

# 2005 Omnibus Survey Results



# OmniStats

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS) annual Omnibus Household Survey asks respondents about their weekly travel habits, journeys to work, opinions about the transportation system, and other transportation-related issues. This report presents key findings from the October 2005 survey<sup>1</sup>:

- Americans perceive congestion as getting worse;
- about 25 percent of those who think they could telecommute actually do; and
- there is disagreement on whether cell phones should be allowed on planes if proven that they do not interfere with aircraft communications systems.

## Congestion

The survey asked those who work or volunteer outside the home whether they think traffic congestion has gotten better or worse on their commute to work during the previous 12 months (table 1). Overall, 28 percent believed that congestion had gotten worse, 64 percent perceived no change, and 8 percent said that it had gotten better. It should be noted that 79 percent of the respondents to this question were from metropolitan areas. Of those living outside of metropolitan areas, over three-fourths perceived no change in congestion levels. However, in metropolitan areas, 61 percent felt that congestion levels had remained stable.

**Table 1: Opinions on Change in Traffic Congestion Compared to 12 Months Earlier (percent)**

	Overall	Living in metro area	Not living in metro area
Much better	2.6	2.3	3.8
Somewhat better	5.4	5.8	3.7
Stayed the same	64.0	60.7	76.5
Somewhat worse	18.2	19.9	11.7
Much worse	<u>9.8</u>	<u>11.3</u>	<u>4.2</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%

**NOTES:** Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding. Only those who worked for pay or volunteered outside the home were asked to respond to this question. 79 percent of respondents lived in metropolitan areas and 21 percent outside of metropolitan areas.

**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Omnibus Household Survey, October 2005.

## Telecommuting

Telecommuting is advocated by proponents as a way to avoid congestion and to ease congestion by reducing the number of people taking trips to and from work. The survey asked several questions about telecommuting to find out how widespread the practice of working at home at least 1 day a week has become (table 2). About one in four paid workers who work

<sup>1</sup> The October 2005 Omnibus Survey is based on telephone interviews with 1,014 households.



**Table 2: Applicability, Availability, and Actual Telecommuting (percent)**

**At least part of work could be done at home**

Yes	24.2
No	<u>75.8</u>
Total	100%

**Employer sometimes allows work to be done at home**

Yes	58.2
No	<u>41.8</u>
Total	100%

**NOTE:** Question asked only to those who said that part of their work could be done at home.

**Actually worked at home the previous week**

Yes	40.2
No	<u>59.8</u>
Total	100%

**NOTE:** Question asked only to those whose employer allows work at home.

**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Omnibus Household Survey, October 2005.

outside the home said that part of the work they do could be done at home. Of those who felt that part of their work could be done from home, nearly 60 percent said that their employer allowed telecommuting sometimes. Of those whose employers allow work from home, about 40 percent actually worked at home at least once in the previous week. Overall, that means that about one-fourth of those who felt they could do some of their work from home actually did during the week of the survey.

**Cell Phones in Flight**

All survey respondents, whether they had flown or not, were asked whether they thought passengers should be allowed to use cell phones on board flights if there were no issues with the phones interfering with aircraft communications systems. On this question there was clearly not a consensus. While 39 percent said that passengers should definitely or probably be allowed to use the phones, 47 percent said that they definitely or probably should not be used. Another 14 percent said that they weren't sure (table 3).

**Table 3: Percent in Favor of Allowing Cellphone Use on Aircraft if No Safety Issue (percent)**

	Total	Age 18 to 34	Age 35 to 64	Age 65+
Definitely should allow	18.2	19.4	20.1	9.8
Probably should allow	20.8	27.1	19.8	12.4
Not sure	14.1	10.4	13.9	21.7
Probably should not allow	17.1	16.5	17.5	17.0
Definitely should not allow	<u>29.8</u>	<u>26.6</u>	<u>28.7</u>	<u>39.5</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

**NOTE:** Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Omnibus Household Survey, October 2005.

Those 65 or older were much less likely to support use of cell phones on aircraft than the younger groups, and were most likely to say that cell phones definitely should not be used on board.

**Air Travel and Security**

Forty-two percent of those surveyed had flown in the preceding 12 months, and those who had flown were asked their opinions of air travel security.

Overall, it appears that travelers had become accustomed to airport security in the post-9/11 environment, and they knew what to expect. Over 92 percent of travelers who had flown in the last 12 months said that the waiting time for security was what they expected or shorter than expected (table 4). Nearly 95 percent said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the time taken at security.

**Table 4: Airport Wait Time Compared to Expectations (percent)**

	Total
Much shorter than expected	13.4
Shorter than expected	26.7
As expected	52.1
Longer than expected	5.7
Much longer than expected	1.8
No expectations	<u>0.4</u>
Total	100%

**NOTE:** Totals do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Omnibus Household Survey, October 2005.

Just over one-fourth of those who had flown had total or great confidence in the ability of security screeners to keep air travel secure (table 5). Another half had a moderate amount of confidence. About 8 percent said they had no confidence.

**Table 5: Amount of Confidence in Screeners to Keep Air Travel Secure (percent)**

Total confidence	7.6
Great deal of confidence	18.9
Moderate confidence	46.9
Small confidence	18.6
No confidence	<u>7.9</u>
Total	100%

**NOTE:** Totals do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Omnibus Household Survey, October 2005.

**Journey to Work**

The survey asked people specifically about their travel habits going to and from work, both for those going to paid work as well as those going to do volunteer work.

About 57 percent of those surveyed worked for pay outside the home (table 6), and they traveled to work an average of 4.8 days per week (table 7). Among those who said that they did not work for pay, 13 percent did some type of volunteer work away from home. Volunteer workers traveled to their place of work an average of 2.1 times per week, less than half as often as did paid workers traveling to their place of work.

**Table 6: Paid and Volunteer Work Outside the Home (percent)**

Work outside the home for pay	
Yes	56.6
No	43.4
Total	100%

Volunteer outside the home (among those who do not do paid work outside the home)	
Yes	13.1
No	86.9
Total	100%

**Table 7: Journeys to Paid and Volunteer Work**

	Paid workers	Volunteer workers
<b>Days traveling to work per week (mean)</b>	4.8 days	2.1 days
<b>Modes used during week (percent)</b>		
Company vehicle-alone	11.0%	1.6%
Company vehicle-w/others	6.1%	4.0%
Personal vehicle-alone	79.0%	83.2%
Personal vehicle-w/others	19.5%	28.0%
Carpool or vanpool	5.9%	5.3%
Bus	4.5%	6.2%
Subway	2.9%	0.0%
Train	2.2%	0.0%
Ferry	0.5%	0.0%
Bicycle	2.8%	4.0%
Walk	6.5%	18.6%
Other	1.2%	0.0%

**NOTE:** Mode totals exceed 100 percent because respondents were able to indicate multiple transportation modes used for travel to work during the survey week.

**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Omnibus Household Survey, October 2005.

The predominant means for getting to work was driving alone in a personal vehicle, no matter where a person lived and whether they were working for pay or were volunteers. Those living outside of a metropolitan area were slightly more likely to drive alone than those inside a metropolitan area. Among volunteer workers, about 30 percent rode with others, compared to about 20 percent of paid workers.

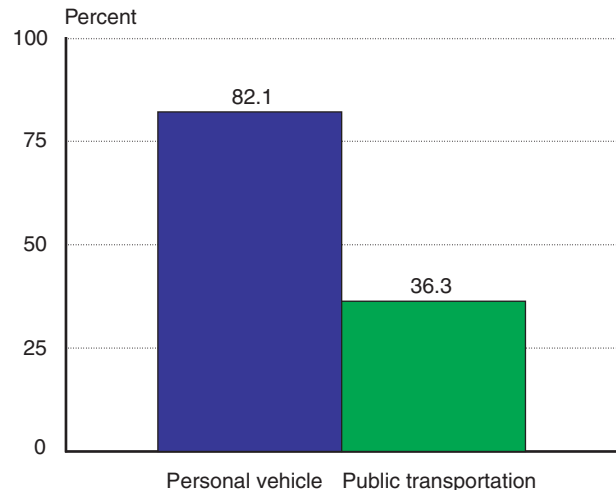
## Weekly Travel

Questions about typical weekly travel habits revealed a clear reliance on personal vehicles as the most frequently used mode of transportation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of this survey, personal vehicle includes automobiles, vans, sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks, recreational vehicles, and motorcycles.

Respondents were asked to identify the transportation modes that they used during the week and the number of days that they used each. The overall average for personal vehicle use was 5.6 days per week, and 82.1 percent of those using a personal vehicle used it at least 5 days during the week (figure 1). The overall average of public transportation, bicycle, and taxi/limousine use was less than one-half day per week for each of these modes. However, many of those using public transportation were regular users as 36.3 percent used it at least 5 days a week.

**Figure 1: Share of Regular Users Using Mode at Least 5 Days a Week**



**NOTE:** Due to the small sample size, the percentage of those using bicycle and taxi/limousine service five or more days per week cannot be estimated reliably.

**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Omnibus Household Survey, October 2005.

### About this Report

This report was prepared by Pheny Weidman, Survey Statistician, and Bruce Goldberg, Transportation Specialist, of the U.S. DOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

This Special Report presents some of the key findings from the BTS Omnibus Household Survey conducted in October 2005. The Omnibus Household Survey is conducted periodically to obtain information on how Americans use and view the transportation system in this country.

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#### Data —

- **Omnibus Household Survey Results**—August 2000-October 2005.

#### Publications —

- **OmniStats**—November 2001-October 2005.
- **Airline Passenger Opinions on Security Screening Procedures**—June 2005.