

★ ★ ★ ★ Safety Culture

2008 Traffic Safety Culture Index

The Problem

- Over 40,000 people die in crashes every year in the United States.
 - 42,642 deaths on our roads in 2006.
 - Over 40,000 deaths on our roads every single year for over four decades with the sole exception of 1992.
 - Over a million people have died on our roads in the past 25 years.
 - Another 2.5–3 million are injured on our roads every year.
- Society appears to have grown complacent—accepting the carnage.
- We need a stronger culture of traffic safety where individuals take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others.

Purpose of the Index

- To investigate the public's traffic-safety-related knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences.
- To create a baseline measure of traffic safety culture in the U.S.
- To monitor America's traffic safety culture.
- To guide traffic safety research and public outreach.
- To foster dialogue about traffic safety and how to improve it.

Findings

- 3 of every 4 drivers say that they're more careful than most other drivers.
- When asked to rate the seriousness of the problem posed by a number of different traffic behaviors, a large proportion of drivers rate many of the behaviors as serious but admitted engaging in them anyway. For example:
 - 82% of drivers rated distracted driving as a serious problem (rating of 4 or 5 on a five-point scale where 1 was defined as *not a problem at all* and 5 was defined as an *extremely serious problem*), yet...
 - Over half of those same drivers later admitted that they had talked on their cell phone while driving in the past 30 days, and
 - 14% of those same drivers later admitted that they had read or sent a text message while driving in the past 30 days.

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



Findings Continued...

- Nearly 3 of every 4 drivers rated speeding as a serious problem, however...
 - 2 out of every 5 of those same drivers admitted having driven 15 mph over the speed limit on the highway in the past 30 days, and
 - 14% even admitted having driven 15 mph over the speed limit on a neighborhood street in the past 30 days.
- Over 7 of every 10 drivers rated drivers who run red lights as a serious problem, yet over 5% of those same drivers admitted having run a red light on purpose in the past 30 days.
- 9% of drivers admitted having driven in the past 30 days when they thought their blood alcohol concentration was over the legal limit.
- A substantial proportion of the population has been personally touched by a serious traffic crash.
 - Nearly 1 in 4 respondents reported having been injured in a crash at some point in their lives.
 - Nearly 1 in 3 respondents reported having had a family member, a relative, or a friend permanently disabled or killed in a crash at some point in their lives.

About the Index

The AAA Foundation commissioned NuStats LLC to conduct a random sample telephone survey of the American public by landline and cellular telephone in English and Spanish from October 25, 2007 through January 10, 2008 and included 2,509 adults aged 18 and over.

Statistics based on the full sample have a margin of error of plus or minus approximately 2.0%, at the 95% confidence level. Statistics based on a subset of the full sample are associated with a slightly higher margin of error than statistics based on the full sample. Statistics in this fact sheet have a margin of error of between 2.6% and 4.9% at the 95% confidence level.

Note that the margin of error reflects only the level of confidence that the responses of a random sample of respondents are statistically representative of the responses that would have been obtained if the entire population were to have been interviewed over the same time period, by the same interviewers, using the same questionnaire. It does not reflect errors related to systematic non-coverage of certain segments of the population, non-response, interviewer errors, or differences in understanding of survey questions or response options.