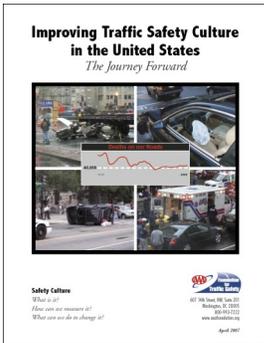


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Americans Decreasingly Concerned about Key Traffic Safety Threats, According to Survey Data

Temporal Trends in Indicators of Traffic Safety Culture among Drivers in the United States, 2009-2012

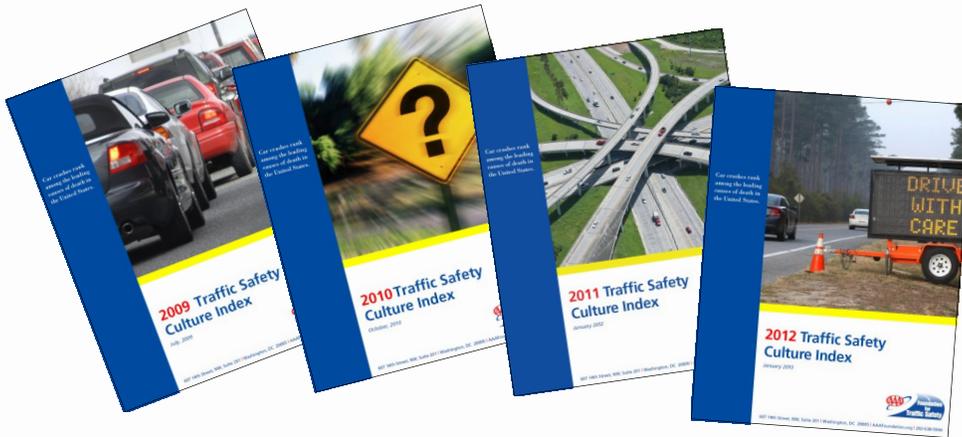


Since 2006, the AAA Foundation has been committed to studying and promoting the concept of *traffic safety culture*, which it defines as a “social climate in which traffic safety is highly valued and rigorously pursued.”

Our annual survey of American motorists — The Traffic Safety Culture Index — addresses core topics, such as:

- Perceived traffic safety threats
- Acceptability of potentially-dangerous behaviors
- Frequency of engaging in various risky behaviors

The findings of these surveys have led us to characterize the traffic safety culture in the United States with the phrase “do as I say, not as I do.” This is because high numbers of people consistently admit to doing the same dangerous things — like texting, driving drowsy, or speeding — that they condemn other drivers for doing.



Now, for the first time, we have conducted a multi-year analysis of the data from our four most recent surveys (2009-2012) in order to offer insights into how the traffic safety culture in the United States has changed since we began our efforts.



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

Notable Findings

Americans Show Decreasing Concerns about Traffic Dangers

- Percentage of respondents who say they perceive a serious threat from hazards such as drunk, aggressive, or drowsy drivers has fallen
- Motorists are becoming less concerned about drivers texting or emailing behind the wheel, despite publicity surrounding distracted driving

"Do As I Say, Not As I Do" Still Holds True

- High numbers of motorists consistently admit to behaving in ways for which they criticize others. For example:
 - ◆ Each year, more than 7 in 10 people say red-light running is completely unacceptable, yet more than 1 in 3 admit to doing so when they could have stopped safely in the past 30 days
 - ◆ There is overwhelming condemnation of drowsy driving, yet more than a quarter of drivers admit to driving when they were so sleepy that they had trouble keeping their eyes open in the past 30 days

Most Indicators Fairly Stable Over Time

- The proportion of drivers who admit to talking on a cell phone has consistently hovered around two-thirds
- Each year, the majority of drivers reports never driving without a seatbelt
- The proportion of drivers who report that drivers' speeding on freeways (15+ mph over limit) is completely unacceptable has increased, from 39% in 2009 to 46% in 2012
- There is greater public acceptance of drivers using hands-free devices than hand-held ones (though recent Foundation research has sounded the alarm about cognitive distractions)

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Temporal Trends in Indicators of Traffic Safety Culture among Drivers in the United States

2009 – 2012



August 2013



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

For More Information

This report is available online at:
www.AAAFoundation.org/research/completed-projects

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The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety's mission is to prevent traffic deaths and injuries through research into their causes, and to educate the public about strategies to prevent crashes and reduce injuries. The Foundation sponsors research that uncovers critical traffic safety problems and identifies the most effective solutions. Drawing on in-house resources and leading traffic safety experts throughout North America, Foundation research focuses on four key areas – teen driver safety, senior safety and mobility, safety culture, and road safety. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.