



National Distracted Driving Telephone Survey Finds Most Drivers Answer the Call, Hold the Phone, and Continue to Drive

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conducted the first of several periodic national surveys of distracted driving to monitor the public's attitudes, knowledge, and self-reported behavior about cell phones, texting, and driver choices. The 2010 survey was administered by telephone to 6,002 respondents 18 and older, with 4,877 interviews completed with respondents who were using landline phones and 1,125 interviews completed with respondents who were using cell phones. The survey over-sampled young adults 18 to 34. Interviewing ran during November and December 2010.

Drivers Answer Calls on Most Trips

Most drivers said they answer incoming calls while driving on all, most, or some trips. As for making calls, 5% report being willing to place calls on *all driving trips*, 10% on *most driving trips*, and 26% on *some driving trips*. The majority (66%) of respondents *answer and drive*, 9% *answer and pull over*, 12% *answer and call back*, 3% say they *pull over then answer*, and 9% *hand the phone to a passenger*. Not only do most people tend to answer and keep driving, but close to half (45%) *hold the phone in their hand* while driving. Seventeen percent use a *hands-free earpiece*, 9% have a *built-in car system*, and 17% use the *cell phone speakers*.

Personal Reasons Predominate

Respondents' decisions to accept or place calls or messages while driving clustered around how important they felt the other person or communication was, followed by reasons related to work or socializing. Respondents rarely considered traffic situations, personal safety, or State laws in their decisions about using phones while driving.

Almost All Passengers Feel Unsafe When Others Send or Read Messages

As passengers, almost all considered a driver who was *sending a text message or e-mail* (86% of men, 90% of women) and *reading e-mails or text messages* (84% men, 88% women) as *very unsafe*, and this perception increased with age from 62% in the youngest age category to 96% in adults 65 and

older. About one-third of respondents considered a driver who was *manipulating a navigation system for driving directions* (33% men, 38% women) or *talking on a cell phone and holding the phone* (32% men, 37% women) as *very unsafe*, increasing with age from low 20s to 60s. About one-third (32% men, 37% women) considered a driver who was talking on a cell phone and holding the phone as *very unsafe*. More passengers are likely to say something to a driver who is sending messages than one who is talking on a handheld phone.

Support for Bans on Phone Use and Texting

Nine of 10 respondents of all ages support laws that ban texting and 6 of 10 support laws that ban phone use while driving. Support is higher (75%) among older drivers. Support for fines of \$100 or more for talking (69%) or texting (79%) is high and about a quarter support fines in the \$200 to \$499 range.

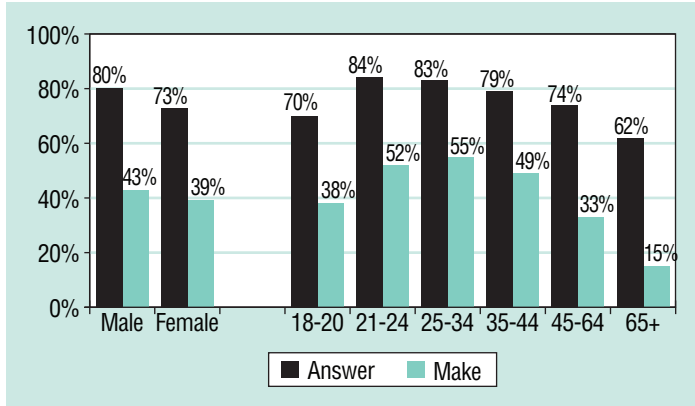
Few Driving Situations When Drivers Would Not Use Phone or Text

When drivers were asked to identify situations in which they would *never talk on the phone* or *never send a text or e-mail* while driving, *bad weather* (54% of all respondents) was the primary driving situation cited. For both placing cell phone calls and sending messages, respondents reported relatively few traffic situations when they would never send a text or make a phone call. About 25% said that *bumper-to-bumper* or *fast-moving traffic* would influence their decision to not place calls or send messages, but seeing a police officer, driving at nighttime, in a marked school zone, or having a baby or child on board would not.

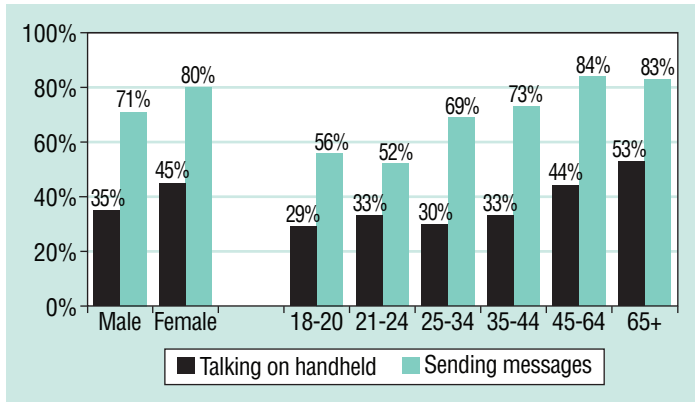
How Does Driving Change?

When asked how they thought their own driving changed when they were sending text messages or e-mails, 25% said it makes *no difference*. Thirty-one percent of respondents (36% men, 25% women) said they *drive slower* when texting or e-mailing and fewer (8% men, 6% women) said they *drift out of their lane*. A larger proportion of respondents 21 to 34 reported *no difference* compared to other age groups.

Percent Answering and Making Phone Calls While Driving, by Sex and Age (All, Most, or Some Trips)



As a Passenger, How Likely Are You to Say Something If Your Driver Is ____, by Sex and Age (% Very Likely)



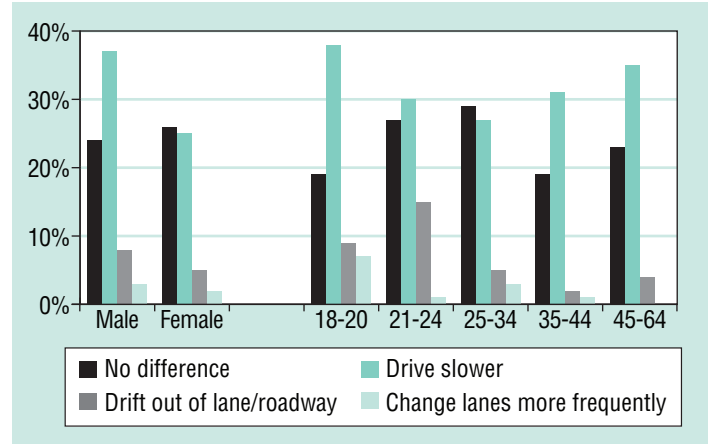
Drivers' Perception of Safety

A set of questions assessed drivers' perception of safety in a variety of situations. Overall, most drivers (68%) reported that driving becomes more dangerous when they take their eyes off the road for 2 seconds or more. Less than a second was the choice of 26% of respondents, 46% selected 1 to 2 seconds, 19% chose 3 to 4 seconds, 8% selected 5 to 10 seconds, and the remainder (2%) chose 10 seconds or more. One-third of young drivers 18 to 24 identified durations longer than 2 seconds.

How to Order

For a copy of *National Phone Survey on Distracted Driving Attitudes and Behaviors* (51 pages plus appendices), prepared by Preusser Research Group, Inc., download from www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/811555.pdf.

Effect of Using a Phone While Driving by Sex and Age (Percent Respondents, Multiple Answers)



Reasons One Is Likely to Use a Phone While Driving (Percent Respondents, Multiple Answers)

