

THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION

National Survey of Speeding and Unsafe Driving Attitudes and Behaviors: 2002

VOLUME II – FINDINGS REPORT

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Executive Summary

Background

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) mission is to save lives, prevent injuries, reduce traffic-related healthcare and other economic costs, and promote fuel economy. NHTSA estimates that 30% of all fatal crashes involve one or more drivers who were exceeding the posted limit or driving too fast for conditions (FARS 2001). The economic cost to society of speeding related crashes is estimated to be \$40.4 billion per year (Traffic Safety Facts 2001, National Center for Statistics and Analyses, NHTSA).

NHTSA first conducted a study on the driving public's attitudes and behaviors regarding speeding and unsafe behaviors in 1997. In 2002 NHTSA undertook a second survey of drivers to collect updated data on the nature and scope of the speeding and unsafe driving problem with the intent of understanding how serious the problem is in the public's eyes, and what countermeasures the public may accept to counter these problems. NHTSA will use the data to guide the development of programs directed at speeding and unsafe driving practices.

The Gallup Organization conducted telephone interviews between February 4 and April 14, 2002, with a nationally representative sample of 4,010 drivers age 16 or older in the United States.

Key Findings

Affinity for Speeding

Self-Reported Speeding Behavior

Speeding is a pervasive behavior with about three-quarters of drivers reporting they drove over the speed limit on all types of roads within the past month, and one-quarter or more reported speeding over the limit on the day of interview (reported below as today). Self-reported speeding behaviors in the past month and most recent day include speeding on:

- multi-lane interstate highways (78% in past month and 25% today)
- two-lane roads (78% and 31%)
- city, town, or neighborhood streets (73% and 33%)
- non-interstate multi-lane roads (83% and 31%)

A majority of drivers of *all ages* admit to speeding, however:

- Younger drivers are most likely to report at least speeding monthly with at least eight of ten speeding on each road type.
- Males are generally 50% more likely than females to drive over the posted speed limit.
- Of those age 65 or older, at least six in ten or more report speeding on all road types.

Agreement With Statements on Personal Driving

A substantial proportion of the driving population indicates an affinity for speed. The survey asked drivers to rate their personal agreement with six statements about their driving. At least three in ten drivers agree strongly or somewhat with each of the six statements below:

- I often get impatient with slow drivers (53% agree strongly or somewhat).
- I worry a lot about having a crash (46%).
- I enjoy the feeling of driving fast (34%).
- I try to get where I am going as fast as I can (30%).
- The faster I drive the more alert I am (30%).
- I tend to pass other cars more often than they pass me (30%).

Younger drivers (age 16 to 20) are much more likely than drivers overall to agree that they:

- Get impatient with slow drivers (65% compared to 53% overall).
- Enjoy the feeling of driving fast (52% compared to 34%).
- Tend to pass other cars more often than are passed (44% compared to 30%).

While at least three-quarters of drivers admit to driving over the speed limit, most seem to have a limit as to how much over the limit they will travel on different types of roads. Large proportions of drivers report driving 10 MPH over the posted speed limit on interstate highways (51%) and driving 10 MPH faster than most other vehicles (34%). However, a relatively smaller proportion reports similar behaviors at higher speeds, including driving 20 MPH over the posted speed limit on interstate highways (12%) and driving 20 MPH faster than most other vehicles (10%).

Drivers under age 30 are most likely to report these speeding behaviors, with the propensity to do so falling significantly with age.

Self-Reported Risky Driving Behavior

While 29% of drivers report that they drive through traffic by switching lanes often or sometimes, only one in ten or fewer report engaging in other risky driving behaviors, including:

- tailgating another vehicle (10% sometimes or often)
- driving through stop signs without slowing down (4%)
- racing another driver (3%)

Attitudes About Speed Limits

Speed Level Before Likely Ticket

Drivers think they can travel between 7-8 MPH over the posted speed limit, on average, before police would normally give them a ticket. Specifically, they feel safe from enforcement driving the following amounts over posted speed limits on different road types:

- 7.8 average MPH over on multi-lane interstate highways (36% feel they can go 10 MPH or more over the limit)
- 7.6 average MPH over on non-interstate multi-lane roads with speeds of 40-55 MPH (30% 10 MPH over)
- 6.7 average MPH over two-lane roads with speeds of 45 MPH or more (28% 10 MPH over)
- 7.0 average MPH over on city, town, or neighborhood roads (26% 10 MPH over)

Drivers have the following views on how many miles per hour over the speed limit they think *should* be allowed before ticketing:

- 10.0 average MPH over on multi-lane interstate highways (53% feel tickets should be issued at 10 MPH over the limit)
- 8.9 average MPH over on non-interstate multi-lane roads with speeds of 40-55 MPH (53% at 10 MPH)
- 8.1 average MPH over two-lane roads with speeds of 45 MPH or more (43% at 5 MPH; 46% at 10 MPH)
- 7.4 average MPH over on city, town, or neighborhood roads (59% at 10 MPH)

Appropriateness of Existing Speed Limits

While three-quarters or more of drivers admit to exceeding the limit on all road types, most drivers feel that the existing speed limits on roads are appropriate, with the following proportions of drivers saying the speed limits are “about right”:

- 83% for city, town, or neighborhood roads (73% report speeding on this road type in the past month)
- 78% for two-lane roads with speeds of 45 MPH or more (78% report speeding)
- 74% for non-interstate multi-lane roads with speeds of 40-55 MPH (83% report speeding on this road type while 22% say limits are too low)
- 61% for multi-lane interstate highways (78% report speeding) while 35% say limits are too low

Ideal Speed Limits

When asked what the speed limit for interstate highways should be, drivers see an average of about 67 MPH about right, with about half of all drivers (49%) feeling that the limit on interstates should be 70 MPH or higher.

The perception of the ideal speed limit for interstate highways varies by NHTSA region, with the following three Central regions reporting an average ideal of 70 MPH or more:

- Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI) – 70 MPH average
- Region 7 (IA, KS, MS, NE) – 70 MPH average
- Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY) – 71 MPH average

The following regions in the Midwest and Northeast report the lowest preferred speed limits:

- Region 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT) – 64 MPH average
- Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, VI) – 64 MPH average
- Region 3 (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV) – 65 MPH average

Factors Affecting Speed Selection by Motorists

Drivers were asked to rate how important various factors were to them in selecting the speed they drive on different types of roads. While there were some small differences by the type of road (i.e. interstate vs. local streets vs. two-lane roads, etc.) the patterns of the importance of factors are similar.

The five *most important* factors drivers say they consider when selecting road speed (across different roadway types) include:

- Weather conditions (about eight often name it as very important for speed selection)
- Driver’s personal assessment of what speed is safe (at least seven often very important)
- Posted speed limits (about two-thirds very important)
- The amount of traffic on the road (about two-thirds very important)
- Driver’s personal experience on that road (about six often very important)

The following factors were *very important* to about one half or fewer drivers when selecting road speed:

- Speed of other drivers (about half very important)
- The chance of being stopped by police (about half very important)
- Amount of time driver has to get their destination (slightly over one third very important)

Reported Speed if Limits Were Raised

To help gauge if higher speed limits would reduce the illegal and unsafe practice of speeding, drivers were asked to predict how they would drive if the posted speed limits were increased by 10 MPH on different road types. Even with an increased limit of 10 MPH, more than one-quarter of drivers would drive faster than the posted limit on the following road types:

- Thirty-eight percent on interstate highways
- Twenty-six percent on non-interstate multi-lane roads

However, with a 10 MPH higher limit, more than one in three (36%) drivers would drive slower than the increased speed limit on city, town, or neighborhood streets, suggesting that drivers feel the current limits for these roads are where they should be for safety.

Younger drivers (under age 30) and males are the most likely to say they would drive faster than the limits if the limits were raised by 10 MPH.

Speeding and Safety Considerations

Perceived Likelihood of Crash at Different Speeds

The majority of drivers (58%) feel that someone driving at least 10 MPH over the posted speed limit would be at least somewhat more likely than someone traveling right at the limit to have a crash. Fewer drivers perceive that a crash is likely for drivers exceeding the limit by less than 10 MPH. Specifically:

- 34% feel someone driving at less than 5 MPH over the limit is more likely to have a crash than is someone traveling at the posted speed.
- 40% say someone driving 5 MPH over the limit is more likely to have a crash.
- 35% feel someone is more likely to crash if driving 6-9 MPH over the posted speed limit.

Perceived Threat of Others Speeding

Many drivers believe that the speed limits on interstates should generally be higher, that they would drive faster than the speed limit even if the limits were raised, and that they themselves speed at least sometimes. However, 68% of drivers feel that *other drivers'* speeding is a **major** threat to their own personal safety. Perceptions of the threat increase significantly with age, from 48% of drivers age 16-20 feeling others speeding is a threat to 86% of those age 65 or older feeling this way.

In addition, more than three-quarters of drivers feel that it is at least somewhat important that something be done to reduce speeding on all road types.

This suggests a strong “it’s not me, it’s the other guy who is a problem” mentality among many drivers.

Unsafe and Aggressive Driving Behaviors

Self-Reported Unsafe Driving Behavior

While speeding is the unsafe behavior engaged in most by drivers, other unsafe behaviors account for a sizable proportion of motor vehicle crashes. The most commonly reported unsafe driving behaviors include:

- Entering an intersection just as the light turned from yellow to red (40% at least sometimes and 11% often).
- Drivers who do rolling stops at stop signs (30% sometimes and 12% often).

Drivers under age 21 report substantially higher involvement in these behaviors (57% and 54% respectively) while drivers over age 65 report substantially lower involvement in these behaviors (28% and 19% respectively).

Relatively few drivers of any age reportedly engage in the following unsafe behaviors:

- drunk driving (4% at least sometimes)
- crossing railroad tracks when the light is flashing (3%)
- running red lights (4%)
- making illegal U-turns (7%)

Self-Reported Aggressive Driving Behavior

While there is some disagreement in the traffic safety community as to what types of behaviors define aggressive driving behavior, many feel that actions such as making rude/obscene gestures, cutting in front of other drivers, passing traffic on the shoulder, and passing in a no-passing zone could be construed as aggressive driving. While reports of aggressive driving are lower than reports of speeding or going through yellow lights, these behaviors do occur on the road. Reported behaviors include:

- making angry, insulting, or obscene gestures toward another driver (12% do at least sometimes with 3% doing so often)
- cutting in front of other drivers (10% at least sometimes and 2% often)
- using the shoulder to pass in heavy traffic (6% and 2% respectively)
- passing a vehicle in a no-passing zone (3%) and passing a school bus with its lights flashing (1%)

Drivers under age 21 are much more likely than older drivers to engage in these behaviors, with 29% saying they cut in front of other drivers, 24% making obscene or angry gestures towards others, and 17% using the shoulder to pass in heavy traffic.

Encountering Unsafe and Aggressive Behaviors

Perceived Change in Aggressive Driving in Others

Drivers feel that others are driving as, or more aggressively, now as they were one year ago. Specifically, compared to a year ago:

- 40% of drivers feel other drivers are driving a lot (18%) or somewhat (22%) more aggressively
- 52% feel drivers are driving about as aggressively
- 6% feel drivers are a lot or somewhat less aggressively now than a year ago

Perceptions of change in levels of aggressive driving differ by region. Specifically:

- Drivers in NHTSA Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, and WY) are most likely to feel that drivers are more aggressive now than one year ago (46%).
- Those in Region 7 (IA, KS, MO, and NE) the Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, and WA) are least likely to feel drivers are more aggressive (36% each).

Unsafe Driving in Others

Drivers report normally encountering a variety of different unsafe and aggressive driving behaviors on the roads they drive. Drivers report normally encountering the following behaviors most:

- weaving in and out of traffic (20%)
- tailgating (19%)
- running red lights (16%)
- inattentive or distracted drivers (14%)

Less than one in ten drivers normally encounter the following unsafe driving behaviors of others:

- ignoring stop signs (8%)
- drinking and driving (3%)
- failing to yield (3%)

Personal Threat to One's Safety

Perceived Threat of Different Driving Behaviors

Drivers were asked how much of a threat three different unsafe driving behaviors are to their personal safety. The perception of threat is inversely related to the frequency drivers report engaging in the behavior. Specifically:

- 97% of drivers feel that when other drivers run red lights it is a major threat to themselves and their family (just 1% of drivers report doing this frequently).
- 83% feel that drivers weaving in and out of traffic is a major threat (6% do this frequently themselves).
- 58% see rolling stops at stop signs as a major threat (12% do this frequently).

The perception of threat increases with age for weaving in and out of traffic (from 72% of drivers under 21 to 92% of those over age 64) and for not stopping completely at stop signs (from 43% under 21 to 74% over age 64).

Past Year Experience of Unsafe Driving Behaviors

The majority of drivers have felt that the behavior of another driver was a personal threat to them or their passengers in the past year. Just 8% say they have *never* felt threatened by another's behavior in the past year. The reported frequency of feeling threatened is as follows:

- 5% have felt threatened nearly every day
- 10% have felt threatened several times a week
- 19% have felt threatened several times a month
- 58% percent have felt threatened once a month or less

Drivers in their 20s (19%) and males (17%) are most likely to say they have felt threatened weekly or more often, while those under 21 and over 64 are the least likely to feel personally threatened (12% each).

Significant differences across NHTSA regions are reported in frequently feeling personally threatened, with drivers in the following regions feeling threatened most often:

- Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, VI – 19% feel threatened at least weekly)
- Region 4 (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN – 19%)
- Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, WA – 19%)
- Region 3 (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV – 16%)
- Region 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT – 15%)
- Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, OH, MN, WI – 15%)

In contrast, just 8% of those in Regions 7 (IA, KS, MO, NE) and 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY) feel threatened as frequently, while this is true of 11% of drivers in Region 6 (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX).

Threatening Behavior Encountered

While drivers reported a variety of unsafe driving behaviors by other drivers, the ***proximity*** of other drivers is clearly what makes them feel personally threatened. Those who have felt threatened in the past year report the following proximity-related behaviors:

- 34% felt threatened when another driver cut in closely in front of them.
- 16% felt the other driver drove too closely behind or beside them.
- 8% say they were passed in a dangerous place or manner.
- 6% say they were cut off at an intersection or exit.

In addition, 12% felt threatened by another driver making obscene or threatening gestures.

Reaction to Threatening Behavior

More than eight of ten (83%) threatened drivers made some sort of avoidance reaction to the threatening behavior. Drivers were most likely to report slowing or stopping their vehicle as the reaction to a threatening encounter, noted by 43% of drivers. Additional actions include:

- 20% moving their vehicle away from the problem driver
- 12% making some other type of avoidance move
- 12% taking an aggressive action in response to the threatening behavior

Drivers in their 20s (20%) were most likely to say they made an aggressive response.

Being Stopped for Traffic-Related Violations

Stopped for Traffic-Related Violations

About one in six (16%) drivers have been stopped in the past 12 months for a traffic-related violation, with 4% stopped more than once.

Younger drivers are most likely to have been stopped with the prevalence dropping consistently with age. Specifically, the proportions of drivers who have been stopped for a traffic violation at least once in the past year are as follows:

- 30% of drivers under age 30
- 15% of drivers age 30-45
- 10% of drivers age 46-64
- 5% of drivers age 65 or older

More than one-third (35%) of male drivers under age 30 have been stopped for any traffic violation in the past 12 months.

Type of Violation

The majority of traffic-related violations were for speeding, with 65% of those stopped (10% of all drivers) due to speeding. One of five drivers under age 30 has been stopped for speeding in the past year. In contrast, just 3% of drivers over age 64 have been stopped.

About 5% of those stopped in the past year report they were stopped for each of the following violations:

- 7% failure to stop at a stop sign
- 6% headlight/taillight out
- 5% seat belt violation
- 5% failure to stop at a red light

Outcome of Being Stopped

About two-thirds (67%) of those stopped for a traffic violation received a ticket for their behavior, while 24% received just a warning. Despite the higher prevalence of speeding and being stopped for a traffic violation among drivers under age 21, it appears that they are less likely than those in their 20s to have been ticketed once stopped (60% were ticketed compared to 76% of those in their 20s).

Police Enforcement

While speeding is reportedly the most common unsafe driving behavior drivers see on roads, it is the other unsafe driving behaviors where drivers feel enforcement is too lax. In relative order, the proportion of drivers who feel there is too little police enforcement of five behaviors is as follows:

- 60% too little police enforcement of tailgating
- 57% weaving in and out of traffic
- 47% running red lights
- 44% failure to stop at stop signs
- 41% percent speeding (11% feel that there is too much)

Younger drivers are most likely to feel there is too much enforcement of most of the unsafe behaviors, especially speeding with twenty-two percent (22%) of those under age 30 feeling there is too much police enforcement of speeding as compared to 8% of those age 30 or older.

Automated Photo Enforcement

Awareness of Photo Enforcement

Automated photo enforcement, which does not require police officers to stop and ticket drivers, is another potential method for controlling speed for those who feel that there is too little police enforcement. Over eight in ten (82%) drivers have heard of automated photo enforcement; the youngest (65% of those 16-20) and oldest (72% of those age 65+) driver groups are less likely to be aware of automated photo enforcement.

Appropriateness of Photo Enforcement

At least two-thirds of drivers feel that photo enforcement would be a good idea for all the traffic violation scenarios identified. The greatest support for automated photo enforcement comes for the following violations:

- 78% for speeding in a school zone,
- 78% for trying to beat a train at railroad crossings, and
- 75% for running red lights.

The least support is given to photo enforcement use for not stopping at stop signs (67% good idea) and going 20 MPH or more over the speed limit (68% good idea).

Women and those over age 64 are most supportive of photo enforcement for all types of violations.

Acceptability of Photo Enforcement by Location

In terms of conditions where photo enforcement would be most acceptable, nearly two-thirds feel photo enforcement would be **very acceptable** in school zones (63%) or where there have been many crashes (63%). An additional one in five drivers would find photo enforcement **somewhat** acceptable in each of these situations (22% and 21% respectively). Drivers are less supportive of photo enforcement in situations where photo enforcement was used because it could be hazardous to the driver or officer to stop (41% very and 28% somewhat acceptable) or where stopping a vehicle could cause traffic congestion (36% very and 34% somewhat acceptable).

Front or Rear Photo Acceptability

While about one-third (32%) of drivers feel that if photo enforcement were used, it should only take a photo of the rear of the vehicle so that the license plate could be identified, a majority (56%) feel that it would be appropriate to take a photo of the front of the vehicle so that the specific driver could be identified. Eight percent (8%) feel that a photo of both the front AND the rear of the vehicle should be taken.

Male drivers (35%) and those under age 30 (38%) are most likely to feel that only a rear photo should be used.

Appropriate Penalty if Front Photo Taken

About eight in ten (82%) drivers who felt that a front photo of the vehicle should be taken feel that a fine should be issued to the driver, with 41% of these saying that both a fine and points against the identified driver should be used. Just 8% feel that only points should be issued against the driver.

Drivers under age 30 are more likely to feel that the penalty for violations caught by front photo enforcement should be just a fine against the driver (52%) while drivers over age 45 are more likely to feel that both points and a fine should be given (45%).

In-Vehicle Speed Governors

As large proportions of drivers feel police enforcement is too lax for traffic violations, and given that budgets continue to tighten, one potential form of limiting drivers' speed could be through the use of speed governors. These devices mechanically limit the maximum speeds at which a vehicle can be driven. However, just over one-third (35%) of drivers think speed governors are a good idea to control speeding. Most drivers think these devices are a bad idea. Females (44%) are almost twice as likely as males (25%) to think these are a good idea.

Support for use of speed governors varies significantly by region. Regions on the East Coast (NHTSA Regions 1, 2, and 3) are most supportive of the idea of speed governors with about 44% saying they are a good idea. Speed governors would be least accepted in NHTSA Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY) where just 14% feel speed governors are a good idea.

Comparisons 1997-2002

The original 1997 speed and unsafe survey was extensively revised to incorporate new areas of interest. These revisions, however, severely limit the number of direct comparisons that can be made with the prior survey.

Consequently, the reader is cautioned on the interpretation of differences between the two surveys.

Comparisons on Affinity for Speeding

Drivers' reports of their own driving attitudes have not changed since 1997. Three in ten (30%) drivers say that they tend to pass other drivers (rather than be passed). The same proportion agreed with this statement in 1997. However, the proportion of younger drivers who say they tend to pass others has *decreased* (from 60% in 1997 to 44% in 2002).

Personal attitudes about speeding are also similar to what they were five years ago with about one in ten or fewer strongly agreeing that they enjoy the feeling of driving fast (8% in 1997 vs. 10% in 2002) or they try to get to where they are going as fast as they can (6% in 1997 vs. 7% in 2002). Slightly more than one in five drivers in both surveys strongly agree that they worry a lot about having a crash (22% in 1997 vs. 23% in 2002).

There has been a slight decrease in the proportion of drivers who strongly agree that they often get impatient with slow drivers, with 22% agreeing with this in 1997, but just 18% doing so in 2002.

Comparisons on Perceptions of Driver Behavior and Speed Limits

While there has been little change in drivers' perceptions of their own driving, there is an increase in the belief that other drivers are driving more aggressively than they were in 1997. In 1997 three in ten (30%) drivers said that other drivers were driving more aggressively now than one year ago. In 2002, four in ten (40%) feel that drivers are driving more aggressively now.

Drivers in all NHTSA Regions continue to feel that drivers are driving more aggressively now as compared to one year ago. Perceptions of increased aggressive driving behavior are sustained in all NHTSA Regions except Region 8 and Region 10 where similar proportions of respondents feel that drivers are currently driving more aggressively as compared to the previous year.

Most drivers continue to feel that driving on interstate highways is just as safe now as it was with the previous lower limits. Drivers are about as likely to believe that driving on interstate highways is safer with the repeal of the 55 MPH maximum limits now (27%) as they were in 1997 (30%). More female drivers felt that driving was less safe after the repeal of the 55 MPH limits in 1997 (37%) than now (31%).

Comparisons on Speeding and Unsafe Behaviors as Threats

Drivers are currently more likely to perceive speeding by others as a threat to their personal safety, with 68% seeing this as a major threat as compared to just 61% who saw it as a threat in 1997.

While the set-up of the question was slightly different in 1997, it appears that drivers are currently more likely to have felt threatened by another driver in the past year than in 1997. The question was changed from a two-part series which first asked drivers if they have ever felt threatened by another driver in the past year, followed by a question on the frequency of feeling threatened to a single question asking the frequency of feeling threatened (without an explicit choice for never).

About one in three drivers (34%) currently say they have felt threatened more than once a month as compared to just 23% of drivers who felt this way in 1997.

Drivers note an increase in feeling threatened by others making obscene gestures (5% in 1997, increased to 12% in 2002). However, fewer drivers were threatened by being passed in a dangerous way or being cut off at an intersection or exit. The changes in being dangerously passed or cut off could be due to lower occurrences of these behaviors or they could be a result of drivers becoming less reactive to such behaviors.

Comparisons on Enforcement

Drivers are more likely to feel that there is too little police enforcement of running red lights (47% currently vs. 42% in 1997) and failure to stop at stop signs (44% vs. 41%) than was true in 1997.

Drivers are about as likely to have been stopped for a traffic violation now as they were five years ago, but are more likely now to have received a ticket for that violation. Despite the increase in perception that there is too little enforcement of motorists failing to stop at lights and stop signs, a similar proportion of drivers report having been stopped for a traffic violation within the past year. About 14% of drivers in 1997 say they had been stopped, as compared with 16% reporting this in 2002.

The vast majority of drivers stopped for a violation continue to report that they were stopped for speeding (62% in 1997 as compared to 65% in 2002). Enforcement of violations such as failure to stop and headlight/taillight being out also continue at a similar rate (ranging from 5% to 8% each).

While the proportion of drivers stopped for traffic violations and the reasons for those stops appear to be similar to those in 1997, it appears that police enforcement is becoming stricter. In 1997, 55% of drivers stopped for a traffic violation say they received a ticket (rather than a warning – 34%). In contrast, in 2002, 67% of drivers say they received a ticket, while just 24% received a warning.

Introduction

Background and Objectives

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), speeding (exceeding the posted speed limit or driving too fast for road conditions) is one of the most prevalent factors contributing to traffic crashes, and a contributing factor in nearly three of ten fatal crashes in 2001 (Traffic Safety Facts 2001 NCSA, NHTSA). NHTSA estimates that speeding-related crashes have an economic cost to society of \$40.4 billion each year.

Aggressive driving — operating a motor vehicle in a manner that endangers or is likely to endanger persons or property, according to NHTSA — appears to be more common and more dangerous on our congested roadways. Despite the growing concern over these behaviors, not enough current information is available on the nature and extent of speeding and other unsafe actions or behaviors. In addition, more information is needed on the characteristics of the drivers who exhibit these behaviors and on the public's views of the problem and their attitudes towards various countermeasures.

NHTSA undertook a national survey in 1997 on speeding and unsafe driving behaviors (released in 1999). The current survey provides an update to the findings of that report. The 1997 study provided baseline data on topic areas including speeding and speed limits, certain unsafe driving behaviors, and crash experience. The unsafe driving behaviors examined included tailgating, weaving, and making obscene gestures to other drivers. These behaviors are sometimes cited as examples of aggressive driving. While there is increased public concern about the role of aggressive driving in crashes and traffic fatalities, there are differences among traffic safety experts as to what constitutes aggressive driving. Consequently, the 1997 survey focused only on specific unsafe driving acts rather than on aggressive driving.

While NHTSA intended to assess the nature and extent of the changes towards the baseline speeding and unsafe driving measures of the initial study, the agency also decided to acquire data on drowsy driving and distracted driving. To accomplish this, NHTSA contracted with The Gallup Organization to conduct two surveys concurrently of the driving public's attitudes and behaviors regarding speeding, unsafe driving, aggressive driving, and distracted driving and drowsy driving.

The specific objectives of these surveys were the following:

1. Measure the attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of the general driving-age public toward speeding and other unsafe driving actions, distracted driving, driver fatigue, and aggressive driving.
2. Identify the nature and extent of changes in speeding and unsafe driving attitudes and behaviors that may have occurred since the administration of the 1997 survey.

Similar methods were used to field the two surveys and many of the questions were asked on both surveys to provide more robust estimates. The data collected in the two surveys resulted in two separate reports: this report on Speeding and Aggressive Behaviors and another report on Distracted and Drowsy Driving, which is published separately.

Methods

Sampling Objective

The sampling requirement of the two studies was the same: acquire a representative national sample of drivers age 16 and older in the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.

In order to accommodate the need to acquire data on topics of speeding, aggressive and unsafe driving, and distracted and fatigued driving, two separate surveys were undertaken. The first survey focused on speeding behaviors, while the second survey focused on aggressive driving and other unsafe driving behaviors. Both versions measured distracted driving and drowsy driving. In addition, split-sample procedures were used within each version to extend the number of questions that could be asked within the 18-minute telephone survey.

Each survey instrument was fielded as an independent national sample and was constructed in an identical manner. Gallup used the following three-stage procedure to meet the sampling objective:

1. Gallup first identified the universe of residential telephone listings within each of the eight U.S. Census Regions.
2. Second, Gallup drew a systematic sample of telephone 100-number blocks within each region. Gallup then randomly generated the last two numbers for a full 10-digit phone number within each valid block selected in the previous stage. This procedure provides for an equal probability of selection for each working residential telephone number in the United States (both listed and unlisted residential telephone households).
3. Next, a single driver age 16 or older was randomly selected (using the “most recent birthday” method described in the Methods report) for inclusion from all eligible members of the driving public residing in that household.

Up to 14 attempts were made to reach each randomly selected respondent. Seven attempts were made to reach the household, and once a respondent in the household was identified, Gallup made up to seven additional attempts to reach that person.

Using the two surveys, Gallup completed a total of 4,010 telephone interviews with vehicle drivers age 16 and older between February 4, 2002 and April 14, 2002. Interviews were completed in both English and Spanish, using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system.

Sample Weighting

While the two samples were weighted separately, similar sample weighting was carried out for each sample. The final telephone samples of drivers age 16 and older were weighted to equalize selection probabilities (at both the household and the individual levels — particularly since we excluded non-drivers), and to adjust for non-response bias by demographics. In the last stage of the weighting process, the adjusted results were projected to the number of drivers age 16 or older in the United States. A detailed description of the weighting procedures can be found in *Volume III: Methods*.

The final number of weighted and unweighted interviews by age and gender appear below:

	Gender				Age			
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>21-29</u>	<u>30-45</u>	<u>46-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
Total Unweighted	4010	1798	2212	214	530	1298	1242	697
Weighted	4010	1970	2040	352	610	1303	1115	610
Estimated sampling error range	±1.5%	±2.3%	±2.1%	±6.7%	±4.3%	±2.3%	±2.8%	±3.7%

Precision of Sample Estimates

All sample surveys are subject to sampling error in that results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population had been interviewed. The size of such sampling error depends largely on the number of interviews. For the sample of 4,010 telephone interviews, the expected maximum sampling error range is approximately +/- 1.5% at the 95% level of confidence. The table above shows the sampling error ranges at the 95% level of confidence. Due to the stratification and other complexities of the sample design, in some cases (particularly among smaller sub-groups of the population) the error ranges will be slightly larger than those shown in the table. This information is provided to offer the reader a **general** sense of the range of the true estimates. The report *Volume III: Methods*, presents a table showing the expected sampling error ranges for sub-group sizes in the sample.

Data Presented

It should be noted that this is a top-line report on survey data and includes responses from more than 4,000 persons of driving age on more than 200 survey questions. The report is not intended to provide in-depth analyses of any one topic, but rather to give the reader a general overview of the data. Additional analyses may be done at the reader's discretion.

The data in this report are based on driver responses from two separate surveys conducted concurrently. Some of the questions were shared between the two surveys, while others were unique to one of the two surveys. The two surveys were referred to as “Speed” and “Unsafe” to identify their primary topic differences. Figures in the report identify from which of the two surveys (Speed or Unsafe) the data are based. In addition, within each survey version some questions were asked of a random half-sample of drivers, rather than the entire survey base. These items are noted with an “(A)” or “(B)” marker in the figure.

The sample bases for most figures can be found in reference tables below. For figures based on other populations, the sample base appears at the bottom of the figure page. A definition of the NHTSA Regions 1-10 can be found in Appendix A.

SAMPLE BASES

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>21-29</u>	<u>30-45</u>	<u>46-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
Speed and Unsafe*	4010	1798	2212	214	530	1298	1242	697
Speed	2004	927	1077	105	273	660	633	321
Unsafe	2006	871	1135	109	257	638	609	376

<u>Race</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
Speed and Unsafe*	3442	319	55	92	298
Speed	1717	165	30	53	155
Unsafe	1725	154	25	39	143

<u>Region</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
Speed and Unsafe*	234	364	446	786	699	394	200	154	52	206
Speed	114	189	225	382	348	201	101	83	25	105
Unsafe	120	175	221	404	351	193	99	71	27	101

* Total base for distracted and drowsy driving questions.

The findings of this study are presented in two parts. The first section examines the results from the current survey administration. The second part (beginning on page 69) examines comparisons between the two survey administrations.

Part one is presented in the following chapters:

Chapter 1: General Driving Characteristics and Road Use

Chapter 2: Affinity for Speed and Personal Speeding Behaviors

Chapter 3: Unsafe Driving Behaviors

Chapter 4: Enforcement

Appendix A contains a listing of the geography of each of NHTSA's 10 regions.

2002 Survey Administration Findings

Chapter 1: General Driving Characteristics and Road Use

This section provides information on the driving-age public's general driving characteristics and road use. Specifically it covers the following topics:

- Frequency of driving by gender and age
- Presence of valid driver's license and commercial license
- Number of years driving
- Personal use of radar detectors
- Use of various road types
- Urbanicity of roads
- Weekly driving trips

General Driving Characteristics

Frequency of Driving

To qualify for this study of Speeding and Unsafe Driving, persons age 16 or older must drive a motor vehicle at least occasionally, regardless of holding a valid driver's license. About eight out of ten (82%) drivers report that they usually drive a car or other motor vehicle every day. An additional 14% drive several days a week. Male drivers (86%) are more likely than female drivers (78%) to report daily driving. Middle age drivers (those in their 30-64) report the greatest frequency of daily driving (86%), while just 63% of those over 64 drives on a daily basis. [Figure 1-A] Not surprisingly, driving frequency is impacted by employment status, with 92% of those employed full time reporting daily driving, as compared to just 66% of those who are not currently employed.

Driver's License

Approximately 2% of drivers report driving a motor vehicle without holding a valid driver's license. Male drivers (3%) and those ages 16-20 (8%) are most likely to report not having a valid driver's license. [Figure 1-B]

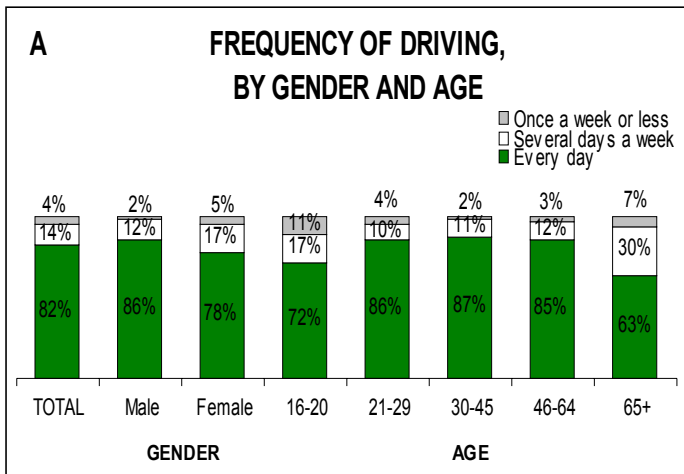
Commercial License

Fourteen percent (14%) of drivers report having a commercial driver's license. It is likely that there was some misunderstanding of the meaning of a "commercial driver's license" among youth age 16-20, as 19% of these drivers report having this type of license. Male drivers are more likely to hold this type of license than are their female counterparts (18% vs. 11%). [Figure 1-C]

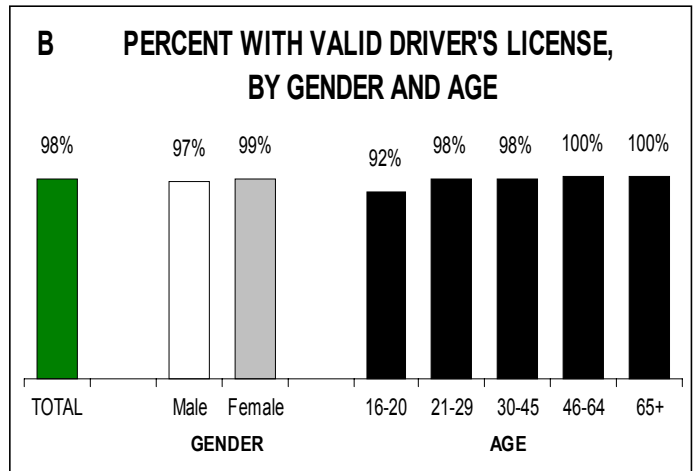
Radar Detector

About four percent (4%) of drivers report that they *usually* drive with a radar detector in their vehicle, with males (6%) and younger drivers (9% of 16-20 year olds) more likely than others to do so. Use of a radar detector may indicate a propensity for speeding or other types of unsafe driving behaviors. [Figure 1-E]

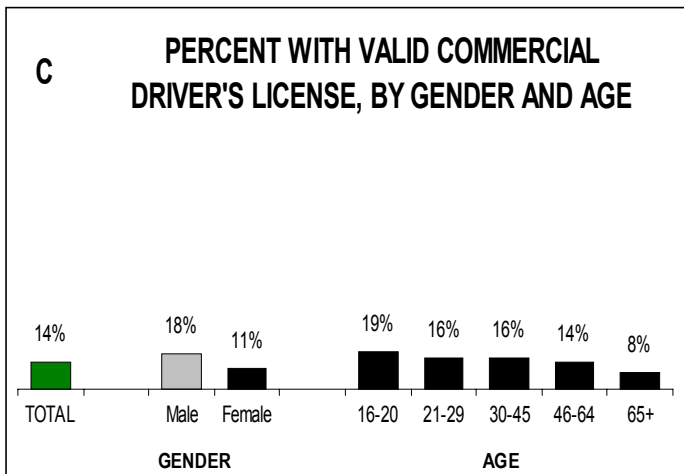
FIGURE 1: GENERAL DRIVER CHARACTERISTICS



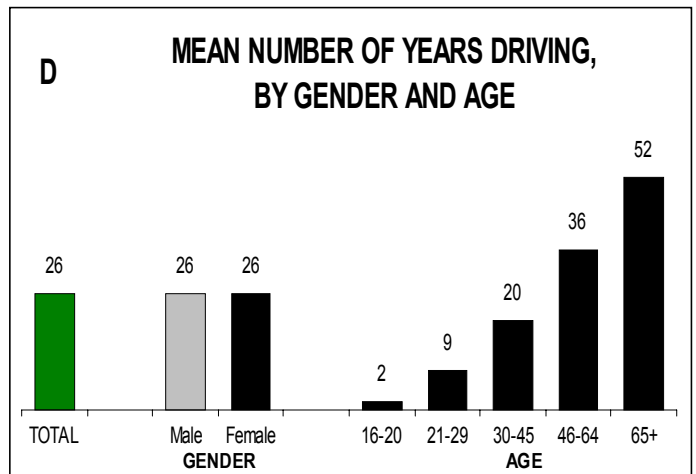
Q1: How often do you usually drive a car or other motor vehicle?
 [Base: total respondents speed and unsafe; n=4010]



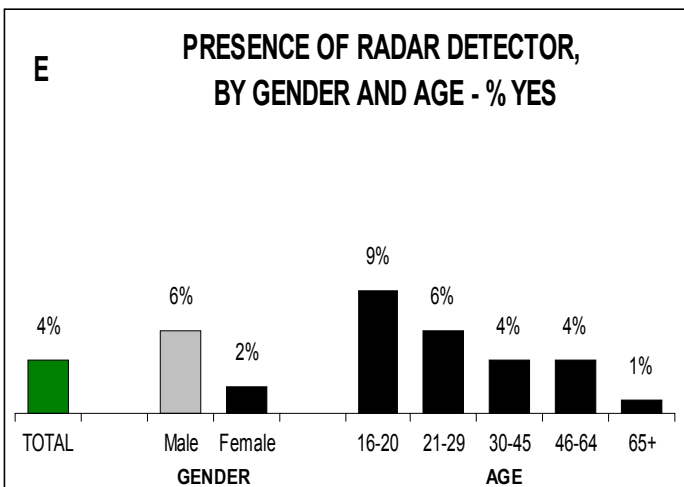
Q2a: Do you have a valid driver's license?
 [Base: total respondents speed and unsafe; n=4010]



Q2b: Is that a commercial license?
 [Base: total respondents speed and unsafe; n=4010]



Q3: How many years have you been driving?
 [Base: total respondents speed and unsafe; n=4010]



Q85: Do you usually drive with a radar detector in your vehicle?
 [Base: total respondents speed and unsafe; n=4010]

Roadway Use

Road Types Driven

More than eight in ten (83%) drivers say they frequently drive on city, town, or neighborhood roads, with an additional 13% driving on these types of roads sometimes. More than two-thirds (68%) of drivers frequently drive on two-lane roads with speed limits of 45 MPH or more. Drivers use multi-lane interstate highways with speed limits of 55 MPH or higher and non-interstate multi-lane roads with 40-55 MPH less often, (55% and 45% respectively). [Figure 2-A]

Urbanicity of Roads Used

Fifty-six percent (56%) of drivers report that the roads they normally drive are more urban than rural while about one-third (35%) drive on roads that are more rural. Drivers in their 20s report the heaviest travel on urban roads (63%), while those age 46-64 are slightly more likely to say their preferred roads are more rural in nature (39%). [Figure 2-C] Drivers living in NHTSA Regions 3 (Mid-Atlantic), 4 (Southeast), 5 (Midwest), and 7 (the Plains) are most likely to say they primarily drive on more rural roads (at least 40% do). [Figure 2-D]

Number of One-Way Trips Weekly

On average, drivers report about 21 one-way trips in the past week. Male drivers report about two more trips a week on average than do females. Drivers age 21 to 45 report the most one-way trips, while those age 65 or older report only about two-thirds of the trips on average. [Figure 2-E]

Estimated Total Number of One-Way Weekly Trips

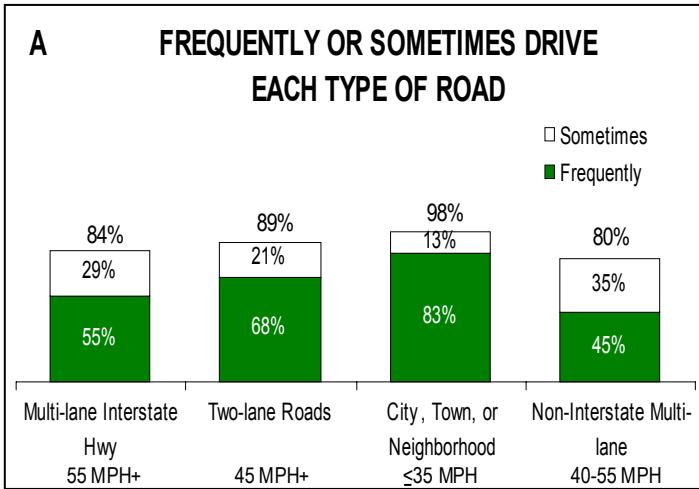
An estimate was made to determine the total number of driving trips in an average week. The number of one-way weekly trips reported by study respondents was projected to the total U.S. driving population. Using this method, it is estimated that drivers make about 4.23 billion one-way driving trips in a typical week. Males make approximately 2.2 billion trips, while females report about 2.0 billion trips. [Figure 2-F]

It should be noted that this estimate is based on respondents' understanding of "one-way driving trips" and their recall of the number of trips they made in the previous seven days. In addition, the study was fielded in the first quarter of 2002, and driving trips during this time period may not be reflective of other times of the year. Consequently, this estimate is most useful as a rough approximation of the number of driving trips and relative comparisons among sub-groups of the driving population.

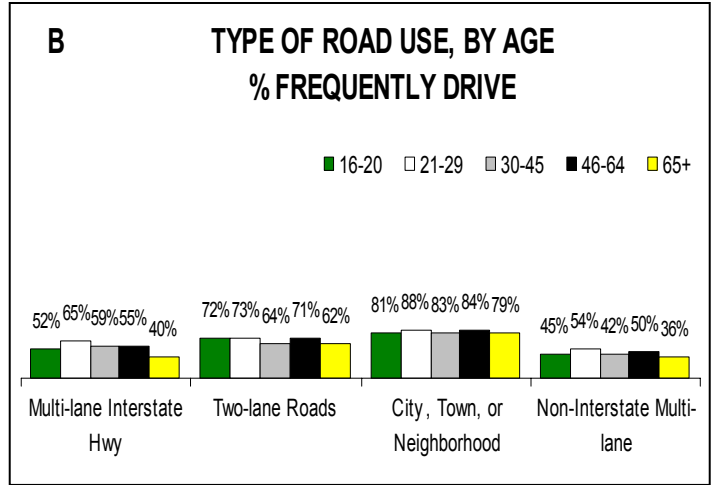
In comparison, the figure of total driving trips is lower than the preliminarily estimated 6.0 billion weekly vehicle trips reported in the 2001 National Household Travel Survey (NHHTS¹). The higher NHHTS figure is likely due to interviewing differences and questionnaire design (e.g. this study did not undertake to acquire extensive data on trip detail or segment definition as did the NHHTS). Again, the measurement in this survey is intended to obtain *relative* estimates of engagement in potentially distracting behaviors in relation to other behaviors. Consequently, compared to the NHHTS, the actual estimates of trips may be underestimated by as much as 30%.

¹ 2001 National Household Travel Survey. User's Guide, Version 1 (preliminary release). U.S. DOT: BTS & FHWA, January 2003.

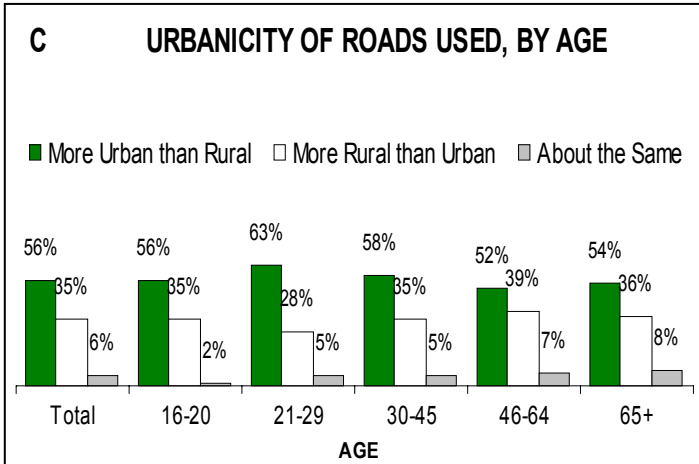
FIGURE 2: ROAD USAGE



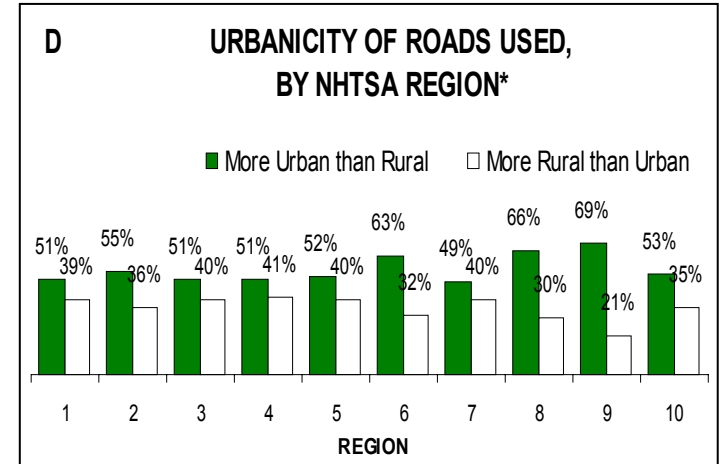
Q8: Thinking of a typical week, how often do you drive on the following types of roads?
[Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]



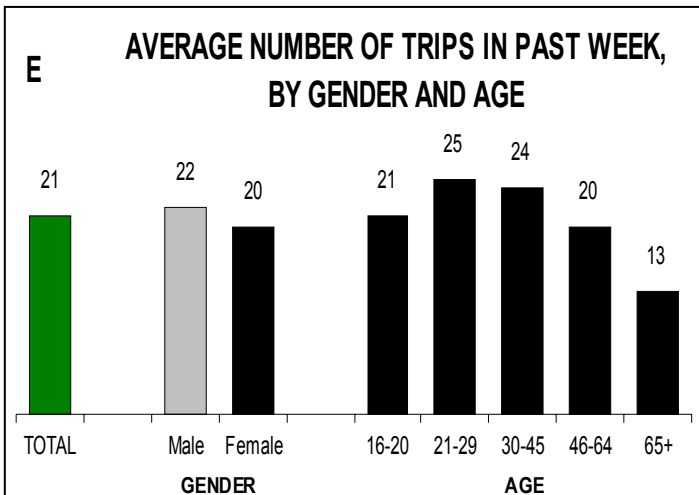
Q8A: Thinking about the roads you normally drive on, would you say that these roads are _____?
[Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]



Q8a: Thinking about the roads you normally drive on, would you say that these roads are _____?
[Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]



Q8a: Thinking about the roads you normally drive on, would you say that these roads are _____?
[Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]



Q9: Please estimate how many total one-way driving trips you made in the past seven days?
[Base: total respondents, speed and unsafe; n=4010]

*Definitions of NHTSA Regions can be found in Appendix A.

Chapter 2: Affinity for Speed and Self-Reported Speeding Behaviors

This section assesses drivers' attitudes and behaviors about speeding, since attitudes about this unsafe behavior are believed to influence actual driver behavior. Specifically it covers the following topics:

- Passing most other drivers
- Personal attitudes about speeding
- Affinity for speeding on different road types
- Frequency of speeding behaviors
- Attitudes about speed limits
- Importance of factors influencing on driving speeds
- Likely impact if speed limits were raised
- Outcomes of speeding behavior
- Perceptions of speeding and safety considerations
- Importance of reducing speeding

Affinity for Speeding – Attitudes About Speeding

Passing Other Drivers

Three of ten (30%) drivers report that they tend to pass most drivers (rather than being passed). Males (34%) are more likely than females (27%) to report such behavior. Almost half of all drivers under age 30 say they tend to pass most drivers. The likelihood of this behavior drops off significantly with age. [Figure 3-A]

Personal Attitudes About Speeding

The tendency to pass other drivers is consistent with personal attitudes of drivers. More than half (53%) of drivers agree at least somewhat that they often get impatient with slow drivers. About three in ten drivers agree that they enjoy the feeling of driving fast (34%), the faster they drive the more alert they are (30%), and they try to get where they are going as fast as they can (30%). Nevertheless, forty-six percent (46%) say they worry a lot about having a crash. [Figure 3-B]

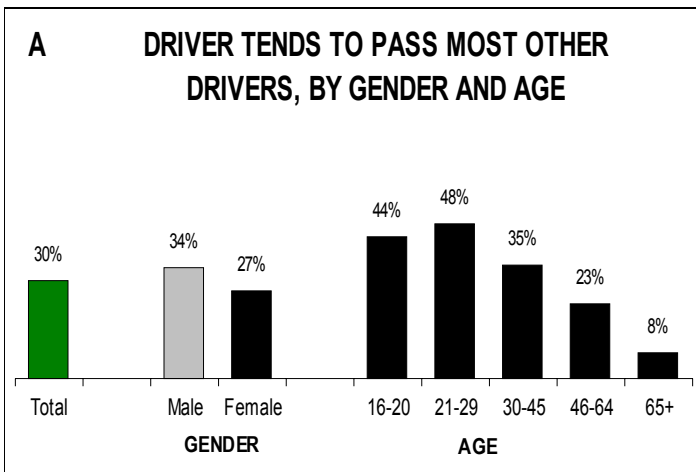
Personal Attitudes About Speeding by Gender

Males are more likely to strongly agree with the speed-positive statements, while females are more likely to worry about having a crash. [Figure 3-C]

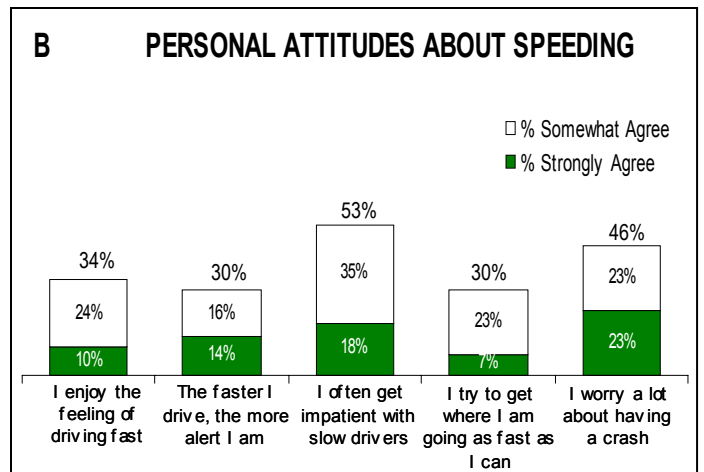
Personal Attitudes About Speeding by Age

Enjoyment of the feeling of speed diminishes significantly with age as does worry over having a crash. While maturity may impact the former, it is likely that experience leads to greater security regarding crashes. Drivers under age 30 are significantly more likely to say they get impatient with slower drivers (29%) with those over age 45 least likely to hold this opinion (12%). There is much less variance by age on the opinions of speed leading to alertness and trying to get where they are going as fast as they can. [Figure 3-D]

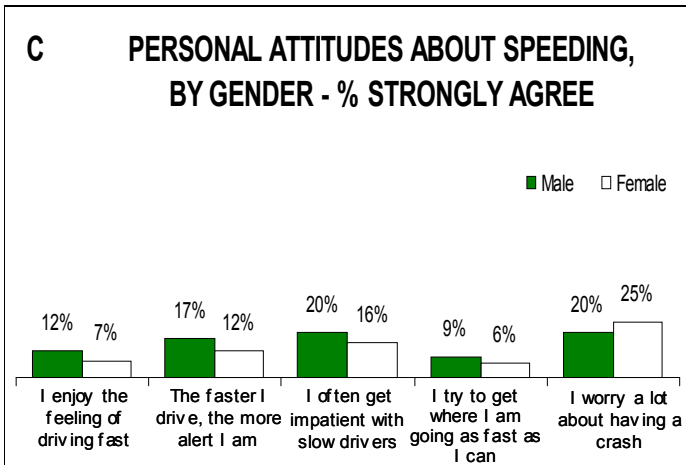
FIGURE 3: AFFINITY FOR SPEEDING - ATTITUDES



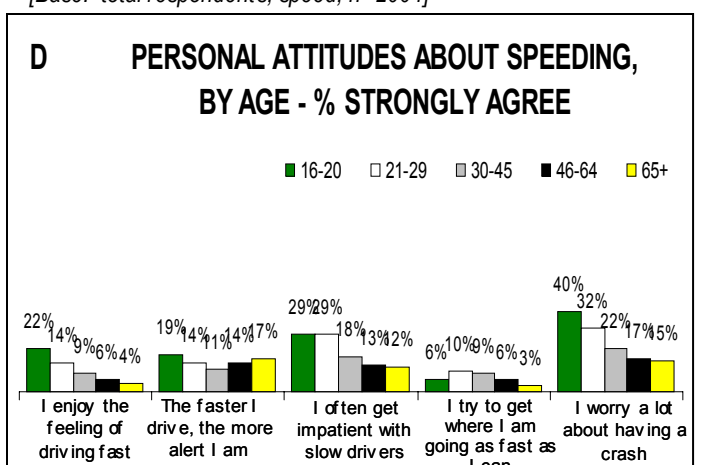
Q4a: Which of the following statements best describes your driving? I tend to pass most drivers. . .
 [Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]



Q5A-E: People have different feelings about driving. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about driving.
 [Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]



Q5A-E: People have different feelings about driving. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about driving.
 [Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]



Q5A-E: People have different feelings about driving. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about driving.
 [Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]

Affinity for Speeding – Driving Over the Speed Limit

Multi-lane Interstate Highways

More than three-quarters (78%) of those who drive on multi-lane interstate highways say they have driven over the speed limit on these types of roads within the past month. One in four (25%) report such behavior on the day of interview. While male and female drivers are equally likely to drive over the speed limit on interstate highways, male drivers are 50% more likely to do so on a daily basis (29% vs. 20% for females).

The likelihood of speeding on interstate highways peaks among drivers in their 20s (87% have done so in the past month) and declines with age. However, slightly over seven in ten (71%) drivers over age 64 still drive over the speed limit at least monthly.

[Figure 4-A]

Two-Lane Roads – Speed Limits of 45 MPH or More

Seventy eight percent (78%) of drivers have driven over the speed limit on two-lane roads with speed limits of 45 MPH or more in the past month, with three in ten (31%) doing so on an average day. Male drivers (82%) are more likely to report speeding on two-lane roads than are female drivers (74%), especially on a daily basis (38% males vs. 25% females). Young drivers on this road type are much more likely to speed daily, with 44% of those under age 30 reporting this behavior. Persons age 65 or older are significantly less likely to speed on two-lane roads (64%) and those who do tend to do so weekly or less frequently. [Figure 4-B]

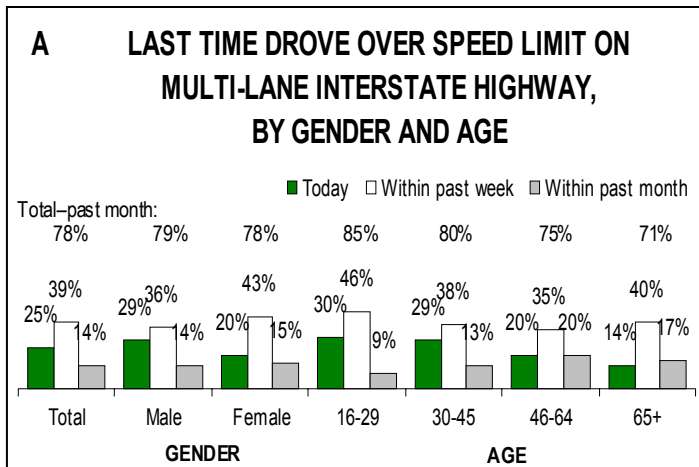
City, Town, and Neighborhood Roads

Drivers are generally less likely to drive over the speed limit on local, city, town, and neighborhood roads than is true of drivers on other road types, but 73% still do so at least monthly. Male drivers (79%) are more likely to do so more frequently than their female counterparts (42% and 25% respectively). [Figure 4-C]

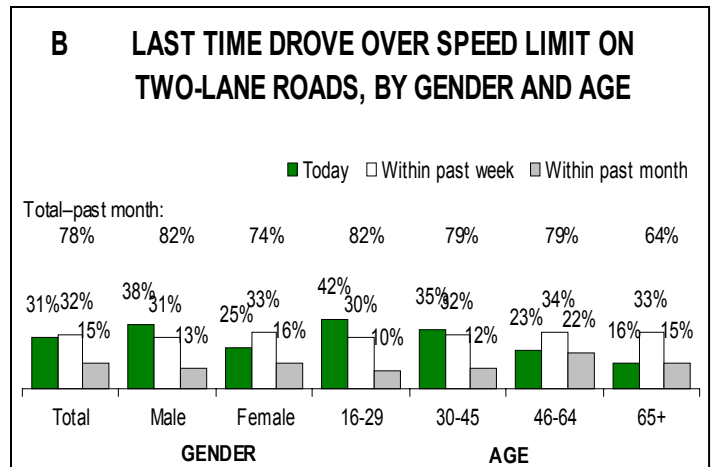
Non-Interstate Multi-Lane Roads – 40-55 MPH

Drivers report a greater likelihood to have driven over the speed limit on arterial or non-interstate multi-lane roads (83%) than on any other types of roads. About nine in ten male drivers (87%) and drivers under age 30 (90%) have done so in the past month (about one-third on a daily basis). In contrast, just 58% of drivers age 65 or older who use these roads have driven over the speed limit in the past month. [Figure 4-D]

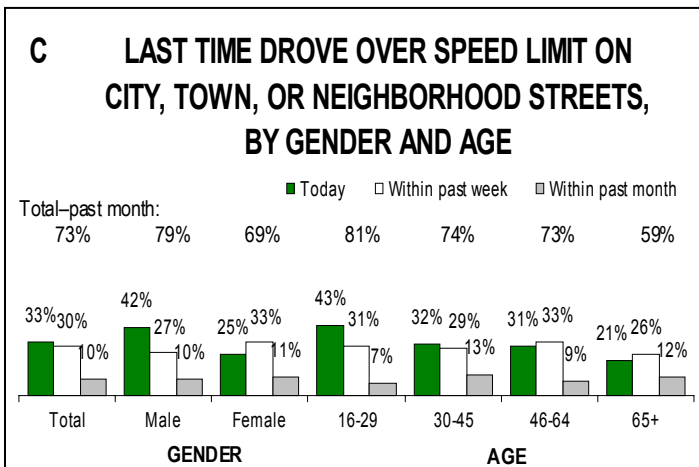
FIGURE 4: AFFINITY FOR SPEEDING – DRIVING OVER THE SPEED LIMIT



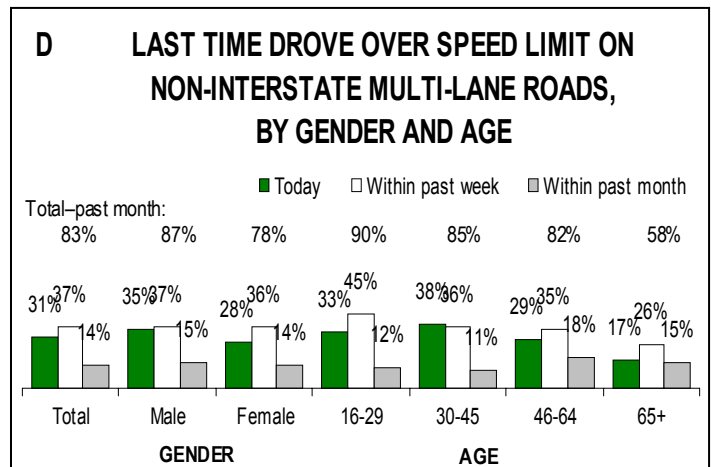
Q15: When was the last time you drove ____mph over the speed limit on multi-lane interstate type highways with speed limits of 55+ mph?
[Base: drive on road type – random sample]*



Q15: When was the last time you drove ____mph over the speed limit on two-lane roads with speed limits of 45+ mph?
[Base: drive on road type – random sample]*



Q15: When was the last time you drove ____mph over the speed limit on city, town or neighborhood streets with speed limits of less than 35 mph?
[Base: drive on road type – random sample]*



Q15: When was the last time you drove ____mph over the speed limit on non-interstate multi-lane roads with speed limits of 40-55 mph?
[Base: drive on road type – random sample]*

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

Drive on road type – random sample

	Total	Male	Female	16-29	30-45	46-64	65+
Multi-lane interstate hwy. (55+ mph)	409	206	203	81	156	124	48
Two-lane roads (45+ mph)	503	223	280	102	155	163	82
City, town or neighborhood streets (≤35 mph)	655	290	365	119	230	198	100
Non-interstate, multi-lane roads (40-55 mph)	294	145	149	62	81	110	140

Frequency of Speeding and Unsafe Driving Behaviors

Frequency of Speeding Behaviors

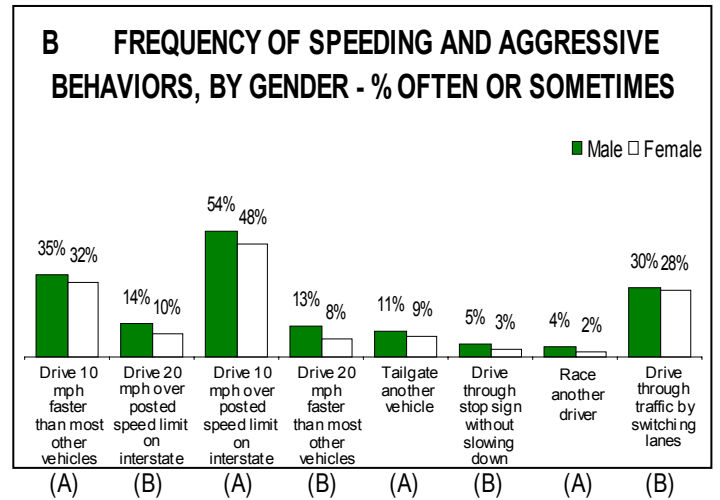
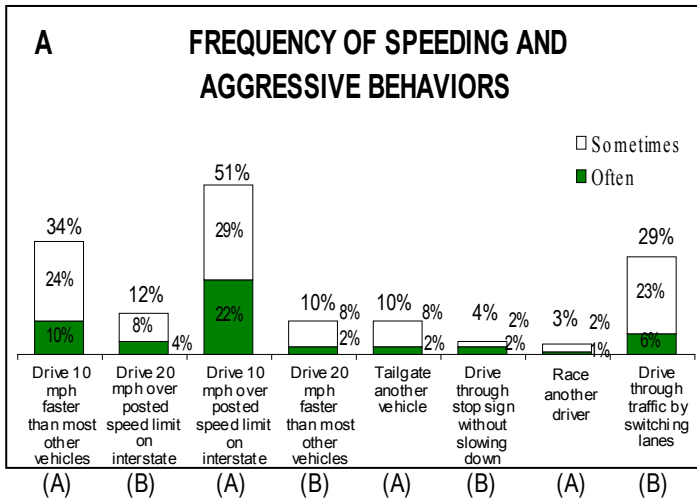
Drivers apparently rely upon their own reference for the acceptable speed of travel, but generally follow other safe driving rules. Slightly over one-half (51%) of *drivers* say that they sometimes (29%) or often (22%) drive 10 MPH over posted speed limits on interstate highways. [Figure 5-A] Male drivers (54%) are slightly more likely to report speeding behavior than females (48%). [Figure 5-B] About one in three drivers (34%) also report that at least some of the time they drive 10 MPH faster than most other vehicles. While relatively few drivers (6%) report that they *often* drive through traffic by switching lanes, nearly three in ten (29%) report doing so at least sometimes. The majority of drivers seems to follow a general speeding ceiling of 10 MPH or less over posted speed limits, although about one in ten reports at least sometimes driving 20 MPH over posted speed limits on interstate highways (12%) or driving 20 MPH faster than most other vehicles.

Speeding behaviors are most prevalent among younger drivers and declines with age. [Figure 5-C]

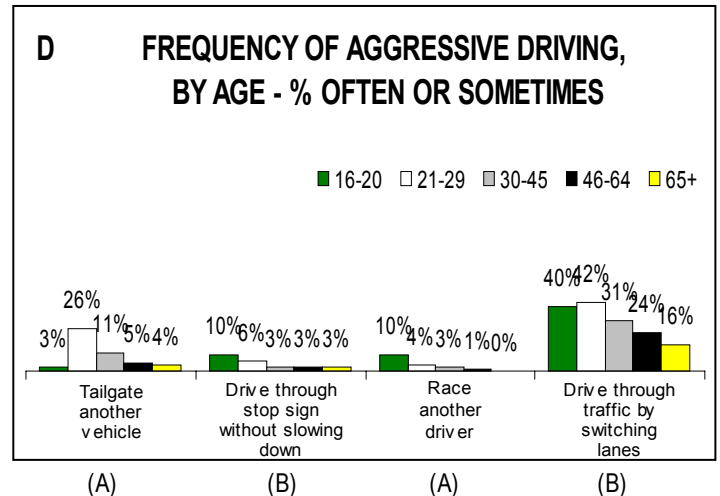
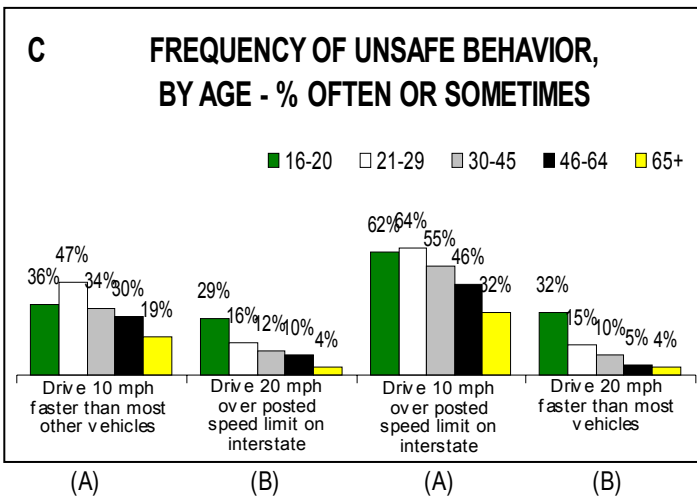
Frequency of Unsafe/Aggressive Driving Behaviors

While a sizable proportion of drivers report these speeding behaviors, fewer than one in twenty drivers say they race other drivers (3%) or drive through stop signs without slowing down (4%). [Figure 5-C] While a plurality of drivers in most age groups report driving 10 MPH faster than most other drivers or above posted speed limits on interstate highways, participation in most of these speeding and aggressive behaviors is more prevalent among younger drivers and tapers off with age. A key exception to this trend is tailgating. One in ten drivers (10%) say they tailgate other drivers at least sometimes. Newer drivers (those under age 21) report low levels of this behavior (3%) while those in their 20s report high levels (26% do this at least sometimes). [Figure 5-D]

FIGURE 5: FREQUENCY OF SPEEDING/AGGRESSIVE DRIVING



Q21: People feel differently about how safe or dangerous different types of driving behaviors are and factors such as time of day, road conditions, and congestion can affect how people drive. Please tell me how frequently you do each of the following when you drive. [Base: total respondents, random half-sample]*



Q21: People feel differently about how safe or dangerous different types of driving behaviors are and factors such as time of day, road conditions, and congestion can affect how people drive. Please tell me how frequently you do each of the following when you drive. [Base: total respondents, random half-sample]*

Q21: People feel differently about how safe or dangerous different types of driving behaviors are and factors such as time of day, road conditions, and congestion can affect how people drive. Please tell me how frequently you do each of the following when you drive. [Base: total respondents, random half-sample]*

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

	Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+
Split Sample A	1005	474	531	51	144	327	309	166
Split Sample B	999	453	546	54	129	333	324	155

Attitudes About Speed Limits

Speed at Which Police Will Ticket

On average, drivers feel that they can travel nearly eight miles per hour over posted speed limits on multi-lane interstate highways before police will normally give them a speeding ticket. On average, they feel 7.6 MPH over the limit is usually allowed on non-interstate multi-lane roads with limits of 40-55 MPH. Drivers report lower allowable speed margins over the limit for city, town, or neighborhood streets with limits of 35 MPH or less (7.0 MPH over), and two-lane roads with limits of 45 MPH or higher (6.7 MPH over). Males believe they can travel at slightly higher speeds on all road types before ticketing, than their female counterparts do. [Figure 6-A]

Younger drivers generally feel higher speeds are allowed, with perceived acceptable speed overages declining with age. Drivers in their teens and 20s report they can travel at much higher speeds over posted speed limits on interstate highways (9.4 MPH over posted speeds) and local roads (7.5 MPH), as do older drivers. [Figure 6-B]

Speed at Which Police Should Ticket by Road Type

Drivers on average feel that they can go nearly 8 MPH over the posted limit on interstate highways and multi-lane roads. However, large majorities feel that police should ticket drivers traveling 10 MPH or more over the limit (75% and 65% respectively). More than one in five (22%) feel only those traveling at least 15 MPH over the speed limit on interstate highways should be ticketed. In contrast, almost six in ten (59%) feel that drivers traveling 5 MPH over the limit on city, town, or neighborhood roads should be ticketed. Drivers are in less agreement over the threshold for speeding on two-lane roads with posted limits of 45 MPH or higher. Slightly more than four in ten (43%) drivers feel that those traveling 5 MPH over the limit on these roads should be ticketed, with 46% feeling that drivers should be ticketed at 10 MPH over posted limits. [Figure 6-C]

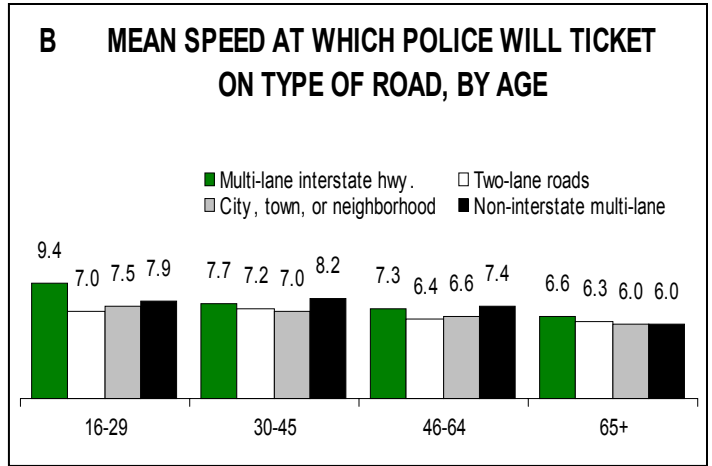
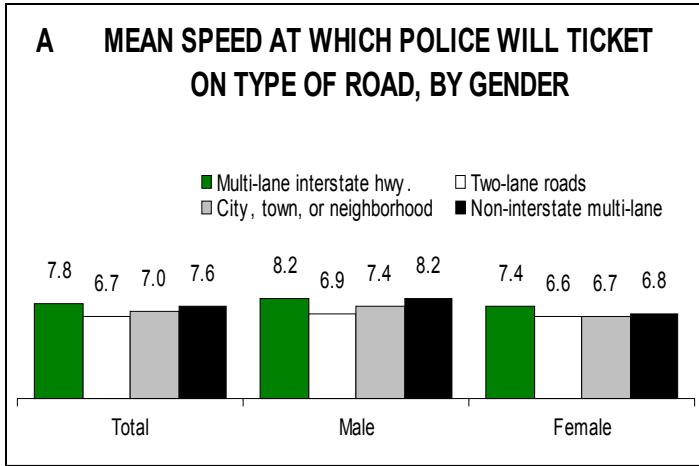
Appropriateness of Speed Limits

While the vast majority of drivers on various road types feel that speed limits on two-lane roads (78%) and city, town, or neighborhood streets (83%) are about right, more than one third (35%) feel that speed limits on the interstate highways they drive are too low. More than one in five (22%) feel limits on non-interstate multi-lane roads are too low. [Figure 6-D]

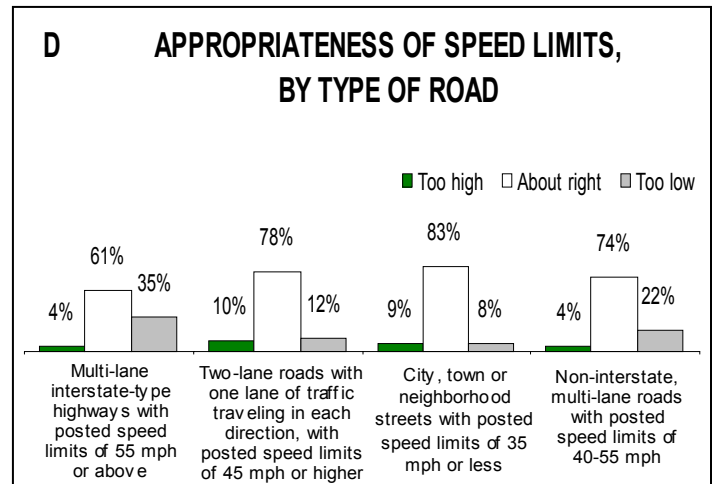
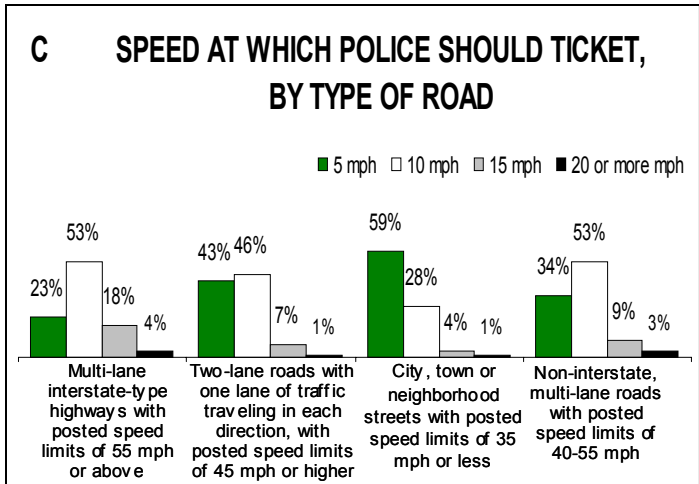
Ideal Speed Limits for Interstate Highways

Almost half (48%) of all drivers believe that the speed limit on interstate highways should be 70 MPH or higher, while an additional one-third feel they should be 65 MPH. Males and younger drivers are more likely to feel limits should be 75 MPH (about one in four do). [Figure 6-E]

FIGURE 6: SPEED LIMIT ATTITUDES



Q13: In your opinion, how much over the speed limit can you go before police will normally give you a speeding ticket if they see you? [Base: random sample - type of road]*



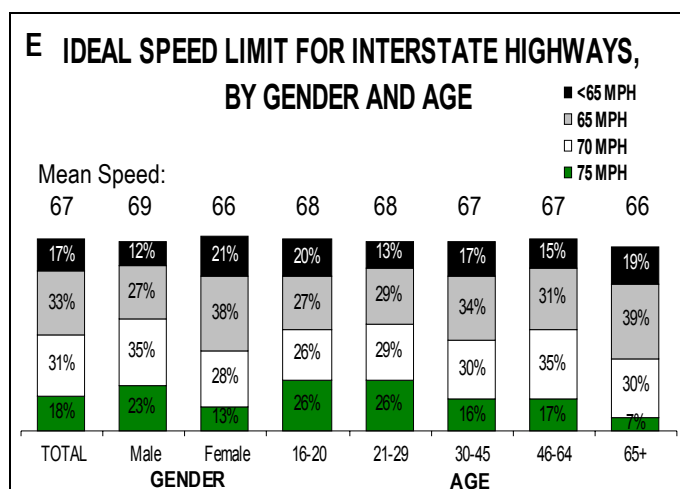
Q20: In your area, how many miles per hour over the posted speed limit do you think law enforcement officers should ticket drivers on _____? Do you think they should ticket on this type of road if the driver is traveling at _____ over the speed limit? [Base: drive on road type at least occasionally]*

Q17: In general, do you think that speed limits are too high, about right, or too low? [Base: drive on road type at least occasionally]*

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

Drive on road type – random sample	Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+	Drive on road type at least occasionally
Multi-lane interstate hwy. (55+ mph)	432	219	313	21	62	163	132	54	1924
Two-lane roads (45+ mph)	548	241	307	34	71	166	176	99	1968
City, town or neighborhood streets (<=35 mph)	710	313	397	35	91	246	208	121	1991
Non-interstate, multi-lane roads (40-55 mph)	312	153	159	14	48	85	117	47	1931

FIGURE 6: SPEED LIMIT ATTITUDES (continued)



Q18. What do you think the speed limit should be for interstate highways? [Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

Drive on road type - random sample	Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+	Drive on road type at least occasionally
Multi-lane interstate hwy. (55+ mph)	432	219	313	21	62	163	132	54	1924
Two-lane roads (45+ mph)	548	241	307	34	71	166	176	99	1968
City, town or neighborhood streets (≤35 mph)	710	313	397	35	91	246	208	121	1991
Non-interstate, multi-lane roads (40-55 mph)	312	153	159	14	48	85	117	47	1931

Importance of Factors Influencing Driving Speed on Interstate Highways and Non-Interstate Multi-Lane Roads

Drivers were asked to rate the importance that a set of factors play in their driving speed selection on four different types of roads. The varying importance of these factors for the four road types appear in Figures 7 and 8.

Multi-Lane Interstate Highways

Drivers prefer to rely upon weather conditions (88% very important) and their own personal perception of what speed is safe (70%) rather than the posted speed limit (63%) to determine the speed at which they drive on multi-lane interstate highways. About the same proportion of drivers feel that the level of traffic on the road (64%) and their past experience driving the multi-lane interstate highway (61%) are very important as those that see the posted speed limit as very important. [Figure 7-A]

The chance of being stopped by police is an important factor in speed choice for about half (51%) of drivers, while a similar proportion feel the speed of other traffic on the road is an important factor in this decision. More than one-third of drivers (36%) admit that the amount of time they have to get to their destination is very important to their speed choice for interstate highways. [Figure 7-A]

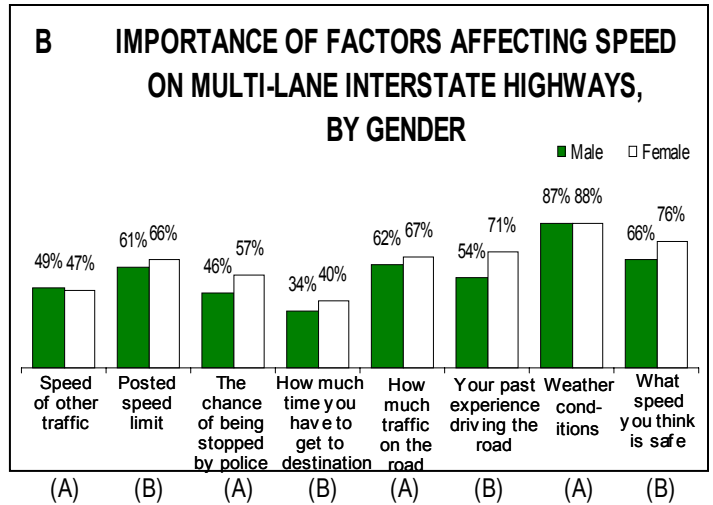
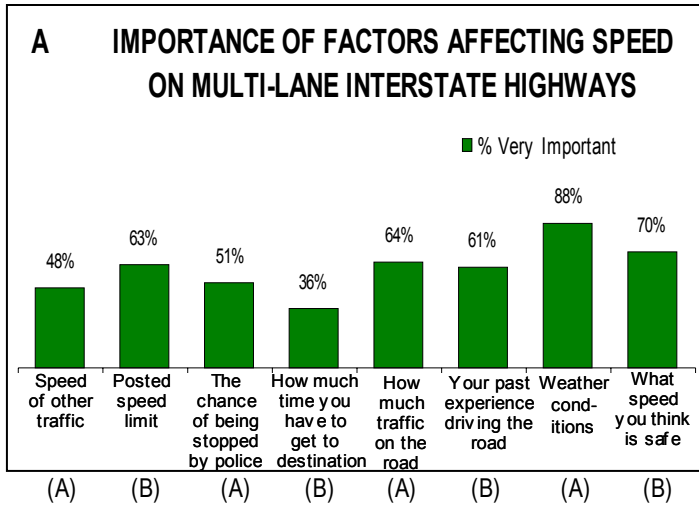
Female drivers are more likely to be heavily influenced by their perception of the chance of being stopped by police, their personal experience driving on the road, and their own perception of what speed is safe for multi-lane interstate highways than are their male counterparts. [Figure 7-B]

Non-Interstate Multi-Lane Roads

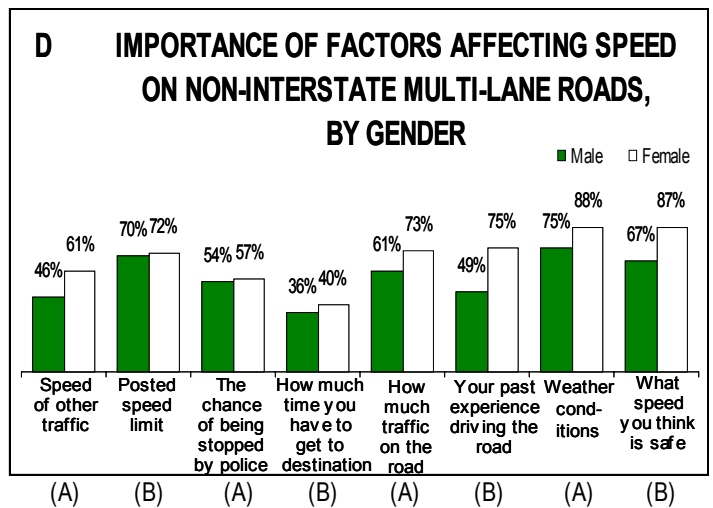
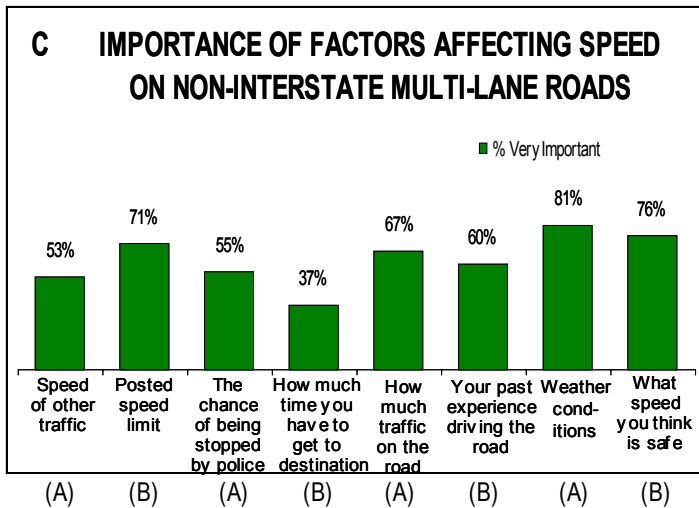
Similar patterns of the importance of factors are found for non-interstate multi-lane arterial roads as for other road types. Drivers are most likely to consider weather conditions (81%) and personal perceptions of safe speeds (76%) as very important factors. Posted speed limits (71%) and amount of road traffic (67%) are very important to slightly fewer drivers. The chance of being stopped by police influences the driving speed on arterial roads for a relatively larger proportion of drivers (55%) as is true for other road types. [Figure 7-C]

Their past experience on the road is a huge influence for female drivers (75%) while not as much for males (49%). Females are also more likely to take into consideration the speed of other traffic on the multi-lane arterial roads (61%) and what speed they think is safe (87%) compared to their male counterparts (46% and 67% respectively). [Figure 7-D]

FIGURE 7: FACTORS INFLUENCING SPEEDING BEHAVIOR – INTERSTATES AND NON-INTERSTATE MULTI-LANE ROADS



Q11: For many people, different factors can affect how they decide to drive on different types of roads. Please tell me how important each of the following factors are to you in selecting the speed at which you drive on the roads you drive most often.
 [Base: total respondents, random half-sample]*



Q11: For many people, different factors can affect how they decide to drive on different types of roads. Please tell me how important each of the following factors are to you in selecting the speed at which you drive on the roads you drive most often.
 [Base: total respondents, random, half-sample]*

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

	Split Sample (A)			Split Sample (B)*		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Multi-lane interstate highway (55+ mph)	213	110	103	219	109	110
Non-interstate multi-lane roads (40-55 mph)	167	80	87	145	73	72

Importance of Factors Influencing Driving Speed on Local Streets and Two-Lane Roads

Importance of Factors – City, Town, or Neighborhood Streets

While the weather conditions are still cited as the most important factor in determining driving speed (82% very important) on city, town, and neighborhood streets drivers' personal perceptions of the safe speed (77%) and posted speed limits (73%) are relatively more important than they are on multi-lane interstates [Figure 7-A] or two-lane roads [Figure 7-C]. The chance of being stopped by police plays a relatively less important role in traveling local roads (46%) than it does for major arterials (55%) and multi-lane roads (51%). More than one in three (37%) drivers adjust their speed based on how early or late they are to their destination. [Figure 8-A]

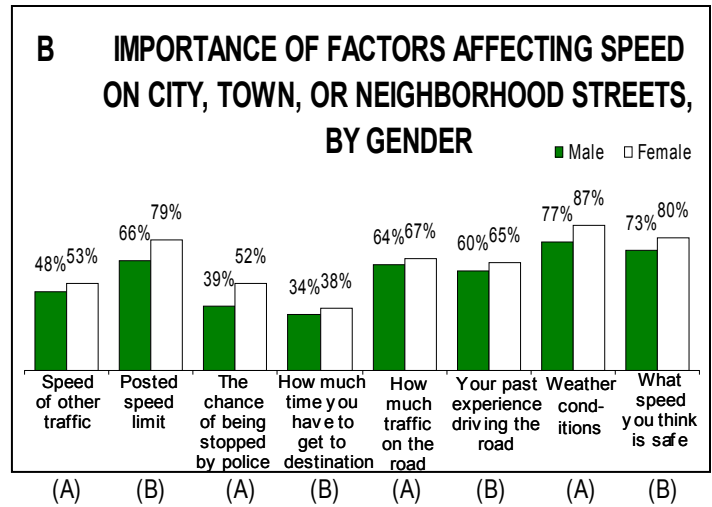
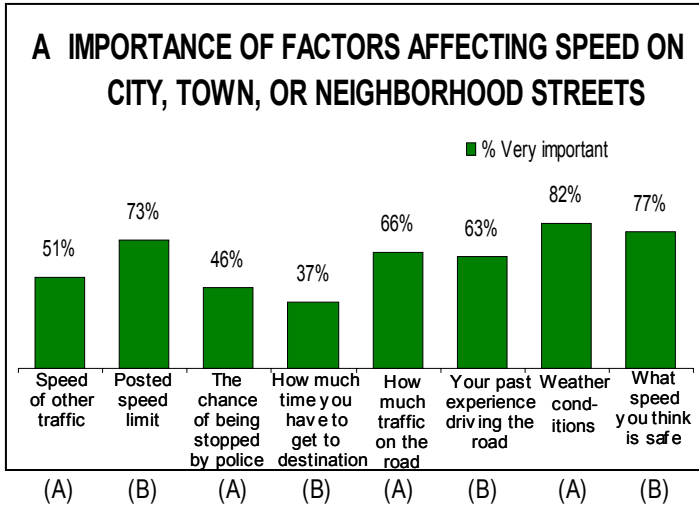
Female drivers are much more influenced by the posted speed limit (79% very important) and by the chance of being stopped by police (52%) on these local roads than are male drivers (66% and 39% respectively). Females are also more likely to consider weather conditions (87% vs. 77%) and what speed they feel is safe (80% vs. 73%) than are their male counterparts. [Figure 8-B]

Two-Lane Roads (45 MPH)

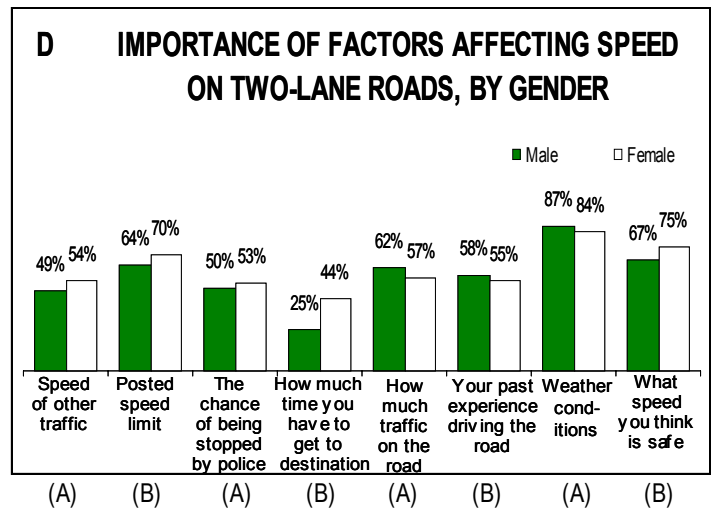
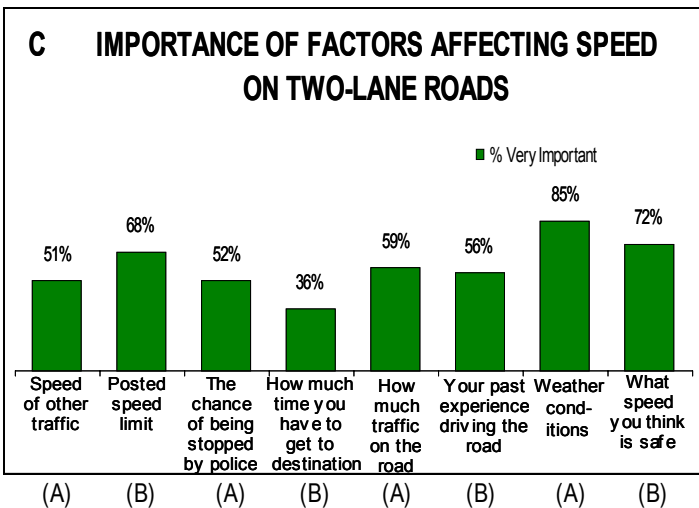
Drivers report similar influences for determining the speed to drive on two-lane roads with posted speed limits of 45 MPH or more as they do for interstate highways. Weather conditions are important (85% very important) to the largest proportion of drivers, followed by their own personal perception of what speed is safe (72%), and the posted speed limits (68%). More than half say the amount of traffic on the two-lane road (59%), their past experience on that road (56%), the chance of being stopped by police (52%), and the speed of other traffic (51%) are very important. [Figure 8-C]

Female drivers are much more likely to say that the amount of time they have to get to a destination is a very important factor in their decision, with 44% of females saying it is important as compared to just 25% of males. [Figure 8-D]

**FIGURE 8: FACTORS INFLUENCING SPEEDING BEHAVIOR –
LOCAL STREETS AND TWO-LANE ROADS**



Q11: For many people, different factors can affect how they decide to drive on different types of roads. Please tell me how important each of the following factors are to you in selecting the speed at which you drive on the roads you drive most often.
[Base: total respondents, random half-sample]*



Q11: For many people, different factors can affect how they decide to drive on different types of roads. Please tell me how important each of the following factors are to you in selecting the speed at which you drive on the roads you drive most often.
[Base: total respondents, random, half-sample]*

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

	Split Sample (A)			Split Sample (B)*		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
City, town, or neighborhood streets (<35mph)	374	172	202	336	141	195
Two-lane roads (45+ mph)	249	111	138	299	130	169

Predicted Speed and Outcomes of Speeding Behavior

Predicted Increased Speed by Road Type

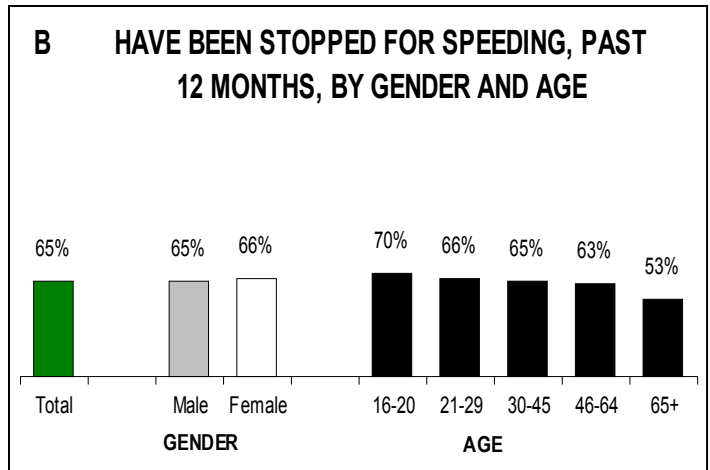
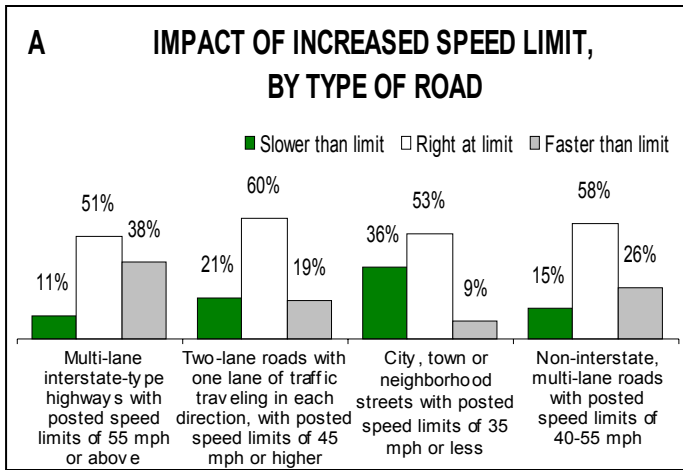
Even if current speed limits were increased by 10 MPH, nearly four in ten (38%) drivers of interstate highways predict they would drive at least a little bit faster than the new limit. About one in four (26%) say they would drive faster than the limit on multi-lane arterial roads if the limits were raised by 10 MPH.

In contrast, many drivers feel that an increase of 10 MPH to local city, town, or neighborhood roads would be too much. More than one third (36%) say they would drive slower than the limit if the limit were raised. About equal proportions of drivers would predict that they would drive slower (21%) or faster (19%) than the speed limit if they were raised by 10 MPH on two-lane roads with limits of 45 MPH or more. [Figure 9-A]

Have Been Stopped for Speeding

One in ten (10%) drivers have been stopped for speeding in the past 12 months. Since males are more likely than females to report excessive speeding behaviors [Figure 5-B], it is not surprising that males are more likely to have been stopped. [Figure 9-B] Reports of being stopped for speeding among age groups also follows the relationship of those who report such activity with those under 30 more likely to drive over the speed limit and more likely to have been stopped for this behavior. [Figure 9-B]

FIGURE 9: PREDICTED SPEEDING AND OUTCOMES OF SPEEDING BEHAVIOR



Q16: If the posted speed limits were increased by 10 mph on _____ do you think that you would normally drive _____?
 [Base: drive on road type at least occasionally]*

Q81: What type of traffic related violation have you been stopped for?
 [Base: total drivers]

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

Drive on road type at least occasionally:

	Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+
Multi-lane interstate hwy. (55+ mph)	1924							
Two-lane roads (45+ mph)	1968							
City, town, or neighborhood streets (\leq 35 mph)	1991							
Non-interstate, multi-lane roads (40-55 mph)	1931							
Stopped for traffic related reason past 12 months	602	344	258	75	151	207	129	37
Total	4010	1970	2040	352	610	1303	1115	610

Speeding and Safety Considerations

Likelihood of Crash if Speeding

Relatively few drivers (about 8%) who say that police will generally ticket drivers traveling between 5-9 MPH over the speed limit believe that drivers at these speeds are a lot more likely to have a crash than those traveling the speed limit. About 30% believe that these drivers are somewhat more likely to crash at these speeds. About one in seven (14%) drivers who say police will ticket at 10-14 MPH over the limit feel these speeds make one a lot more likely to have a crash. In contrast, almost four in ten (37%) believe that someone traveling 15 MPH or more over the limit is a lot more likely than someone going the speed limit to have a crash. [Figure 10-A]

Perceived Safety of Increased Speed Limits on Interstate Highways

Despite feeling that the average speed limit on interstate highways should be close to 70 MPH, twice as many drivers feel that driving on interstate highways is less safe (27%) after the repeal of 55 MPH maximum speeds as feel driving is now more safe (12%). Females (31%) and those age 65 or older (36%) are most likely to feel these highways are less safe now. [Figure 10-B]

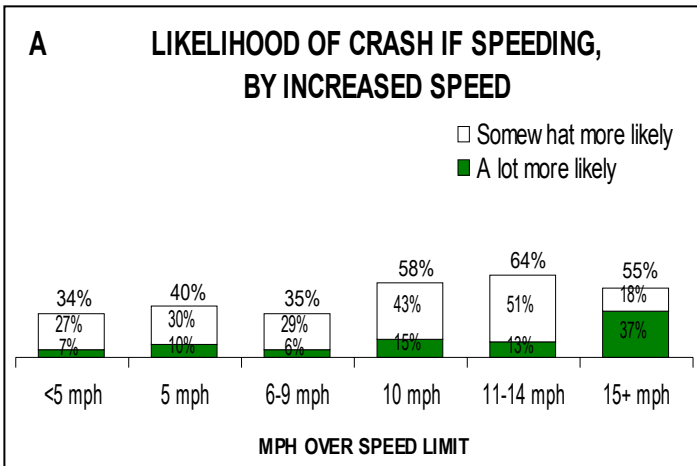
Importance of Reducing Speed, by Type of Road

While many drivers admit to driving over the speed limit and advocate higher limits, at least three quarters feel it is at least somewhat important to reduce speeding on all road types. About one-quarter feel it is extremely important to reduce speeding on interstate highways (27%) and non-interstate multi-lane roads (25%). One-third or more feel reducing speeding on two-lane roads (36%) and local city, town, or neighborhood roads (33%) are extremely important. [Figure 10-C]

Personal Threat of Speeding

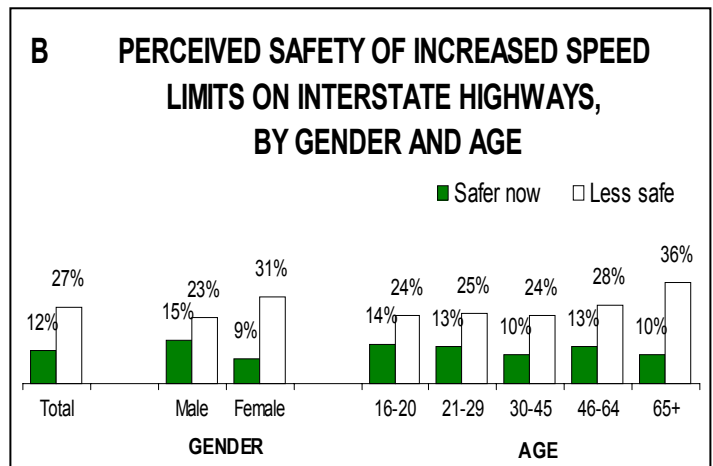
Although many drivers report speeding at least occasionally, more than two-thirds (68%) feel that speeding by others is a major threat to themselves and their family. Females (75%) are more likely to see speeding as a major personal threat than males (60%). The perception of speeding of others as a major personal threat increases steadily with age from 48% among 16-20 year olds up to 86% among those 65 or older. [Figure 10-D]

FIGURE 10: SPEEDING AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS



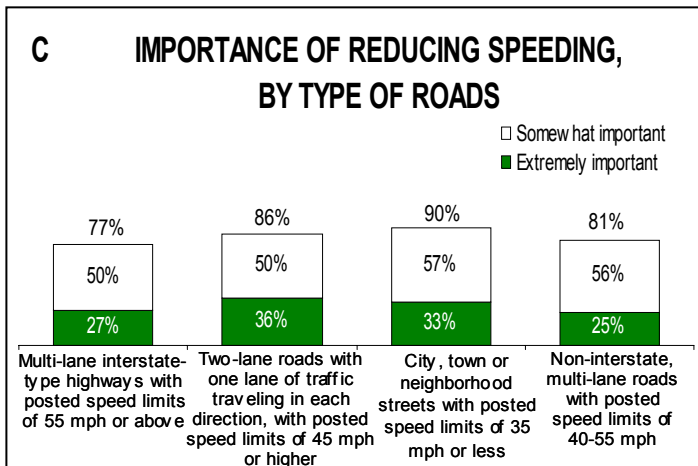
Q14. Compared to someone driving at the speed limit, how much more likely is someone traveling ____mph over the speed limit to have a crash?

[Base: respondents indicating number of miles per hour over speed limit before police would issue a ticket]*



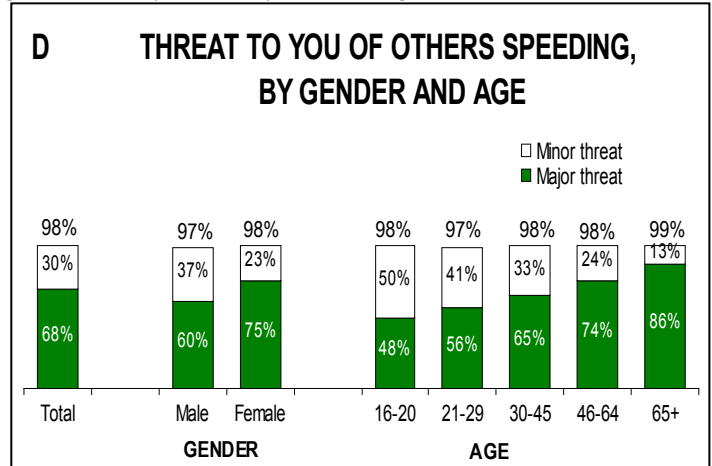
Q19. As you may be aware, a number of years ago the national maximum speed limit of 55 mph was repealed, resulting in higher speed limits on many interstates. Do you think that driving on these interstate highways is safer now with the higher speed limits, about as safe, or less safe than with the old (lower) limits?

[Base: total respondents, speed; n=2004]



Q22. How important is it that something be done to reduce speeding on _____?

[Base: drive on road type at least occasionally]*



Q86aA. In your opinion, how much of a threat is it to the personal safety of you and your family if other drivers are speeding?

[Base: total respondents, speed and unsafe; n=4010]

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

Drive on road type at least occasionally:

Multi-lane interstate hwy. (55+ mph)	1924
Two-lane roads (45+ mph)	1968
City, town, or neighborhood streets (<35 mph)	1991
Non-interstate, multi-lane roads (40-55 mph)	1931

Respondents indicating speed of:

<5 mph over limit	191
5 mph over limit	887
6-9 mph over limit	206
10 mph over limit	477
11-14 mph over limit	68
15+ mph over limit	32

Chapter 3: Unsafe Driving Behaviors

While speeding is the driving behavior for which there is the most data, other driving behaviors that can be unsafe also occur frequently, although the extent of the contribution these behaviors make to the crash problem is not well quantified. This section provides information on the driving age public's behaviors and attitudes regarding unsafe driving behaviors beyond speeding. Specifically it covers the following topics:

- Frequency of unsafe driving behaviors
- Police intervention in unsafe driving
- Outcomes of unsafe driving behaviors
- Types of unsafe driving behaviors drivers encounter
- Perceived changes over time of unsafe driving
- Perceived threat of unsafe driving
- Experiences of unsafe driving behaviors
- Reactions to experiences of unsafe driving behaviors

Frequency of Unsafe Driving Behaviors

Frequency of Unsafe Behaviors

Very few drivers report running red lights (4%), crossing railroad tracks when the light is blinking (3%), passing a vehicle in a non-passing zone (3%), driving after thinking they've had *too much* to drink (2%), or passing a school bus when its light is flashing (1%), at least sometimes or often. One in ten or fewer admit to at least sometimes cutting in front of another driver (10%), making an illegal U-turn (7%), or using the shoulder to pass in heavy traffic (6%).

However, sizable proportions of drivers admit to at least sometimes coming only to a rolling stop at stop signs (30%) or entering an intersection just as the light turned from yellow to red (40%), with slightly more than one in ten reporting doing the behavior often. [Figures 11-A & 11-B]

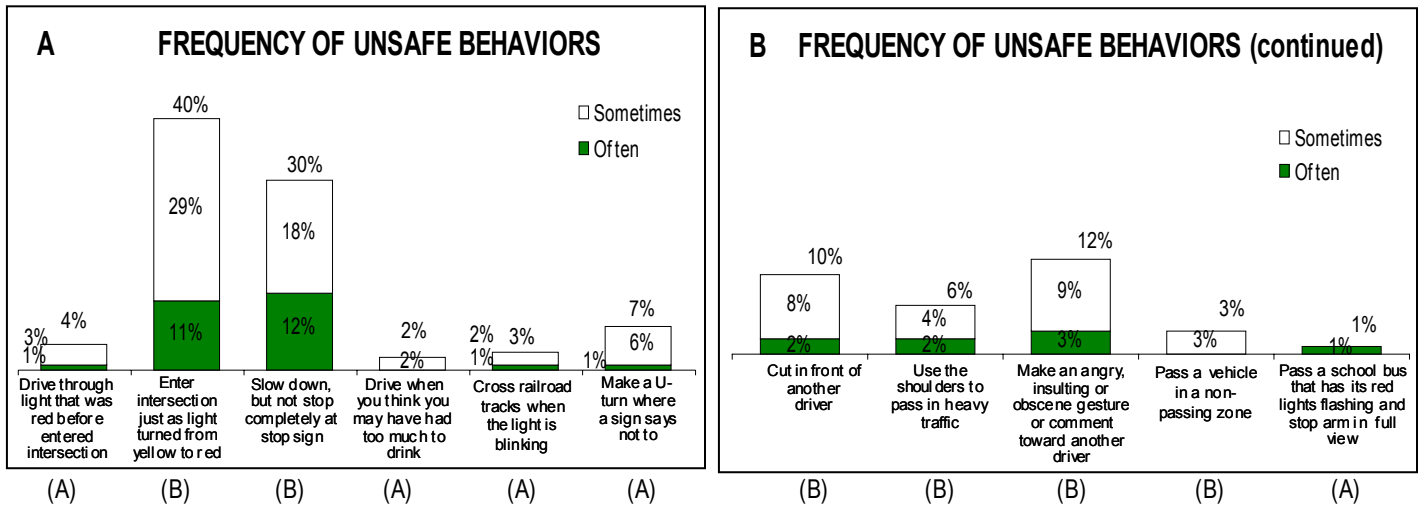
By Gender

Male drivers are about two to three times more likely than females to say they at least sometimes run red lights (6% of males vs. 2% of females), drive while intoxicated (3% vs. 1%), and make an illegal U-turn (16% vs. 9%). Male drivers are also slightly more likely than females to say they at least sometimes make rolling stops at stop signs (37% vs. 24%) or enter an intersection just as the light is turning red (42% vs. 36%). [Figures 11-C & 11-D]

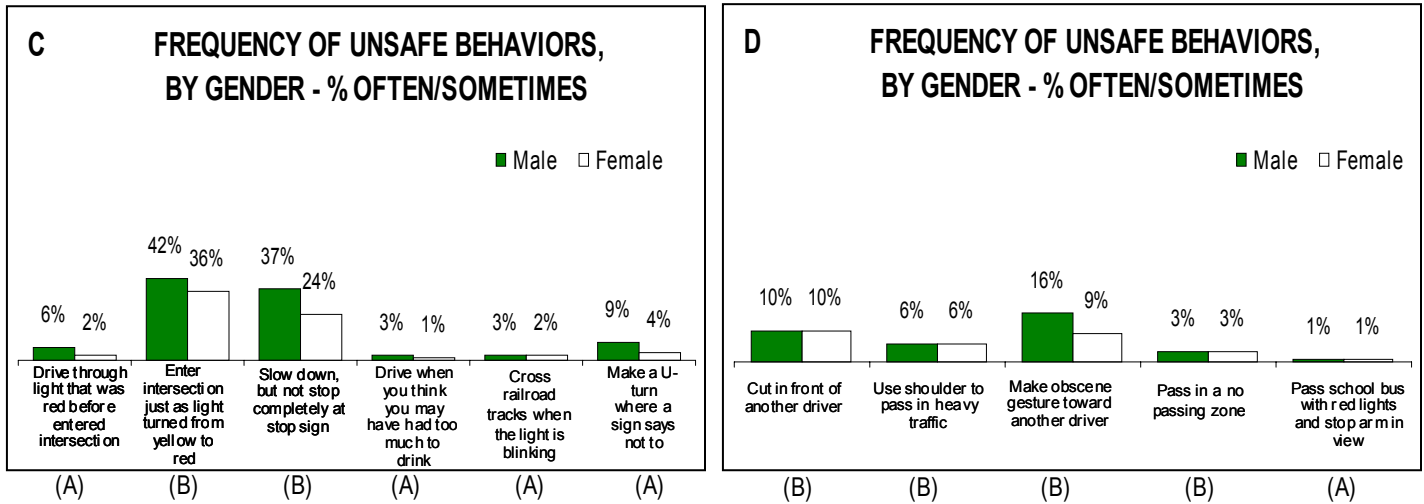
By Age

Reportings of unsafe driving behaviors are generally highest among younger drivers and decrease with age. In most instances, drivers over age 45 report much lower rates of these behaviors as do their younger counterparts. [Figures 11-E & 11-F]

FIGURE 11: FREQUENCY OF UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIORS



Q21: People feel differently about how safe or dangerous different types of driving behaviors are and factors such as time of day, road conditions, and congestion can affect how people drive. Please tell me how frequently you do each of the following when you drive. [Base: total respondents, random half-sample]*

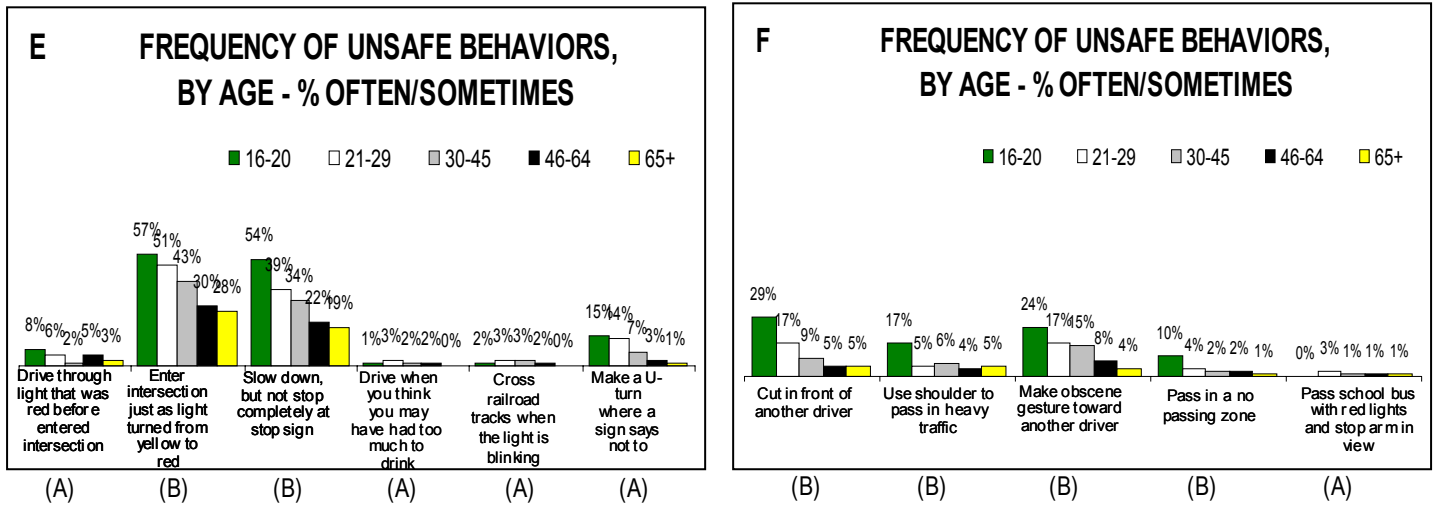


Q21: People feel differently about how safe or dangerous different types of driving behaviors are and factors such as time of day, road conditions, and congestion can affect how people drive. Please tell me how frequently you do each of the following when you drive. [Base: total respondents, random half-sample]*

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

	Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+
Split Sample A	1011	434	577	59	129	316	315	184
Split Sample B	995	437	558	50	128	322	294	192

FIGURE 11: FREQUENCY OF UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIORS (continued)



Q21: People feel differently about how safe or dangerous different types of driving behaviors are and factors such as time of day, road conditions, and congestion can affect how people drive. Please tell me how frequently you do each of the following when you drive. [Base: total respondents, random half-sample]*

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

	Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+
Split Sample A	1011	434	577	59	129	316	315	184
Split Sample B	995	437	558	50	128	322	294	192

Outcomes of Unsafe Driving – Being Stopped for Violations

Number of Times Stopped for Traffic Violation Past 12 Months

About one in six (16%) drivers report having been stopped for a traffic violation at least once in the past year. Four percent (4%) say they have been stopped more than once. Male drivers (20%) are almost twice as likely as females (12%) to have been stopped (they are also much more likely to have reported unsafe driving behaviors). The prevalence of being stopped is highest among those under 21 (31%) and decreases steadily with age, as did self-reports of involvement in measured unsafe and speeding behaviors. [Figure 12-A]

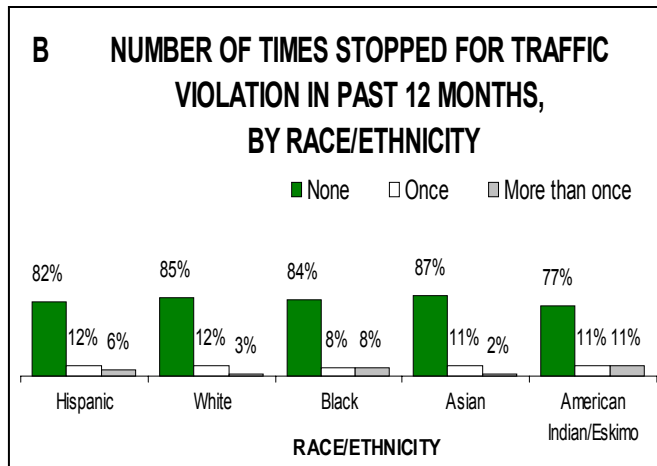
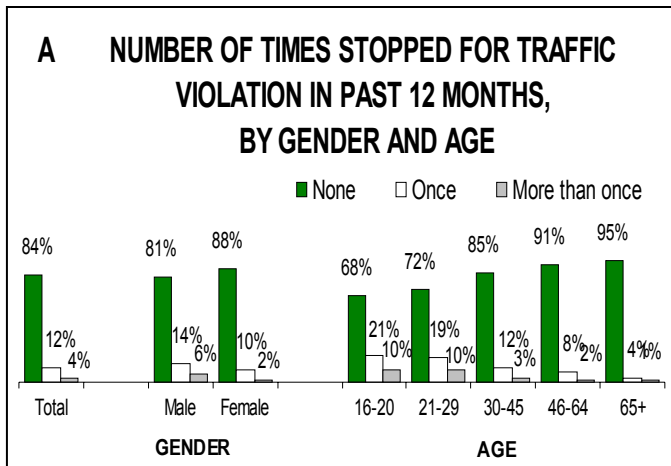
Number of Times Stopped for Traffic Violation Past 12 Months, by Race/Ethnic Group

Drivers of American Indian/Eskimo (22%) or Hispanic (18%) descent are more likely to have been stopped for a traffic-related violation than are other drivers. [Figure 12-B]

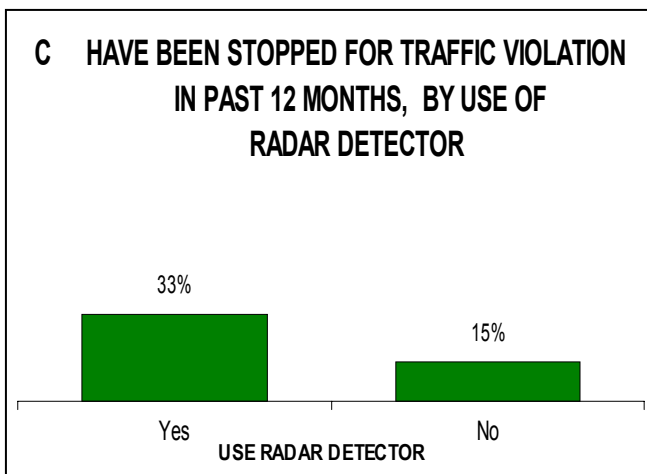
By Use of Radar Detector

Drivers who say they drive with a radar detector in their car (33%) are twice as likely as others (15%) to report being stopped for a traffic violation. [Figure 12-C]

FIGURE 12: OUTCOMES OF UNSAFE DRIVING-BEING STOPPED FOR VIOLATIONS



Q79/80: In the past twelve months have you been stopped by the police for any traffic related reason? How many times have you been stopped for any traffic related violation in the past twelve months?
 [Base: total respondents, speed and unsafe; n=4010]



Q79: In the past twelve months, have you been stopped by the police for any traffic related reason?
 [Base: use radar detector; n=156; do not use radar detector; n=3847]

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

Been stopped for traffic related incident past 12 months:

Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+
602	344	258	75	151	207	129	37

Outcomes of Unsafe Driving – Receiving Ticket vs. Warning

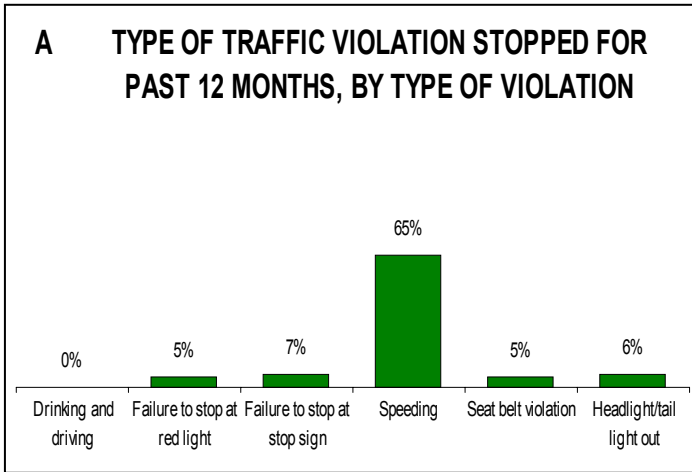
Type of Violation

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of drivers stopped for any traffic violation (10% of all drivers) were stopped for speeding. Fewer than one in ten have been stopped for failure to stop at a stop sign (7%), failure to stop at a red light (5%), having a headlight or taillight out (6%), or for a seatbelt violation (5%). [Figure 13-A]

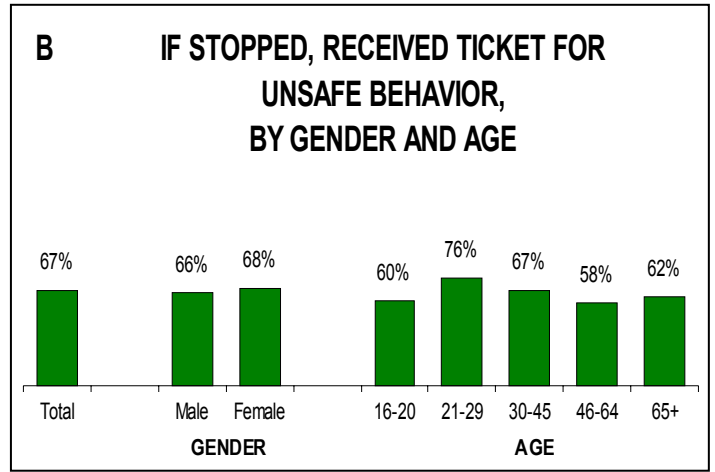
Received Ticket/Warning for Unsafe Violation

Slightly more than two-thirds (67%) of the drivers stopped for a traffic violation report receiving a ticket on at least one occasion. Those in their 20s were most likely to receive a ticket (76%). [Figure 13-B] About one in four (24%) report receiving a warning for at least one traffic violation. There is no significant difference by gender or age. [Figure 13-C]

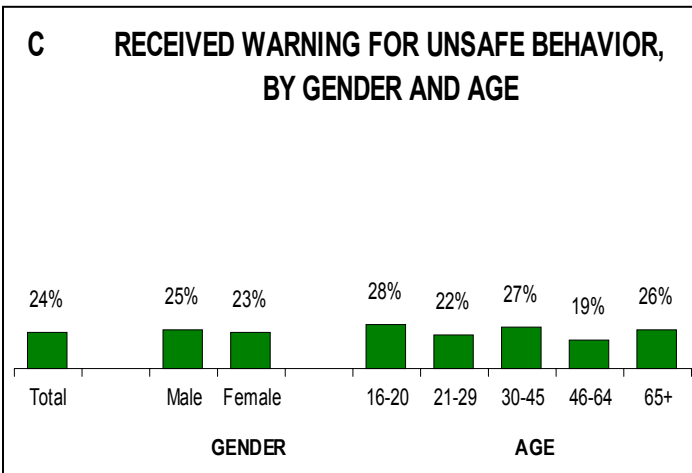
FIGURE 13: OUTCOMES OF UNSAFE DRIVING- RECEIVING TICKET VS. WARNING



Q81: What type of traffic related violation have you been stopped for? [Base: stopped by police for traffic related reason past 12 months; n=602]



Q82: Did you receive a ticket or a written warning on any of these occasions? [Base: stopped by police for traffic related reason past 12 months; n=602]



Q82: Did you receive a ticket or a written warning on any of these occasions? [Base: stopped by police for traffic related reason past 12 months; n=602]

*Sample bases for figures on this page:

Been stopped for traffic related incident past 12 months:

Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+
602	344	258	75	151	207	129	37

Perceptions of Other Drivers as Safe

Types of Unsafe Driving Behaviors Encountered

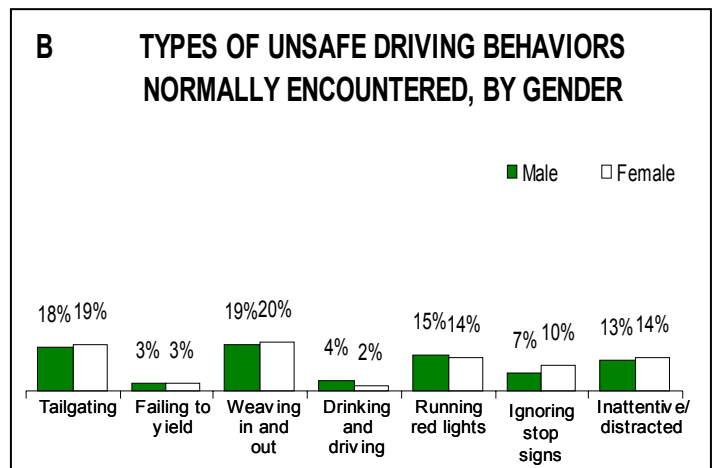
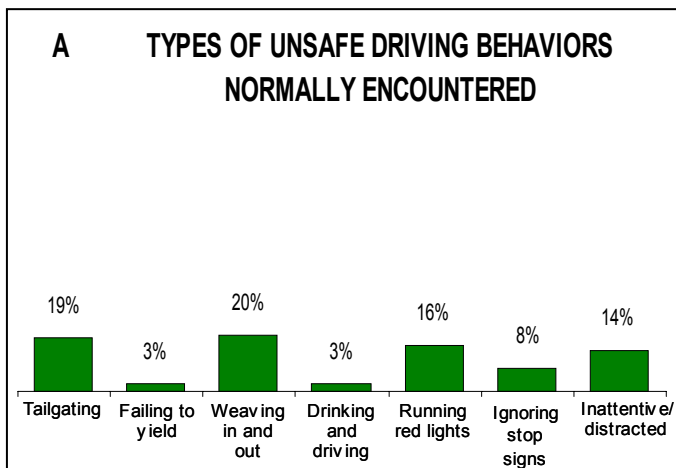
Drivers say they “normally” encounter a variety of unsafe driving behaviors. About one in five say they normally encounter tailgating (19%) and vehicles weaving in and out of traffic (20%). About one in seven drivers encounter other drivers running red lights (16%) and inattentive or distracted driving (14%). Some drivers also find other drivers ignoring stop signs (8%), failing to yield the right of way (3%), and engaging in drinking (alcohol) and driving behaviors (3%). [Figure 14-A] Males and females report encountering the same types of unsafe driving behaviors equally. [Figure 14-B]

Perceived Change in Driver Behavior

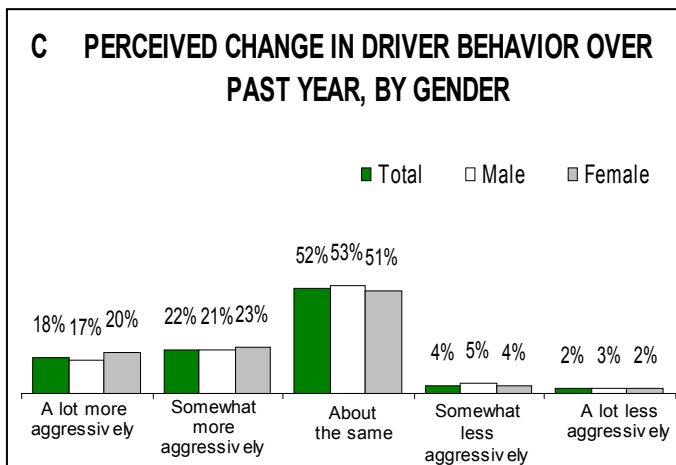
While a majority of drivers (54%) feel the behavior of other drivers in the area has not changed in the past year, four of ten (40%) feel other drivers’ behavior has become more aggressive in the past year. Nearly one of five (18%) say drivers are driving a lot more aggressively, while an additional 22% feel drivers are driving somewhat more aggressively. Male and female drivers have similar perceptions of the increased aggressive driving behaviors of others. [Figure 14-C]

Perceptions of the change in driving behavior varies somewhat by NHTSA region, with drivers in Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, VI – 44%) and Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY – 46%) most likely to feel others are driving more aggressively, with those in Region 7 (IA, KS, MO, NE – 36%) and Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, WA – 36%) least likely to feel that drivers are more aggressive. [Figure 14-D]

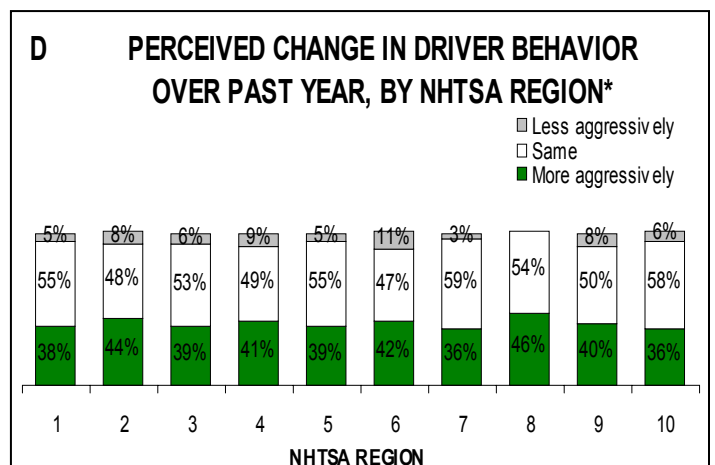
FIGURE 14: PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER DRIVERS AS SAFE



Q28: Other than speeding, what types of unsafe driving behaviors do you normally encounter on the roads you drive?
 [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]



Q34: Compared to one year ago, would you say that other drivers in your area drive _____?
 [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]



Q34: Compared to one year ago, would you say that other drivers in your area drive _____?
 [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]

*Definitions of NHTSA Regions can be found in Appendix A

Perceived Threat of Unsafe Driving Behaviors

Specific Actions Threatening to Self/Family

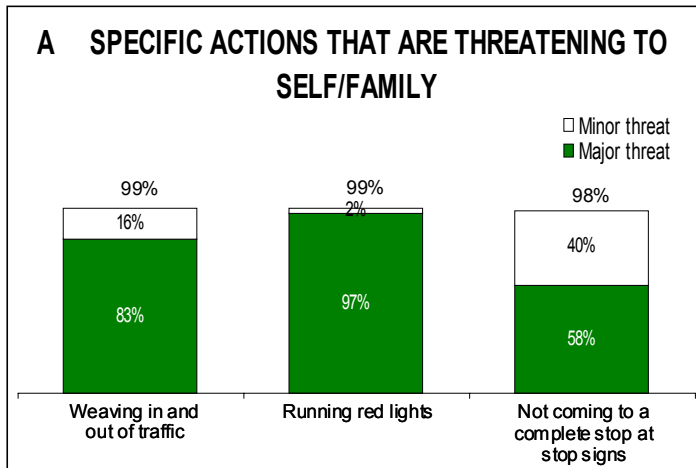
Drivers have different perceptions of what types of driving behaviors by others are threats to personal safety. Virtually all (97%) drivers feel that other drivers running red lights is a major threat to the personal safety of themselves and their family. Slightly more than eight of ten (83%) feel that others weaving in and out of traffic is a major threat. Relatively fewer drivers (58%) see other drivers not coming to a complete stop at stop signs as a major threat to their personal safety. [Figure 15-A]

Actions That Are Threatening, by Gender and Age

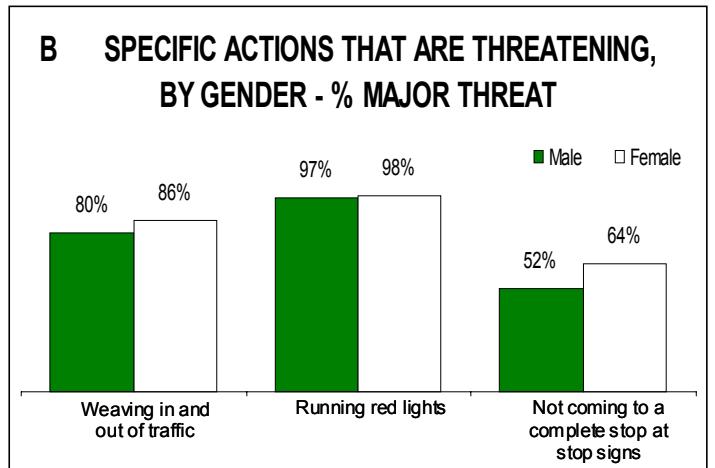
Female drivers are much more likely than their male counterparts (64% and 52% respectively) to feel that rolling stops at stop signs are a major threat and slightly more likely to perceive others weaving in and out of traffic as a major threat. [Figure 15-B]

While drivers of all ages see the running of red lights as a major personal threat to safety, perceptions of others weaving in and out of traffic and not coming to a complete stop at stop signs vary by age, with younger drivers seeing these actions as less threatening than their older counterparts. [Figure 15-C]

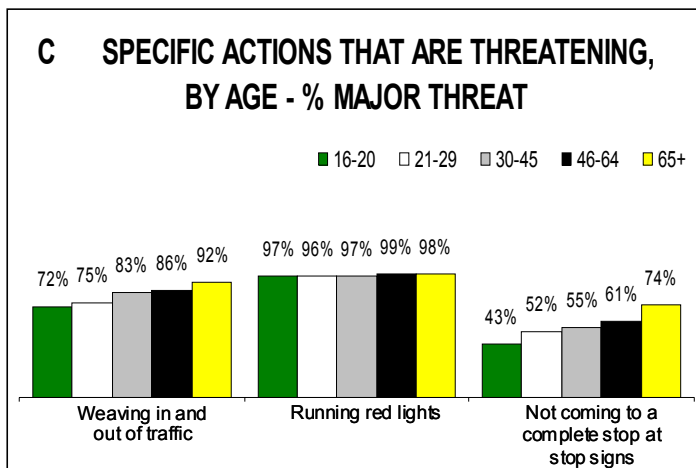
FIGURE 15: PERCEIVED THREAT OF UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIORS



Q86a. In your opinion, how much of a threat is it to the personal safety of you and your family if the other drivers do the following?
 [Base: total respondents, speed and unsafe; n=4010]



Q86a. In your opinion, how much of a threat is it to the personal safety of you and your family if the other drivers do the following?
 [Base: total respondents, speed and unsafe; n=4010]



Q86a. In your opinion, how much of a threat is it to the personal safety of you and your family if the other drivers do the following?
 [Base: total respondents, speed and unsafe; n=4010]

Experiences of Unsafe Driving Behaviors

Frequency of Feeling Threatened by Other Drivers

About one in three (34%) drivers say they have felt the behavior of other drivers was a personal threat more often than once a month, with 5% saying they experience threatening behavior nearly every day or more. An additional 10% report such experiences several times a week. [Figure 16-A]

Frequently Feel Threatened, by Gender and Age

Male drivers are more likely to report experiencing threatening driving behavior by others at least several times a week (17%) than do females (13%). Very young (16-20) and older (65+) drivers are least likely to report experiencing very frequent threatening behavior by other drivers (12% vs. 18% of other drivers). [Figure 16-B]

Frequency Feel Threatened by Race/Ethnicity

Black drivers (21%) and those of Hispanic descent (21%) are more likely to report experiencing threatening driving behavior by others at least weekly as do drivers overall. Asians (8%) and those of non-White, non-Black, non-Asian races (7%) are least likely to feel threatened often. [Figure 16-C]

Frequently Feel Threatened, by NHTSA Region

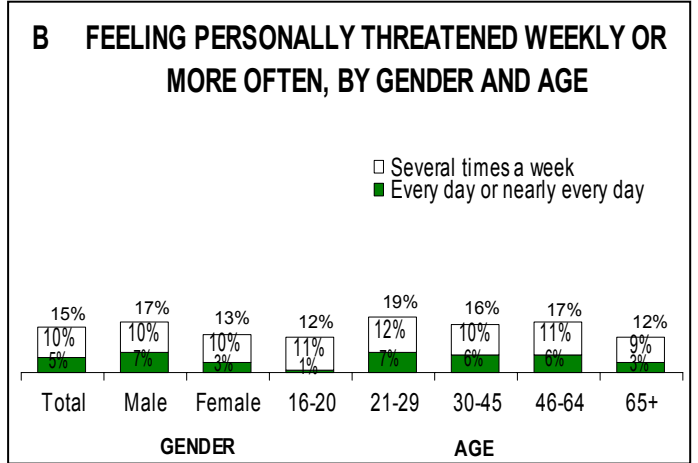
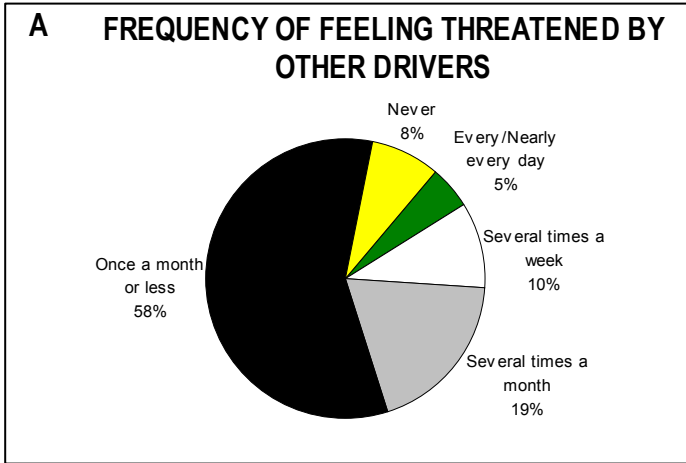
Drivers in different areas of the country have very different experiences regarding other drivers threatening their and their family's personal safety. Drivers in NHTSA Regions 2 (19%), 4 (19%), and 10 (19%) are most likely to report that their personal safety is threatened more than weekly while those in Regions 7 (7%) and 8 (8%) are least likely to frequently feel threatened by other drivers. [Figure 16-D]

Last Time Felt Personal Safety Threatened

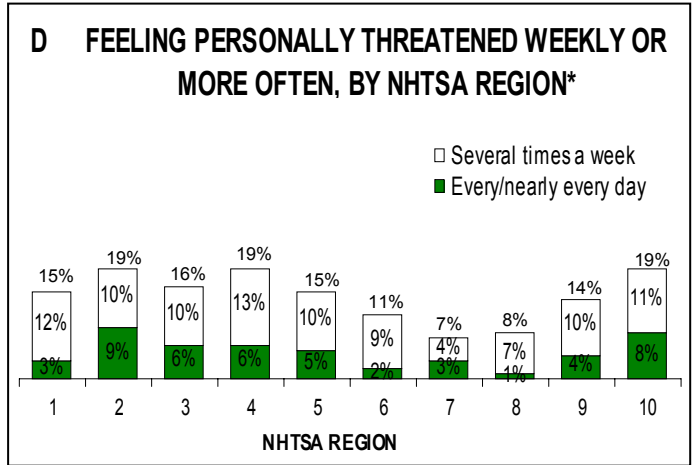
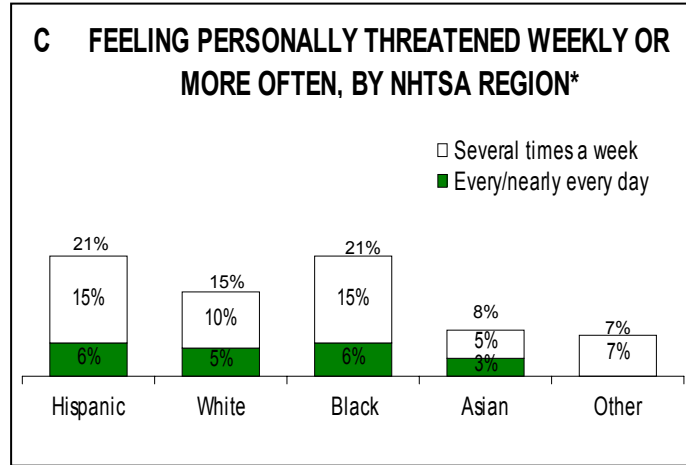
About one-half (51%) of those who report feeling personally threatened by another driver's behavior in the past year, report last having felt this way within the past month, with 29% reporting feeling personally threatened for their safety in the past week. [Figure 16-E]

Again, drivers under age 21 (44%) and 65 or older (45%) are least likely to report having recently (within the past month) felt their personal safety threatened by another driver's behavior. Those in their 20s are most likely to say they have felt personally threatened within the past month. [Figure 16-F]

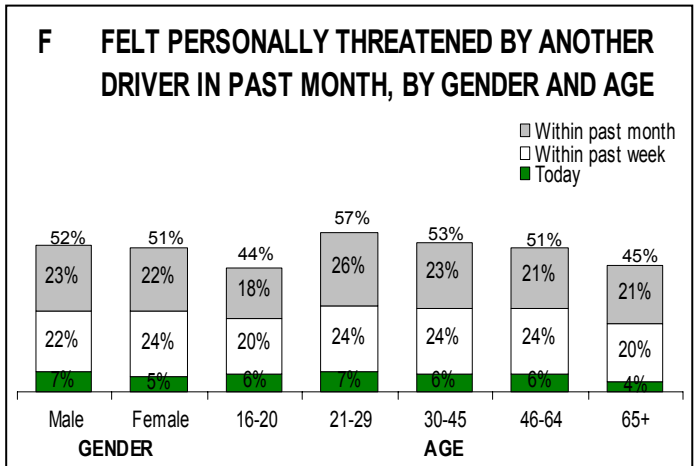
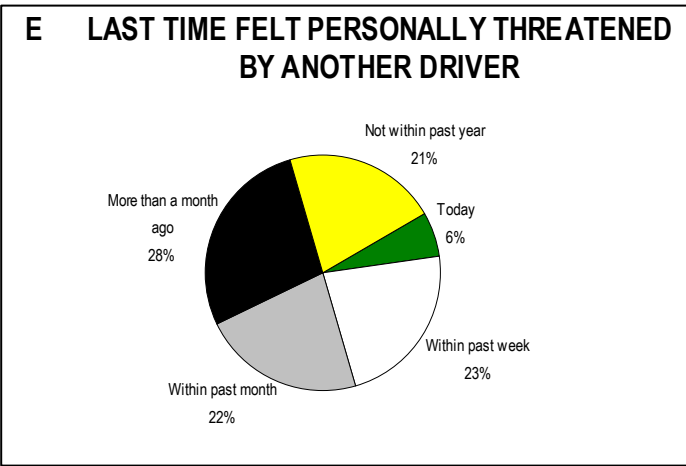
FIGURE 16: EXPERIENCES OF UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIORS



Q36. How often in the past year have you felt that the behavior of another driver was a personal threat to you or your passengers?
 [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]



Q36. How often in the past year have you felt that the behavior of another driver was a personal threat to you or your passengers?
 [Base: total respondents; n=2006]



Q37: When was the last time that you felt that another driver's behavior was a personal threat?
 [Base: felt threatened past year; n=1854]

Q37: When was the last time that you felt that another driver's behavior was a personal threat?
 [Base: felt threatened past year]*

	Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+
Felt threatened past year	1854	815	1039	104	242	607	561	325

*Definitions of NHTSA Regions can be found in Appendix A

Threatening Behaviors Encountered and Reactions to Threat

Behaviors Causing Driver to Feel Threatened

About one third (34%) of drivers who have felt their personal safety was threatened within the past year say that the other driver cut in very closely in front of them. Other drivers report threatening behaviors such as drivers driving very closely behind or beside them (16%) or making obscene or threatening gestures (12%). Fewer than one in ten threatened drivers report they felt threatened by another driver passing them in a dangerous place or manner (8%), cutting them off at an intersection or exit (6%), driving too fast or too slow (6%), or running a red light or stop sign (5%). [Figure 17-A]

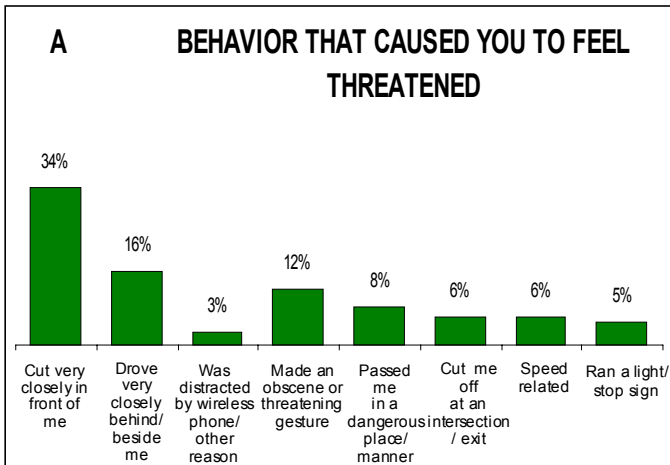
Reactions to Threatening Behavior

A majority of drivers who felt their personal safety was threatened by a specific action of another driver took some sort of avoidance action to remove themselves from the threat. More than four in ten (43%) stopped or slowed their vehicle, while an additional 20% moved their vehicle away from the problem drivers. Slightly more than one in ten (12%) report taking an aggressive action such as honking, yelling, or using a hand gesture, while about one in six (17%) did nothing in response to the threatening behavior. [Figure 17-B]

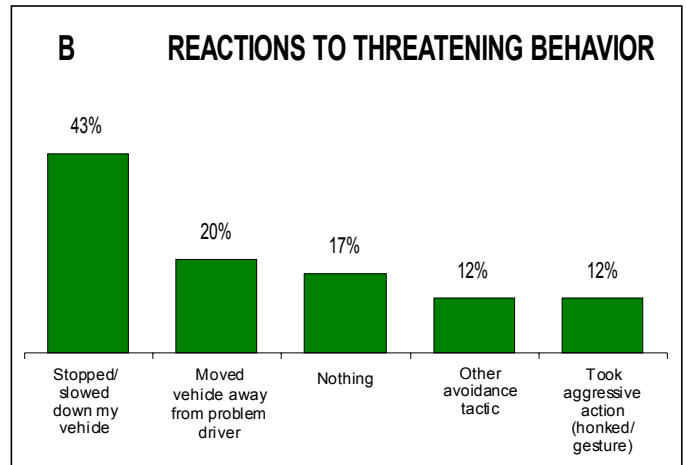
Reactions to Threatening Behavior, by Age

Reports of slowing or stopping their vehicle increases directly with age, with just 32% of those under age 21 reporting this reaction as compared with 50% of those age 65 or older. In contrast, aggressive reactions are most common among those under age 30. [Figures 17-C & 17-D]

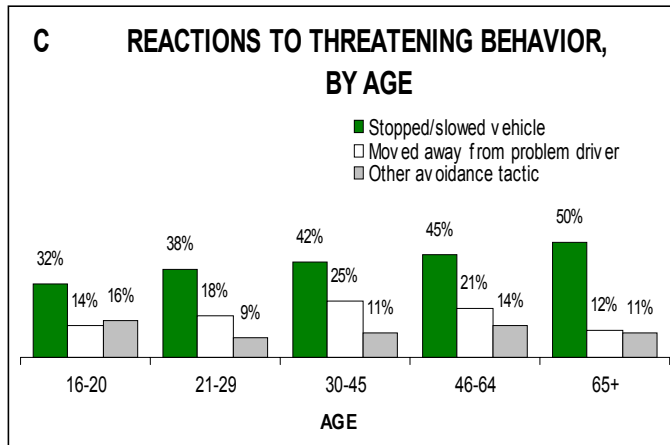
FIGURE 17: THREATENING BEHAVIORS ENCOUNTERED AND REACTIONS TO THREAT



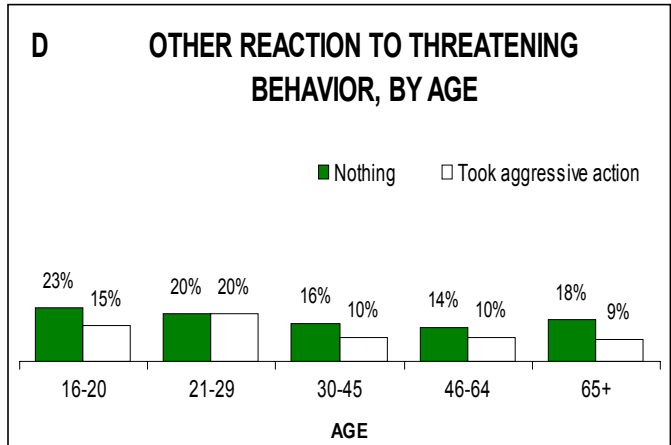
Q38: Thinking about the last time you felt this way, what did the driver do that made you feel threatened?
 [Base: felt threatened past year; n=1854]



Q39: What did you do?
 [Base: felt threatened by specific action past year; n=1711]



Q39: What did you do?
 [Base: felt threatened by specific action past year]



Q39: What did you do?
 [Base: felt threatened by specific action past year]

	Total	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+
Felt threatened by specific action past year	1711	93	228	571	524	283

Chapter 4: Enforcement

One approach to reducing speeding and other unsafe driving behaviors is to increase enforcement of offenders. Due to the expense to cities and municipalities for increased enforcement, alternative measures are being suggested. This section considers drivers' perceptions about the current level of police enforcement, and the appropriateness of alternative enforcement options.

Specifically it covers the following topics:

- Perceptions of the amount of police enforcement
- Appropriateness of speed governors
- Awareness of automated photo enforcement
- Where and how photo enforcement should be used

Perceptions of Police Enforcement and Speed Governors

Perceived Amount of Police Enforcement of Traffic Laws

Drivers are significantly more likely to feel that too little, rather than too much police enforcement of traffic laws is being undertaken. Six in ten drivers feel there is too little police enforcement of tailgating (60%) and drivers weaving in and out of traffic (57%) on the roads they drive. [Figure 18-A] These are the same behaviors drivers feel they encounter most often.

About one in ten (11%) feel there is too much police enforcement of speeding, while just 5% or fewer feel that there is too much police enforcement of other driving behaviors. [Figure 18-A] Drivers under age 30 are most likely to believe there is too much police enforcement of running red lights (8% vs. 2% of older drivers), failure to stop at stop signs (8% vs. 3%), and speeding (22% vs. 7%). [Figure 18-B]

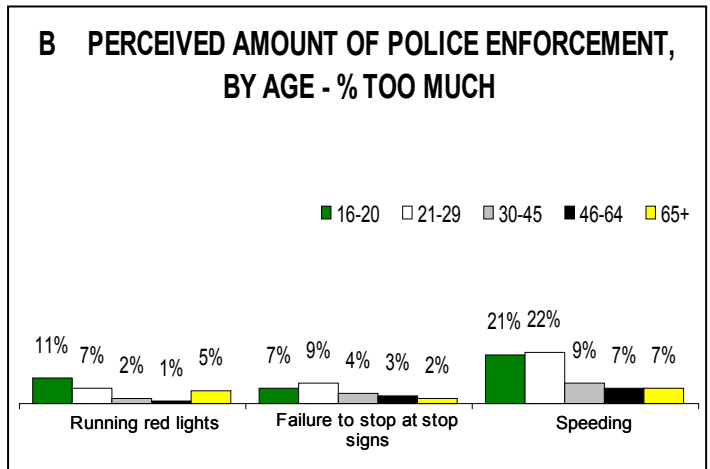
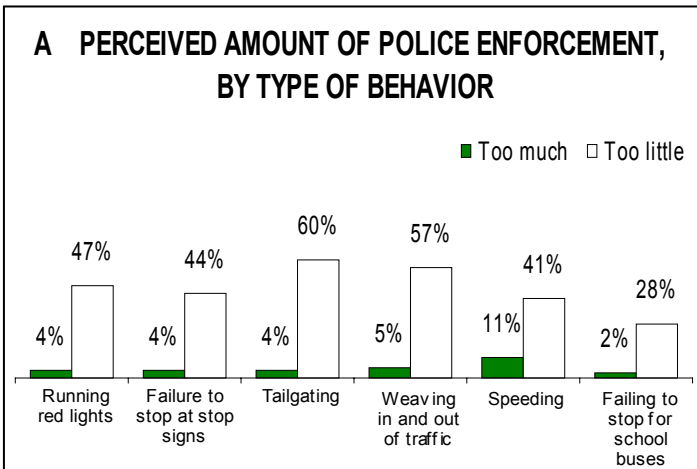
Appropriateness of Speed Governors

Slightly more than one of three (35%) drivers feels that speed governors, mechanical devices that limit the maximum speed a vehicle can be driven, are a good idea. Female drivers (44%) are much more likely to think speed governors are a good idea than their male counterparts (25%). Newer drivers are more likely to say these are a good idea (48% of those under age 21) than are older drivers. [Figure 18-C]

Drivers of Hispanic descent are most supportive of the use of speed governors, with 51% saying they are a good idea. Nearly half (48%) of Black drivers think speed governors are a good idea, while just 33% of White drivers are likely to see their use as good. [Figure 18-D]

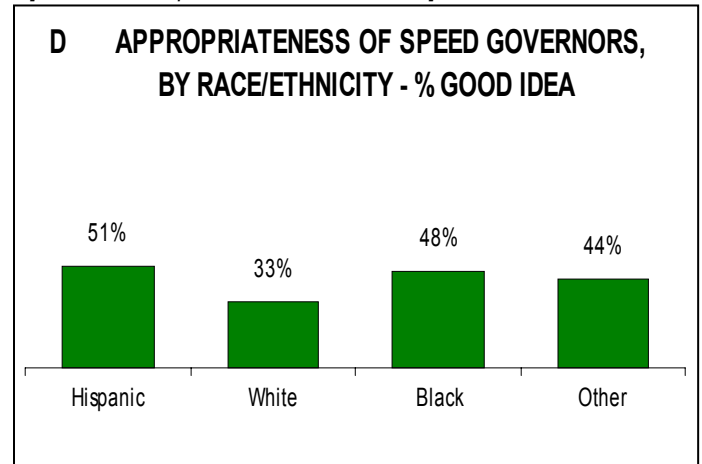
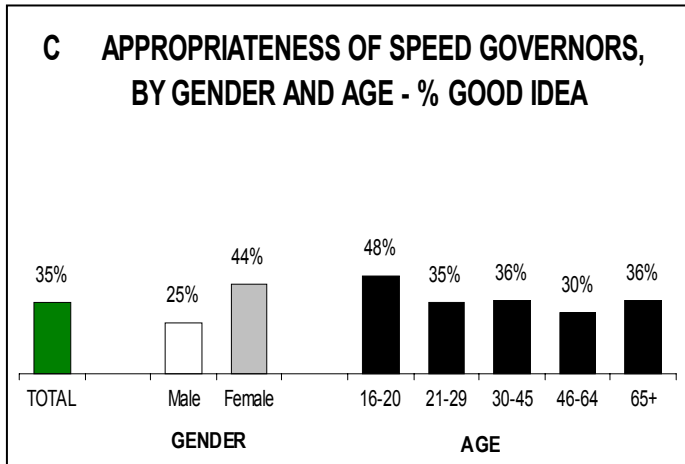
Drivers in different NHTSA regions have very different views of the appropriateness of speed governors. More than four in ten of those in Regions 1 (44%), 2 (43%), and 3 (45%) think these are a good idea. In contrast, just 14% of those in Region 8 think speed governors are a good idea. [Figure 18-E]

FIGURE 18: PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE ENFORCEMENT AND SPEED GOVERNORS

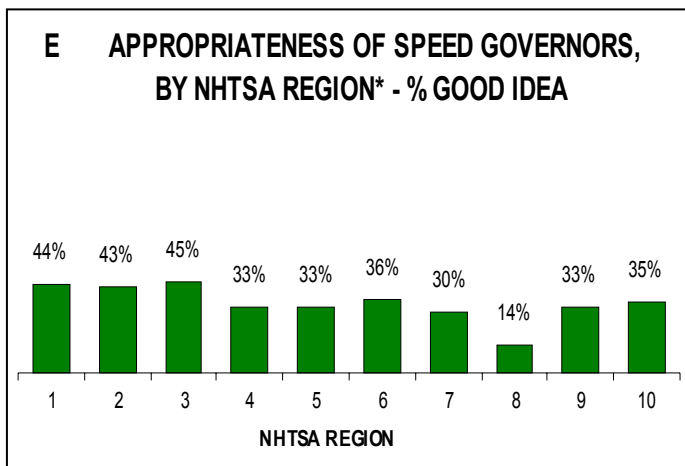


Q40: Do you think that the amount of police enforcement, of traffic laws, on the roads that you drive is too much, about right, or not enough for _____?
 [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]

Q40: Do you think that the amount of police enforcement, of traffic laws, on the roads that you drive is too much, about right, or not enough for _____?
 [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]



Q43c. Some safety groups have suggested that excessive speeding could be brought under control by using speed governors that mechanically limit the maximum speeds at which a vehicle can be driven. Do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to use such speed governors to control vehicle speed? [Base: those who think photo enforcement should take front photo of vehicle to identify driver; n=1266]



*Definitions of NHTSA Regions can be found in Appendix A

Sample bases for this page:

	Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+	White	Black	Other	Hispanic
Think photo should be taken of driver	1266	511	755	64	160	434	382	217	1090	91	43	94

Perceptions of Automated Photo Enforcement

Awareness of Automated Photo Enforcement

About eight in ten (82%) drivers have heard of automated photo enforcement devices that do not require police officers to stop and ticket drivers. Males (87%) are more likely than females (76%) to be aware of automated photo enforcement. Drivers under age 21 (65%) and those age 65 and older (72%) are least likely to be aware. [Figure 19-A]

Appropriateness of Automated Photo Enforcement

At least three-quarters of drivers feel that automated photo enforcement is a good idea to identify vehicles that are passing a school bus (82%), speeding in a school zone (78%), trying to beat a train at railroad crossings (78%), and running red lights (75%). Approximately two-thirds also feel photo enforcement is a good idea for identifying those who do not stop at stop signs (67%) and those going 20 MPH or more over the speed limit (68%). [Figure 19-B]

Where Automated Photo Enforcement Is Acceptable

A majority of drivers feel it would be very acceptable to use photo enforcement in a school zone (63%) and locations where there have been many accidents (63%). Significantly fewer drivers feel photo enforcement would be very acceptable at locations where it could be hazardous to the driver or officer to stop (41%) or where stopping could cause traffic congestion (36%), though seven in ten feel this would be at least somewhat acceptable. [Figure 19-C]

Type of Photo to Take

If photo enforcement were used, a majority (56%) of drivers feel it should take a picture of the front of the vehicle so the specific driver can be identified and matched to pictures from state driver's licenses. About one in three (32%) drivers think photos should be taken of the rear license plate only. Females are most likely to feel photo enforcement should include photos of the driver (60% compared to 52% of males). Drivers under age 30 are more likely than older drivers to feel that only rear photos should be used. [Figure 19-D]

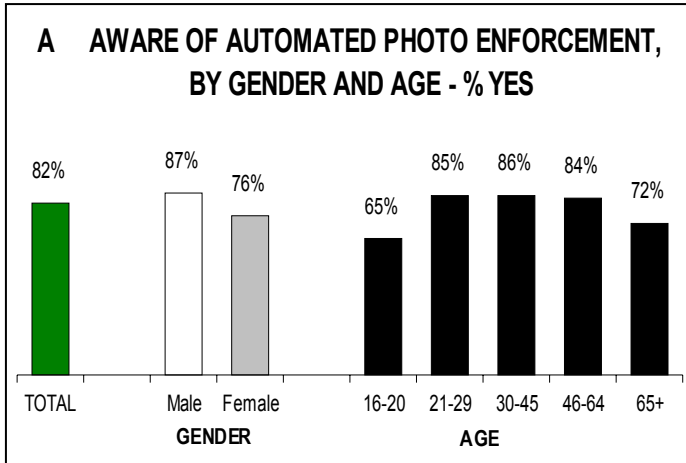
Appropriate Penalties

If photo enforcement is used and the driver can be identified, drivers who think photos should be taken of the driver feel the penalty should be either a fine for the driver (41%) or both a fine and points against the driver (41%). Few (8%) think only points against the driver should be given. [Figure 19-E]

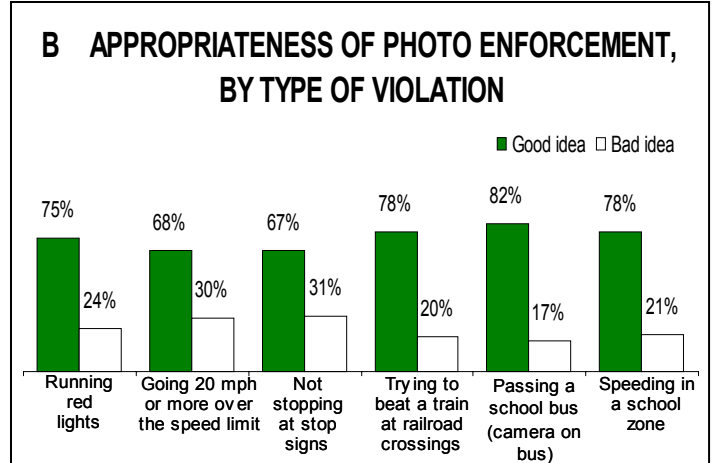
Females are slightly more likely to feel a fine should be given to the driver (43% as compared to 39% of males) while males are more likely to feel a combination of points and a fine should be used. Younger drivers are much more likely to feel that only a fine should be given, while older drivers are more likely to feel both points and a fine should be given.

White drivers are most likely to feel both points and a fine should be levied, with 42% saying so as compared to 34% of Black and 32% of drivers of other races.

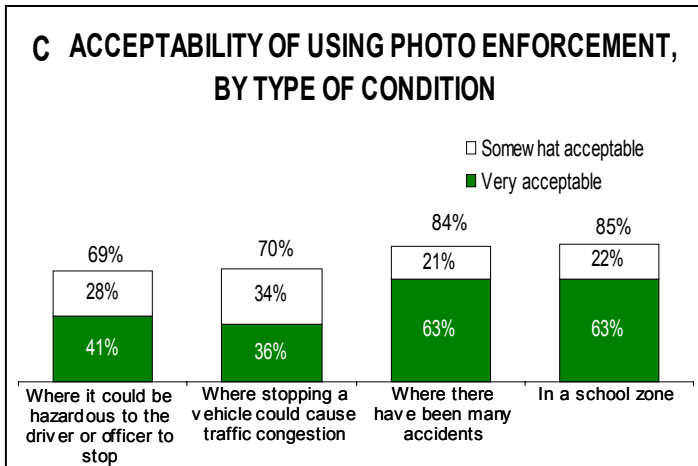
FIGURE 19: PERCEPTIONS OF AUTOMATED PHOTO ENFORCEMENT



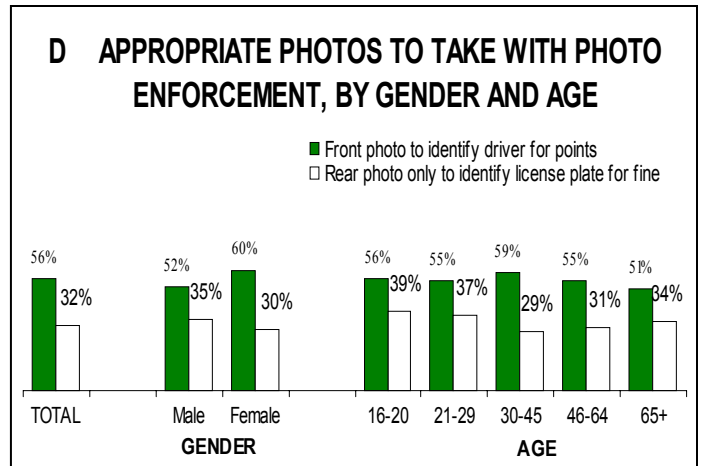
Q41: Have you ever heard of this kind of automated photo enforcement that doesn't require police officers to stop and ticket traffic violators? [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]



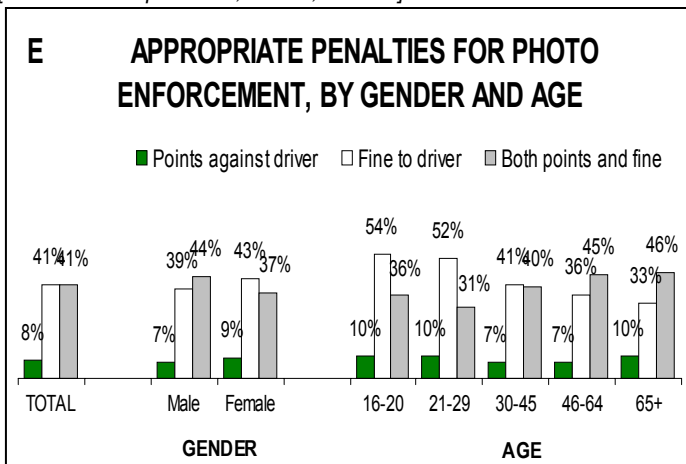
Q42: Do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to use an automated photo enforcement system like this to identify vehicles which are _____? [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]



Q43: Thinking about locations where photo enforcement might be useful, would you find it very acceptable, somewhat acceptable, or not at all acceptable to use it _____? [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]



Q43a: If photo enforcement were used, do you think it should take a picture of the front of the vehicle so that the specific driver can be identified and matched to pictures from state driver's licenses or do you think it should take a picture ONLY of the rear of the vehicle so that only the license plate can be determined? [Base: total respondents, unsafe; n=2006]



Q43b: If photo enforcement is used and the driver can be identified, which of the following penalties do you think should be used? [Base: think photo should be taken of driver]*

	Total	Male	Female	16-20	21-29	30-45	46-64	65+
Think photo should be taken of driver	1266	511	755	64	160	434	382	217

Comparisons Between 1997 and 2002

Chapter 5: Comparisons in Speeding and Unsafe Driving Attitudes and Behaviors: Studies Conducted in 1997 and 2002

One goal of this study is to examine changes in attitudes and behaviors regarding speeding and unsafe driving since the 1997 survey administration.

Substantial changes in the survey instrument were made between the 1997 and 2002 administrations. Changes occurred to question wordings, placement and sequence of questions within the questionnaire, and format of the questions. Because the survey design changed dramatically, with a majority of questions reworded or reordered, the reader is cautioned not to interpret small differences between the two study years as real. The comparison data is provided to offer a general view of the changing behaviors over five years' time.

This section presents comparison data for measures that were included in the previous survey.

Key topics addressed here include:

- Affinity for speeding
- Perceptions of driver behavior
- Perceptions of driving safety
- Perceived personal threat of other drivers' behaviors
- Experiences of and reactions to threats from other drivers' behaviors
- Perceptions of police enforcement
- Personal experience of traffic violations

Comparisons on Affinity for Speeding

Driver Tends to Pass Most Other Drivers

Three in ten (30%) drivers currently say that they tend to pass most other drivers (as opposed to being passed by others). This is the same proportion that reported this tendency in 1997. [Figure 20-A]

Though the sample sizes are small it appears that there has been a slight decline in this behavior among drivers under age 21, and an increase among those age 21-45. [Figure 20-A]

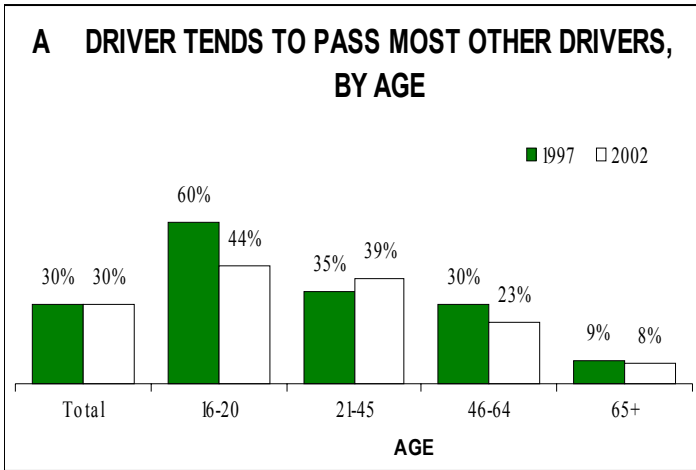
Personal Attitudes About Speeding

Drivers' affinity for speeding appears to be unchanged from 1997. About one in ten drivers in 2002 (10%), and in 1997 8% strongly agrees that he or she enjoys the feeling of driving fast, while about one in fourteen say they try to get to where they are going as fast as they can (6% in 1997 and 7% in 2002).

Slightly larger proportions in both years strongly agree that the faster they drive the more alert they feel (12% and 14% respectively) and that they worry a lot about having a crash (22% and 23% respectively).

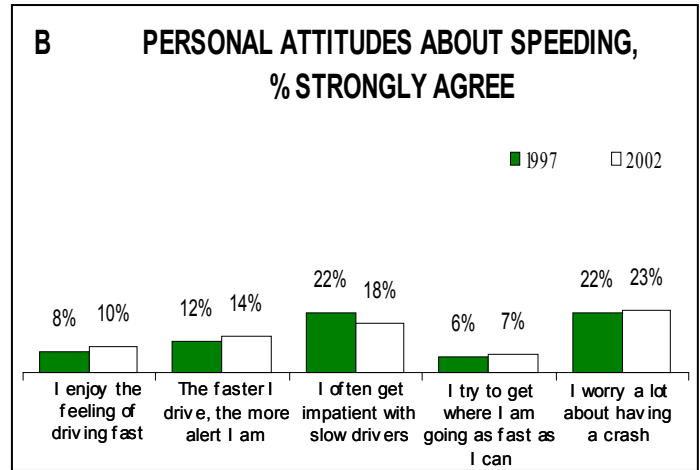
There has been a slight decline in the proportion of drivers who often get impatient with slow drivers, dropping from 22% in 1997 to 18% in 2002. [Figure 20-B]

FIGURE 20: COMPARISONS ON AFFINITY FOR SPEEDING



Q4a: Which of the following statements best describes your driving? I tend to pass most drivers. . .

[Base: total respondents, 2002 speed n=2004, 1997 n=2956]



Q5A-E: People have different feelings about driving. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about driving.

[Base: total respondents, 2002 speed n=2004, 1997 n=3044]

	<u>Total</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>21-45</u>	<u>46-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
1997	2596	145	1305	755	391
2002	2004	105	1566	633	321

Comparisons on Perceptions of Driving Behavior and Safety

Change in Driver Behavior Over the Past Year

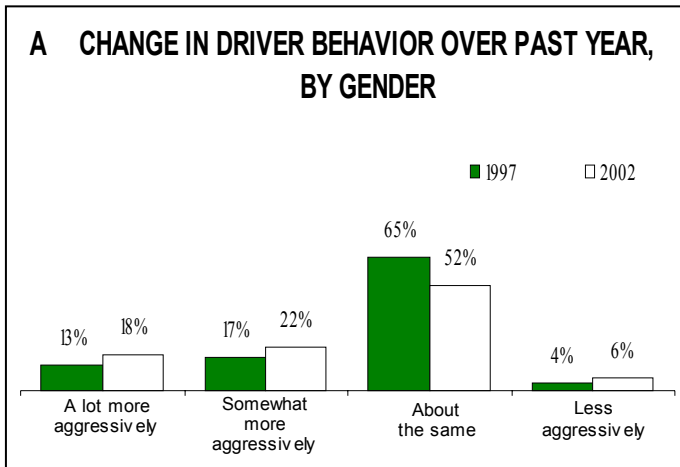
Drivers tend to feel that other drivers in their area are driving more aggressively since 1997. In 1997, just 30% of drivers felt that compared to the previous year other drivers in their area were driving more aggressively. Currently, four in ten (40%) feel this way, with increases in both the proportion who feel drivers are now driving “a lot more” and “somewhat” more aggressively. [Figure 21-A]

Perceptions of increases in the aggressiveness of drivers is seen in all NHTSA regions except the mountain states in Region 8 and the Pacific Northwest Region 10, where perceptions remain unchanged. The greatest change in perceptions of aggressive drivers is found in Region 2 (New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands) where 44% now feel that drivers are driving more aggressively than they were one year ago. [Figure 21-B]

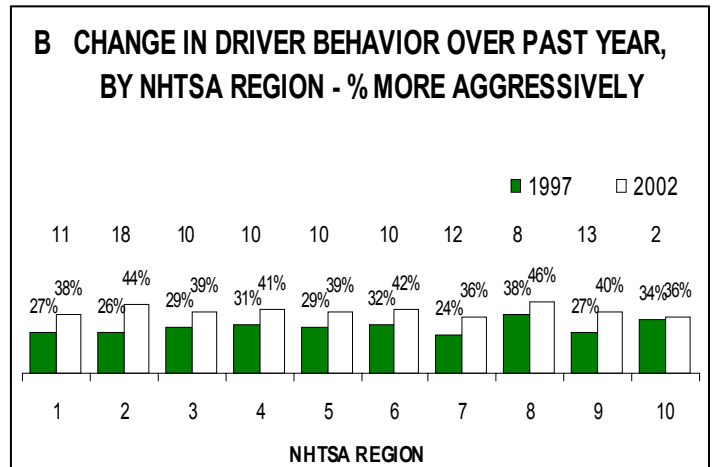
Perceived Safety of Increased Speed Limits on Highways, by Gender

After the 55 MPH maximum speed limit for interstate highways was repealed in December of 1995, there were some who believed that it would be less safe. Since 1997 there has been a decrease in the proportion of drivers who feel that the repeal of the 55 MPH speed limit caused driving on interstates to be less safe. In 1997, 30% of all drivers felt driving was less safe after the repeal, while in 2002, just 27% feel driving is less safe. Females exhibit the greatest change in perception, with 31% saying driving is less safe as compared to 37% who felt this way in 1997. [Figure 21-C]

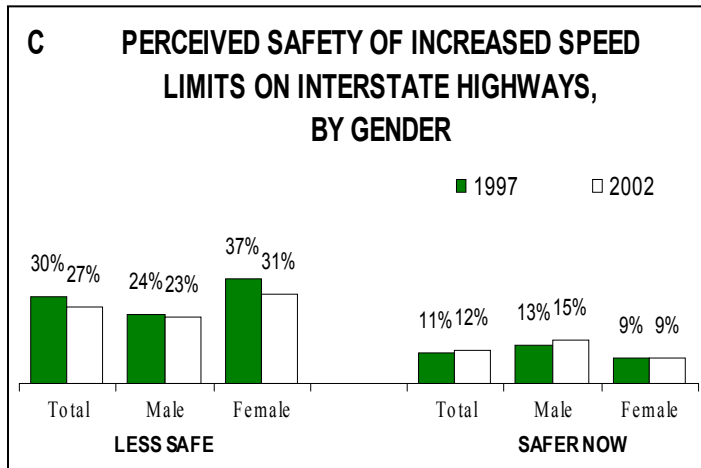
FIGURE 21: COMPARISONS ON PERCEPTIONS OF DRIVING BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY



Q34: Compared to one year ago, would you say that other drivers in your area drive _____?
 [Base: total respondents, 2002 unsafe n=2006; 1997 n=3000]



Q34: Compared to one year ago, would you say that other drivers in your area drive _____?
 [Base: total respondents, 2002 unsafe n=2006; 1997 n=3000]



Q19. As you may be aware, a number of years ago the national maximum speed limit of 55 mph was repealed, resulting in higher speed limits on many interstates. Do you think that driving on these interstate highways is safer now with the higher speed limits, about as safe, or less safe than with the old (lower) limits?
 [Base: total respondents, 2002 speed n=2004; 1997 n=3000]

	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1997	3000	149	294	306	551	547	347	141	96	449	120
2002	2006	114	189	225	382	348	201	101	83	256	105

Speeding by Others as Threat to Safety of Self and Family

Drivers are much more likely now than in 1997 to see speeding by other drivers as a threat to the personal safety of themselves or their family as was true five year ago. Currently 68% of drivers feel that speeding by others is a major threat as compared to just 61% who felt this way in 1997. [Figure 22-A]

Frequency of Feeling Threatened by Another Driver

While the set-up of the question was slightly different in 1997, it appears that drivers are more likely to have felt threatened by another driver in the past year than in 1997. The question was changed from a two-part series which first asked drivers if they have ever felt threatened by another driver in the past year, followed by a question on the frequency of feeling threatened to be just a question asking the frequency of feeling threatened (without an explicit choice for “never”).

While the proportion of drivers who say they “never” have felt threatened by the behavior of another driver in the past year is just 8% as compared to 38% in 1997, it is likely that this difference is due to the lack of an explicit option for “never” in 2002. It is very possible that drivers who hadn’t experienced a threatening behavior responded to the question saying “once a month or less often.”

Despite the question changes it seems reasonable to compare the proportion of drivers who say they have felt threatened several times a week or more often or several times a month. Using this analysis, there has been an increase in the number of drivers who have felt threatened by the behavior of another driver. In 1997, 23% of drivers reported feeling threatened more than once a month, while currently 34% report having felt threatened this often. [Figure 22-B]

Behavior That Caused You to Feel Threatened

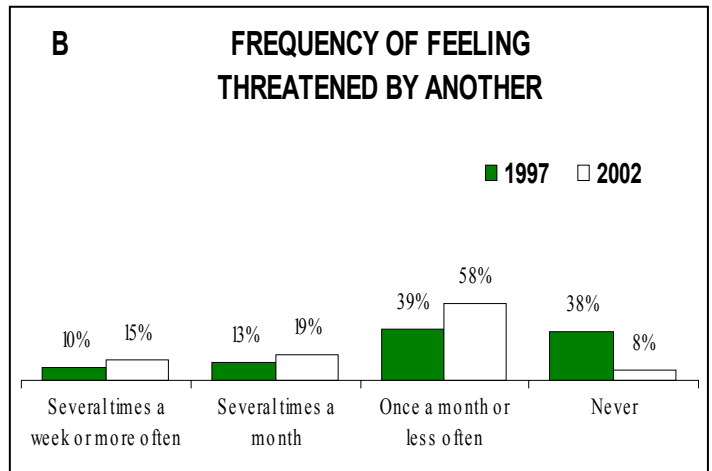
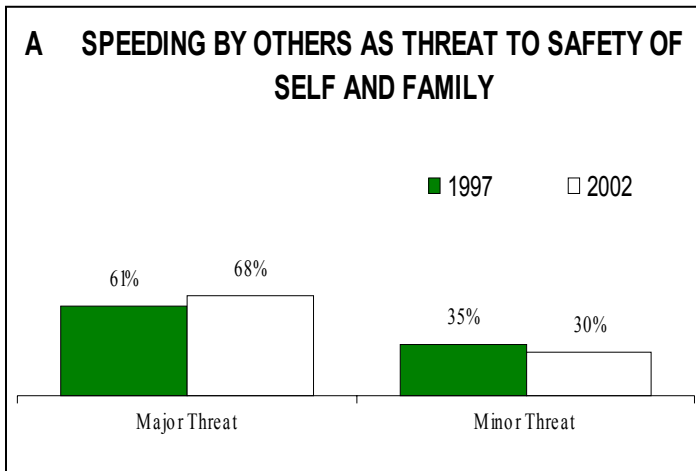
Proximity of other drivers also makes drivers feel threatened. About one-third of drivers continue to feel threatened by another driver cutting close in front of them (34% in 2002 as compared to 36% in 1997). One in five continues to feel threatened because the other driver drove too close.

Drivers are currently twice as likely to have felt threatened by another driver making an obscene gesture (12% as compared to 5% in 1997). However, they are less likely now to say they felt threatened by another driver passing them in a dangerous way (8% vs. 15% in 1997) or being cut off at an intersection or exit (6% and 13%, respectively). [Figure 22-C]

Reaction to Threatening Behavior

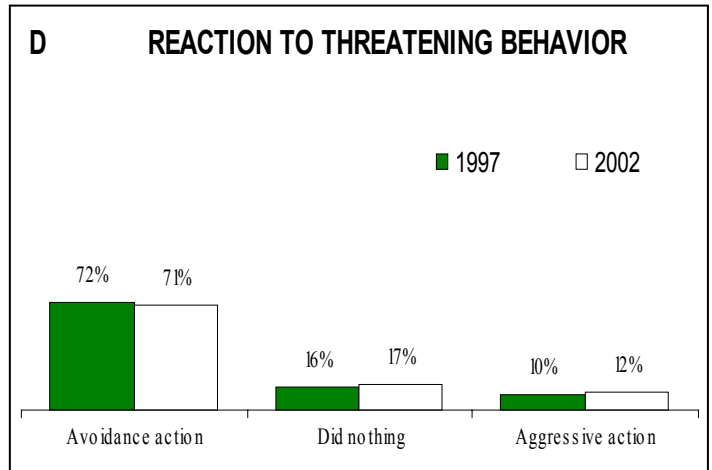
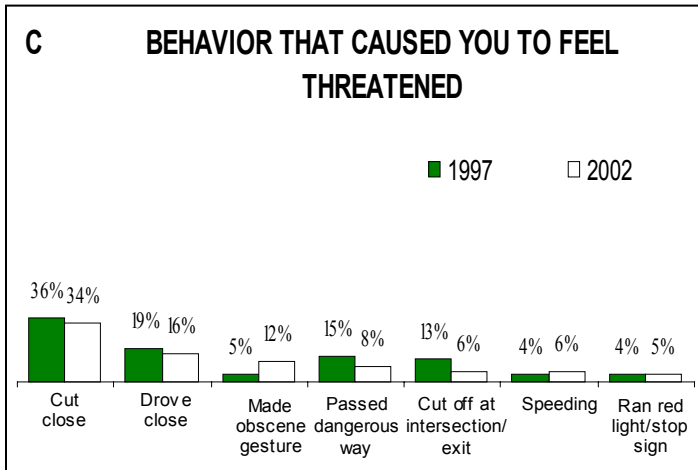
Drivers continue to react in a similar manner to threatening behavior from others. The overwhelming majority (71%) take some sort of avoidance action, primarily slowing down their vehicle (40%), or moving their vehicle away from the problem driver (20%). A similar proportion (72%) took an avoidance action in 1997. About one in ten drivers in both years (12% in 2002 and 10% in 1997) took some sort of aggressive action toward the other driver, primarily making an obscene gesture or blowing the car horn. [Figure 22-D]

FIGURE 22: COMPARISONS ON THREATENING BEHAVIOR OF OTHER DRIVERS



Q86aA. In your opinion, how much of a threat is it to the personal safety of you and your family if other drivers are speeding?
 [Base: total respondents, 2002 speed and unsafe n=4010; 1997 n=3000]

Q36. How often in the past year have you felt that the behavior of another driver was a personal threat to you or your passengers?
 [Base: total respondents, 2002 unsafe n=2006; 1997 n=3000]



Q38: Thinking about the last time you felt this way, what did the driver do that made you feel threatened?
 [Base: felt threatened past year; 2002 n=1854; 1997 n=1837]

Q39: What did you do? [Base: felt threatened by specific action past year; 2002 n=1711; 1997 n=1837]

Comparisons on Enforcement

Perceptions of Too Little Police Enforcement

A majority of drivers continue to feel that there is too little police enforcement of tailgating (60% in 2002 and 61% in 1997) and weaving in and out of traffic (57% and 58% respectively). There is an increased perception that there is too little police enforcement of drivers who run red lights with 47% of drivers currently saying there is too little enforcement compared to 42% who felt this way in 1997, as well as running or rolling through stop signs (44% say too little enforcement in 2002 as compared to 41% in 1997). [Figure 23-A]

Personally Been Stopped for Traffic Violation

Despite the increase in perception that there is too little enforcement of vehicles failing to stop at lights and stop signs, a similar proportion of drivers report having been stopped for a traffic violation within the past year. About 14% of drivers in 1997 say they had personally been stopped, as compared with 16% reporting this in 2002. [Figure 23-B]

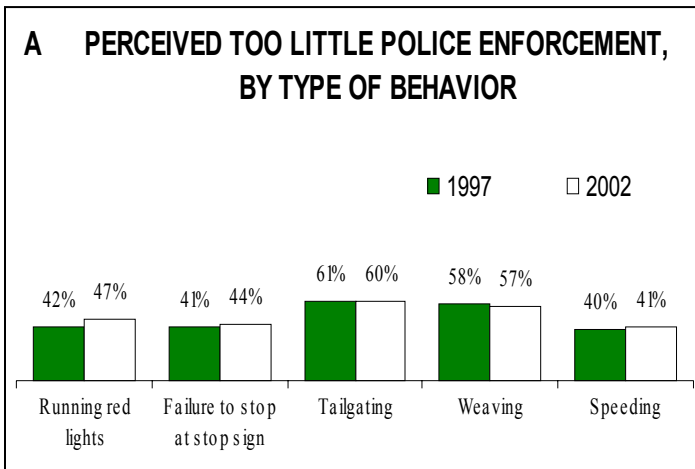
Reason Stopped for Traffic Violation

The vast majority of drivers stopped for a traffic violation continue to report that they were stopped for speeding, with 62% reporting this reason in 1997 and 65% saying so in 2002. Stops for violations such as failure to stop (5% for red light and 7% for stop sign in 2002) and headlight/taillights being out (6% in 2002) also continue at a similar rate. [Figure 23-C]

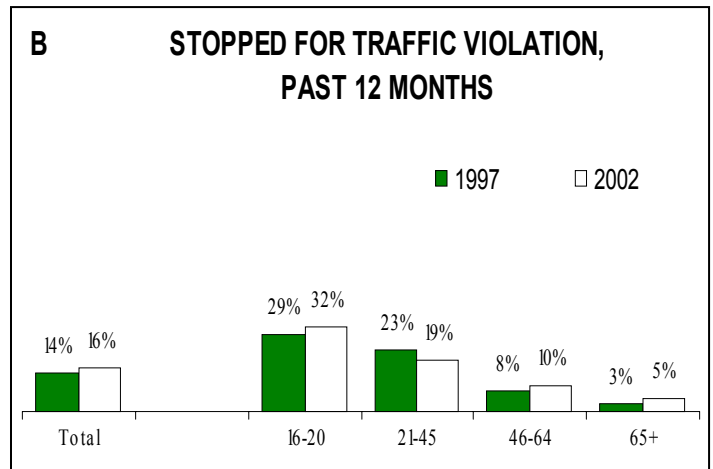
Outcome of Police Stop

While the proportion of drivers stopped for traffic violations and the actual behaviors appears to be similar to those in 1997, it appears that police officers are enforcing the law with tickets more often. In 1997, 55% of drivers stopped for a traffic violation say they received a ticket (rather than a warning, 34%). In contrast, in 2002, 62% of drivers say they received a ticket, while just 24% received a warning. [Figure 23-D]

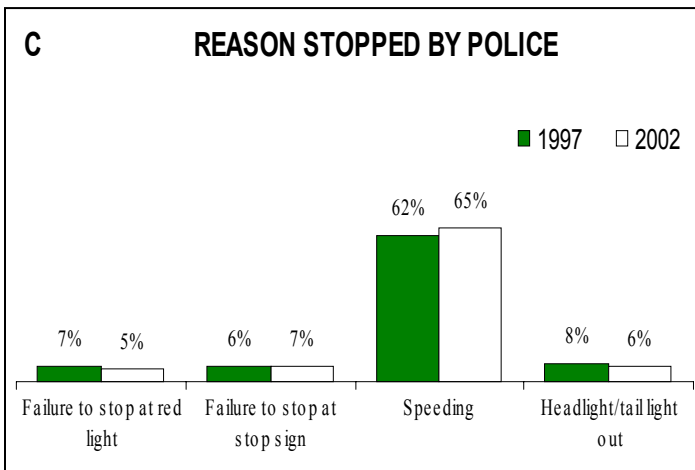
FIGURE 23: COMPARISONS ON ENFORCEMENT



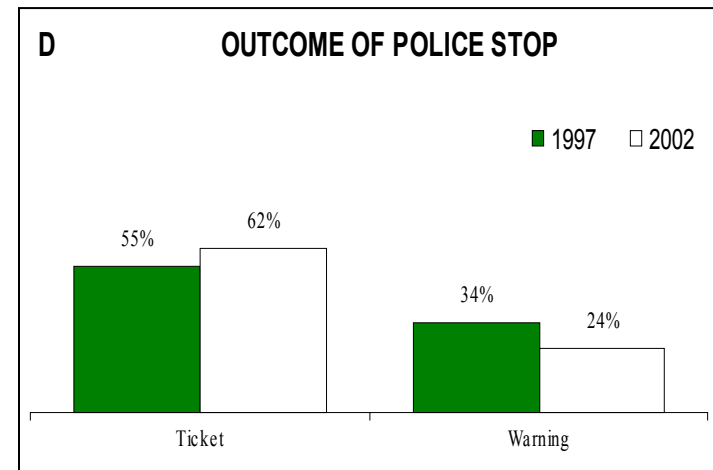
Q40. Do you think that the amount of police enforcement, of traffic laws, on the roads that you drive is too much, about right, or not enough for _____?
 [Base: total respondents, 2002 unsafe n=2006; 1997 n=1533]



Q79/80: In the past twelve months, have you been stopped by the police for any traffic related reason? [Base: total respondents, 2002 speed and unsafe n=4010; 1997 n=2956]



Q81: What type of traffic related violation have you been stopped for? [Base: stopped by police for traffic related reason past 12 months 2002 n=602; 1997 n=442]



Q82: Did you receive a ticket or a written warning on any of these occasions? [Base: stopped by police for traffic related reason past 12 months 2002 n=602; 1997 n=405]

Appendix A

NHTSA Regions

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has 10 regional offices that work on the agency’s mission to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce traffic-related healthcare and other economic costs. The states and territories that make up each region are as follows:

Region 1: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Region 2: New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Region 3: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia

Region 4: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Region 5: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

Region 6: Arkansas, Indian Nations, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Region 7: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska

Region 8: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

Region 9: American Samoa, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, North Marianas

Region 10: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington