



2017 Traffic Safety Culture Index

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Title

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Authors

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

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Foreword

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has consistently demonstrated its commitment to improve traffic safety through work such as the research presented in this report, the 10th annual *Traffic Safety Culture Index*. Findings presented in this report are based on a nationally representative survey of more than 2,600 U.S. motorists conducted in 2017.

This report is a useful reference for researchers, practitioners and advocates of traffic safety who may utilize results presented to influence changes and promote awareness of traffic safety.

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Introduction

Between 2006 and 2015, an estimated 57,732,000 crashes occurred on U.S. highways, resulting in 355,562 fatalities and an estimated 23,541,000 injuries (National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 2017a). Certain driver behaviors increase the risk of crashes and fatalities, posing a danger not only to drivers, but to passengers, other motorists, pedestrians and other road users. In 2016, there were 10,497 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities, an increase of 1.7% from 10,320 in 2015. Additionally, the number of fatalities in speeding related crashes in 2016 increased by 4%, from 9,723 in 2015 to 10,111. Although it is still a significant number, distraction-affected crashes decreased from 3,526 in 2015 to 3,450 in 2016 (National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 2017b).

A recent study conducted by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that texting and visual-manual tasks increase the odds of crash involvement by 83% (Owens, 2018a). Driving while drowsy increases the risk of motor vehicle crash involvement. In another study conducted by the Foundation, results show drivers who usually sleep four to five hours daily had 5.4 times the crash rate of drivers who reported sleeping usually seven hours or more (Tefft, 2016). In addition, a separate study conducted by the Foundation found that around 10% of drivers in the study who were involved in a crash were shown to be driving while drowsy. (Owens, 2018b).

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has been committed to deepening our understanding of our nation's traffic safety culture (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2013-2017). The first Traffic Safety Culture Index, a nationally representative survey of U.S. motorists, was launched in 2008 (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2008). This effort, which is carried out annually, continues to identify key indicators regarding the degree to which traffic safety is valued and pursued by drivers in the U.S.

As in previous years, the 2017 Traffic Safety Culture Index (TSCI) reveals that people in the United States value safe travel and also desire a greater level of security than they currently are experiencing. Unsafe driving behavior – such as red-light running, texting while driving and impaired driving – are perceived as posing serious threats to personal safety. However, despite these strongly held concerns, many individuals admit engaging in unsafe driving practices. Most drivers (89.3%) reported engaging in at least one of the risky behaviors examined in the survey at least once in the past 30 days. As such, drivers in the sample often demonstrate a “do as I say, not as I do” attitude. For example, although 92% of respondents reported that driving through a light that just turned red when they could have stopped is unacceptable behavior, 43% admitted to doing so in the past month. These examples highlight discordance between motorists' traffic safety culture beliefs and concerns and actual driving behaviors.

Summarized in this report are the major national-level results of the Foundation's 10th annual Traffic Safety Culture Index.

Summary of Major Findings

General

- More than 1 in 5 (21.4%) drivers report having been involved in a motor vehicle crash in which someone had to go to the hospital, including 11.1% who have been seriously injured in a crash themselves.
- Nearly 1 in 3 (31.6%) drivers report having had a relative who was seriously injured or killed in a motor vehicle crash.
- Most drivers (87.5%) perceive that distracted drivers are a bigger problem today than in past years. Moreover, distracted driving outpaced all other issues as a growing concern. It was followed by traffic congestion at 74.5%, aggressive drivers at 68.1%, drivers using drugs at 54.9% and drunk driving at 43.4%.

Distracted Driving

- Cellphone use while driving is common. In the past month, 60.5% of drivers talked on a hands-free cellphone while 49.1% talked on a hand-held cellphone. Drivers are more accepting of hands-free cellphone use (69.0%) than hand-held cellphone use (24.6%) while driving.
- More view drivers texting or emailing while driving as a serious threat (96.8%) than drivers talking on cellphones (87.7%). However, in the past 30 days, 44.9% of drivers read a text message or email while driving and 34.6% of drivers typed or sent a text message or email while driving.
- A majority of respondents (87.6%) support legislation against reading, typing or sending a text message or email and 73.4% of drivers support having a law against using a hand-held cellphone while driving. However, only 40.9% support an outright ban on using any type of cellphone (including hands-free) while driving.

Risky and Aggressive Driving Behaviors

- Speeding on freeways and on residential streets is prevalent. Half of drivers (50.3%) reported driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway and 47.6% reported driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street.
- There is greater social disapproval for speeding on a residential street than on freeways. Only 23.9% of drivers believe that driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway is completely or somewhat acceptable while only 14.0% of motorists deem driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street as acceptable.
- A large portion of drivers (42.7%) admitted to driving through a stoplight that has just turned red when they could have stopped safely in the past 30 days, despite most drivers (92.9%) viewing it as an unacceptable behavior. In conjunction with this, an overwhelming majority (91.4%) of drivers perceive running red lights as a serious or somewhat serious threat to their personal safety.

Drowsy Driving

- 42.4% of drivers have at least one or more days when they get less than six hours of sleep in a typical week.

- The majority of motorists view drowsy driving as a serious or somewhat serious threat to their safety (87.9%) and an unacceptable behavior (95.2%); yet around 3 in 10 (30.8%) 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.

Impaired Driving

- An overwhelming majority of drivers consider driving after drinking alcohol a serious threat to their personal safety (94.3%). However, 13.5% reported driving at least once in the past year when they thought their alcohol levels might have been close to or possibly over the legal limit.
- A majority of drivers (90.8%) perceive people driving after using illegal drugs to be either a very serious threat or a somewhat serious threat to their personal safety.
- Most respondents supported requiring alcohol-ignition interlocks for drivers convicted of DWI, even for first time offenders (79.9%); requiring built-in interlocks for all new vehicles (73.0%) and having a *per se* law for marijuana (82.9%).

Data Collection Methodology and Limitations

Sampling

As with previous years, a sample of respondents ages 16 and older was recruited from KnowledgePanel®, an online research panel recruited and maintained by GfK. The panel consists of members of a representative sample of households that were recruited using standard probability-based random digit dial (RDD) and address-based sampling methods (GfK, 2013). 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, which was made available in English and Spanish. The survey was administered between October 14 and November 17, 2017.

Respondents ages 19 and older were sampled directly from the membership of the panel across the nine U.S. Census Bureau divisions, with a target of a minimum of 200 completed interviews per division. The questionnaire was sent to 3,927 panelists ages 19 and older of which 2,402 completed the questionnaire. Respondents ages 16-18 were recruited indirectly from a sample of panel members whose existing household information indicated that there 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 3,396 parents of teens ages 16-18 and 972 respondents completed the questionnaire.

Weighting

The data were weighted according to a number of factors: (1) probability of selection for recruitment into KnowledgePanel, (2) probability of selection for this survey and (3) nonresponse at both stages. Weighting also aligned the characteristics of the respondents to those of the population of residents ages 16 or older 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 Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). All analyses were based on weighted data.

Limitations

The purpose of the Traffic Safety Culture Index (TSCI) is to estimate the prevalence of specific attitudes and behaviors among all drivers in the United States. However, the results of this survey may have some

deviation compared with the driving population due to sampling error and various possible sources of bias.

Sampling error reflects the extent to which estimates derived from a sample (e.g., this sample of 2,613 drivers) might be expected to differ from the results that would be obtained if the same data were collected from every member of the population (i.e., all drivers in the United States). The current results are reported at the 95% confidence level; thus, range estimates are provided that are expected to include the actual population value 95 times out of 100 when estimated from a sample of the same size and with the same design. The resulting margin of error varies depending on the number of respondents who answered a particular question as well as the distribution of the responses. Table 1 shows the approximate margin of error for illustrative examples of statistics derived from the entire sample; the margin of error would be larger for items with fewer respondents.

Table 1. Approximate margin of error (in percentage points) for selected percentages, at the 95% confidence level

Percentages near	Approx. margin of error
90 or 10	± 1.4
80 or 20	± 1.9
70 or 30	± 2.1
60 or 40	± 2.3
50	± 2.3

Due to the design of the panel and the stratification by census division and oversampling of respondents ages 16-18, the margin of error is larger in this survey than for a simple random sample of the same size. However, because the probability of the selection is known, the statistics are weighted to reflect the entire population from which the sample was drawn.

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 attributable to bias. Potential sources of bias in surveys include systematic non-coverage of certain segments of the population (e.g., people who cannot read in English nor in Spanish), nonresponse (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., underreporting of behaviors that may be perceived as undesirable).

This report summarizes the main national-level results of the TSCI survey. 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. This report will refer to these respondents as drivers. In addition, row percentages may not equal 100% because nonresponses and refusals were omitted on the tables. This report focuses on certain themes such as distracted driving, which includes cellphone use while driving and texting while driving; risky and aggressive behavior such as speeding and running red lights; drowsy driving and impaired driving behavior including alcohol-impaired driving and drug-impaired driving.

Overall Results

The results of the 2017 TSCI study are presented in several sections. The first section covers the overall results related to the perceived magnitude and visibility of the problem, support of safety laws and acceptability of certain traffic behaviors, threats to personal safety and traffic-related behaviors. These are described in the context of three focus areas: 1) distracted driving, including cellphone use and texting or emailing, 2) risky and aggressive driving, which includes speeding and running red lights and 3) driving while drowsy or impaired by alcohol or other drugs. The remaining sections more closely examine the three focus areas considering relevant demographic factors such as age and sex. The discussion section presents a comparison of drivers' beliefs with their behaviors.

Personal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes

A large portion of drivers have been affected in some way by a serious motor vehicle crash at some point in their lives. More than 1 in 5 drivers (21.4%) report having been involved in a motor vehicle crash in which someone had to go to the hospital, including 11.1% who have been seriously injured in a crash themselves. Nearly 1 in 3 drivers (31.6%) report having had a relative who was seriously injured or killed in a motor vehicle crash.

Perceived Magnitude of the Problem Compared With Three Years Ago

Participants were asked to report how much of a problem certain traffic related issues are today, compared with three years ago. Traffic issues included traffic congestion, distracted driving, risky and aggressive driving and alcohol and drug use and driving. Participants were asked whether each issue was a much bigger issue today than three years ago, a somewhat bigger problem, about the same, a somewhat smaller issue or a much smaller issue.

When asked how much of a problem each traffic related issue is today compared with three years ago, most drivers (87.5%) perceive that distracted driving is a somewhat or much bigger problem today, with 11.1% perceiving it as the same as it was three years ago, as shown in Table 2. Moreover, distracted driving outpaced all other issues as a growing concern. It was followed by traffic congestion at 74.5%, aggressive drivers at 68.1%, drivers using drugs at 54.9% and drunk driving.

Table 2. Please tell us how much of a problem each of the issues below is today compared with three years ago. (N=2,613)

	Much bigger problem today (%)	Somewhat bigger problem today (%)	About the same (%)	Somewhat smaller problem today (%)	Much smaller problem today (%)
<i>Distracted drivers</i>	63.9	23.6	11.1	0.5	0.7
<i>Aggressive drivers</i>	39.2	28.9	29.6	1.2	0.9
<i>Drunk driving</i>	22.2	21.2	48.3	6.8	1.3
<i>Drivers using drugs</i>	29.5	25.4	42.1	2.0	0.8
<i>Traffic congestion</i>	41.1	33.4	23.4	0.9	1.0

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

Less than half of participants (43.4%) perceived drunk driving to be a much bigger problem or a somewhat bigger problem than three years ago. More than any other issue, drunk driving was considered to be most similar in problem magnitude as three years ago.

Visibility of Traffic Behaviors

Drivers were asked how often they observed a certain driver behavior on the road within the last month. Drivers responded whether they saw the behavior regularly, fairly often, rarely, just once or never. Table 3 shows that the majority of drivers observe distracted driving often on the roads. More than 9 in 10 drivers (92.8%) report seeing drivers talking on cellphones regularly or fairly often while 84% of drivers report seeing drivers text messaging or emailing regularly or fairly often.

Speeding on freeways was the most visible behavior; 93.3% of respondents reported observing it regularly or fairly often. Speeding on residential streets was reported regularly or fairly often by 85.5% of respondents. Only 28.0% of drivers reported seeing drivers who appeared to be under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Fifty percent say they rarely saw this behavior while 16.3% never saw it in the previous month. Drowsy driving was not often observed by respondents in the previous month; 26.1% of drivers reported they saw it regularly or fairly often.

Table 3. In the past month, how often have you seen the following behaviors on the road? (N=2,613)

	Regularly	Fairly often	Rarely	Just once	Never
<i>Drivers talking on cellphones</i>	64.8	28.0	5.8	0.5	0.9
<i>Drivers text messaging or emailing</i>	48.9	35.1	11.3	1.4	3.1
<i>People driving aggressively</i>	42.6	40.9	13.1	1.6	1.5
<i>Drivers speeding on freeways</i>	65.5	27.8	4.6	0.6	1.2
<i>Drivers speeding on residential streets</i>	44.8	40.7	12.2	0.5	1.5
<i>Drivers running red lights</i>	20.0	31.5	35.5	5.6	7.2
<i>Drivers who appear to be drowsy</i>	6.0	20.1	51.7	4.2	17.7
<i>Drivers who appear to be under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs</i>	7.7	20.3	50.0	5.4	16.3

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

Support for Safety Countermeasures

Regarding the support of specific safety countermeasures, the majority of drivers tend to support most traffic safety laws (Table 4). For example, 73.4% of drivers support laws against using hand-held cellphones while driving and 87.6% of drivers support a law against reading, typing and sending a text message while driving. There are a few exceptions, however, such as laws using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who drive more than 10 mph over the speed limit in a residential area, with a little more than half of drivers strongly or somewhat opposed to it. In addition, a law against using any type of cellphone (whether hand-held or hands-free), is relatively unpopular, with 58.4% of drivers opposing it.

Table 4. How strongly do you support or oppose (N= 2,613)

	Support strongly (%)	Support somewhat (%)	Oppose somewhat (%)	Oppose strongly (%)
<i>Having a law against reading, typing or sending a text message or email while driving</i>	61.6	26.0	8.2	3.3
<i>Having a law against using a hand-held cellphone while driving, for all drivers regardless of their age</i>	44.3	29.1	18.2	7.7
<i>Having a law against using any type of cellphone while driving, hand-held or hands-free, for all drivers regardless of their age</i>	20.3	20.6	32.2	26.2
<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>	50.5	29.4	14.5	4.9
<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>	45.4	27.6	16.4	9.9
<i>Using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who drive more than 10 mph over the speed limit on residential streets</i>	22.3	25.9	25.3	25.6
<i>Using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who run red lights on residential streets</i>	30.0	29.1	20.4	19.8
<i>Having a law requiring all motorcycle riders to wear a helmet</i>	62.3	19.9	10.8	6.3
<i>Having a law making it illegal to drive with more than a certain amount of marijuana in your system</i>	55.9	27.0	10.7	5.7
<i>Having a law against driving with no sleep in the past 24 hours</i>	37.8	31.2	21.2	8.9
<i>Lowering the limit for a driver's blood alcohol concentration from 0.08 to 0.05 g/dL ^a</i>	31.3	32.4	19.9	16.0

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

Acceptability of Traffic Behaviors

Participants were asked to report how acceptable each traffic related behavior is: completely acceptable, somewhat acceptable, somewhat unacceptable and completely unacceptable. Traffic behaviors identified were: talking on a hand-held phone while driving, talking on a hands-free phone while driving, reading a text or email message while driving, driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway, driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street, running a red light, driving without a seat belt, drowsy or fatigued driving, drunk driving and driving after using marijuana.

There are differences in the type of distracted behavior drivers deem as acceptable. Table 5 shows how acceptable each driving behavior is to drivers. More than 2 in 3 drivers (69.0%) see talking on a hands-free phone while driving as acceptable while only around a quarter (24.6%) of drivers see talking on a

hand-held cellphone as acceptable. With respect to texting and emailing while driving, only 6.8% of drivers consider reading a text or e-mailing while driving as acceptable and only 3.8% of drivers consider typing or sending a text message as acceptable.

Table 5. How acceptable do you, personally, feel it is for a driver to...? (N=2,613)

	Completely acceptable (%)	Somewhat acceptable (%)	Somewhat unacceptable (%)	Completely unacceptable (%)
<i>Talk on a hand-held cellphone while driving</i>	4.9	19.7	28.7	46.1
<i>Talk on a hands-free phone while driving</i>	29.3	39.7	18.0	12.6
<i>Read a text message or email while driving</i>	1.3	5.5	24.5	68.3
<i>Type or send text message or email while driving</i>	1.1	2.7	17.2	78.4
<i>Drive 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway</i>	4.3	19.6	33.5	42.0
<i>Drive 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street</i>	2.2	11.8	29.9	55.6
<i>Drive through a light that just turned red, when they could have stopped safely</i>	1.6	5.5	28.1	64.3
<i>Drive without wearing their seat belt</i>	5.1	8.4	22.4	63.7
<i>Drive when they're so sleepy that they have trouble keeping their eyes open</i>	1.5	2.9	20.3	74.9
<i>Drive after drinking alcohol</i>	1.0	4.8	19.3	74.4
<i>Drive after smoking or using marijuana</i>	2.3	8.0	23.3	65.8

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

There are also differences in the level of acceptability based on the location where speeding occurs. For example, around a quarter (23.9%) of drivers deem driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway as acceptable but only 14.0% of drivers deem driving 10 mph over the speed limit in a residential street as acceptable.

The acceptability of impaired driving also varies by the type or source of impairment. Only 5.8% of drivers deem driving after drinking alcohol as an acceptable behavior while 10.3% of drivers see driving after smoking or using marijuana as completely or somewhat acceptable.

Threats to Personal Safety

Participants were asked how much of a threat to their personal safety certain traffic behaviors are. Traffic related behaviors included drivers talking on cellphones, text messaging or emailing, driving after drinking alcohol, driving aggressively, speeding on freeways and on residential streets, running red lights, driving while sleepy or fatigued and driving after using drugs, whether prescription or illegal ones. Based on driver responses for each year, a large majority of drivers sees each traffic related behavior as a threat to their personal safety.

In terms of impaired driving, drivers overall perceive people driving after using prescription drugs as considerably less threatening to their personal safety than people driving after using illegal drugs (Table 6). A little more than 3 out of 4 (78.1%) drivers perceive people driving after using prescription drugs as

a very serious or somewhat serious threat to their personal safety, while around 9 in 10 (90.8%) perceive people driving after using illegal drugs as a very serious or somewhat serious threat to their personal safety.

Table 6. How much of a threat to your personal safety are ...? (N=2,613)

	Very serious threat (%)	Somewhat serious threat (%)	Minor threat (%)	Not a threat at all (%)
<i>Drivers talking on cellphones</i>	57.5	30.2	11.5	0.7
<i>Drivers text messaging or emailing</i>	77.6	19.2	2.8	0.2
<i>People driving aggressively</i>	58.3	33.2	7.6	0.7
<i>Drivers speeding on freeways</i>	44.9	34.4	18.5	1.9
<i>Drivers speeding on residential streets</i>	55.1	33.1	10.6	1.0
<i>Drivers running red lights</i>	66.2	25.2	7.8	0.7
<i>Sleepy drivers</i>	54.9	33	11.1	0.8
<i>People driving after drinking alcohol</i>	73.5	20.8	5.0	0.5
<i>People driving after using illegal drugs</i>	68.2	22.6	8.2	0.8
<i>People driving after using prescription drugs</i>	42.5	35.6	19.2	2.5

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

Drivers text messaging or emailing is the most cited threat to personal safety among drivers with 96.8% saying that it is a very serious threat or a somewhat serious threat. The percentage of respondents who said text messaging or emailing while driving is a serious threat exceeds the percentage who consider driving after drinking alcohol a serious threat (94.3%).

Traffic Related Behaviors in the Past 30 Days

Drivers were asked to report how often they engaged in any risky driving behaviors in the past 30 days. Behaviors that were asked about included talking on a hand-held phone while driving, talking on a hands-free phone while driving, reading a text or email message while driving, driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway, driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street, running a red light, driving without a seat belt, drowsy or fatigued driving, drunk driving and driving after using marijuana. Participants were asked whether they did this regularly, fairly often, rarely, just once or never.

Despite perceived threats and lower levels of acceptance, a considerable proportion of drivers still admit to engaging in these behaviors. Table 7 shows how often drivers engaged in different behaviors in the previous 30 days. A little more than 60 percent of drivers reported talking on a hands-free phone while driving in the past month while almost half (49.2%) reported talking on a hand-held phone. Forty-five percent of drivers read a text or email message while driving and 34.6% typed or sent a text message or email. Comparatively, the percentage of drivers who drove without seat belts in the previous month was low (18.5%).

Table 7. In the past 30 days, how often have you...? (N=2,613)

	Regularly (%)	Fairly often (%)	Rarely (%)	Just once (%)	Never (%)
<i>Read a text message or email while you were driving</i>	3.6	9.5	23.5	8.4	54.7
<i>Typed or sent a text message or email while you were driving</i>	3.2	6.8	19.2	5.4	64.9
<i>Talked on a hand-held phone while you were driving</i>	4.5	9.3	26.9	8.5	50.7
<i>Talked on a hands-free phone while you were driving</i>	13.8	20.9	21.3	4.4	39.3
<i>Driven 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway</i>	4.9	13.9	25.6	6.0	49.6
<i>Driven 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street</i>	3.5	9.4	27.8	6.8	52.2
<i>Driven through a light that had just turned red when you could have stopped safely</i>	1.9	3.1	22.7	15	57.1
<i>Driven without wearing your seat belt</i>	3.3	3.5	8.9	2.8	81.2
<i>Driven when you were so tired that you had a hard time keeping your eyes open</i>	1.3	2.9	16.8	9.9	69.1

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

Distracted Driving

Distracted driving behaviors, including hand-held and hand-free cellphone use and texting or emailing, are fairly widespread. As shown in Table 8, in the 30 days prior to the survey, 60.5% of drivers talked on a hands-free cellphone, 49.1% talked on a hand-held cellphone, 44.9% of drivers read a text message or email while driving and 34.6% of drivers typed or sent a text message or email while driving.

Table 8. Proportion of drivers who reported distracted driving behaviors at least once in the past 30 days (N= 2,613)

	Talked on a hands-free cellphone (%)	Talked on a hand-held cellphone (%)	Read a text message or email (%)	Typed/sent a text message or email (%)
<i>All drivers</i>	60.5	49.1	44.9	34.6
<i>Age group</i>				
<i>16-18</i>	53.1	51.1	52.0	37.9
<i>19-24</i>	66.2	57.3	54.9	42.3
<i>25-39</i>	66.9	55.4	62.2	55.0
<i>40-59</i>	64.4	50.5	48.2	35.6
<i>60-74</i>	53.2	40.6	24.5	13.9
<i>75+</i>	33.7	35.2	11.4	7.2
<i>Gender</i>				
<i>Male</i>	60.8	51.0	44.2	32.9
<i>Female</i>	60.3	47.3	45.7	36.2

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

Cellphone Use

Most drivers consider using a cellphone while driving and texting or emailing while driving to be a threat to their safety. Among participants, 87.7% considered drivers talking on cellphones to be a very serious or somewhat serious threat. Table 9 presents the proportion of drivers by age and sex who see distracted driving as a threat. There were gender differences in the perceived threat of using a phone while driving. Nearly 9 in 10 females (90.8%) considered phone use while driving as a somewhat or very

serious threat to their personal safety while 84.4% of males considered it a somewhat or very serious threat.

Table 9. Proportion of drivers who reported perceiving distracted driving behaviors as a somewhat or very serious threat (N= 2,613)

		Drivers talking on cellphones (%)	Drivers text messaging or emailing (%)
<i>All drivers</i>		87.7	96.8
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	83.1	95.7
	19-24	76.3	94.3
	25-39	84.4	96.0
	40-59	87.9	97.6
	60-74	92.7	97.6
	75+	94.3	95.1
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	84.4	95.6
	<i>Female</i>	90.8	97.9

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

Although cellphone usage was reported as a prevalent threat to personal safety, there were differences in the level of acceptability across modes of voice calling. Table 10 illustrates the proportion of drivers who found certain potentially distracting behaviors as acceptable while driving. More than 2 out of 3 drivers (69.0%) considered it completely or somewhat acceptable to talk on a hands-free phone while driving while only 24.6% indicated that it is acceptable to talk on a hand-held cellphone while driving.

Table 10. Proportion of drivers who rated distracted driving behaviors as completely or somewhat acceptable (N= 2,613)

		Read a text message or email while driving (%)	Type or send a text message or email while driving (%)	Talk on a hand-held cellphone while driving (%)	Talk on a hands-free phone while driving (%)
<i>All drivers</i>		6.8	3.9	24.6	69.0
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	11.0	6.4	34.2	78.9
	19-24	7.8	3.4	24.7	72.1
	25-39	12.1	6.2	32.6	71.4
	40-59	5.3	3.2	26.1	72.2
	60-74	3.5	2.3	16.2	63.5
	75+	1.7	2.8	5.7	49.6
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	8.5	4.5	25.3	70.0
	<i>Female</i>	5.2	3.3	24.0	68.0

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

These outcomes mirror the trend in how much drivers support or oppose having laws against cellphone use. For example, 73.4% of drivers supported laws against a hand-held cellphone while driving; however, only 40.9% of drivers supported laws against using any type of cellphone, whether hand-held or hands-free (see Table 4).

Text Messaging and Emailing

Most drivers (96.8%) consider text messaging or emailing as a bigger threat than drivers talking on cellphones (87.7%) (Table 9). The level of perceived threat mirrors what drivers believe is acceptable, with 6.8% of drivers saying that reading a text message or email while driving is acceptable and only 3.9% of drivers saying that typing a text message or emailing while driving is acceptable (Table 10). When asked whether they strongly support or oppose legislation against reading, typing or sending a text message or email while driving, an overwhelming 87.6% support it with 61.6% strongly supporting it (Table 4).

Despite this belief in acceptability and perceived threat regarding reading and writing text messages and emails while driving, 44.9% of drivers admitted to reading a text message or email while driving in the 30 days prior to the survey and 34.6% typed or sent a text or email (Table 8).

Self-reported beliefs about acceptance and threats and self-reported behavior about texting and emailing while driving varies by age and sex. Table 8 shows that those ages 25-39 have the highest proportion who report they have read text messages or emails while driving (62.2%) and typed/sent text messages while driving (55.0%). Drivers ages 19-24 follow closely behind with 54.9% and 42.3%, respectively. Drivers ages 75 and older, by a wide margin, have the lowest proportion of drivers who read texts or emails (11.4%) or type or send texts or emails (7.2%) while driving. A higher percentage of females (36.2%) report typing or sending text messages or emails than males (32.9%).

Risky and Aggressive Driving Behaviors

Around 2 in 3 drivers (68.1%) perceive that aggressive driving is a much bigger or somewhat bigger problem today than it was three years ago (Table 2), with 91.5% of all drivers saying that people driving aggressively pose a threat to their personal safety (Table 6).

Speeding

Speeding on freeways and residential streets is prevalent. About half of drivers (50.3%) reported driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway, with 18.8% reporting that they did it fairly often to regularly in the past month. Table 11 shows the proportion of drivers who, at least once within the past 30 days, engaged in certain behaviors including speeding, driving through a red light or driving without a seat belt.

Table 11. Proportion of drivers who reported behaviors at least once in the past 30 days (N= 2,613)

		Drove 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway	Drove 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street	Drove through a light that had just turned red when you could have stopped safely	Drove without wearing your seat belt
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<i>All drivers</i>		50.3	47.6	42.7	18.6
<i>Age group</i>	<i>16-18</i>	38.1	49.7	34.0	11.9
	<i>19-24</i>	54.5	52.7	45.6	18.6
	<i>25-39</i>	55.3	53.2	43.9	26.0
	<i>40-59</i>	50.3	46.0	43.5	17.5
	<i>60-74</i>	46.4	42.6	41.8	13.5
	<i>75+</i>	45.0	44.9	37.8	15.3
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	54.1	50.2	45.4	21.4
	<i>Female</i>	46.7	45.1	40.2	15.9

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

Additionally, 47.6% reported driving 10 mph over the speed limit in a residential area, with 12.9% indicating that they did it fairly often or regularly, over the past 30 days.

Despite the high proportion of individuals who drive over the speed limit, the proportion of individuals who deem this behavior acceptable is relatively small (Table 12). Only 23.9% of drivers believe that driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway is completely or somewhat acceptable and a smaller proportion of people (14.0%) deem driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street to be acceptable.

Table 12. Proportion of drivers who rated risky driving behaviors as completely or somewhat acceptable (N= 2,613)

		Driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway	Driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street	Driving without wearing a seat belt	Driving through a light that just turned red when they could have stopped
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<i>All drivers</i>		23.9	14.0	13.5	7.1
<i>Age group</i>	<i>16-18</i>	23.7	18.2	10.5	7.3
	<i>19-24</i>	30.2	16.4	9.1	7.5
	<i>25-39</i>	29.5	18.5	16.6	9.8
	<i>40-59</i>	22.9	14.0	15.3	6.4
	<i>60-74</i>	20.1	9.4	10.2	5.4
	<i>75+</i>	13.0	7.3	6.7	4.4
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	26.5	15.8	16.8	6.5
	<i>Female</i>	21.4	12.4	10.5	7.6

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

Table 13 shows that majority of drivers, around 4 in 5 (79.3%), indicated that drivers speeding on freeways pose a very serious or somewhat serious threat to their safety, while a greater percentage (88.2%) indicated that they see drivers speeding on residential streets as a very serious or somewhat serious threat to their personal safety.

Table 13. Proportion of drivers who reported perceiving risky driving behaviors as a somewhat or very serious threat (N= 2,613)

		People driving aggressively	Drivers speeding on freeways	Drivers speeding on residential streets	Drivers running red lights
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<i>All drivers</i>		91.5	79.3	88.2	91.4
<i>Age group</i>	<i>16-18</i>	90.6	76.7	85.4	91.7
	<i>19-24</i>	94.0	66.8	88.7	86.6
	<i>25-39</i>	90.2	77.8	87.8	92.6
	<i>40-59</i>	91.2	79.1	88.7	91.2
	<i>60-74</i>	93.3	83.4	89.0	91.6
	<i>75+</i>	90.5	84.5	84.8	90.0
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	87.9	71.5	85.0	89.1
	<i>Female</i>	94.9	86.6	91.3	93.6

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

The proportion of drivers who support having cameras automatically ticket drivers who speed more than 10 mph in a residential setting is only a fraction of those who see the behavior as a personal threat. Only 48.2% of drivers either strongly support or somewhat support using cameras to automatically ticket people driving more than 10 mph in a residential setting (Table 4).

Across sex and age, there are differences in self-reported beliefs about acceptance, threats and self-reported behavior regarding speeding. Table 12 shows that drivers ages 25-39 have the second highest proportion of drivers who consider speeding on freeways to be acceptable (29.5%) and the highest proportion of drivers who deem speeding on residential streets to be acceptable (18.5%). Not surprisingly, this age group also has the highest proportion of drivers who admit to speeding 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway (55.3%) and of drivers who drive 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential road (53.2%, see Table 11). In both cases, drivers ages 75 and older were less likely to deem speeding as acceptable: Only 13.0% believed that driving 15 mph over the speed limit on freeways is acceptable and only 7.3% believed that it is acceptable to drive 10 mph over the limit on residential roads (see Table 12).

Males were more likely to find speeding on both freeways (26.5%) and residential roads (15.8%) acceptable than females, of whom 21.4% found speeding on freeways acceptable and 12.4% found speeding on residential roads acceptable (see Table 12). In turn, the percentage of males who report speeding on freeways (54.1%) is higher than for females (46.7%). This also holds true for speeding on residential roads with half of male drivers (50.2%) reporting doing so compared with 45.1% of female drivers (Table 11).

Red-Light Running

The majority of drivers find that driving through a light that just turned red when they could have stopped safely is an unacceptable behavior (92.9%). Only 7.1% of drivers found it either completely acceptable or somewhat acceptable (see Table 12). An overwhelming majority (91.4%) of drivers perceive drivers running red lights as a serious or a somewhat serious threat to their personal safety (see Table 13).

Despite this, a relatively large portion of drivers (42.7%) admitted to driving through a stoplight that had just turned red when they could have stopped safely in the past 30 days. About 1 in 4 drivers (27.7%) report having done this more than once, with 5.0% reporting doing this fairly often or regularly (see Table 7). In addition, regardless of the fact that an overwhelming majority of drivers see red-light running as a threat to their safety and an unacceptable behavior, only 59.1% support using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who run red lights on residential streets.

Drivers ages 19-24 were the least likely to see red-light running as a threat (86.6%). This age group is also more likely to have driven through a stoplight that has just turned red when they could have safely stopped (45.6%) compared with other age groups (see Table 13 and Table 11).

Drowsy and Impaired Driving

Drowsy Driving

On a typical week, drivers report an average of 1.3 days where they get less than six hours of sleep. More than half of drivers, or 57.6%, typically do not get less than six hours of sleep during the week. This means that 42.4% of drivers report at least one or more days where they get less than six hours of sleep in a typical week. Table 14 shows that almost a third of drivers (30.8%) reported driving when they were so tired that they could barely keep their eyes open in the past 30 days.

Table 14. Proportion of drivers who reported driving while drowsy at least once in the past 30 days (N= 2,613)

		Driven when you were so tired that you had a hard time keeping your eyes open
		(%)
<i>All drivers</i>		30.8
<i>Age group</i>	<i>16-18</i>	24.8
	<i>19-24</i>	38.3
	<i>25-39</i>	34.5
	<i>40-59</i>	30.3
	<i>60-74</i>	27.3
	<i>75+</i>	27.6
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	31.4
	<i>Female</i>	30.2

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

Despite these figures, only 4.5% of drivers find this behavior acceptable (see Table 16 below) while 87.9% of drivers find that sleepy drivers are either a very serious threat or a somewhat serious threat as shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Proportion of drivers who reported perceiving drowsy drivers as a somewhat or very serious threat (N= 2,613)

		Sleepy drivers (%)
<i>All drivers</i>		87.9
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	85.7
	19-24	85.0
	25-39	91.0
	40-59	87.5
	60-74	87.6
	75+	82.2
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	84.1
	<i>Female</i>	91.6

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

In addition, more than two-thirds of drivers (69.0%) either strongly support or somewhat support having a law against driving with no sleep within the past 24 hours (see Table 4).

The 25-39 age group had the highest proportion (91.0%) of respondents who consider drowsy drivers as a threat to their personal safety (see Table 15). However, as shown in Table 16, this group also had the highest proportion – albeit a small one – of respondents who perceive drowsy driving as acceptable, at 5.7%. In terms of the proportion of drivers who reported driving when they were so tired that they had a hard time keeping their eyes open, 34.5% of drivers in this age group reported affirmatively, second only to drivers 19-24, where 38.3% of drivers reported driving while tired or sleepy (Table 14).

Table 16. Proportion of drivers who rated drowsy driving as completely or somewhat acceptable (N= 2,613)

		Driving when they are so tired that they have a hard time keeping their eyes open (%)
<i>All drivers</i>		4.5
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	4.5
	19-24	3.2
	25-39	5.7
	40-59	4.6
	60-74	3.5
	75+	2.5
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	5.5
	<i>Female</i>	3.5

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

Alcohol-Impaired Driving

Most drivers stated that they consume alcohol: About 2 out of 3 drivers (66.3%) reported that they consume beer, wine, liquor or other drinks containing alcohol. A little over one-fifth (20.5%) stated that they drink less than once a month, 10.6% drink once or twice a month, 12.1% drink a few times a month, 17.1% drink a few times a week and 6.2% drink daily, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17. How often do you consume beer, wine or liquor? (N=2,613)

		Daily	A few times a week	A few times a month	1 or 2 times a month	Less than once a month	Never
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<i>All drivers</i>		6.2	17.1	12.1	10.6	20.5	33.6
<i>Age group</i>	<i>16-18</i>	0.7	0.1	3.7	3.2	12.0	80.4
	<i>19-24</i>	0.0	10.4	17.6	9.9	18.3	43.8
	<i>25-39</i>	4.1	16.5	18.4	12.2	22.7	26.2
	<i>40-59</i>	6.0	20.0	9.7	12.2	19.9	32.3
	<i>60-74</i>	8.7	17.8	9.0	7.8	21.3	35.4
	<i>75+</i>	16.5	13.6	11.4	10.1	16.7	31.8
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	8.4	21.8	13.4	9.4	16.2	31.0
	<i>Female</i>	4.1	12.6	11.0	11.8	24.5	36.0

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

Drinking and driving is viewed as a very serious threat, social disapproval is almost universal, social stigma is felt strongly and relatively few drivers admit to it. There is very strong support for requiring all DWI offenders to use alcohol-ignition interlocks on their vehicles, even for first time offenders (see Table 4). About 43.4% of drivers believe that drunk driving is either a much bigger problem today or a somewhat bigger problem today than three years ago (see Table 2).

Table 18 shows that a vast majority of drivers (94.3%) believe that people driving after drinking alcohol pose a very serious threat or somewhat serious threat to their personal safety, with 73.5% reporting that it is a very serious threat. Only 5.8% consider driving after drinking alcohol acceptable, with 74.4% reporting that it is completely unacceptable and 19.3% of drivers saying that it is somewhat unacceptable (see Table 5).

Table 18. Proportion of drivers who reported perceiving impaired drivers as a somewhat or very serious threat (N= 2,613)

		People driving after drinking alcohol	People driving after using prescription drugs	People driving after using illegal drugs
		(%)	(%)	(%)
<i>All drivers</i>		94.3	78.2	90.8
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	96.7	76.6	91.1
	19-24	97.6	75.5	93.0
	25-39	94.6	78.9	91.0
	40-59	94.3	78.7	90.4
	60-74	93.9	79.2	91.3
	75+	89.2	69.8	87.2
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	92.5	73.2	87.4
	<i>Female</i>	95.9	82.8	93.9

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

Among those who reported consuming alcohol, 20.7% reported driving when they thought they had consumed too much alcohol to drive safely in the past year. Among those who reported consuming alcohol, about 6.6% stated that they did this just once, 11.9% stated that they do this rarely and 1.6% stated that they do this fairly often (Table 19).

Table 19. 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=1,317)

		Regularly	Fairly often	Rarely	Just once	Never
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<i>All drivers</i>		0.4	1.0	7.8	4.3	86.4
<i>Age Group</i>	16-18	0.0	0.5	1.7	1.4	96.4
	19-24	0.0	1.8	5.6	3.0	89.7
	25-39	1.5		9.1	5.7	81.8
	40-59	0.0	0.6	1.9	4.8	84.3
	60-74	0.0	0.8	4.0	3.5	91.6
	75+	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	93.4
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	0.5	1.5	9.7	6.8	81.5
	<i>Female</i>	0.3	0.6	6.0	2.0	91.1

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

Among the different age groups, those ages 25-39 had the highest proportion of drivers who drove when they thought their alcohol level might have been close to or possibly over the legal limit during the past year, with 18.2% doing so. Within this age group, 5.7% indicated that they did it just once, 9.1% indicated that they did it rarely, 1.9% indicated that they do this fairly often, and 1.5% indicated that they do this regularly.

About 2.3% of drivers mentioned that they have driven when they thought their alcohol level might have been close to or possibly over the legal limit within the past month, 2.3% reported that they did so

at least one month ago but less than three months ago and about 2.7% reported that they did so between three and six months ago, and 6.3% reported they have done so 6 months or longer ago (see Table 20).

Table 20. 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=1,317)

		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 (%)	Never (%)
<i>All drivers</i>		2.3	2.3	2.7	6.3	86.5
<i>Age Group</i>	16-18	0.8	1.5	0.0	1.3	96.4
	19-24	2.9	3.2	0.0	4.1	89.9
	25-39	3.1	3.0	4.7	6.9	82.3
	40-59	2.2	3.0	2.2	8.9	83.8
	60-74	1.9	1.0	2.4	2.9	91.8
	75+	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.5	93.5
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	2.3	4.0	3.1	9.0	81.7
	<i>Female</i>	2.3	0.8	2.3	3.7	91.0

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

Drug-Impaired Driving

More than half (54.9%) of drivers believe that drivers using drugs pose a much bigger problem or somewhat bigger problem today than they did three years ago (Table 2). The majority of drivers (90.8%) perceive people driving after using illegal drugs to be either a very serious threat or a somewhat serious threat to their personal safety. About 2 in 3 (68.2%) believe that this is a very serious threat while 22.6% believe that it is somewhat a serious threat (Table 6). Comparatively, 78.2 percent consider driving under the influence of prescription drugs a very serious or somewhat serious threat to their personal safety (Table 18).

Table 21. Have you ever even once used marijuana? (N=2,613)

		Yes (%)	No (%)
<i>All drivers</i>		47.4	52.3
<i>Age group</i>	16-18	19.3	80.8
	19-24	37.4	62.6
	25-39	50.1	49.6
	40-59	52.2	47.5
	60-74	50.5	49.2
	75+	15.8	84.2
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	49.7	50.0
	<i>Female</i>	45.2	54.6

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

Among drivers, 47.4% have used marijuana in their lifetimes (Table 21). Only 10.8% of drivers perceive driving after smoking marijuana as completely or somewhat acceptable. Among drivers who reported to drive within an hour of using marijuana in the past year, 49.4% did so in the past month, while 21.2% did so at least one month ago but less than three months ago and 18.4% reported doing so between three and six months ago. Due to the small sample size, only drivers who reported driving within an hour of using marijuana in the past year are tabulated.

Table 22. About how long ago was the last time you drove within one hour of using marijuana? (N=123)

		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 ago or longer (%)
<i>All drivers</i>		49.4	21.2	18.4	11.0
<i>Age Group</i>	16-18	37.7	25.2	6.6	30.5
	19-24	60.8	0.0	30.0	9.2
	25-39	48.1	25.1	17.8	9.0
	40-59	61.1	18.7	11.1	9.2
	60-74	35.5	13.1	30.9	20.4
	75+	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	52.9	25.2	13.2	8.8
	<i>Female</i>	43.3	14.0	27.6	15.1

Base: U.S. residents ages 16+ with a driver's license who reported driving in past 30 days and reported driving within one hour of using marijuana, weighted to reflect U.S. population

Summary of Overall 2017 TSCI Results

Overall, drivers perceive unsafe driving behaviors such as talking on cellphones, texting, emailing, speeding and red-light running as serious threats to their personal safety. There is generally concordance between drivers' level of acceptance of certain behaviors with the level of threat each behavior poses to their personal safety.

Although there seems to be concordance between perceived threats to personal safety and acceptability of certain behaviors, there seems to be discordance between acceptability and threats to personal safety with certain behaviors engaged in by drivers themselves. The survey findings reveal that drivers engage in behaviors they recognize as unsafe. For example, a substantial number of drivers (95.6%) say that it is unacceptable to type text messages or email while driving (Table 5); yet approximately 1 in 3 (34.6%) indicated that they have done it in the past 30 days (Table 7).

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