



# Safety Culture

## **“Do As I Say, Not As I Do” Rules Drivers’ Decisions on Cell Phone Use and Texting**

*AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety Finds that Ninety-Five Percent of Drivers Rate Texting as a Serious Safety Threat yet Thirty-Five Percent Admit Doing so in the Past Month*

Washington, DC – For the fourth consecutive year, the [AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety](#)’s annual Traffic Safety Culture Index shows drivers know that cell phone use and texting while driving are dangerous, yet they continue to do it anyway. Specifically, data from the 2011 survey found that 95 percent of drivers view texting or emailing by other drivers as a serious threat to their own personal safety, however, 35 percent of those same drivers also admitted to having read or sent a text message or email in the previous month.

To help bring greater recognition to the issue of cell phone use and distracted driving and combat this dangerous behavior, the AAA Foundation and AAA will promote [Heads Up Driving Week](#) from Sunday, October 2 through Saturday, October 8. The campaign aims to inspire drivers to [pledge](#) to a week of distraction-free driving while encouraging them to *“Try it for a Week and Do it for Life”*.

“This research continues to illustrate a *“Do as I Say, Not as I Do”* attitude that persists among drivers, and perpetuates the threat of cell phone use while driving,” said AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety President and CEO Peter Kissinger. “Changing our nation’s traffic safety culture requires drivers to take responsibility for their actions and alter their own behaviors on the road.”

According to the survey, 88 percent feel other drivers’ talking on a phone is a threat to safety, yet two-thirds admitted to having talked on a cell phone while driving in the past 30 days. The findings also showed that peoples’ concern about texting or emailing while driving (95 percent) is on par with drinking and driving (93 percent). Additionally, 87 percent of drivers expressed support for having a law against reading, typing or sending a text message or email while driving and 50 percent of drivers support having a law against the use of any type of cell phone, hand-held or hands-free, for all drivers regardless of age.

Distracted driving, especially the use of cell phones and text messaging, remains a top traffic safety concern for policymakers, safety advocates, law enforcement, industry, and the public. As part of AAA’s commitment to improving highway safety for its members and all road users, AAA launched a legislative campaign in 2009 to ban texting while driving in all 50 states. So far in 2011, four additional states have enacted [anti-texting laws](#), bringing the total number up to 34 states and the District of Columbia that have adopted this safety measure.

“We’re encouraged by the process made in statehouses across the country to ban the dangerous practice of texting while driving, with more than two thirds of all states having such laws on the books,” said AAA Vice President of Public Affairs Kathleen Marvaso. “AAA will continue to advocate

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



in those states without texting bans, but it's important to remember that good laws are only effective when accompanied by extensive public education efforts and visible and consistent enforcement.”

Other distracted driving findings from the 2011 Traffic Safety Culture Index include:

- Of those drivers who admitted to having talked on a cell phone while driving (68 percent of all drivers)
  - 55 percent admitted to answering calls more than half the time while stopped at a red light; and 31 percent said they make calls at red lights fairly often or regularly
  - 44 percent admitted to answering calls while driving on a residential street with no traffic more than half the time; and 26 percent said they make calls on residential street fairly often or regularly
  - 28 percent admitted to answering calls while driving on a freeway with heavy traffic more than half the time; 15 percent admitted said they make calls on a freeway with heavy traffic fairly often or frequently
- Of those who admitted to reading or typing text messages or emails while driving (35 percent of all drivers)
  - 54 percent admitted to reading text messages or emails while stopped at red lights fairly often or regularly; and 35 percent said they type text messages or emails while stopped at red lights fairly often or regularly
  - 27 percent admitted to reading text messages or emails while driving on a residential street with no traffic fairly often or regularly; and 15 percent said they type text messages or emails while driving on a residential street fairly often or regularly
  - 16 percent admitted to reading text messages or emails while driving on a freeway with heavy traffic fairly often or regularly; and 9 percent said they type text messages or emails while driving on a freeway in heavy traffic fairly often or regularly

The AAA Foundation and AAA will continue to educate the public on the dangers of distracted driving in an effort to curb the use of cell phones as well as other distracting behaviors. For more information about distracted driving and take the HUDW pledge, visit [www.AAAFoundation.org](http://www.AAAFoundation.org).

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*The AAA Foundation's fourth annual Traffic Safety Culture Index was conducted June 6 – 28, 2011 by Knowledge Networks for the AAA Foundation, with a nationally representative sample of 3,147 U.S. residents ages 16 and older using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel<sup>®</sup>, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The survey has a margin of error of approximately  $\pm 2.3$  percentage points at a 95% confidence level. More technical information is available at [www.knowledgenetworks.com](http://www.knowledgenetworks.com).*

*Established in 1947 by AAA, the [AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety](http://www.AAAFoundation.org) is an independent, publicly funded, 501(c)(3) charitable research and educational organization. The AAA Foundation's mission is to prevent traffic deaths and injuries by conducting research into their causes and by educating the public about strategies to prevent crashes and reduce injuries when they do occur.*

*As North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA provides more than 51 million members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. AAA clubs can be visited on the Internet at [AAA.com](http://AAA.com).*