly half (48.8%) nonetheless did express support, while 50.0 percent opposed it.

Attitudes and behavior: Cell phone use and text messaging

Cell phone use while driving remains widespread. More than 2 in 3 drivers (69.9%) report having talked on a cell phone while driving within the past 30 days; 64.0 percent report doing this on more than one occasion, and 30.9 percent say they talk on their cell phone while driving fairly often or regularly (Table 9).

Most drivers (84.9%) perceived that "distracted drivers" are a somewhat or much bigger problem than 3 years ago (Table 2). More than half of drivers (55.7%) say that drivers talking on cell phones are a very serious threat to their personal safety (Table 5). More than 2 in 3 drivers say that they personally consider it unacceptable (45.0% completely unacceptable) for a driver to talk on a hand-held cell phone while driving; 30.8 percent consider it somewhat or completely acceptable (Table 7). More than 1 in 3 drivers (35.9%) consider it unacceptable for a driver to talk on a hands-free cell phone while driving; nearly 2 in 3 (63.1%) consider it acceptable (Table 7). More than 2 in 5 drivers (41.2%) believe that most other people where they live consider it somewhat or completely acceptable for a driver to talk on a hand-held cell phone, and nearly 4 in 5 drivers (78.1%) believe that most other people consider it acceptable to talk on a hands-free cell phone (Table 6).

Most drivers (72.8%) believe that when talking on a cell phone while driving, it is safer to use a hands-free device than a hand-held device (Table 14). However, of the nearly 70 percent of drivers who reported talking on a cell phone while driving in the past 30 days, nearly half said they usually or always hold their cell phone in their hand when they talk on the phone while driving (Table 13). Drivers are divided with regard to laws prohibiting any and all cell phone use while driving (hand-held and hands-free), with greater opposition than support for such legislation (57.0% oppose versus 42.4% support) (Table 11).

Most drivers (77.4%) say that drivers text messaging or emailing are a very serious threat to their personal safety (Table 5); 95.2 percent say that they personally consider it unacceptable (80.6% completely unacceptable) for a driver to type a text or email while driving (Table 7); and 85.0 percent believe that most other people where they live consider it unacceptable to text while driving (Table 6). Nonetheless, more than 2 in 5 drivers (42.3%) admit to reading a text message or email while driving in the past 30 days, and 12.0 percent admit to doing this fairly often or regularly. In that same time period nearly 1 in 3 drivers (31.5%) admit to typing or sending a text or e-mail, and 8.1 percent say they do so fairly often or regularly (Table 9).

Nearly 9 in 10 drivers (87.7%) support having a law against reading, typing, or sending a text message or email while driving; nearly 2 in 3 (63.8%) strongly support such a law (Table 11). Drivers are more evenly divided on the issue of the federal government regulating non-driving-related in-vehicle technologies for distraction: 46.5 percent support such regulation, with fewer than 1 in 5 (19.0%) strongly supporting regulation.

Self-reported distracted driving behavior and support for laws that prohibit or limit distracted driving behavior vary widely by age. Drivers ages 25-39 report reading and typing text messages and emails while driving in the past 30 days more than any other age group, with drivers ages 19-24 following closely behind (Table 10). Drivers ages 19-59 were the most likely to report having talked on a cell phone while driving. Drivers over 60 years of age engage in these activities while driving less than any other age group. The social acceptability of engaging in distracting activities also varied by age: drivers ages 60 and older are the least likely to say that talking on a hand-held or hands-free cell phone while driving is acceptable, while those ages 19-24 are most likely to say that typing texts or emails while driving is acceptable (Table 8). Drivers ages 25-39 were the least likely to support laws that restrict text messaging and all cell phone use while driving (Table 12).

Attitudes and behavior: Speeding

Speeding on freeways is prevalent. Nearly half of drivers (48.4%) say they have driven 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway in the past month (Table 9), and 15.1 percent say they did so fairly often or regularly. Additionally, 45.0 percent of drivers report having driven 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street in the past 30 days, with 11.4 percent reporting they did so regularly or fairly often.

More than 2 in 5 drivers (44.4%) say that drivers speeding on residential streets are a very serious threat to their personal safety, and nearly one in three (32.4%) say this about drivers speeding on freeways (Table 5). Moreover, 88.6 percent consider it unacceptable (62.3% completely unacceptable) for a driver to drive 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street (Table 7), and 76.3 percent believe that most other people where they live consider it unacceptable for a driver to do so (Table 6). Nearly 3 in 4 drivers (74.1%) consider it unacceptable to drive 15 mph over the speed limit on freeways. However, more than 1 in 3 drivers (36.6%) believe incorrectly that most other people consider it acceptable to drive 15 mph over the speed limit on freeways. More than 4 in 5 drivers consider it unacceptable to drive 10 mph over the speed limit in an urban area, and most (95.5%) consider it unacceptable to do so in a school zone.

Attitudes and behavior: Red-light running

Most drivers (93.5%) consider it unacceptable for a driver to drive through a light that had already turned red when they could have stopped safely (70.7% completely unacceptable) (Table 7), and 82.5 percent say that most other people where they live consider this unacceptable (Table 6). Nonetheless, more than 1 in 3 drivers (38.7%) admit to having driven through a light that had just turned red in the past 30 days when they could have stopped safely. More than 1 in 4 drivers (25.5%) report having done this more than once; however, very few (2.5%) report doing this fairly often or regularly (Table 9).

Despite the fact that an overwhelming proportion of drivers consider red-light running unacceptable, only slightly more than half of drivers (53.5%) support using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who run red lights in urban areas, and only slightly more (57.0%) support using such cameras on residential streets (Table 11).

Attitudes and behavior: Drowsy driving

Most people view driving while drowsy as a serious threat to their own personal safety and a completely unacceptable behavior; however, many drivers still admit to driving while extremely drowsy themselves.

Nearly half of all drivers (47.8%) view sleepy drivers as a very serious threat to their personal safety (Table 5). Virtually all drivers (97.0%) consider it unacceptable for someone to drive when they are so sleepy that they have a hard time keeping their eyes open (83.2% completely unacceptable) (Table 7), and most (90.6%) believe that most other people where they live consider it unacceptable (Table 6).

Despite this, nearly 1 in 3 drivers (31.5%) reported having driven when they were so tired that they had a hard time keeping their eyes open in the past 30 days. More than one in five (22.3%) reported having done this more than once, and 3.5 percent reported having done this fairly often or regularly (Table 9).

Attitudes and behavior: Seatbelts and helmets

Most drivers (88.2%) say it is unacceptable for a driver to drive without wearing his or her seatbelt (70.8% completely unacceptable) (Table 7). Moreover, 81.6 percent say they believe that most other people where they live consider driving without wearing a seatbelt to be unacceptable (Table 6).

Despite strong social disapproval, nearly 1 in 5 drivers (17.8%) report having driven without wearing their seatbelt in the past 30 days; 15.2 percent report doing this more than once, and 5.6 percent report driving without a seatbelt fairly often or regularly (Table 9).

While motorcycle helmet usage was not covered extensively in the survey, 4 in 5 drivers (80.1%) support a law requiring all motorcycle riders to wear a helmet (59.8% strongly support) (Table 11).

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Appendix: Data Tables

Table 2. Please tell us how much of a problem each of the issues below is today compared to 3 years ago. (N=2,545)

	Much bigger problem today (%)	Somewhat bigger problem today (%)	About the same (%)	Somewhat smaller problem today (%)	Much smaller problem today (%)	Don't Know/Refused (%)
<i>Traffic congestion</i>	33.2	35.4	29.1	1.6	0.6	0.2
<i>Aggressive drivers</i>	33.0	31.9	33.3	0.9	0.7	0.2
<i>Distracted drivers</i>	58.7	26.2	13.5	0.9	0.5	0.2
<i>Drunk driving</i>	20.8	22.0	49.2	7.0	0.8	0.2
<i>Drivers using drugs</i>	21.2	24.6	50.2	3.0	0.9	0.2

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 3. When you drive, how careful are you, compared to most other drivers on the roads where you drive? (N=2,545)

	Much more careful (%)	Somewhat more careful (%)	About the same (%)	Somewhat less careful (%)	Much less careful (%)	Don't know/Refused (%)	
<i>All drivers</i>	41.0	42.0	15.6	1.0	0.4	0.1	
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	46.4	38.8	12.6	1.4	0.0	0.7
	19-24	35.1	40.6	20.2	3.8	0.3	0.0
	25-39	31.9	43.2	22.9	1.7	0.3	0.0
	40-59	41.3	42.3	15.5	0.4	0.4	0.0
	60-74	49.7	41.3	8.5	0.0	0.5	0.0
	75+	49.5	41.2	6.8	1.3	0.0	1.1

Base: US residents ages 16+ with a driver's license who reported driving in past 30 days, weighted to reflect US population

Table 4. How fast do you usually drive, compared to most other drivers on the roads you drive? (N=2,545)

	Much faster (%)	Somewhat faster (%)	About the same (%)	Somewhat slower (%)	Much slower (%)	Don't know/ Refused (%)	
<i>All drivers</i>	1.0	18.1	56.9	22.8	0.9	0.3	
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	1.4	17.3	53.2	26.2	1.5	0.4
	19-24	2.3	34.0	47.5	14.8	1.5	0.0
	25-39	1.1	27.4	57.6	13.8	0.0	0.0
	40-59	1.0	15.7	56.6	24.7	1.6	0.3
	60-74	0.7	9.0	62.1	27.6	0.5	0.0
	75+	0.0	7.5	50.4	40.2	0.3	1.5

Base: US residents ages 16+ with a driver's license who reported driving in past 30 days, weighted to reflect US population

Table 5. How much of a threat to your personal safety are ...? (N=2,545)

	Very serious threat	Somewhat serious threat	Minor threat	Not a threat	Don't Know/Refused
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<i>People driving aggressively</i>	47.3	39.0	11.8	1.4	0.5
<i>Drivers talking on cell phones</i>	55.7	30.7	12.1	1.1	0.4
<i>People driving after drinking alcohol</i>	66.3	25.7	6.5	1.2	0.3
<i>People driving after using prescription drugs</i>	31.8	38.3	25.7	3.9	0.3
<i>People driving after using illegal drugs</i>	57.3	27.1	13.5	1.6	0.5
<i>Drivers text messaging or e-mailing</i>	77.4	18.8	2.7	0.7	0.5
<i>Drivers speeding on freeways</i>	32.4	37.8	25.8	3.6	0.4
<i>Drivers speeding on residential streets</i>	44.4	35.7	17.3	2.1	0.5
<i>Drivers running red lights</i>	58.6	26.1	12.9	2.0	0.4
<i>Sleepy drivers</i>	47.8	34.0	16.0	1.8	0.4

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 6. Where you live, how acceptable would most other people say it is for a driver to...? (N=2,545)

	Completely acceptable (%)	Somewhat acceptable (%)	Somewhat unacceptable (%)	Completely unacceptable (%)	Total: Acceptable (%)	Total: Unacceptable (%)	Don't know/Refused (%)
<i>Drive 15 miles per hour over the speed limit on a freeway</i>	8.5	28.1	29.7	32.9	36.6	62.6	0.8
<i>Drive 10 miles per hour over the speed limit on a residential street</i>	4.0	18.8	33.4	42.9	22.8	76.3	0.8
<i>Drive 10 miles per hour over the speed limit in an urban area</i>	5.6	23.8	35.8	34.1	29.4	69.9	0.7
<i>Drive 10 miles per hour over the speed limit in a school zone</i>	3.0	6.8	22.3	67.3	9.8	89.6	0.7
<i>Talk on a hands-free cell phone while driving</i>	40.8	37.3	12.7	8.4	78.1	21.1	0.9
<i>Talk on a hand-held cell phone while driving</i>	10.6	30.6	30.0	27.7	41.2	57.7	1.0
<i>Type text messages or e-mails while driving</i>	3.3	10.8	24.8	60.2	14.1	85.0	0.8
<i>Drive when they're so sleepy that they have trouble keeping their eyes open</i>	2.2	6.3	27.8	62.8	8.5	90.6	0.8
<i>Drive without wearing their seatbelt</i>	3.5	14.0	30.7	50.9	17.5	81.6	0.9
<i>Drive through a light that just turned red, when they could have stopped safely</i>	2.9	13.7	32.4	50.1	16.6	82.5	0.8
<i>Drive when they think they may have had too much to drink</i>	2.3	6.3	16.7	73.9	8.6	90.6	0.8
<i>Drive 1 hour after using marijuana</i>	3.7	13.0	32.4	50.0	16.7	82.4	0.9
<i>Drive after using both marijuana and alcohol</i>	1.9	5.9	14.1	77.2	7.8	91.3	0.8

Base: US residents ages 16+ with a driver's license who reported driving in past 30 days, weighted to reflect US population

Table 7. How acceptable do you, personally, feel it is for a driver to...? (N=2,545)

	Completely acceptable	Somewhat acceptable	Somewhat unacceptable	Completely unacceptable	Total: Acceptable	Total: Unacceptable	Don't know/Refused
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<i>Drive 15 miles per hour over the speed limit on a freeway</i>	5.9	19.3	26.2	47.9	25.2	74.1	0.6
<i>Drive 10 miles per hour over the speed limit on a residential street</i>	2.1	8.7	26.3	62.3	10.8	88.6	0.6
<i>Drive 10 miles per hour over the speed limit in an urban area</i>	2.3	13.5	30.6	53.0	15.8	83.6	0.6
<i>Drive 10 miles per hour over the speed limit in a school zone</i>	1.3	2.5	14.0	81.5	3.8	95.5	0.6
<i>Talk on a hands-free cell phone while driving</i>	29.4	33.7	18.1	17.8	63.1	35.9	0.9
<i>Talk on a hand-held cell phone while driving</i>	7.4	23.4	23.6	45.0	30.8	68.6	0.6
<i>Type text messages or e-mails while driving</i>	1.4	2.7	14.6	80.6	4.1	95.2	0.7
<i>Drive when they're so sleepy that they have trouble keeping their eyes open</i>	0.8	1.6	13.8	83.2	2.4	97.0	0.6
<i>Drive without wearing their seatbelt</i>	4.2	7.0	17.4	70.8	11.2	88.2	0.7
<i>Drive through a light that just turned red, when they could have stopped safely</i>	1.0	4.9	22.8	70.7	5.9	93.5	0.6
<i>Drive when they think they may have had too much to drink</i>	1.2	1.0	7.6	89.5	2.2	97.1	0.7
<i>Drive 1 hour after using marijuana</i>	2.5	6.2	17.2	73.4	8.7	90.6	0.7
<i>Drive after using both marijuana and alcohol</i>	0.8	1.5	6.9	90.0	2.3	96.9	0.8

Base: US residents ages 16+ with a driver's license who reported driving in past 30 days, weighted to reflect US population

Table 8. Acceptability of performing distracting tasks while driving by age group, United States, 2015 (N=2,545)

	Type text messages or email (%)	Talk on hand-held cell phone (%)	Talk on a hands-free phone (%)
<i>All drivers</i>	4.1	30.8	63.1
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	39.3	69.3
	19-24	37.9	71.2
	25-39	40.1	67.7
	40-59	32.1	65.7
	60-74	19.0	54.8
	75+	12.0	42.2

Base: US residents ages 16+ with a driver's license who reported driving in past 30 days, weighted to reflect US population

Table 9. In the past 30 days, how often have you...? (N=2,545)

	Regularly	Fairly often	Rarely	Just once	Never	Total: Any	Fairly often/ Regularly	Don't know/ Refused
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<i>Driven 15 miles per hour over the speed limit on a freeway</i>	3.8	11.3	26.7	6.6	51.0	48.4	15.1	0.6
<i>Driven 10 miles per hour over the speed limit on a residential street</i>	2.1	9.3	28.7	4.9	54.7	45.0	11.4	0.4
<i>Read a text message or e-mail while you were driving</i>	3.1	8.9	23.0	7.3	57.3	42.3	12.0	0.5
<i>Typed or sent a text message or e-mail while you were driving</i>	2.4	5.7	17.1	6.3	68.0	31.5	8.1	0.5
<i>Driven without wearing your seatbelt</i>	2.7	2.9	9.6	2.6	81.9	17.8	5.6	0.4
<i>Driven when you were so tired that you had a hard time keeping your eyes open</i>	0.7	2.8	18.8	9.2	68.2	31.5	3.5	0.3
<i>Driven through a light that had just turned red when you could have stopped safely</i>	0.7	1.8	23.0	13.2	61.1	38.7	2.5	0.3
<i>Talked on a cell phone while you were driving (any type of phone)</i>	11.4	19.5	33.1	5.9	29.7	69.9	30.9	0.4

Base: US residents ages 16+ with a driver's license who reported driving in past 30 days, weighted to reflect US population

Table 10. Behaviors reported at least once while driving in past 30 days by age group (N=2,545)

	Read text message or email (%)	Typed/sent text message or email (%)	Talked on a cell phone of any kind (%)
<i>All drivers</i>	42.3	31.5	69.9
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	47.3	62.6
	19-24	59.2	77.2
	25-39	64.8	77.5
	40-59	41.7	73.7
	60-74	20.5	60.0
	75+	5.8	42.2

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 11. How strongly do you support or oppose...?

	Support strongly	Support somewhat	Oppose somewhat	Oppose strongly	Support (strongly or somewhat)	Oppose (strongly or somewhat)	N
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	
<i>Having a law against reading, typing, or sending a text message or email while driving</i>	63.8	23.9	8.3	3.6	87.7	11.9	2,545
<i>Having a law against using a hand-held cell phone while driving, for all drivers regardless of their age</i>	42.7	27.6	21.0	8.2	70.3	29.2	2,545
<i>Having a law against using any type of cell phone while driving, hand-held or hands-free, for all drivers regardless of their age</i>	20.0	22.4	32.7	24.3	42.4	57.0	2,545
<i>Having a law requiring all drivers who have been convicted of DWI to use a device that won't let their car start if they have been drinking, even if it's their first time being convicted of DWI</i>	51.8	28.3	14.2	5.1	80.1	19.3	2,545
<i>Requiring all new cars to have a built-in technology that won't let the car start if the driver's alcohol level is over the legal limit</i>	43.9	26.4	16.6	12.4	70.3	29.0	2,545
<i>Using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who drive more than 10 mph over the speed limit on freeways</i>	14.4	20.5	25.8	38.7	34.9	64.5	1,288
<i>Using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who drive more than 10 mph over the speed limit on residential streets</i>	19.0	26.1	24.1	30.3	45.1	54.4	1,282
<i>Using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who drive more than 10 mph over the speed limit in urban areas</i>	16.6	24.5	26.8	31.6	41.1	58.4	1,306
<i>Using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who drive more than 10 mph over the speed limit in school zones</i>	33.2	23.0	17.6	25.4	56.2	43.0	1,227
<i>Using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who run red lights in urban areas</i>	26.3	27.2	20.8	24.9	53.5	45.7	1,303
<i>Using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who run red lights on residential streets</i>	27.8	29.2	18.1	24.2	57.0	42.3	1,229
<i>Having a law requiring all motorcycle riders to wear a helmet</i>	59.8	20.3	12.2	7.0	80.1	19.2	2,545

<i>Having the federal government regulate non-driving-related technologies in cars to make sure they don't distract drivers</i>	19.0	27.5	28.4	24.3	46.5	52.7	2,545
<i>Having a law making it illegal to drive with more than a certain amount of marijuana in your system</i>	55.2	26.4	11.0	6.6	81.6	17.6	2,545
<i>Lowering the limit for a driver's blood alcohol concentration from 0.08 to 0.05 g/dL^a</i>	31.4	31.7	19.0	16.6	63.1	35.6	2,545
<i>Your state adopting a vision to reduce the number of people killed in accidents to zero^b</i>	40.4	39.2	13.1	5.9	79.6	19.0	2,545

Base: US residents ages 16+ with a driver's license who reported driving in past 30 days, weighted to reflect US population

Note: Columns do not sum to 100 because refusals are not shown. The proportion that refused to respond was 0.9 percent or smaller for all questions.

These items were asked in separate questions as follows:

^a "In the United States, the legal limit for a driver's blood alcohol concentration (a measure of the amount of alcohol in a person's blood) is 0.08 grams of alcohol per deciliter of blood. In Australia, France, Italy, Spain, and several other countries, the limit is 0.05. How strongly do you support or oppose lowering the limit in the United States from 0.08 to 0.05?"

^b "The governments in some states have adopted a vision that in the future, no people will be killed in car accidents in their state. How strongly do you support or oppose your state adopting a vision to reduce the number of people killed in accidents to zero?"

Table 12. Support for distracted driving laws & regulation by age group, United States, 2015 (N=2,545)

	Text message/Email ban (%)	Hand-held cell phone ban (%)	All cell phone ban (%)	Federal gov't. regulation of non-driving technologies in cars (%)	
<i>All drivers</i>	87.7	70.3	42.4	46.5	
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	86.1	65.8	38.6	45.9
	19-24	83.7	66.4	32.5	37.2
	25-39	79.7	60.9	33.0	40.9
	40-59	89.1	68.5	42.1	45.6
	60-74	94.2	82.8	53.0	55.2
	75+	93.4	81.7	61.0	57.3

Base: US residents ages 16+ with a driver's license who reported driving in past 30 days, weighted to reflect US population

Table 13. When you talk on your cell phone while driving, do you usually hold the phone in your hand, or do you use a hands-free device? (N=1,724)

	I always hold the phone in my hand (%)	I usually hold the phone in my hand (%)	I hold the phone in my hand about half the time, and use a hands-free device about half of the time (%)	I usually use a hands-free device (%)	I always use a hands-free device (%)	Don't know/Refused (%)	
<i>All drivers</i>	26.7	15.4	8.6	17.9	30.5	0.9	
<i>Age Group</i>	16-18	28.8	21.3	8.2	19.4	21.2	1.1
	19-24	20.2	22.4	9.8	17.9	29.8	0.0
	25-39	28.4	13.2	12.0	17.6	28.6	0.2
	40-59	25.6	14.1	8.0	20.3	30.8	1.2
	60-74	28.8	16.4	5.4	13.6	34.4	1.5
	75+	30.6	18.4	5.3	16.0	28.4	1.3

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days and having talked on a cell phone while driving at least once, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 14. Compared to holding a cell phone in your hand and talking while you were driving, how safe or dangerous do you think it is to talk while driving using a hands-free device? (N=2,545)

	Hands-free device is much safer (%)	Hands-free device is somewhat safer (%)	They are about the same (%)	Hands-free device is somewhat more dangerous (%)	Hands-free device is much more dangerous (%)	Don't know/Refused (%)	
<i>All drivers</i>	28.9	43.9	25.4	0.9	0.7	0.1	
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	30.8	43.6	24.1	1.0	0.5	0.0
	19-24	32.6	48.7	18.4	0.0	0.3	0.0
	25-39	28.7	43.6	26.1	0.9	0.4	0.3
	40-59	28.6	41.4	28.6	1.0	0.5	0.0
	60-74	27.9	45.5	23.7	1.1	1.6	0.3
	75+	29.1	50.5	18.9	1.2	0.3	0.0

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 15. In the past year how often have you driven when you thought your alcohol level might have been close to or possibly over the legal limit? (N=2,545)

	Regularly (%)	Fairly often (%)	Rarely (%)	Just once (%)	Not in the past year (%)	
<i>All drivers</i>	0.4	1.1	7.8	4.1	86.6	
<i>Age Group</i>	16-18	0.5	0.8	1.4	1.5	95.7
	19-24	0.0	2.6	5.5	7.2	84.7
	25-39	0.6	2.1	9.8	6.1	81.4
	40-59	0.4	0.3	8.6	3.4	87.4
	60-74	0.5	0.9	6.0	2.9	89.8
	75+	0.0	0.8	8.0	1.6	89.7

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 16. About how long ago was the last time you drove when you thought your alcohol level might have been close to or possibly over the legal limit? (N=2,545)

	Within the past month (%)	At least 1 month ago, but less than 3 months ago (%)	At least 3 months ago, but less than 6 months ago (%)	6 months or longer ago (%)	Not in the past year (%)	Refused (%)	
<i>All drivers</i>	2.0	2.2	3.2	5.9	86.6	0.0	
<i>Age Group</i>	16-18	0.5	0.8	0.9	2.1	95.7	0.0
	19-24	3.3	3.6	3.0	5.4	84.7	0.0
	25-39	3.9	3.5	4.5	6.7	81.4	0.0
	40-59	1.3	1.8	3.4	6.1	87.4	0.1
	60-74	1.4	1.4	2.3	5.2	89.8	0.0
	75+	0.8	1.7	0.7	7.2	89.7	0.0

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 17. In the past year how often have you driven less than two hours after drinking alcohol, even if you only had a little to drink? (N=2,545)

	Regularly (%)	Fairly often (%)	Rarely (%)	Just once (%)	Not in the past year (%)	
<i>All drivers</i>	1.7	5.3	18.3	5.2	69.5	
<i>Age Group</i>	16-18	1.1	1.1	3.4	2.1	92.4
	19-24	0.4	6.6	14.2	2.4	76.5
	25-39	3.1	6.2	20.7	7.1	63.0
	40-59	1.4	4.6	20.0	5.6	68.4
	60-74	1.8	5.5	15.1	4.0	73.6
	75+	0.0	6.9	23.2	4.2	65.8

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 18. In the past year, how often have you driven within one hour of using marijuana? (N=2,545)

	Regularly (%)	Fairly often (%)	Rarely (%)	Just once (%)	Never (%)	Don't know/Refused	
<i>All drivers</i>	1.3	0.7	1.6	0.6	95.6	0.2	
<i>Age Group</i>	16-18	0.5	0.7	1.2	0.2	96.9	0.5
	19-24	2.6	2.6	3.0	0.9	91.0	0.0
	25-39	2.4	0.5	2.1	1.5	92.9	0.5
	40-59	1.0	0.5	1.6	0.2	96.7	0.0
	60-74	0.5	0.5	1.2	0.5	97.0	0.3
	75+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	99.6	0.4

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 19. About how long ago was the last time you drove within 1 hour of using marijuana? (N=2,545)

	Within the past month	At least 1 month ago, but less than 3 months ago	At least 3 months ago, but less than 6 months ago	6 months or longer ago	Not in the past year	Don't know/Refused	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	
<i>All drivers</i>	2.1	0.8	0.6	0.7	95.6	0.2	
<i>Age Group</i>	16-18	1.1	1.1	0.2	0.2	96.9	0.5
	19-24	4.6	2.2	0.6	1.6	91.0	0.0
	25-39	2.9	1.5	1.0	1.1	92.9	0.5
	40-59	2.1	0.3	0.5	0.4	96.7	0.0
	60-74	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.8	97.0	0.3
	75+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	99.6	0.4

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 20. Sometimes people drink alcohol while using marijuana. In the past year how often have you driven within 1 hour of consuming both marijuana and alcohol, even if you weren't drunk? (N=2,545)

	Regularly (%)	Fairly often (%)	Rarely (%)	Just once (%)	Not in past year (%)	
All drivers	0.4	0.4	1.1	0.0	98.0	
Age Group	16-18	0.5	0.0	0.8	0.4	98.3
	19-24	1.3	1.1	1.6	0.3	95.8
	25-39	0.5	1.0	1.4	0.3	96.8
	40-59	0.1	0.0	1.1	0.0	98.8
	60-74	0.5	0.0	0.9	0.0	98.5
	75+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

Base: licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in the past 30 days, weighted to reflect the US population

Table 21. Driver Characteristics (Column percent weighted to reflect U.S. resident population ages 16+, unweighted N)

Type of Vehicle Driven Most Often	%	N
Car	56.5	1,474
Van / Minivan	7.0	176
Pickup Truck	11.3	287
SUV	22.2	549
Other	2.2	41
Motorcycle	0.3	7
Don't know / Refused	0.6	11
Number of Times Stopped by Police for Moving Violation in Past 2 Years		
0	84.8	2,160
1	10.8	273
2+	3.8	96
Don't know / Refused	0.6	16
Number of Tickets for Moving Violations in Past 2 Years		
0	88.7	2,275
1	8.4	199
2+	2.0	47
Don't know / Refused	0.8	24
Number of Accidents while Driving in Past 2 Years		
0	88.5	2,223
1	9.3	256
2+	1.6	50
Don't know / Refused	0.6	16

Base: Licensed drivers 16+ who reported driving in past 30 days.

Table 22. Sample Characteristics (Column percent weighted to reflect U.S. resident population ages 16+, unweighted N)

	Drivers (N=2,545)		All Respondents (N=3,405)	
	%	N	%	N
Age Group				
16-18	3.1	439	5.3	963
19-24	8.2	154	9.9	225
25-39	23.9	485	24.4	586
40-59	37.5	804	34.9	894
60-74	22.2	534	20.4	584
75+	5.1	129	5.1	153
Gender				
Male	49.2	1,280	48.3	1,693
Female	50.8	1,265	51.7	1,712
Race/Ethnicity				
Non-Hispanic White	69.8	1,946	65.2	2,361
Non-Hispanic Black	9.8	174	11.6	291
Other Race/Multiple Races	7.5	158	7.8	231
Hispanic (Any race)	12.9	267	15.4	522
Language of Interview				
English	95.0	2,450	92.9	3,172
Spanish	5.0	95	7.1	233
Type of Community				
Country	13.6	352	12.6	426
Small Town	20.1	526	19.2	667
Medium-Sized Town	20.6	531	20.1	687
Small City	23.6	607	23.5	822
Large City	22.0	524	23.8	777
Unknown	0.1	5	0.8	26
Region				
Northeast	17.8	503	18.2	680
Midwest	22.5	619	21.4	769
South	36.3	856	37.1	1,169
West	23.4	567	23.4	787
Ever Involved in Serious Motor Vehicle Accident				
Yes	19.6	454	18.9	561
No	80.0	2,080	79.9	2,810
Don't know / Refused	0.5	11	1.2	34

Ever Seriously Injured in Motor Vehicle Accident					
Yes	11.9	267	11.6	327	
No	87.2	2,261	86.9	3,036	
<i>Don't know / Refused</i>	0.9	17	1.5	42	
Friend or Relative Ever Seriously Injured or Killed in Motor Vehicle Accident					
Yes	30.9	770	30.4	1019	
No	68.7	1,766	68.5	2,357	
<i>Don't know / Refused</i>	0.4	9	1.1	29	