



BTS 38-08
Thursday, August 7, 2008

Contact: Dave Smallen
Tel.: (202) 366-5568

Americans Divided on Airplane Cell Phone Use, According to New BTS Special Report

Americans are divided on whether cell phones should be allowed during flights, with people age 65 and older more likely to oppose their use than those between 18 and 34, according to a new Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) special report using survey data on opinions about the transportation system.

BTS, a part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, reported that four out of 10 U.S. residents (39.7 percent) responded in November 2007 that passengers should definitely or probably be allowed to use cell phones if there were no interference issues with aircraft communications systems. Slightly less than half (45.2 percent) said they definitely or probably should not be used. The remaining 15 percent said they weren't sure.

The report uses data from BTS' annual *Omnibus Household Survey* conducted in November 2006 and November 2007. The margin of error for the 2007 cell phone questions is 3.1 percent.

Younger respondents were most likely to support cell phone use. In 2007, almost half (47.7 percent) of respondents between 18 and 34 said passengers should definitely or probably be allowed to use cell phones while fewer than four out of 10 (36.1 percent) said they definitely or probably should not be used. The remaining 16 percent said that they weren't sure.

Among those over age 65, about one out of four (26.6 percent) said passengers should definitely or probably be allowed to use cell phones while more than half (56.7 percent) said they definitely or probably should not be used. The remaining 17 percent said that they weren't sure.

The opinions of those aged 35-64 fell between those of the other groups. Four out of 10 (40.3 percent) said passengers should definitely or probably be allowed to use cell phones while less than half (45.6 percent) said they definitely or probably should not be used. The remaining 14 percent said that they weren't sure.

The special report, *Opinions on Cell Phone Use on Airplanes, Congestion, and Telecommuting—from the 2006 and 2007 Omnibus Household Survey*, is available at http://www.bts.gov/publications/bts_special_report/2008_009/