



Safety Culture

Heads Up Driving Week – Fact Sheet

October 2-8, 2011

The Situation

- More than one million people have died in motor vehicle crashes over the past 25 years in the United States, including 32,788 in 2010.
- Estimates of the number of crashes, injuries and deaths caused by distracted driving vary widely due to limitations of existing motor vehicle crash data. NHTSA estimates that 16% of fatal crashes and fatalities involved distracted driving.
- According to NHTSA data, 5,474 people were killed in U.S. roadways and an estimated additional 448,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes that were reported to have involved distracted driving in 2009.
- Studies of the cell phone records of crash-involved drivers suggest that using a cell phone while driving is associated with roughly a quadrupling of crash risk.
- In a recent nationally representative survey, 35% of drivers reported they feel less safe on the road than they did five years ago; and of those who felt less safe, 45% mentioned cell phones, texting, or distracted driving in general as the reason they felt that way.
- According to CTIA, there were 302.9 million wireless subscriber connections in the U.S. as of December 2010 – nearly as many connections as there were people.

The Survey

Every year, the AAA Foundation conducts a nationally-representative survey of U.S. drivers to assess attitudes toward traffic safety in general and toward specific issues, and to monitor driving behaviors. The data are used to help identify key audiences for educational messages, and to track changes in driver attitudes and behaviors over time.

The AAA Foundation's fourth annual Traffic Safety Culture Index was conducted June 6 – 28, 2011 by Knowledge Networks. A nationally representative sample of 3,147 U.S. residents ages 16 and older was surveyed using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel[®], a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. For more technical information about the survey, visit www.knowledgenetworks.com.

Cell Phones and Driving

Despite acknowledging that texting, emailing and talking on a cell phone driving are dangerous, many drivers admit to engaging in these distracting behaviors anyway. This is what we have termed a “Do As I Say, Not As I Do” attitude among drivers and is something that needs to change in order to achieve a positive traffic culture.

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



Texting/Emailing while Driving

- 95% of drivers said they consider other drivers text messaging or emailing while driving to be a serious threat to their personal safety and 94% said they consider texting or emailing while driving to be unacceptable
 - However, 35% admitted to having read or sent a text message or email while driving in the last month
- Of those who admitted to reading or typing text messages or emails while driving (35% of all drivers)
 - 54% admitted to reading text messages or emails while stopped at red lights fairly often or regularly; and 35% said they type text messages or emails at red lights fairly often or regularly
 - 27% admitted reading text messages or emails while driving on a residential street with no traffic fairly often or regularly; and 15% said they type texts or emails fairly often or regularly
 - 16% admitted to reading text messages or emails while driving on a freeway with heavy traffic fairly often or regularly; and 9% said they type text messages or emails while driving on a freeway in heavy traffic fairly often or regularly

Talking while Driving

- 88% of drivers said they consider talking on a cell phone while driving to be a serious threat to their personal safety; 71% of drivers said they consider it unacceptable to talk on a hand-held cell phone while driving and 40% consider it unacceptable to use a hands-free device
 - Yet, 67% also admitted that they had talked on a cell phone while driving in past month with 31% saying they did so fairly often or regularly
- Of those drivers who admitted to having talked on a cell phone while driving (67% of all drivers)
 - 55% admitted to answering a call while stopped at a red light more than half the time; and 32% said they make calls at red light fairly often or regularly
 - 44% admitted to answering a call while driving on a residential street with no traffic more than half the time and 26% said they make calls on a residential street doing so fairly often or regularly
 - 28% admitted to answering a call while driving on a freeway with heavy traffic more than half the time and 15% said they make calls on the freeway fairly often or regularly

Legislative Support

- 87% of drivers expressed support for having a law against reading, typing, or sending a text message or email while driving
- 70% of drivers support having a law against using a hand-held cell phone while driving for all drivers regardless of age
- 50% of drivers support having a law against using any type of cell phone while driving, hand-held or hands-free, for all drivers regardless of age

For more information about Heads Up Driving Week and distracted driving, visit www.AAAFoundation.org.