DRIVER BEHAVIOR & PERFORMANCE

**TECHNICAL REPORT**

FOUNDATION FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY

# 2025 Traffic Safety Culture Index

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## Title

2025 Traffic Safety Culture Index

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## Foreword

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has consistently demonstrated its commitment to improving traffic safety through work such as the one presented in this report, the 18th annual *Traffic Safety Culture Index*. Results presented in this report are based on a nationally representative survey conducted in 2025 of about 2,700 licensed U.S. motorists.

This report provides an overview of the cultural environment of driving in the United States, explores drivers' perceptions of road safety, and examines links between perceived neighborhood driving behaviors, self-appraisals of behavior and abilities, and perceived social stress on self-reported engagement in risky driving behaviors. Similar to previous *Traffic Safety Culture Index* reports, this edition should be a useful reference for researchers, practitioners, and traffic safety advocates to gain a better understanding of people's perceptions and attitudes towards risky driving behaviors, to identify relevant issues, and to develop corresponding countermeasures.

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## About the Sponsor

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
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Founded in 1947, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety in Washington, D.C., is a nonprofit, publicly supported charitable research and education organization dedicated to saving lives by preventing traffic crashes and reducing injuries when crashes occur. Funding for this report was provided by voluntary contributions from AAA/CAA and their affiliated motor clubs, individual members, AAA-affiliated insurance companies, and other organizations or sources.

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## Introduction

Improving traffic safety is an ongoing priority in the United States. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) projects 36,640 traffic fatalities in 2025 in the United States, representing a 6.7% decrease from 2024 (National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 2026). While this downward trend reflects continued efforts by government agencies, safety organizations, and road users to improve roadway safety, the traffic fatalities remain unacceptably high.

To further reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries, increasing attention has been directed toward the concept of traffic safety culture as a critical component in managing and sustaining safe transportation systems (Montana Department of Transportation, n.d.). Traffic safety culture refers to shared values, attitudes, and behaviors that demonstrate a commitment to safety over competing goals and demands. Communities with a strong safety culture tend to exhibit lower levels of risky driving behaviors (Federal Highway Administration, 2025). This is particularly important given that risky driving contributes to tens of thousands of fatalities each year (Cheng et al., 2023).

For more than a decade, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (AAAFTS) has measured Americans' traffic safety culture through its annual Traffic Safety Culture Index (TSCI) survey. The TSCI evaluates five key dimensions: how dangerous drivers perceive risky driving behaviors to be, how likely they believe they are to be apprehended for engaging in risky driving behaviors, how much social disapproval they associate with risky driving behaviors, how frequently they report engaging in risky driving behaviors themselves, and their support for safety laws related to risky driving behaviors.

The 2025 TSCI builds upon this established framework by incorporating additional measures related to contextual and personal influences on driving behavior. First, this survey examines drivers' perceptions of both safe and risky driving behaviors in their own neighborhoods. Such perceived neighborhood driving behaviors may shape individuals' own driving behavioral choices, as prior research suggests that drivers tend to follow and imitate the behaviors of those around them (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2025). Second, the survey explores self-appraisals of behavior and abilities, which may be systematically biased by the "better-than-average effect," a well-documented tendency for drivers to rate their own skills and behaviors more favorably than those of their peers (Horswill et al., 2004; Horswill et al., 2013). This bias is frequently associated with overconfidence and an increased likelihood of engaging in risky driving behaviors (Măirean & Havârneanu, 2018; Horrey et al., 2015). Third, this survey explores drivers' social stress. Previous research has indicated that elevated social stress levels can contribute to increased distraction, aggression, and impairment

behind the wheel (Suhr & Dula, 2017). These additional measures provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors influencing risky driving behaviors.

Collectively, the dimensions measured in the 2025 TSCI reflect the underlying catalysts of attitudes, perceptions, and social pressures that shape driving behaviors. A thorough understanding of these factors is essential for identifying potential contributors to risky behaviors and for developing more effective traffic safety interventions.

As in previous years, this report details the data collection methodology and summarizes the major national-level results of the 18th annual TSCI. Results are presented across the five core dimensions of drivers' perceived danger, perceived likelihood of apprehension, perceived social disapproval, self-reported engagement in risky driving behaviors, and support for countermeasures. The report also presents national-level findings on perceived neighborhood driving behaviors, the self-appraisals of behavior and abilities (i.e., better-than-average effect), and perceived social stress, as well as their impact on self-reported engagement in risky driving behaviors.

## Summary of Major Findings

### Distracted Driving Behaviors

- Most drivers perceived scrolling through social media (95%), texting/emailing (93%), or reading on a hand-held cell phone (91%) while driving as being extremely or very dangerous. Fewer drivers perceived holding and talking on a phone (69%) or using a technology that allows for hands-free use of their phones (20%) as being very or extremely dangerous.
- Over one third of respondents believed drivers would be apprehended for texting/emailing, reading a text/email, holding and talking on a cell phone, and scrolling through social media content on a cell phone while driving.
- Drivers predominantly agreed that people important to them would disapprove of distracted driving behaviors (85%–98% depending on the behavior).
- Nevertheless, some drivers reported sending a text/email (28%), reading a text/email (38%), or holding and talking on a phone (32%) while driving. The majority of drivers (61%) indicated they used hands-free technology to talk/text/email while driving. Only 10% of drivers reported scrolling through social media content on a cell phone.
- Approximately 83% of drivers supported a law against holding and talking on a phone while driving, while only 40% supported a law against using hands-free technologies to read/text/email while driving.

**Aggressive Driving Behaviors**

- Many respondents considered driving through a red light (78%) to be very or extremely dangerous. About 90% felt the same about other aggressive driving behaviors, such as switching lanes quickly and driving closely behind other vehicles. Approximately 95%–96% of respondents reported that people important to them would disapprove of these aggressive driving behaviors.
- Fewer drivers perceived speeding as a dangerous behavior, although the second-highest proportion of drivers believed that driving 15 mph over the speed limit could result in being caught by police. In addition, speeding had the lowest level of social disapproval among all the unsafe driving behaviors examined.
- About 62% of drivers believed police would apprehend them for traveling 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway, yet approximately half reported having engaged in the behavior in the past 30 days before the survey.
- About 72% of drivers supported requiring those convicted of serious speeding offenses to use a device that prevents them from exceeding the posted speed limit. Support was lower for requiring manufacturers to include a device in all new cars that warns drivers when they exceed the speed limit (59%) and for using cameras to automatically ticket drivers exceeding the limit by more than 10 mph on residential streets (47%).

**Drowsy Driving Behaviors**

- Drivers predominantly perceived drowsy driving to be very or extremely dangerous (95%), and about 98% of respondents believed that people important to them would disapprove of driving while drowsy; however, 20% of drivers reported having engaged in the behavior in the past 30 days.
- Almost 26% of drivers believed the police would apprehend them for drowsy driving.

**Impaired Driving Behaviors**

- Drivers overwhelmingly perceived driving after drinking (93%) as very or extremely dangerous, and 63% believed such a driver would be likely to be apprehended by police. Only 7% of respondents reported having engaged in this behavior in the past 30 days.
- By comparison, only 71% of drivers felt driving (within an hour) of using marijuana to be very or extremely dangerous, and 26% believed such a driver would be likely to be apprehended by police. Only 6% of respondents reported having engaged in this behavior at least once in the past 30 days.

- Most respondents (86%) considered driving when using potentially impairing prescription drugs to be very or extremely dangerous, very few reported having done so at least once in the past 30 days (3%).

**Perceived Neighborhood Driving Behaviors**

- Drivers perceived that other drivers in their neighborhood often engaged in risky driving behaviors. About 91% of drivers perceived others driving too fast on freeways in their neighborhood, followed by cell phone use while driving (88%), speeding on residential roads (86%), and aggressive driving—such as weaving in and out of lanes or passing with less than a car-length of space (81%).
- Drivers also perceived that those around them engaged in many safe driving behaviors, including obeying school zone speed limits (88%), slowing in construction zones (87%), adjusting speed in poor weather (85%), taking extra care around pedestrians (91%), and using caution around cyclists (87%).
- Drivers who perceived risky behaviors as more common in their neighborhood were more likely to report engaging in similar behaviors themselves, including excessive speeding, running a red light when a safe stop was possible, unsafe lane changes or tailgating, and multiple forms of cell phone use while driving (handheld, texting, emailing, and hands-free use).

**Comparisons with Peers**

- About 78% of drivers considered themselves to drive more safely than others, while only 1% believed they were less safe.
- About 61% of drivers rated themselves as more skillful than other drivers, compared to 4% who considered themselves less skillful. Perceived higher driving skill was positively associated with several risky behaviors, including driving 15 mph over the freeway speed limit, running a red light when a safe stop was possible, rapid lane changes or tailgating, driving without a seatbelt, and using hands-free technology.
- Approximately 66% of drivers believed others drove more aggressively than they did, while 10% considered themselves more aggressive than others.
- Around 60% felt they handled distractions better than others, compared to 6% who thought the opposite.
- Speeding had the highest proportion of drivers rating themselves as similar to others: about 50% believed their driving speed was about the same as that of other drivers, and 19% thought they drove faster.

### Perceived Social Stress

- Drivers with higher levels of social stress were more likely to report drowsy driving and driving without wearing a seatbelt.

## Method

### Survey Instrument

The 2025 TSCI instrument was similar to the instrument used in previous years and continued to survey the five core questions pertaining to people's perceived danger, perceived risk of apprehension, social disapproval, self-reported behaviors, and support for safety countermeasures. Additional questions were introduced to explore how drivers perceive driving behaviors in their neighborhood, whether they consider themselves to be better drivers than others in terms of skills and behaviors, and whether they experience social stress in their daily lives. Detailed survey questions and response options can be found in Appendix B.

### Sampling

The study used a sample from KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based web panel maintained by Ipsos, to collect data. The panel was designed to be representative of households in the United States by using standard probability-based random digit dial (RDD) and address-based sampling (ABS) methods. The sampling frame includes all U.S. households reachable by telephone or regular mail, regardless of telephone or internet access or use. If a sampled household did not have an internet connection or an internet-capable computer, a web-enabled device and/or free internet service were provided. To achieve representation of the U.S. adult population, a broad set of geodemographic indicators, as well as hard-to-reach adult subgroups, were used for the panel recruitment process. Individuals not sampled could not volunteer to join the panel.

For respondents ages 19 and older, eligible adults across the nine Census geographical divisions were sampled to ensure a minimum of 200 completed interviews per division. The questionnaire was sent to 4,100 panelists ages 19 and older, with 2,551 qualified respondents completing the questionnaire. For the 16- to 18-year-old sample, random households were sampled with at least one 15- to 18-year-old present from KnowledgePanel®. The survey was also sent to parents who had at least one age-eligible teen in their household. If there was more than one teen in this age range, one of the eligible teens was randomly selected. Parents were asked to provide consent for the selected teen and their teen completed the remainder of the survey. Invitations were sent to 3,463 parents of teens ages 15 to 18, and 1,010 qualified teens completed the questionnaire. A total of 3,561 respondents ages 16 and older completed the survey.

Among them, 2,699 were active licensed drivers (who drove in the past 30 days before the survey with valid driver's license). The survey was administered in English and Spanish between July 31 and August 13, 2025. After collection, data underwent a rigorous cleaning and quality assurance process.

**Weighting**

The data were weighted to account for the probability of selection for recruitment into KnowledgePanel®, the probability of selection for the survey, and non-response at both stages. Further, they were weighted to align the characteristics of respondents to those of the population of residents aged 16 years 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 aged 16 and older in the household, and household income using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). All analyses included in this report have been conducted using weighted data.

**Limitations**

This survey aims to estimate the prevalence of specific attitudes and behaviors among all drivers in the United States. However, the results of this survey may differ from true population values due to sampling error and possible sources of bias.

Sampling error measures the extent to which estimates from a sample may reflect the population from which the sample is drawn. In this survey, the sampling error reflects the range in which estimates from the sample of 2,699 drivers might be expected to differ from the results that would be obtained if the same data were collected from all drivers in the United States. In this particular survey, a 95% confidence level is set for the margin of error. This means that the range of estimates is expected to include the actual population values 95 times out of 100 when estimated from a sample of the same size and with the same survey design. Additionally, the margin of error varies depending on the number of responses for a survey question and the distribution of responses. The table below shows the approximate margin of error derived from the entire sample. The margin of error is larger for items asked of 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** | ± 1.8 |
| **70 or 30** | ± 2.1 |
| **60 or 40** | ± 2.2 |
| **50** | ± 2.2 |

This survey has a larger margin of error than a simple random sample of the same size because of the design of the panel, the stratification by census division, and oversampling of respondents aged 16 to 18. 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 due to bias. For instance, potential sources of bias in surveys include systematic non-coverage of certain segments of the population (e.g., people who cannot read in English or Spanish), non-response (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).

## Results

Results of the 2025 TSCI are presented in two sections. The first section presents overall findings on perceived danger, perceived risk of apprehension, social disapproval, self-reported behaviors, and support for safety laws related to various risky driving behaviors. The second section examines drivers' contextual and personal influences on driving behavior, focusing on their perceptions of other drivers' behaviors within their local communities, how they rate their own driving skills and behaviors compared to others, and how they have been feeling personally about their lives.

### Overall Results

#### *Perceived Danger of Driving Behaviors*

The survey assessed drivers' perceptions of danger associated with various unsafe driving behaviors, including distracted, aggressive, drowsy, impaired, and other behaviors. Results are reported in Table 2.

Among distracted driving behaviors, the majority of respondents rated most as very or extremely dangerous: about 95% of drivers reported that scrolling through social media (i.e., TikTok, Pinterest, X (Twitter), Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, etc.) while driving was extremely or very dangerous, 93% said the same about manually texting or emailing, 91% about reading on a phone, and 69% about holding and talking on a phone. However, perceptions of hands-free technology (i.e., Bluetooth, CarPlay, Android Auto, etc.) followed a different pattern: only 20% of drivers perceived using technology that allows for hands-free use of their phones as being very or extremely dangerous, and 16% perceived this behavior as not dangerous at all.

Regarding aggressive driving behaviors, 90% of drivers believed aggressive driving, including switching lanes quickly and driving closely behind other vehicles, was very or extremely dangerous. Driving through a red light was reported as being very or extremely dangerous by approximately 78% of drivers. Fewer drivers perceived speeding as a dangerous activity: 61% of respondents perceived driving 10 mph over the posted speed limit on residential streets as very or extremely dangerous, and 48% of respondents reported speeding 15 mph over the posted speed limit on freeways as very or extremely dangerous.

In terms of drowsy or impaired driving, 95% of drivers rated driving while tired or drowsy as very or extremely dangerous, and 93% said the same about driving after consuming enough alcohol to potentially exceed the legal limit. Additionally, 86% of respondents reported driving after using potentially impairing prescription drugs as very or extremely dangerous. However, a smaller proportion of respondents perceived driving within an hour after using marijuana as extremely or very dangerous (71%).

Additionally, this survey asked drivers how they perceived the danger of not wearing a seatbelt. While only 78% viewed it as very or extremely dangerous, roughly 8% considered it only slightly or not dangerous.

*Table 2. How Dangerous Do You Feel the Following Driving Behaviors Are?*

| | Driving Behavior | Extremely dangerous (%) | Very dangerous (%) | Moderately dangerous (%) | Slightly dangerous (%) | Not dangerous at all (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Distracted** | Drivers holding and talking on cell phones | 35.8 | 32.7 | 23.6 | 6.7 | 1.2 |
| | Drivers reading on cell phones | 63.7 | 27.2 | 6.9 | 2.2 | 0.0 |
| | Drivers manually texting or emailing on cell phones | 69.8 | 22.7 | 6.8 | 0.6 | 0.1 |
| | Drivers using technology that allows hands-free use of their phone* | 8.8 | 11.0 | 26.6 | 37.9 | 15.7 |
| | Drivers scrolling through social media content on a cell phone | 78.1 | 16.9 | 3.7 | 0.4 | 1.0 |
| **Aggressive** | Drivers speeding 15 mph over the speed limit on freeways | 24.2 | 24.2 | 33.3 | 14.0 | 4.4 |
| | Drivers speeding 10 mph over the speed limit on residential streets (neighborhood) | 28.0 | 33.5 | 27.7 | 8.6 | 2.2 |
| | Driving through a light that had just turned red when they could have stopped safely | 50.8 | 27.1 | 18.5 | 3.5 | 0.1 |
| | Driving aggressively (switching lanes quickly, driving very closely behind another car) | 58.9 | 31.0 | 8.2 | 1.3 | 0.6 |
| **Drowsy & Impaired** | Driving when they were so tired that they had a hard time keeping their eyes open | 69.8 | 25.0 | 3.6 | 1.0 | 0.5 |
| | Driving after drinking enough alcohol that they may be over the legal limit | 72.9 | 20.4 | 4.6 | 2.1 | 0.1 |
| | Driving shortly (within an hour) after using marijuana | 44.1 | 27.0 | 20.0 | 6.2 | 2.6 |
| | Driving after using potentially impairing prescription drugs | 58.7 | 27.2 | 10.6 | 2.8 | 0.6 |
| **Other** | Driving without wearing a seatbelt | 52.0 | 25.6 | 15.1 | 5.7 | 1.8 |

** The survey did not specify talking or typing using hands-free technology.*

### *Perceived Risk of Apprehension*

Table 3 presents the results of respondents' perceptions on the likelihood that a driver would be apprehended for certain unsafe behaviors. Fewer than half of respondents believed that a driver would be somewhat or very likely to be caught by the police for distracted driving behaviors, including driving while holding and talking on a cell phone (41%), driving while scrolling through social media content on a cell phone (39%), manually typing or sending a text message/email on a phone (37%), and driving while reading a text/email on a cell phone (35%).

Perceptions of apprehension risk were notably higher for aggressive driving behaviors. Among respondents, 62% felt that driving 15 mph over the posted speed limit on a freeway would somewhat or very likely result in being caught by police. Similarly, 56% believed that rapidly switching lanes and tailgating would somewhat or very likely lead to apprehension, and 49% thought the same about running a red light.

For impaired driving behaviors, perceived apprehension risk varied depending on the type of impairment. The perceived risk of apprehension was highest for driving after drinking enough alcohol to be over the legal limit, where 63% of respondents perceived a driver was somewhat or very likely to be caught by the police. In comparison, 43% thought a driver was somewhat or very likely to be caught when driving while using potentially impairing prescription drugs. Only 26% of respondents believed that drivers would be apprehended if they drove within an hour of using marijuana or if they drove while drowsy.

*Table 3. How Likely is a Driver to Be Caught by the Police for the Following Behaviors?*

| | Driving Behavior | Very likely (%) | Somewhat likely (%) | Somewhat unlikely (%) | Very unlikely (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Distracted** | Driving while holding and talking on a cell phone | 11.1 | 30.1 | 36.1 | 22.7 |
| | Driving while reading a text or an email on a cell phone | 8.7 | 26.1 | 36.8 | 28.5 |
| | Driving while manually typing or sending a text message or email on a cell phone | 8.9 | 28.2 | 41.1 | 21.7 |
| | Drivers scrolling through social media content on a cell phone | 11.9 | 27.3 | 37.2 | 23.5 |
| **Aggressive** | Driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway | 21.6 | 40.6 | 27.5 | 10.3 |
| | Driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street (neighborhood) | 14.1 | 29.8 | 33.6 | 22.5 |
| | Driving through a light that had just turned red when they could have stopped safely | 13.7 | 35.6 | 33.7 | 16.9 |
| | Driving aggressively (switching lanes quickly, driving very closely behind another car) | 20.8 | 35.1 | 28.1 | 16.1 |
| **Drowsy & Impaired** | Driving while being so tired that they had a hard time keeping their eyes open | 8.4 | 23.5 | 39.4 | 28.6 |
| | Driving after drinking enough alcohol that they may be over the legal limit | 20.2 | 42.9 | 24.7 | 12.3 |
| | Driving shortly (within an hour) after using marijuana | 4.6 | 21.6 | 44.0 | 29.9 |
| | Driving after using potentially impairing prescription drugs | 10.1 | 33.0 | 37.8 | 19.2 |
| **Other** | Driving without wearing a seatbelt | 9.7 | 26.2 | 40.5 | 23.6 |

### *Social Disapproval*

Table 4 presents results from questions related to social disapproval. Respondents were asked how much they believed people important to them would approve of various unsafe driving behaviors. Across all behaviors examined, drivers overwhelmingly indicated that those important to them would somewhat or completely disapprove.

Among the distracted driving behaviors, 98% of respondents reported that people important to them would somewhat or completely disapprove of driving while scrolling through social media content on a cell phone, while 94% of respondents felt people important to them would disapprove both of driving while manually sending a text/email on a phone or driving while reading a text/email on a phone. Disapproval was somewhat lower for holding and talking on a phone while driving, with 85% of respondents indicating this would be disapproved by those important to them.

Speeding 15 mph over the posted limit on freeways received the lowest level of social disapproval among the behaviors surveyed, with 83% of respondents indicating it would be disapproved of. By comparison, 90% believed driving 10 mph over the limit on residential streets would be disapproved of. Aggressive driving behaviors, such as running a red light or driving aggressively, were perceived more negatively, with 95%–96% of respondents reporting that people important to them would disapprove.

There were very high levels of social disapproval of impaired driving behaviors. Nearly all respondents believed riding in a car driven by someone who has had too much alcohol (99%) or driving a car after drinking enough alcohol to be over the legal limit (97%) would be socially disapproved of. Slightly fewer respondents (96%) felt that the people important to them would disapprove of driving within an hour after using marijuana.

Additionally, about 98% of respondents believed that people important to them would disapprove of driving while being so tired that they had a hard time keeping their eyes open, and 97% felt the same about driving while using potentially impairing prescription drugs.

*Table 4. How Much Do You Believe People Who Are Important to You Would Approve of Each of the Following Behaviors?*

| | Driving Behavior | Completely approve (%) | Somewhat approve (%) | Somewhat disapprove (%) | Completely disapprove (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Distracted** | Driving while holding and talking on a cell phone | 3.0 | 12.2 | 38.8 | 46.0 |
| | Driving while reading a text or an email on a cell phone | 1.2 | 4.8 | 29.7 | 64.3 |
| | Driving while manually typing or sending a text message or email on a cell phone | 1.0 | 4.6 | 27.6 | 66.8 |
| | Drivers scrolling through social media content on a cell phone | 1.0 | 1.1 | 18.1 | 79.8 |
| **Aggressive** | Drivers speeding 15 mph over the speed limit on freeways | 2.5 | 14.2 | 42.6 | 40.8 |
| | Drivers speeding 10 mph over the speed limit on residential streets (neighborhood) | 1.2 | 9.0 | 37.3 | 52.6 |
| | Driving through a light that had just turned red when they could have stopped safely | 1.4 | 3.9 | 33.1 | 61.6 |
| | Driving aggressively (switching lanes quickly, driving very closely behind another car) | 1.6 | 2.0 | 25.0 | 71.4 |
| **Drowsy & Impaired** | Driving while being so tired that they had a hard time keeping their eyes open | 0.5 | 1.8 | 21.5 | 76.2 |
| | Driving after drinking enough alcohol to be over the legal limit | 0.9 | 2.1 | 11.0 | 86.0 |
| | Riding in a car driven by someone who has had too much alcohol | 0.9 | 0.7 | 7.9 | 90.5 |
| | Driving shortly (within an hour) after using marijuana | 2.0 | 2.5 | 16.1 | 79.4 |
| | Driving after using potentially impairing prescription drugs | 1.2 | 1.7 | 15.7 | 81.4 |
| **Other** | Driving without wearing a seatbelt | 2.3 | 3.3 | 20.3 | 74.1 |

### *Driving Behaviors in Past 30 Days*

Respondents were asked, “In the past 30 days, how often have you done any of the following behaviors?” Table 5 shows that many respondents reported having engaged in each of the behaviors to varying degrees.

Regarding distracted driving, 32% of drivers reported they drove while holding and talking on a phone at least once in the past 30 days before the survey. Additionally, 38% reported reading a text or email on their phone while driving, and 28% typed or sent a text or email while driving. By contrast, 61% reported using hands-free technology to talk, text, or email while driving. Finally, 10% of drivers reported scrolling through social media content on a cell phone—a notably high figure given that 98% of respondents believed people important to them would somewhat or completely disapprove of this behavior.

In terms of speeding, 48% of the respondents indicated having driven 15 mph over the posted speed limit on a freeway at least once in the past 30 days before the survey. Additionally, 37% of drivers reported having driven 10 mph over the posted speed limit on a residential street. In contrast, fewer reported having driven through a red light (28%) or driven aggressively by switching lanes quickly and/or following very closely behind another vehicle (22%) in the past 30 days.

The reported prevalence of impaired driving was lower than that of distracted or aggressive driving and varied by the type of impairment. About 7% of drivers admitted to having driven when they had enough alcohol that they may have been over the legal limit, and 6% admitted to having driven shortly (within an hour) after using marijuana at least once in the past 30 days. Fewer reported having driven when using potentially impairing prescription drugs (3%).

Additionally, 20% of drivers reported driving while so tired that they had difficulty keeping their eyes open, and 12% indicated driving in the past 30 days without wearing a seatbelt. This survey also asked about seatbelt use in rideshare vehicles. Although 40% of drivers reported not using rideshare services, among those who did, about 90% reported usually or always wearing a seatbelt, while the remainder reported rarely or never doing so.

*Table 5. In the Past 30 Days, How Often Have You…?*

| | Driving Behavior | Regularly (%) | Fairly often (%) | A few times (%) | Just once (%) | Never (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Distracted** | Driving while holding and talking on a cell phone | 1.2 | 2.8 | 19.5 | 8.2 | 68.2 |
| | Driving while reading a text or an email on a cell phone | 1.2 | 3.6 | 23.9 | 9.0 | 62.3 |
| | Driving while manually typing or sending a text message or an email | 1.0 | 2.2 | 16.5 | 8.0 | 72.2 |
| | Talked/texted/emailed on a cell phone using hands-free technology | 11.6 | 12.9 | 30.9 | 5.4 | 39.2 |
| | Drivers scrolling through social media content on a cell phone | 0.7 | 1.0 | 6.0 | 2.8 | 89.6 |
| **Aggressive** | Driving 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway | 4.2 | 8.9 | 27.1 | 7.5 | 52.4 |
| | Driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street | 2.5 | 4.7 | 22.4 | 6.9 | 63.4 |
| | Driving through a light that had just turned red when you could have stopped safely | 0.7 | 0.9 | 11.0 | 15.5 | 72.0 |
| | Driving aggressively by switching lanes quickly and/or very close behind another car | 0.7 | 1.4 | 11.9 | 8.1 | 77.9 |
| **Drowsy & Impaired** | Driving when you were so tired that you had a hard time keeping your eyes open | 0.3 | 0.9 | 8.5 | 10.7 | 79.6 |
| | Driving when you had enough alcohol that you thought you might be over the legal limit | 0.2 | 0.3 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 92.7 |
| | Ridden in a car driven by someone who has had too much alcohol | 0.2 | 0.4 | 3.3 | 3.2 | 93.0 |
| | Driving shortly (within an hour) after using marijuana | 0.9 | 1.2 | 2.5 | 1.6 | 93.9 |
| | Driving when using potentially impairing prescription drugs | 0.4 | 0.3 | 1.2 | 0.9 | 97.2 |
| **Other** | Driving without wearing a seatbelt | 2.1 | 1.6 | 5.5 | 2.7 | 88.1 |

### *Support for Safety Countermeasures*

Respondents were asked how strongly they support or oppose various traffic safety countermeasures. As shown in Table 6, many drivers were in favor of most examined countermeasures. Approximately 83% supported a law prohibiting holding and talking on a phone while driving. Support was considerably lower, however, for a law against using hands-free technology to read, type, or send a text or email while driving (40%).

Regarding countermeasures for aggressive driving, 72% of drivers supported requiring those convicted of serious speeding offenses to use a device that prevents them from exceeding the posted speed limit. Support was lower for requiring manufacturers to include a device in all new cars that warns drivers when they exceed the speed limit (59%), and lower still for using cameras to automatically ticket drivers exceeding the limit by more than 10 mph on residential streets (47%).

For impaired driving countermeasures, levels of support varied by both the type of measure and the source of impairment. More drivers were supportive of making it illegal to drive with more than a certain amount of marijuana in one's system (79%). Additionally, 66% of drivers supported requiring all new cars to have a built-in technology that prevents the car from starting if the driver's alcohol level is over the legal limit. Over half of drivers (53%) supported lowering the legal limit for a driver's blood alcohol concentration from 0.08 to 0.05.

*Table 6. How Strongly Do You Support or Oppose…?*

| | Driving Behavior | Support Strongly (%) | Support Somewhat (%) | Oppose Somewhat (%) | Oppose Strongly (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Distracted** | Having a law against holding and talking on a cell phone while driving, for all drivers regardless of their age | 53.2 | 29.8 | 11.5 | 5.6 |
| | Having a law against using hands-free technology to read, type, or send a text message/email while driving | 20.2 | 20.1 | 32.7 | 26.9 |
| **Aggressive** | Using cameras to automatically ticket drivers who drive more than 10 mph over speed limit on residential streets | 18.0 | 28.5 | 26.8 | 26.8 |
| | Requiring manufacturers to include a device on all new cars that will warn drivers when they exceed the posted speed limit on the roads they travel | 24.4 | 34.2 | 24.1 | 17.4 |
| | Requiring drivers convicted of serious speeding offenses to use a device that prevents them from driving faster than the posted speed limit on the roads they travel | 38.6 | 33.3 | 16.8 | 11.3 |
| **Impaired** | Requiring all new cars to have a built-in technology that will not let the car start if the driver's alcohol level is over the legal limit | 38.3 | 27.5 | 17.2 | 17.0 |
| | Having a law lowering the legal limit for a driver's blood alcohol concentration from 0.08 to 0.05 | 22.7 | 29.9 | 24.7 | 22.7 |
| | Making it illegal to drive with more than a certain amount of marijuana in your system | 49.3 | 29.4 | 11.8 | 9.5 |
| **Other** | Require developers of self-driving car technologies to share safety information and testing results with the public before the vehicles are allowed on public roads | 68.0 | 21.5 | 4.4 | 6.1 |

## Contextual and Personal Influences on Driving Behavior

Many different factors shape an individual's propensity to engage in risky driving behavior. It is widely acknowledged that local context plays an important role, with some evidence that drivers follow and imitate the actions of their peers (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2025). Increasingly, road safety research has started to examine altruistic or pro-social driving behaviors (Kaye et al., 2022), in addition to risky driving, in order to better understand how local context shapes individual driving behavior. To begin to explore the impact of contextual influences on risky driving, this year's TSCI added several new questions to better understand how drivers perceive driving behaviors in their own neighborhood.

In addition to the local context itself, driver's perceptions of their own effectiveness, within their local context (i.e., how they see their own driving compared to others around them), can influence driving behavior. Psychology research has highlighted the better-than-average effect, where drivers tend to rate their own skills and behaviors more favorably than those of their peers (Horswill et al., 2004; Horswill et al., 2013). This phenomenon is often linked to overconfidence and a higher likelihood of engaging in risky driving behaviors (Măirean & Havârneanu, 2018; Horrey et al., 2015). To begin to explore the relative contribution of this type of comparison with peers to risky driving behavior, several new questions on how drivers perceived their own behaviors and skills compared with those of other drivers were added to this year's TSCI.

A growing body of work links another key personal influence, social stress, to risky driving. Measures of social exclusion (Li et al., 2023), perceived social stress (Öztürk et al., 2024), and suicidal thoughts (Ehsani et al., 2025) have been linked to engagement in risky driving behaviors, driving violations, and crash involvement. Multiple hypothesized pathways may link social stress to risky driving. Physiologically, social stress may cause the release of hormones, which in turn can impair concentration, judgment, and reaction time. Neurobiologically, chronic social stress may impair the prefrontal cortex, lowering impulse control (Arnsten, 2009). Psychologically, over the course of repeated or prolonged exposure to social stress, occasional engagement in risky behavior can become more customary, leading to ingrained habits. To begin to explore the relative influence of social stress on risky driving, this year's TSCI included a four-item perceived social stress scale (Cohen et al., 1983), which assessed whether respondents experience social stress in their daily lives.

### *Perceived Neighborhood Driving Behaviors*

Respondents were asked: "In your opinion, how often do other drivers in your neighborhood exhibit the following behaviors?" Table 7 presents the behaviors assessed in the survey, along with the percentages of drivers who perceived these behaviors as common or uncommon in their neighborhood.

*Table 7. In Your Opinion, How Often Do Other Drivers in Your Neighborhood…?*

| Driving Behavior | Always (%) | Almost Always (%) | Sometimes (%) | Hardly Ever (%) | Never (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Use their cell phone while driving** | 26.8 | 31.8 | 28.9 | 7.1 | 5.4 |
| **Drive too fast on freeways** | 35.1 | 30.6 | 25.4 | 5.1 | 3.9 |
| **Drive too fast on residential roads** | 19.9 | 31.1 | 34.6 | 9.4 | 5.0 |
| **Drive without wearing their seatbelt** | 5.7 | 9.6 | 41.2 | 29.5 | 14 |
| **Drive through a red light when they could have stopped safely** | 13.9 | 21.5 | 41.6 | 16.6 | 6.4 |
| **Weave in and out of lanes to overtake traffic** | 18.1 | 27.8 | 35.4 | 12.3 | 6.4 |
| **Pass in front of a vehicle at less than a car length** | 16.2 | 27.0 | 37.6 | 13.3 | 5.9 |
| **Slow down in a construction zone** | 15.7 | 30.2 | 40.9 | 11.9 | 1.3 |
| **Obey posted speed limits in a school zone** | 20.6 | 34.6 | 32.4 | 10.5 | 1.9 |
| **Use more caution around bicyclists** | 14.4 | 30.4 | 42.3 | 11.0 | 2.0 |
| **Take extra care around pedestrians** | 17.5 | 31.7 | 41.8 | 7.6 | 1.4 |
| **Decrease speed to accommodate poor weather conditions** | 14.8 | 29.1 | 40.8 | 13.4 | 1.9 |
| **Come to a complete stop at stop signs** | 16.9 | 29.9 | 35.3 | 15.9 | 2.1 |

Drivers frequently perceived both risky and safe behaviors among others in their neighborhood, with 77% to 91% reporting that these behaviors occurred at least sometimes. The exception was seatbelt non-use, which was perceived less often; 57% of drivers reported that others drove without a seatbelt in their communities.

Driving too fast on freeways was the most commonly perceived risky behavior, with 91% of drivers reporting that others in their neighborhood engaged in it at least sometimes. Speeding on residential roads was also widely perceived (86%). Despite these concerns, drivers also perceived regular safe behaviors in their neighborhood, including obeying school zone speed limits (88%), slowing in construction zones (87%), and reducing speed in poor weather conditions (85%).

Beyond speeding, cell phone use while driving (88%) and aggressive driving behaviors, such as weaving in and out of lanes to overtake traffic or passing with less than a car-length of space (81%), were also frequently perceived in their communities. Safe behaviors around vulnerable road users were among the most perceived, with taking extra care around pedestrians being the highest reported safe behavior at 91%, followed by using extra caution around cyclists (87%).

Although the questions used to capture perceived neighborhood driving differ slightly from those assessing self-reported behaviors in the 2025 TSCI, both sets of results on drivers' risky driving are presented here to allow readers to draw their own comparisons. Drivers reported engaging in a range of cell phone–related behaviors (10% to 61%) while driving at least once in the past 30 days. Meanwhile, about 88% reported perceiving others in their neighborhood using a cell phone while driving at least sometimes. Regarding speeding, 48% of drivers reported driving 15 mph over the speed limit on freeways, and 37% reported driving 10 mph over the limit on residential roads at least once in the past 30 days. Concurrently, 91% and 86% perceived that drivers in their neighborhood drive too fast on freeways and residential roads, respectively. For other aggressive driving behaviors, 28% of drivers reported running a red light, and 22% reported rapid lane changes or tailgating at least once in the past 30 days. Meanwhile, 77% perceived drivers in their neighborhood running red lights, and 81% perceived behaviors such as weaving through traffic or unsafe passing. Finally, 12% of drivers reported driving without a seatbelt at least once in the past 30 days, compared to 57% who perceived others in their community doing so at least sometimes.

### *Comparisons with Peers*

The questions listed in Table 8 measure how drivers perceive their abilities relative to other drivers, i.e., the better-than-average effect. Overall, the majority of drivers rated their own abilities as equal to or better than those of other drivers across all dimensions assessed. The better-than-average effect was most pronounced for safety perception, where 78% of drivers considered themselves safer than other drivers, and only 1% believed they were less safe. Regarding driving skill, 61% of drivers rated themselves as more skillful than other drivers, compared to just 4% who considered themselves less skillful. In terms of aggression, 66% of drivers believed others tended to drive more aggressively than themselves, while only 10% considered themselves more aggressive than others. Similarly, 60% of drivers felt they were better at handling distractions than others, while only 6% thought the opposite.

Speeding behavior showed a slightly different pattern, with the highest proportion of drivers rating themselves as similar to others. About 50% of drivers believed their driving speed was about the same as that of other drivers, and only 19% thought they drove faster than others.

*Table 8. Compared to Other Drivers…?*

| Questions | Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **How fast do you tend to drive** | Much faster (%) | Somewhat faster (%) | About the same (%) | Somewhat slower (%) | Much slower (%) |
| | 0.9 | 17.7 | 49.9 | 29.6 | 2.0 |
| **How aggressively do you tend to drive** | Much more aggressively (%) | Somewhat more aggressively (%) | About the same (%) | Somewhat less aggressively (%) | Much less aggressively (%) |
| | 0.8 | 9.6 | 23.4 | 38.2 | 28.1 |
| **How safe of a driver are you** | Much safer (%) | Somewhat safer (%) | About the same (%) | Somewhat less safe (%) | Much less safe (%) |
| | 31.2 | 46.6 | 20.8 | 1.0 | 0.5 |
| **How skillful of a driver are you** | Much more skillful (%) | Somewhat more skillful (%) | About the same (%) | Somewhat less (%) | Much less skillful (%) |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 34.5 | 3.8 | 0.4 |
| **How good are you at dealing with distraction while driving** | Much better dealing with distraction (%) | Somewhat better dealing with distraction (%) | About the same (%) | Somewhat worse dealing with distraction (%) | Much worse dealing with distraction (%) |
| | 23.7 | 36.4 | 34.4 | 5.1 | 0.4 |

### *Perceived Social Stress*

Table 9 presents drivers' feelings and thoughts over the 30 days preceding the survey. Overall, drivers tended to report more positive than negative stress appraisals during the period measured. The majority of drivers reported positive appraisals of their personal circumstances. Approximately 90% felt confident in their ability to handle their personal problems at least sometimes, and 86% reported that things were going their way at least some of the time.

In contrast, 38% of drivers felt that difficulties were piling up so high that they could not overcome them, and approximately 43% reported feeling unable to control the important things in their lives, both at least sometimes.

*Table 9. In the Past 30 Days, How Often Have You Felt…?*

| Questions | Very often (%) | Fairly often (%) | Sometimes (%) | Almost never (%) | Never (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **You were unable to control the important things in your life** | 5.1 | 10.4 | 27.6 | 27.6 | 24.9 |
| **Confident about your ability to handle your personal problems** | 35.5 | 34.2 | 20.0 | 6.4 | 4.0 |
| **Things were going your way** | 15.2 | 37.9 | 32.9 | 11.0 | 3.0 |
| **Difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them** | 4.3 | 8.7 | 24.5 | 36.6 | 25.9 |

### *Predictors of Risky Driving Behaviors*

Given the inclusion of measures of neighborhood driving behaviors, self-appraisals of behavior and abilities, and social stress, further analyses were conducted to determine whether these factors influenced drivers' own self-reported risky driving behavior. Therefore, a logistic regression analysis was employed for each risky driving behavior. The outcome variables, i.e., the self-reported risky driving behaviors listed in Table 5, were dichotomized into two categories: those who reported never or only once engaging in the behavior, and those who reported doing so more than once. The analysis incorporated three predictors, i.e., perceived neighborhood driving behaviors, better-than-average effects, and perceived social stress, while controlling for demographic characteristics including age, gender, education, and region.

Perceived neighborhood driving behaviors were first subjected to a factor analysis, which grouped the behaviors into two factors: safe driving behaviors and risky driving behaviors. The resulting factor scores reflect each driver's perception of their neighborhood's safety or risk relative to the sample average.

With respect to drivers' self-appraisals, the survey item related to perceived driving skill was selected for inclusion in statistical models, as perceived skill has been identified in the literature as a contributing factor to risky driving behavior (Măirean & Havârneanu, 2018). Drivers who reported themselves as at least somewhat more skillful than others were classified as high confidence, while the remaining respondents served as the reference group. The remaining items related to self-appraisals (Table 8) were excluded because some directly measured risky driving behaviors (making them inappropriate predictors), and others overlapped conceptually or statistically with neighborhood safety or risk factors.

Perceived social stress was calculated by summing individual item responses scored from 0 to 4, resulting in a total score ranging from 0 to 16 across all related questions. Higher total scores indicate greater perceived stress (Cohen et al., 1983). Stress levels were further categorized, with scores at or above the 80$^{th}$ percentile (i.e., a total score of 8 or higher) classified as high social stress.

All findings reported in this section were statistically significant. Detailed model results are provided in Appendix C. The perceived neighborhood risky driving (i.e., drivers who believed that risky driving behaviors were more common than average in their local area) was positively associated with a broad set of risky behaviors. These included distracted driving behaviors such as holding and talking on a cell phone while driving, reading a text or email on a cell phone while driving, manually typing or sending a text message or email while driving, and using hands-free technology to talk, text, or email while driving; speeding behaviors such as driving 15 miles per hour over the speed limit on a freeway; and aggressive driving behaviors such as driving through a light that had just turned red when a safe stop was possible and rapidly switching lanes or following another vehicle too closely.

Drivers who believed they were at least somewhat more skillful than other drivers were more likely to engage in a range of risky driving behaviors, including driving 15 miles per hour over the speed limit on a freeway, driving through a light that had just turned red when a safe stop was possible, aggressive driving such as rapidly switching lanes or following another vehicle too closely, driving without wearing a seatbelt, and using hands-free technology. In addition, perceived social stress was positively correlated with drowsy driving and driving without a seatbelt, indicating that higher stress levels were associated with a greater likelihood of engaging in these behaviors.

## Discussion

Findings from the 2025 TSCI provide insight into public perceptions and attitudes toward risky driving, as well as psychosocial factors that may contribute to risky driving behaviors. Together, these findings can inform the development of countermeasures and support efforts to promote safer driving.

Overall trends in attitudes towards risky driving behaviors are similar to previous rounds of the TSCI survey (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2023, 2024; Zhang & Steinbach, 2025). Overwhelmingly, drivers recognized distracted, drowsy, and impaired behaviors as dangerous, and reported that people important to them would disapprove. Most drivers also supported laws aimed at reducing distracted and impaired driving behaviors. Attitudes towards speeding behaviors, however, follow a different pattern. Fewer drivers perceived speeding as dangerous; speeding behaviors had the lowest

levels of social disapproval of all the examined risky driving behaviors. Support for speeding-related countermeasures was also more tepid—only 59% of drivers supported requiring manufacturers to include speed-warning devices in new vehicles, and just 46% supported using cameras to automatically ticket drivers on residential streets.

In terms of self-reported risky driving behavior in 2025, roughly 61% of respondents reported using hands-free technology to talk, text, or email while driving. Despite recognizing the risks, about a third admitted to distracted driving behaviors, such as reading or sending texts and emails, in the 30 days prior to the survey, and 20% admitted to drowsy driving. Consistent with previous TSCI reports (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2023, 2024; Zhang & Steinbach, 2025), speeding remained relatively common, with approximately 48% of drivers reporting freeway speeding and 37% reporting speeding on residential roads in the past 30 days.

Previous studies have identified risky driving behaviors as a particularly significant contributor to traffic fatalities (Cheng et al., 2023; Hee et al., 2024). For instance, NHTSA reported that speeding alone has been implicated in approximately one-third of all motor vehicle fatalities for more than two decades, accounting for 29% of all traffic deaths in 2023 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, n.d.a). Additionally, NHTSA documented that 3,275 people died in distraction-affected crashes in 2023, representing a decrease of approximately 1% from the 3,315 deaths recorded in 2022 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, n.d.b). It is worth noting, however, that these figures may underestimate the true prevalence of distraction-affected crashes due to inherent data limitations (National Safety Council, n.d.).

However, compared to 2024, several encouraging trends emerged. Self-reported phone use while driving dropped four percentage points to 32%, while support for banning handheld calls rose four percentage points to 83%. Support also grew for speed-limiting technology: 72% backed requiring speed-limiting devices for convicted speeders, and 59% supported mandating speed-warning systems in all new vehicles—both up three percentage points from last year. These shifts may be indicative of small changes in underlying traffic safety culture, which could help explain why NHTSA recorded the second-lowest traffic fatality rate in U.S. history in 2025, at 1.1 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 2026).

In addition, this study identified several factors contributing to risky driving behaviors. First, the perceived behavior of other drivers in their communities positively influenced a driver's own risky driving behaviors. This is consistent with prior research indicating that group norms play a meaningful role—individuals who are regularly exposed to peers or family members who engage in aberrant driving are more likely to adopt similar behaviors themselves (Harith & Mahmud, 2020). These findings underscore the importance of cultivating a strong safety culture within communities as a means of shaping driver behavior.

Relatedly, drivers' tendency to perceive their own driving skills as superior to those of other drivers was positively associated with risky driving behaviors. This aligns with a substantial body of prior research demonstrating that drivers consistently rate themselves as more skillful than average (Horswill et al., 2013; Stephens & Ohtsuka, 2014), and that this better-than-average effect is positively associated with risky driving (Măirean & Havârneanu, 2018). Accordingly, behavioral countermeasures aimed at reducing such cognitive biases may be incorporated into driver training programs.

Beyond social dynamics, this study found that social stress was positively correlated with drowsy driving and seatbelt non-use. Prior research (Atombo et al., 2017; Ge et al., 2014) demonstrates that stress functions as a precursor to emotional dysregulation, impairing cognitive function and increasing inattention, fatigue, and aggression behind the wheel. These findings suggest that enhanced interventions—such as stress management training, psychological education, and the integration of mental health strategies into driver education curricula (Singh & Dubey, 2025) may be warranted to address this risk factor.

These findings shed light on the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of U.S. drivers, offering valuable direction for the development of more targeted and effective traffic safety countermeasures. Although further research is needed to identify which interventions are most effective across diverse populations and driving contexts, the results presented in this report provide meaningful insight into the values and cultural norms that shape driver behavior on American roads. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety remains committed to advancing research that promotes safe driving, fosters a healthy traffic safety culture, and supports safe mobility for all road users.

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## Appendix A: Drivers' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors in relation to age and sex

### Distracted Driving Behaviors

*Table A1. Proportion of Drivers Who Perceived Distracted Driving as Very or Extremely Dangerous*

| | | Holding and talking on cell phone (%) | Reading on cell phone (%) | Texting or emailing on cell phone (%) | Using technology that allows hands-free use of their phone (%) | Scrolling through social media content on a cell phone (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **All drivers** | 68.6 | 90.8 | 92.5 | 19.8 | 95.0 |
| **Age group** | **16–18** | 64.4 | 85.4 | 92.4 | 23.4 | 86.9 |
| | **19–24** | 58.5 | 87.4 | 92.3 | 10.4 | 97.1 |
| | **25–39** | 55.6 | 86.5 | 88.6 | 10.5 | 93.9 |
| | **40–59** | 67.1 | 90.6 | 90.9 | 16.7 | 93.6 |
| | **60–74** | 78.2 | 95.3 | 97.7 | 27.4 | 96.8 |
| | **75+** | 92.9 | 94.9 | 95.0 | 41.7 | 99.2 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 66.5 | 89.1 | 93.8 | 17.5 | 92.8 |
| | **Female** | 70.7 | 92.6 | 91.2 | 22.0 | 97.1 |

*Table A2. Proportion of Drivers Who Perceived Distracted Driving Somewhat or Very Likely to be Caught by the Police*

| | | Holding and talking on cell phone (%) | Reading a text or an email on cell phone (%) | Typing or sending a text message or email on cell phone (%) | Scrolling through social media content on a cell phone (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **All drivers** | 41.2 | 34.7 | 37.1 | 39.3 |
| **Age group** | 16–18 | 39.5 | 42.7 | 42.7 | 43.4 |
| | 19–24 | 48.7 | 41.4 | 43.2 | 51.1 |
| | 25–39 | 47.7 | 42.3 | 43.7 | 41.8 |
| | 40–59 | 40.7 | 30.7 | 33.6 | 38.9 |
| | 60–74 | 37.3 | 30.8 | 34.2 | 35.9 |
| | 75+ | 31.2 | 35.6 | 36.6 | 33.5 |
| **Sex** | Male | 36.3 | 34.3 | 30.7 | 36.2 |
| | Female | 46.2 | 35.2 | 43.3 | 42.3 |

*Table A3. Proportion of Drivers Who Believed People Who Were Important to Them Would Somewhat or Completely Approve of Distracted Driving*

| | | Holding and talking on cell phone (%) | Reading a text or an email on cell phone (%) | Typing or sending a text message or email on cell phone (%) | Scrolling through social media content on a cell phone (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **All drivers** | 15.2 | 6.1 | 5.6 | 2.1 |
| **Age group** | **16–18** | 14.1 | 1.5 | 2.7 | 5.0 |
| | **19–24** | 19.8 | 3.4 | 0.0 | 5.5 |
| | **25–39** | 17.2 | 8.1 | 6.7 | 1.6 |
| | **40–59** | 16.1 | 6.1 | 8.0 | 0.9 |
| | **60–74** | 13.6 | 5.0 | 4.6 | 3.0 |
| | **75+** | 7.3 | 8.0 | 1.6 | 2.7 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 14.3 | 6.1 | 6.7 | 1.8 |
| | **Female** | 16.1 | 6.1 | 4.7 | 2.5 |

*Table A4. Proportion of Drivers Who Reported Engaging in Distracted Driving at Least Once in the Past 30 Days*

| | | Holding and talking on cell phone (%) | Reading a text or an email on cell phone (%) | Manually texting or sending a text message or email (%) | Using technology that allows hands-free use of their phone (%) | Scrolling through social media content on a cell phone (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **All drivers** | 31.8 | 37.7 | 27.8 | 60.8 | 10.4 |
| **Age group** | **16–18** | 46.6 | 42.4 | 34.4 | 58.0 | 17.5 |
| | **19–24** | 32.4 | 48.1 | 44.1 | 64.4 | 17.0 |
| | **25–39** | 33.3 | 49.0 | 39.2 | 65.5 | 14.8 |
| | **40–59** | 37.6 | 44.2 | 31.8 | 66.6 | 12.7 |
| | **60–74** | 25.0 | 22.5 | 13.9 | 54.9 | 3.2 |
| | **75+** | 16.8 | 14.1 | 4.5 | 37.9 | 2.1 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 32.5 | 38.6 | 27.7 | 61.1 | 12.2 |
| | **Female** | 31.1 | 36.9 | 27.8 | 60.5 | 8.6 |

## Aggressive Driving Behaviors

*Table A5. Proportion of Drivers Who Perceived Aggressive Driving as Very or Extremely Dangerous*

| | | Driving 15 mph over the speed limit on freeway (%) | Driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street (neighborhood) (%) | Driving through a red light (%) | Aggressive driving (%) | Driving without wearing a seatbelt (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **All drivers** | 48.4 | 61.4 | 77.9 | 89.9 | 77.5 |
| **Age group** | 16–18 | 49.4 | 57.9 | 77.1 | 85.2 | 80.1 |
| | 19–24 | 48.2 | 57.3 | 61.3 | 90.8 | 74.0 |
| | 25–39 | 34.4 | 57.9 | 70.0 | 88.3 | 74.5 |
| | 40–59 | 50.8 | 56.0 | 78.8 | 89.2 | 75.6 |
| | 60–74 | 56.5 | 72.0 | 85.7 | 91.3 | 80.9 |
| | 75+ | 55.8 | 65.0 | 86.8 | 94.2 | 85.9 |
| **Sex** | Male | 44.5 | 55.6 | 75.4 | 88.8 | 73.0 |
| | Female | 52.4 | 67.4 | 80.3 | 91.0 | 81.8 |

*Table A6. Proportion of Drivers Who Perceived Aggressive Driving as Somewhat or Very Likely to be Caught by the Police*

| | | Driving 15 mph over the speed limit on freeway (%) | Driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street (neighborhood) (%) | Driving through a red light (%) | Aggressive driving (%) | Driving without wearing a seatbelt (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **All drivers** | 62.2 | 43.9 | 49.3 | 55.9 | 35.9 |
| **Age group** | **16–18** | 65.1 | 49.7 | 62.3 | 60.1 | 43.0 |
| | **19–24** | 65.9 | 64.9 | 52.4 | 56.5 | 25.2 |
| | **25–39** | 72.7 | 54.2 | 46.5 | 57.5 | 30.0 |
| | **40–59** | 60.5 | 39.8 | 48.7 | 55.9 | 37.5 |
| | **60–74** | 56.7 | 36.2 | 50.6 | 55.9 | 38.0 |
| | **75+** | 50.2 | 38.7 | 48.7 | 49.0 | 44.1 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 58.1 | 41.4 | 46.3 | 52.8 | 33.6 |
| | **Female** | 66.3 | 46.5 | 52.2 | 59.0 | 38.1 |

*Table A7. Proportion of Drivers Who Believed People Who Were Important to Them Would Somewhat or Completely Approve of Aggressive Driving*

| | | Driving 15 mph over the speed limit on freeway (%) | Driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street (neighborhood) (%) | Driving through a red light (%) | Aggressive driving (%) | Driving without wearing a seatbelt (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **All drivers** | 16.7 | 10.1 | 5.3 | 3.6 | 5.6 |
| **Age group** | **16–18** | 12.3 | 6.1 | 3.5 | 5.3 | 1.1 |
| | **19–24** | 7.3 | 3.4 | 9.8 | 5.5 | 5.4 |
| | **25–39** | 17.8 | 15.8 | 9.4 | 6.6 | 8.2 |
| | **40–59** | 19.6 | 8.5 | 3.8 | 2.7 | 5.4 |
| | **60–74** | 15.5 | 9.9 | 3.2 | 1.9 | 6.3 |
| | **75+** | 13.0 | 8.7 | 3.7 | 1.5 | 0.0 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 17.3 | 11.1 | 5.4 | 4.0 | 5.9 |
| | **Female** | 16.1 | 9.1 | 5.1 | 3.1 | 5.3 |

*Table A8. Proportion of Drivers Who Reported Engaging in Aggressive Driving at Least Once in the Past 30 Days*

| | | Driving 15 mph over the speed limit on freeway (%) | Driving 10 mph over the speed limit on a residential street (neighborhood) (%) | Driving through a red light (%) | Aggressive driving (%) | Driving without wearing a seatbelt (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **All drivers** | 47.6 | 36.6 | 28.0 | 22.2 | 11.9 |
| **Age group** | **16–18** | 40.2 | 45.8 | 26.3 | 26.1 | 14.3 |
| | **19–24** | 40.1 | 44.8 | 34.1 | 30.3 | 13.9 |
| | **25–39** | 53.4 | 38.0 | 30.8 | 27.5 | 15.5 |
| | **40–59** | 50.6 | 36.4 | 29.7 | 24.6 | 12.3 |
| | **60–74** | 43.3 | 30.9 | 22.6 | 15.2 | 8.5 |
| | **75+** | 40.2 | 40.9 | 24.6 | 9.3 | 8.5 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 52.4 | 40.3 | 30.1 | 26.1 | 14.1 |
| | **Female** | 42.9 | 32.9 | 25.9 | 18.2 | 9.8 |

## Drowsy and Impaired Driving Behaviors

*Table A9. Proportion of Drivers Who Reported Drowsy, Alcohol-Impaired, or Drug-Impaired Driving as Very or Extremely Dangerous*

| | | Driving while being so tired that they had had a hard time keeping their eyes open (%) | Drinking enough alcohol that they may be over the legal limit (%) | Driving shortly (within an hour) after using marijuana (%) | Driving after using potentially impairing prescription drugs (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All drivers** | | 94.8 | 93.3 | 71.2 | 86.0 |
| **Age Group** | **16–18** | 85.7 | 93.6 | 83.6 | 89.5 |
| | **19–24** | 95.7 | 94.2 | 65.0 | 95.9 |
| | **25–39** | 96.4 | 92.8 | 65.0 | 76.6 |
| | **40–59** | 93.6 | 91.5 | 69.3 | 86.5 |
| | **60–74** | 94.4 | 96.2 | 77.6 | 90.2 |
| | **75+** | 98.4 | 92.0 | 77.8 | 86.7 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 94.2 | 90.7 | 68.9 | 83.3 |
| | **Female** | 95.5 | 96.0 | 73.3 | 88.7 |

*Table A10. Proportion of Drivers Who Perceived Drowsy, Alcohol-Impaired, or Drug-Impaired Driving Somewhat or Very Likely to be Caught by the Police*

| | | Driving while being so tired that they had had a hard time keeping their eyes open (%) | Drinking enough alcohol that they may be over the legal limit (%) | Driving shortly (within an hour) after using marijuana (%) | Driving after using potentially impairing prescription drugs (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All drivers** | | 32.0 | 63.0 | 26.2 | 43.0 |
| **Age Group** | **16–18** | 31.4 | 69.5 | 36.7 | 51.8 |
| | **19–24** | 41.1 | 76.4 | 35.9 | 66.7 |
| | **25–39** | 28.5 | 71.9 | 28.4 | 49.3 |
| | **40–59** | 35.4 | 58.2 | 24.2 | 37.4 |
| | **60–74** | 30.1 | 59.4 | 21.1 | 40.4 |
| | **75+** | 27.0 | 57.0 | 30.4 | 35.2 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 29.3 | 57.1 | 19.8 | 40.7 |
| | **Female** | 34.6 | 69.2 | 32.2 | 45.4 |

*Table A11. Proportion of Drivers Who Believed People Who Were Important to Them Would Somewhat or Completely Approve of Engaging in Drowsy, Alcohol-Impaired, or Drug-Impaired Driving*

| | | Driving while being so tired that they had had a hard time keeping their eyes open (%) | Drinking enough alcohol that they may be over the legal limit (%) | Ridden in a car driven by someone who has had too much alcohol (%) | Driving shortly (within an hour) after using marijuana (%) | Driving after using potentially impairing prescription drugs (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All drivers** | | 2.3 | 3.0 | 1.6 | 4.5 | 2.9 |
| **Age Group** | **16–18** | 4.5 | 1.1 | 6.2 | 2.4 | 0.4 |
| | **19–24** | 5.5 | 3.4 | 5.5 | 5.3 | 3.4 |
| | **25–39** | 2.9 | 4.3 | 1.4 | 4.2 | 5.6 |
| | **40–59** | 2.5 | 2.3 | 0.7 | 3.8 | 1.8 |
| | **60–74** | 1.1 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 6.6 | 2.4 |
| | **75+** | 0.0 | 3.4 | 1.5 | 3.0 | 2.0 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 2.4 | 2.8 | 1.0 | 4.2 | 3.5 |
| | **Female** | 2.2 | 3.2 | 2.1 | 4.8 | 2.3 |

*Table A12. Proportion of Drivers Who Reported Engaging in Drowsy, Alcohol-Impaired, or Drug-Impaired Driving at Least Once in the Past 30 Days*

| | | Driving while being so tired that they had had a hard time keeping their eyes open (%) | Drinking enough alcohol that they may be over the legal limit (%) | Ridden in a car driven by someone who has had too much alcohol (%) | Driving shortly (within an hour) after using marijuana (%) | Driving after using potentially impairing prescription drugs (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All drivers** | | 20.4 | 7.4 | 7.0 | 6.1 | 2.8 |
| **Age Group** | **16–18** | 20.8 | 2.1 | 6.0 | 5.1 | 2.7 |
| | **19–24** | 29.8 | 7.4 | 9.7 | 13.9 | 4.7 |
| | **25–39** | 26.0 | 6.5 | 7.1 | 9.4 | 3.5 |
| | **40–59** | 20.6 | 9.2 | 8.1 | 5.7 | 3.2 |
| | **60–74** | 14.9 | 6.7 | 6.1 | 3.2 | 1.8 |
| | **75+** | 12.7 | 5.8 | 3.3 | 1.7 | 0.4 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 23.4 | 9.8 | 6.5 | 7.6 | 3.4 |
| | **Female** | 17.3 | 4.9 | 7.6 | 4.6 | 2.2 |

## Appendix B: New questions in the 2025 TSCI Survey

| Questions | | Answer Options |
|---|---|---|
| **Perceived Neighborhood Driving Behaviors** | | |
| **We'd like to get an idea of what it's like to drive in your local area. In your opinion, how often do other drivers in your neighborhood…?** | a. Use their cell phone while driving<br>b. Drive too fast on freeways<br>c. Drive too fast on residential roads<br>d. Drive without wearing their seatbelt<br>e. Drive through a red light when they could have stopped safely<br>f. Weave in and out of lanes to overtake traffic<br>g. Pass in front of a vehicle at less than a car length<br>h. Slow down in a construction zone<br>i. Obey posted speed limits in a school zone<br>j. Use more caution around bicyclists<br>k. Take extra care around pedestrians<br>l. Decrease speed to accommodate poor weather conditions<br>m. Come to a complete stop at stop signs | Always<br>Almost always<br>Sometimes<br>Hardly ever<br>Never |
| **Perceived Driving Ability** | | |
| **Compared to other drivers, how fast do you tend to drive?** | | Much faster<br>Somewhat faster<br>About the same<br>Somewhat slower<br>Much slower |
| **Compared to other drivers, how safe of a driver are you?** | | Much safer<br>Somewhat safer<br>About the same<br>Somewhat less safer<br>Much less safer |
| **Compared to other drivers, how skillful of a driver are you?** | | Much more skillful<br>Somewhat more skillful<br>About the same<br>Somewhat less<br>Much less skillful |

| Questions | | Answer Options |
|---|---|---|
| **Compared to other drivers, how good are you at dealing with distraction while driving?** | | Much better dealing with distraction<br>Somewhat better dealing with distraction<br>About the same<br>Somewhat worse dealing with distraction<br>Much worse dealing with distraction |
| **Compared to other drivers, how aggressively do you tend to drive?** | | Much more aggressively<br>Somewhat more aggressively<br>About the same<br>Somewhat less aggressively<br>Much less aggressively |
| **Perceived Social Stress** | | |
| **The next few questions ask you about your feelings and thoughts during in the past 30 days:** | a. In the past 30 days, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?<br>b. In the past 30 days, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?<br>c. In the past 30 days, how often have you felt that things were going your way?<br>d. In the past 30 days, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? | Very often<br>Fairly often<br>Sometimes<br>Almost never<br>Never |

## Appendix C: Logistic regression results

| Driving Behavior | Handheld phone call | Reading messages | Manual texting | Freeway speeding | Residential speeding | Red-light running | Lane-changing/ tailgating | Drowsy | No seatbelt use | Hands-free device | Scrolling through social media |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Predictor** | | | | | | **Odd Ratio** | | | | | |
| **Perceived neighborhood—risky driving** | 1.16* | 1.24* | 1.22* | 1.26* | 1.12 | 1.29* | 1.28* | 1.12 | 1.09 | 1.37* | 1.11 |
| **Perceived neighborhood—safe driving** | 0.89 | 0.92 | 0.98 | 0.91 | 1.01 | 0.91 | 0.96 | 1.06 | 0.92 | 0.90 | 1.07 |
| **Overconfidence in driving skill** | 1.00 | 1.05 | 0.87 | 1.32* | 1.02 | 0.73* | 1.45* | 0.94 | 1.43* | 1.21* | 0.90 |
| **High social stress** | 1.11 | 1.10 | 1.05 | 1.12 | 0.90 | 0.77 | 1.06 | 1.88* | 1.58* | 0.89 | 0.80 |

** Results are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.*

*Notes: The models were controlled for drivers' demographic characteristics; Alcohol and drug-impaired driving behaviors were excluded from the analysis due to the limited sample size of drivers who reported engaging in each of these behaviors in the past 30 days.*