

**Final Project Report  
South Dakota Office of Highway Safety  
2011 Department of Public Safety  
Driver Survey**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DATA HIGHLIGHTS

The 2011 Department of Public Safety Driver Survey, a telephone-based questionnaire designed through collaboration between the South Dakota Department of Public Safety and the University of South Dakota (USD) Government Research Bureau (GRB), was deployed from July 13 to 19, 2011, via the Robinson & Muenster Associates, Inc., calling center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Altogether, this surveying effort generated a total sample of 750 licensed drivers and state identification (ID) card holders ages 16 and over. Data analysis was conducted in July and August 2011 by USD GRB personnel, under the direction of Dr. Shane Nordyke.

As described in this report, the ensuing analysis of survey data produced a number of key observations:

- Overall, 82.3% of respondents reported driving almost every day, while an additional 12.9% reported driving at least several times per week. Combined these categories increased 3.5% from 2010. However, it appears that the motorists who drive most regularly tend also to be those who report more frequent undesirable driving habits.
- Basic awareness of South Dakota's state seat belt law is high, though drivers tend to lack knowledge of the law's finer points. Within this context, self-reported seat belt use is quite strong. According to survey results, 74.9% claimed to wear seat belts "all of the time," with another 6.2% reporting seat belt use "most of the time."
- Speeding may be seen as a problematic area. Of the respondents, 72% reported driving more than 35 miles per hour (mph) in 30-mph speed zones at least occasionally, while 57% admitted to occasionally driving more than 70 mph in 65-mph zones.<sup>1</sup> Altogether, 55.1% of respondents reported driving more than five miles per hour over the posted speed limit within the last year. Despite this, South Dakotans appear to agree overwhelmingly that South Dakota's speed limits are optimal.
- When asked to reflect directly on the frequency with which they drive after drinking, 24.9% of respondents reported doing so on at least a rare basis, though only .9% claimed to do so most or all of the time. Participants also tend to agree strongly that impaired driving is likely to result in an arrest.
- In general, South Dakotans tend to view the enforcement of highway safety initiatives as an essential activity. According to the survey, 83.7% of participants agreed that enforcing seat belt laws is important, and 96.1% said the same of speed limit laws. As was the case in 2010, a staggering 97.9% agreed that enforcing laws against impaired driving is an important undertaking.

The remainder of this report provides an analytical and interpretive exploration of data collected through the above surveying effort. After a concise presentation of demographic data describing the survey sample, the report will move to a detailed, item-by-item examination of findings. The central purpose of this analysis is to supply the South Dakota Office of Highway Safety with a firm, empirical basis for understanding citizen

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<sup>1</sup> This includes those that reported that they do rarely, sometimes, most of the time, and all of the time.



## SECTION I: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND DRIVING FREQUENCY

As a preface to the main body of the report, the following tables provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the complete participant group.<sup>2</sup> Output for these survey items serves as the organizing basis for a number of data cross-tabulations presented throughout this report.

### Q24. In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

	n	%
<=30	38	5.1%
31-40	41	5.5%
41-50	109	14.6%
51-60	167	22.4%
61-70	172	23.1%
> 70	203	27.2%
Don't know/Refused to answer	16	2.1%
(Total)	750	100.0%

### Q26. Which of the following best describes where you live?

	n	%
Own a single-family home	625	83.1%
Own a condominium	8	1.1%
Rent an apartment or home	89	11.9%
Other (specify):_____	15	2.0%
Refused to answer	13	1.7%
(Total)	750	99.9%

<sup>2</sup> Although presented at the outset of this report, data regarding participants' demographic characteristics was collected at the end of the actual survey instrument. Through the entirety of this document, all tables and figures referencing specific survey items are notated with a "Q \_\_\_" at the head of the embedded title.

**Q27. What race/ethnicity best describes you?**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
American Indian/Alaskan Native	18	2.4%
Asian	1	0.1%
Black/African American	3	0.4%
White	709	94.5%
Other(Specify)	6	0.8%
Refused to answer	13	1.7%
(Total)	750	99.9%

**Q28. Please identify your annual pre-tax household income based upon the following categories:**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
< \$10,000	30	4.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	28	3.7%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	51	6.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	74	9.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	102	13.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	119	15.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	66	8.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	40	5.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	16	2.1%
\$200,000 or more	10	1.3%
Don't know	41	5.5%
Refused to answer	173	23.1%
(Total)	750	100.0%

**Q29. Gender**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	350	46.7%
Female	400	53.3%
(Total)	750	100.0%

**Q30. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?**

	n	%
Unemployed, seeking work	15	2.0%
Unemployed, not seeking work	12	1.6%
Employed part time	52	6.9%
Employed full time	298	39.7%
Retired	328	43.7%
Other	5	0.7%
Don't know	1	0.1%
Refused to answer	12	1.6%
Self-employed	11	1.5%
Disabled	10	1.3%
Homemaker	2	0.3%
Student	4	0.5%
(Total)	750	99.9% <sup>3</sup>

**Q31. Which of the following best describes your current marital status?**

	n	%
Single, never married	71	9.5%
Single, divorced	70	9.3%
Single, living with someone	7	0.9%
Married	474	63.2%
Widowed	112	14.9%
Other (specify)	2	0.3%
Refused to answer	14	1.9%
(Total)	750	100.0%

<sup>3</sup> This column does not sum to 100.0% due to rounding. Throughout this document, all instances of cumulative “%” column totals not summing to 100.0% are attributable to rounding conventions.

**Q32. What is the highest grade or year of school you have completed?**

	n	%
8th grade or less	23	3.1%
9th grade	6	0.8%
10th grade	10	1.3%
11th grade	12	1.6%
12th grade/GED	221	29.5%
Some college	199	26.5%
College graduate or higher	264	35.2%
Don't know	5	0.7%
Refused to answer	10	1.3%
(Total)	750	100.0%

**Q33. Including yourself, how many persons aged 16 or older are living in your household at least half of the time or consider it their primary residence?**

	n	%
0	10	1.3%
1	206	27.6%
2	401	53.5%
3	76	10.1%
4	31	4.1%
5	11	1.5%
6 or more	3	0.4%
Don't know	1	0.1%
Refused to answer	11	1.5%
(Total)	750	100.1%

**Q34. Of those members of your household, how many are legally licensed drivers?**

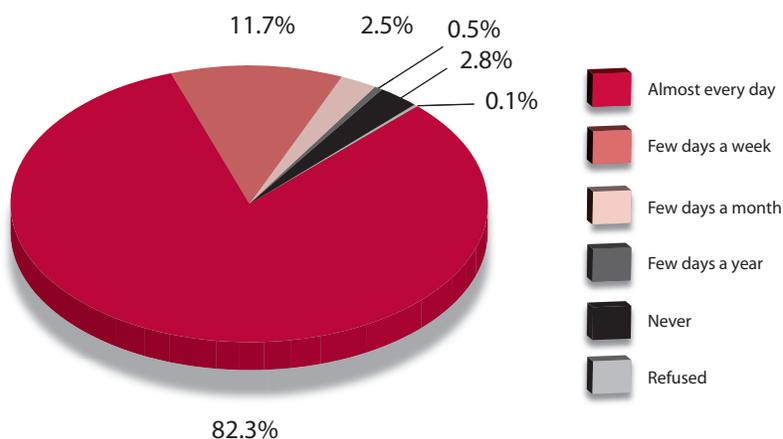
	n	%
0	23	3.1%
1	217	28.9%
2	390	52.0%
3	75	10.0%
4	27	3.6%
5	6	.8%
6 or more	2	0.3%
Refused to answer	10	1.3%
(Total)	750	100%

**Q35. How many children aged 15 or younger are living in your household at least half of the time or consider it their primary residence?**

	n	%
0	611	81.5%
1	52	6.9%
2	41	5.5%
3	24	3.2%
4	7	.9%
5	3	0.4%
6 or more	2	0.3%
Refused to answer	10	1.3%
(Total)	750	100.0%

To begin the survey, all participants were asked to reflect on the frequency with which they drive a motor vehicle. The following figure presents the resulting response distribution in percentage format. It can be seen that 82.3% of respondents reported driving almost every day, while an additional 11.7% reported driving at least several times per week. Frequency of motor vehicle driving tended to rise somewhat with increasing education and household income level. Female respondents and single respondents showed lower rates of driving frequency.

## Q1: How often do you drive a motor vehicle?



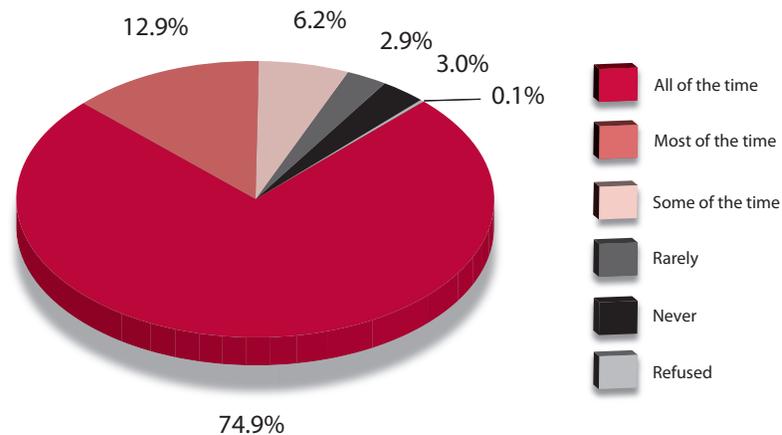
When cross-tabulating the results of item Q1 with those of several later questions, a number of troubling tendencies emerge. Of participants who reported wearing a seat belt “all of the time” when driving (item Q2), 82.6% reported driving almost every day; the analogous figure for participants who reported wearing seat belts only “some of the time” when driving was 94.4%. Put another way, less diligent seat belt users tend to report driving more frequently. The following table shows that similarly undesirable patterns can be found by examining several other cross-tabulations.

% Responding “Almost Every Day” to Q1 (“How often do you drive a motor vehicle?”)		
	All of the time	Some of the time
Q2. When driving, how often do you wear a seat belt?	73.1%	13.6%
	All/Most of the time	Never
Q10. On a local road with a speed limit of 30 mph, how often do you drive faster than 35 mph?	9.4%	22.4%
	All/Most of the time	Never
Q11. On a road with a speed limit of 65 mph, how often do you drive faster than 70 mph?	18.3%	36.3%
	0	1 or more
Q16. In the past 60 days, how many times have you driven a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverages?	83.8%	16.4%

## SECTION II: SEAT BELTS

Participants were asked to respond to a series of survey items related to the use of seat belts in motor vehicles, survey items that encompassed both attitudinal and behavioral aspects of seat belt use. Results for these items are presented and discussed below. It is important to note that, due to the use of “skip logic” in the survey design, fewer than 750 responses are reported for some survey items. For example, item Q2 (“When driving, how often do you wear your seat belt?”) was not asked of the 30 participants who reported no driving activity in item Q1.

**Q2: When driving, how often do you wear a seat belt?**



As seen in the table above, survey data suggests that South Dakotans report being meticulous seat belt users. Of the respondents, 74.9% claim to wear seat belts “all of the time,” with another 12.9% reporting seat belt use “most of the time.” Regular seat belt use, as measured by “all of the time” responses, is most common among drivers in the highest income households; 89.4% of those reporting income between \$75,000 and \$100,000 per year and 80.8% for those reporting income of more than \$100,000 per year (this is compared to 61.8% of wage earners in the \$10,000 to \$24,999 category). College degree holders (80.8%, compared to 72.3% of respondents with less than a high school diploma), and females (76.3%, in contrast to 68.9% of males) also report more consistent seat belt use. It should be pointed out, however, that rates of self-reported seat belt use are likely to be inflated estimates of actual seat belt use. The following table provides additional detail regarding the frequency of seat belt use by participants. Oddly, when the question is asked in the form “When was the last time you did NOT wear your seat belt?,” only 45.0% (up slightly from 42.9% reported in 2010) of respondents stated that “I always wear it.”

**Q3. When was the last time you did NOT wear your seat belt when driving?**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Within the past day	115	15.8%
Within the past week	85	11.7%
Within the past month	35	4.8%
Within the past year	31	4.3%
I always wear it	328	45.0%
Don't know	132	18.1%
Refused to answer	3	0.4%
(Total)	750	100.1%

Survey items Q4 through Q6b focus on respondents' knowledge and views of the seat belt law. As seen in the responses to item Q4, 91.3% reported awareness of mandated seat belt use in the state. In general, this high level of awareness was found to be relatively consistent across demographic groups and similar to analogous figures from last year.

**Q4. Does South Dakota have a law requiring seat belt use by adults?**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	685	91.3%
No	26	3.5%
Don't know	39	5.2%
Refused to answer	0	0%
(Total)	750	100.0%

Despite the apparent level of basic statutory familiarity on the part of respondents (as demonstrated in item Q4), answers to item Q5 suggest that South Dakota drivers lack nuanced knowledge of the law's details. The following table shows that only 41.9% of respondents observed correctly that South Dakota seat belt laws define failure to wear a seat belt as a secondary offense. While 41.6% stated that a seat belt violation constitutes a primary offense, a sizable 16.5% reported not knowing.

**Q5. According to South Dakota law, can police stop a vehicle if they observe a seat belt violation, or do they have to observe some other offense first in order to stop the vehicle?**

	n	%
Can stop just for seat belt violation	285	41.6%
Must observe another offense first	287	41.9%
Don't know	113	16.5%
(Total)	750	100%

In survey items Q6a and Q6b, the questionnaire asked respondents to reflect on separate but related hypothetical statutory conditions. In item Q6a, respondents were asked whether police should be able to stop a vehicle after observing a seat belt violation involving *a child or infant*. Item Q7 posed a similar question, but replaced the phrase “involving a child or infant” with “by an adult.” The following tables show that the response pattern difference between these items is striking. While only 55.6% of participants stated that traffic stops should be warranted by seat belt violations by adults, a whopping 88.8% said the same for violations involving child passengers. Both of these figures increased slightly compared to the same questions in 2010 (52.9% and 87.7% respectively).

**Q6a. In your opinion, SHOULD police be allowed to stop a vehicle if they observe a seat belt violation involving a child or infant but if no other traffic laws are being broken?**

	n	%
Should be allowed to stop	666	88.8%
Should not be allowed to stop	58	7.7%
Don't know	25	3.3%
Refused to answer	1	0.1%
(Total)	750	99.9%

**Q6b. In your opinion, SHOULD police be allowed to stop a vehicle if they observe a seat belt violation by an adult but if no other traffic laws are being broken?**

	n	%
Should be allowed to stop	417	55.6%
Should not be allowed to stop	284	37.9%
Don't know	46	6.1%
(Total)	747	99.6%

Items Q9a and Q9b relate to respondents' impressions of seat belt efficacy. Overall, only 23.2% of participants agreed that seat belts are as likely to cause harm as to prevent it, down slightly from 25.6% last year. However, this figure was drastically higher (41.3%) among the lowest wage earners (those with a reported household income of \$10,000 to \$24,999), those with less than a high school diploma (45.1%), and those under the age of 30 (31.6%). Not surprisingly, those respondents who reported frequent use of seat belts were far more likely to disagree with the statement posed in item Q9a.<sup>4</sup> The generally favorable impression of seat belt efficacy reflected in item Q9a is further advanced by results from item Q9b, which show that a staggering 94.0% of respondents would want to be wearing a seat belt in the event of a traffic crash.

**Q9a. Seat belts are just as likely to harm you as help you.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	174	23.2%
Strongly agree	70	9.3%
Somewhat agree	104	13.9%
<b>Net disagree</b>	548	73.1%
Somewhat disagree	186	24.8%
Strongly disagree	362	48.3%
Don't know	28	3.7%
(Total)	750	100% <sup>5</sup>

**Q9b. If I were in an accident, I would want to have my seat belt on.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	705	94.0%
Strongly agree	650	86.7%
Somewhat agree	55	7.4%
<b>Net disagree</b>	29	3.9%
Somewhat disagree	12	1.6%
Strongly disagree	17	2.3%
Don't know	16	2.1%
(Total)	750	100.1%

<sup>4</sup> Disagreement (any level) was indicated by 80.2% of participants who also reported wearing seat belts "all of the time"; the analogous figure among respondents reporting seat belt use "some of the time" was only 46.1%.

<sup>5</sup> In this and subsequent tables, response category sub-components (e.g., *strongly agree*, *somewhat agree*) may sum to slightly more or slightly less than "net" figures (e.g., *net agree*) due to rounding. Column totals refer to *net agree* plus *net disagree* plus other (*don't know*, *refused*, etc.).

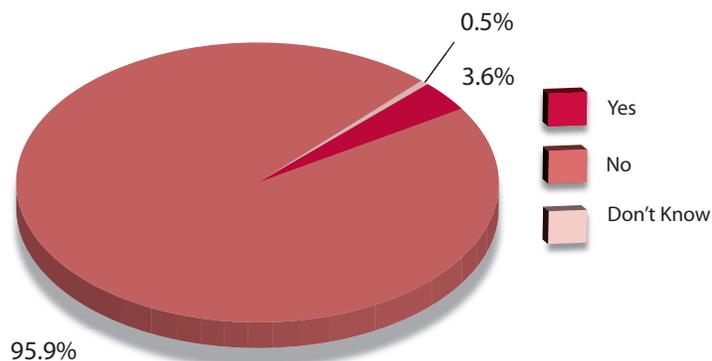
The following tables provide respondent feedback regarding experiences with seat belt enforcement. In item Q7, respondents were asked to estimate the likelihood of receiving a citation as a consequence of failing to wear a seat belt. Overall, 50.4% of respondents found it likely that a ticket would be issued, with 19.6% estimating that such an outcome would be “very likely.” Looking at demographic cross-tabulations, “very likely” and “somewhat likely” responses were most frequent among participants without a high school degree, and young participants.<sup>6</sup> Results for item Q7 were relatively consistent across all categories of reported seat belt use.

**Q7. What do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you don't wear your seat belt?**

	n	%
<b>Net likely</b>	378	50.4%
Very likely	147	19.6%
Somewhat likely	231	30.8%
<b>Net unlikely</b>	305	40.7%
Somewhat unlikely	149	19.9%
Very unlikely	156	20.8%
Don't know	66	8.8%
Refused to answer	1	0.1%
(Total)	750	100.0%

Respondents were also asked to report whether they ever had been issued a traffic ticket for failing to wear a seat belt. The following figure presents the results of this item (Q8) and shows that a vast majority of respondents have never received any such citation, even fewer than were reported in 2010 (3.6% compared to 6.3%).

**Q8. Have you ever received a ticket for not wearing a seat belt?**



<sup>6</sup> It is plausible that a large degree of overlap exists between these demographic categories.

The final items dealing explicitly with seat belts (Q9c and Q9d) focus on respondents' appraisals of the resoluteness and necessity of seat belt enforcement in South Dakota. Troublingly, results from survey item Q9c suggest that a plurality of participants agreed that local police "generally will not bother to write tickets for seat belt violations" (43.1%) and this number is increasing (the analogous figure from 2010 was only 38.3%). At the same time, output from item Q9d shows that 83.7% of participants agreed that enforcing seat belt laws is an important law enforcement activity, with 59.7% agreeing strongly. This figure is consistent across most demographic groups, though females (88.0%) were especially likely to support seat belt law enforcement.

**Q9c. Police in my community generally will not bother to write tickets for seat belt violations.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	323	43.1%
Strongly agree	165	22.0%
Somewhat agree	158	21.1%
<b>Net disagree</b>	217	28.9%
Somewhat disagree	98	13.1%
Strongly disagree	119	15.9%
Don't know	210	28.0%
(Total)	750	100.1%

**Q9d. It is important for police to enforce seat belt laws.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	628	83.7%
Strongly agree	448	59.7%
Somewhat agree	180	24.0%
<b>Net disagree</b>	103	13.7%
Somewhat disagree	47	6.3%
Strongly disagree	56	7.5%
Don't know	19	2.5%
(Total)	750	100.0%

## SECTION III: SPEEDING

In the next section of the survey, respondents were presented with a series of questions that focus on various dimensions of the broad topic of motor vehicle speeding. First among these questions were several items centered on respondents' own driving habits. Items Q10 and Q11 prompted participants to rate their relative frequency of driving over the speed limit under two different speed zone conditions. Item Q10 asked respondents to estimate the regularity with which they drive more than 35 mph in 30-mph speed zones, while item Q11 posed a parallel question about driving more than 70 mph in 65-mph speed zones. It can be seen from the following table that to the first question only 8.3% responded with "all of the time" or "most of the time." Reflecting on item Q11, only 5.8% gave the same responses. Both of these figures are down slightly from 2010 (11.2% and 6.2% respectively). For both questions, female respondents, single respondents, low-income respondents, those without a high school degree and older respondents tended to select "never" more often.

**Q10/Q11. On a local road with a speed limit of 30/65 mph, how often do you drive faster than 35/70 mph?**

	"30" / "35"		"65" / "70"	
	n	%	n	%
All of the time	20	2.7%	16	2.1%
Most of the time	42	5.6%	28	3.7%
Some of the time	159	21.2%	76	10.1%
Rarely	319	42.5%	308	41.1%
Never	210	28.0%	322	42.9%
(Total)	750	100.1%	750	99.9%

Results from survey item Q12 provide another means of examining the speeding-related driving behavior of respondents. Altogether, 55.1% of participants reported driving more than 5 mph over the posted speed limit at least once within the last year, 25.7% in the last week alone. Again, cross-tabulations suggest that female participants (13.0%), participants over 70 years old (19.7%), participants with a household income of \$10,000 to \$24,999, (18.4%), single participants (16.2%), and participants without a high school degree (27.5%) provided the highest incidence of "never" responses.

**Q12. When was the last time you drove more than 5 mph over the speed limit?**

	n	%
Within the past day	79	10.5%
Within the past week	114	15.2%
Within the past month	113	15.1%
Within the past year	107	14.3%
A year or more ago	151	20.1%
Don't know	98	13.1%
Never	88	11.7%
(Total)	750	100.0%

Respondents' self-reporting of speeding behavior seems to contrast with their own negative views of speeding itself. Figures presented in the following tables show that 88.9% of respondents agreed that driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident occurring. Further, an astonishing 96.1% of respondents agreed that the enforcement of speed limit laws is an important undertaking. Across both survey items, male respondents were somewhat less inclined to agree.<sup>7</sup>

**Q14a. Driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	667	88.9%
Strongly agree	486	64.8%
Somewhat agree	181	24.1%
<b>Net disagree</b>	72	9.6%
Somewhat disagree	39	5.2%
Strongly disagree	33	4.4%
Don't know	11	1.5%
(Total)	750	100.0%

<sup>7</sup> Of male respondents, 12.9% (compared to 6.8% of females) disagreed that driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident occurring, while 4.0% (compared to 1.5% of female respondents) disagreed that it is important for police to enforce speed limit laws.

**Q14d. It is important for police to enforce the speed limit laws.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	721	96.1%
Strongly agree	579	77.2%
Somewhat agree	142	18.9%
<b>Net disagree</b>	20	2.7%
Somewhat disagree	8	1.1%
Strongly disagree	12	1.6%
Don't know	9	1.2%
(Total)	750	100.0%

Further, when cross-tabulated with survey items Q10 and Q11, an inverse relationship appears to exist between speeding frequency and negative attitudes toward speeding. Put another way, drivers who self-reported frequent speeding also tended to be less likely to agree with the statements posed in items Q14a and Q14d (see the following table).

**% Responding to Q10 ("On a local road with a speed limit of 30 mph, how often do you drive faster than 35 mph?")**

	All/Most of the time	Never
Q14a. Driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident. <b>(Agree)</b>	74.2%	92.9%
Q14d. It is important for police to enforce the speed limit laws. <b>(Agree)</b>	85.5%	97.6%

**% Responding to Q11 ("On a road with a speed limit of 65 mph, how often do you drive faster than 70 mph?")**

	All/Most of the time	Never
Q14a. Driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident. <b>(Agree)</b>	80.8%	92.5%
Q14d. It is important for police to enforce the speed limit laws. <b>(Agree)</b>	92.3%	97.5%

Results from item Q14d strongly imply that South Dakotans value the enforcement of speeding laws. Concurrently, tabular output for items Q13 and Q14b suggests that respondents tend to view law enforcement officials as performing relatively well in this regard. Almost three-quarters of respondents estimated the chances of being ticketed as a consequence of driving over the speed limit as either "very likely" or "somewhat likely," slightly down from the same figure reported in 2010 (75.4%). Further, a plurality of

respondents (41.2%) disagreed with the proposition that local police “generally will not bother to write tickets for speeding violations if they are less than 10 mph over the speed limit” (about one in five respondents did not offer a response to this item).

**Q13. What do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you drive over the speed limit?**

	n	%
<b>Net likely</b>	547	72.9%
Very likely	242	32.3%
Somewhat likely	305	40.7%
<b>Net unlikely</b>	162	21.6%
Somewhat unlikely	118	15.7%
Very unlikely	42	5.9%
Don't know	38	5.1%
Refused to answer	3	0.4%
(Total)	750	100.1%

**Q14b. Police in my community generally will not bother to write tickets for speeding violations if they are less than 10 mph over the limit.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	282	37.6%
Strongly agree	127	16.9%
Somewhat agree	155	20.7%
<b>Net disagree</b>	309	41.2%
Somewhat disagree	125	16.7%
Strongly disagree	184	24.5%
Don't know	159	21.2%
(Total)	750	100.0%

The response patterns for the final two survey items in this series (Q14e and Q14f) are remarkable in their level of similarity. The following table shows that 83.5% of respondents disagreed with a statement suggesting that speed limits in South Dakota are too low; a similar proportion (85.1%) disagreed with a parallel statement proposing that the state’s speed limits are too high. These results are consistent with the answers reported in 2010. Careful inspection shows that the response distribution for each of these items is nearly indistinguishable from the other. The book-matched properties of these distributions paired with strong evidence of a shared negative valence suggest that South Dakotans are of firm mind that the state’s speed limits are optimal. Yet, it should perhaps come as no surprise that those respondents who in item Q11

indicated driving more than 70 mph in 65-mph zones on a regular basis were drastically more likely to view the state’s speed limits as being too low.<sup>8</sup>

**Q14e/Q14f. In general, I believe the speed limits in South Dakota are too low/too high.**

	“...too low”		“...too high”	
	n	%	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	105	14.0%	96	13.2%
Strongly agree	49	6.5%	40	5.3%
Somewhat agree	56	7.5%	56	7.5%
<b>Net disagree</b>	626	83.5%	638	85.1%
Somewhat disagree	233	31.1%	212	28.3%
Strongly disagree	393	52.4%	426	56.8%
Don't know	19	2.5%	16	2.1%
(Total)	750	100.0%	750	100.0%

<sup>8</sup> Of respondents who reported a speeding frequency of “all of the time” or “most of the time” in these speed zones, 30.0% expressed agreement that speed limits are generally too low. By contrast, of those who reported a speeding frequency of “never” in these zones, only 9.9% view the state’s speed limits as unsatisfactorily low.

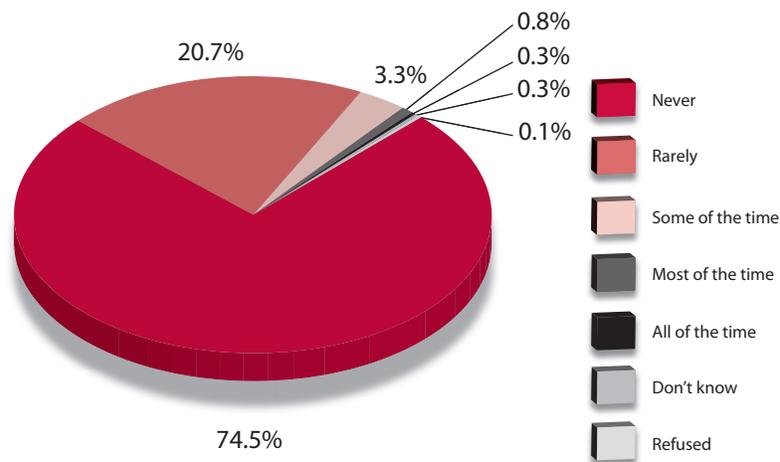


## SECTION IV: IMPAIRED DRIVING

The ensuing section of the survey asked participants to consider an assortment of survey items related to alcohol- and drug-impaired driving and enforcement. As in preceding sections, participants were first prompted to respond to several self-reported behavioral measures related to the topic of interest. One potential qualifier is in order at this point. It is possible, or even likely, that given the particularly sensitive nature of this line of questioning, social desirability bias may have led to systematic under reporting of impaired driving behaviors. In this light, estimates of impaired driving behaviors reported here are likely to underestimate actual incidence.

While the following three tables may not go so far as to suggest that impaired driving among South Dakotans is rampant, the proportion of drivers who admit to drinking and driving is nonetheless unsettling. The first behavioral survey item asked respondents to reflect directly on the frequency with which they drive after drinking. Overall, 25.5% reported doing so with some level of frequency, though only 0.3% claimed to do so “most of the time.” Demographic cross-tabulations show evidence of several strong patterns existing in the data for this item. Rates of “never” responses can be seen to vary by age (84.2% of respondents over the age of 70, compared to an overall rate of 74.5%), gender (82.2% of women, in contrast with 65.7% of men), income (85.3% of respondents in the \$10,000 to \$24,999 category, compared to 34.6% in the >\$100,000 category), and education level (90.2% of respondents with less than a high school diploma, compared to 69.7% of those with a college degree).

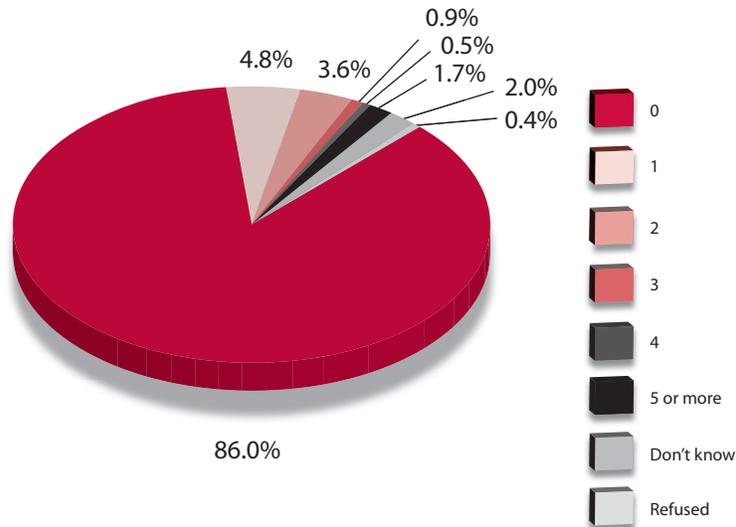
**Q15: When driving, how often do you drive within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverages?**



Results for items Q16 and Q17 provide additional detail regarding the self-reported incidence of alcohol-impaired driving among South Dakota motorists. In item Q16, 86.0% of participants reported that they had not driven after drinking within the most recent 60-day period. Likewise, results for item Q17 show that only 5.9% of respondents admitted to driving after drinking within the last month. However, comparisons of the output for these survey items may lead us to raise doubts about the consistency of the behavioral accounts presented by respondents. It seems curious, for example, that while a robust 74.5% of participants

in item Q15 reported “never” driving within two hours of drinking alcoholic beverages, a vastly reduced 59.2% claimed the same in item Q17 (when asked about their most recent impaired driving incident). These somewhat incongruent findings likely suggest either that respondents may not be able to accurately recall impaired driving experiences or that their reporting is vulnerable to response editing effects due to the nature of the research topic.

**Q16: In the past 60 days, how many times have you driven a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverages?**



**Q17. When was the last time you drove a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverages?**

	n	%
Within the past day	12	1.6%
Within the past week	29	3.9%
Within the past month	44	5.9%
Within the past year	41	5.5%
A year or more ago	150	20.0%
Don't know	29	3.9%
Refused to answer	1	0.1%
Never	444	59.2%
(Total)	750	100.1%

Survey items Q20a and Q20b asked participants to offer their impressions of impaired driving itself by considering the consequences of intoxicated driving revealing responses similar to those provided in 2010. Results for item Q20a show that 76.3% of respondents disagreed with the idea that their own capacity to drive safely is unaffected by the consumption of two to three alcoholic drinks, with 58.0% disagreeing strongly. Similarly, 87.1% of respondents agreed in item Q20b that driving immediately after consuming alcohol elevates the likelihood of a traffic accident.

**Q20a. I can still drive safely even if I have had 2 or 3 drinks.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	130	17.3%
Strongly agree	48	6.4%
Somewhat agree	82	10.9%
<b>Net disagree</b>	572	76.3%
Somewhat disagree	137	18.3%
Strongly disagree	435	58.0%
Don't know	48	6.4%
(Total)	750	100.0%

**Q20b. Driving within 2 hours after consuming alcohol increases the chance of an accident.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	653	87.1%
Strongly agree	471	62.8%
Somewhat agree	182	24.3%
<b>Net disagree</b>	57	7.6%
Somewhat disagree	35	4.7%
Strongly disagree	22	2.9%
Don't know	40	5.3%
(Total)	750	100.0%

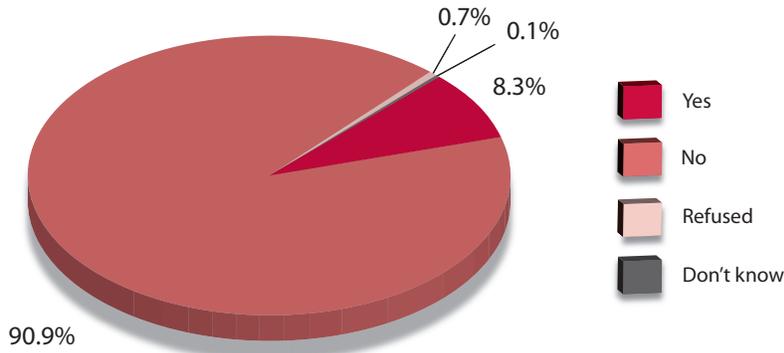
Examining these results in the context of respondent age reveals that no less likely to agree that consumption of alcohol generally increases the chance of an accident, younger drivers are more likely in to affirm their own ability to drive safely despite having recently consumed alcohol (31.6%) . This finding, presented in the table below, certainly seems to suggest the invincibility mentality popularly thought to dominate the worldview of many young drivers. Perhaps more troubling is that this percentage has increased from 2010 (25.4%).

### Q20a and Q20b by Age Group

	≤30	31– 40	41– 50	51– 60	61–70	>70
Q20a. "I can still drive safely even if I have had 2 or 3 drinks." <b>(Agree)</b>	31.6%	14.6%	16.5%	19.2%	20.3%	12.3%
Q20b. "Driving within 2 hours after consuming alcohol increases the chance of an accident." <b>(Agree)</b>	86.8%	92.7%	93.6%	87.4%	83.7%	86.2%

The balance of this section’s survey items deals primarily with impaired driving enforcement. To gain perspective of drivers’ experiences with law enforcement, the survey asked respondents to indicate whether they had ever been arrested for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. As seen in the table for item Q19, only 8.3% of participants answered “yes,” with male participants (14.6%) and those in the 41-50 age group (14.7%) indicating especially high rates of impaired driving arrests.

### Q19: Have you ever been arrested for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol?



Covering related territory, items Q18a and Q18b prompted respondents to estimate the odds of being arrested as a consequence of driving while intoxicated. Item Q18a asked participants to rate the probability of a hypothetical “someone” being arrested, while item Q18b asked the same question about the respondent himself/herself. Each item was administered to half of the overall survey sample for the purpose of identifying differences between the split-sample groups. As the following table indicates, the response distributions for these items are slightly different, with a greater level of agreement for when “someone” is included (79.7%) in the question rather than “you” (73.3%). However, in 2010 these two groups were virtually indistinguishable (76.6% and 76.5% respectively).

**Q18a/Q18b. What do you think the chances are of someone/you getting arrested if they/you drive after drinking?**

	"Someone"		"You"	
	n	%	n	%
<b>Net likely</b>	278	79.7%	294	73.3%
Very likely	129	37.0%	156	38.9%
Somewhat likely	149	42.7%	138	34.4%
<b>Net unlikely</b>	52	14.9%	77	19.2%
Somewhat unlikely	41	11.7%	49	12.2%
Very unlikely	11	3.2%	28	7.0%
Don't know	19	5.4%	27	6.7%
Refused to answer	-	-	3	0.7%
(Total)	349	100.0%	401	99.9%

Survey participants were also asked to consider the earnestness of local enforcement efforts with respect to impaired driving. Overall, 76.4% of respondents expressed disagreement with the idea that local police show little interest in making impaired driving arrests. Cross-tabulations show that an even higher analogous figure (86.4%) was generated among drivers who in item Q16 had themselves reported driving while intoxicated one or more times in the last 60 days. It seems plausible that this response pattern may stem from the drivers' personal experiences with impaired driving arrests. At the same time, this finding is somewhat surprising in light of data from items Q18a and Q18b, which suggest that this same subset of respondents tended to supply slightly lower estimates of arrest probability.<sup>9</sup>

**Q20c. Police in my community generally will not bother to make arrests for drunk driving.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	101	13.5%
Strongly agree	59	7.9%
Somewhat agree	42	5.6%
<b>Net disagree</b>	573	76.4%
Somewhat disagree	135	18.0%
Strongly disagree	438	58.4%
Don't know	76	10.1%
(Total)	750	100.0%

<sup>9</sup> Of participants who indicated in item Q16 at least one recent intoxicated driving experience, 79.5% also estimated in item Q18a that the likelihood of someone being arrested as a consequence of impaired driving is likely, compared to 80.0% of respondents with no recent intoxicated driving experiences.

Finally, item Q20d solicited respondents' views regarding the ongoing need for impaired driving enforcement. Altogether, an extraordinary figure of 97.9% agreement was recorded for the entire sample. Figures for this item were exceptionally high across all demographic groups and categories, and even received 98.9% support from respondents who earlier in the survey (item Q16) had reported driving while intoxicated one or more times in the last 60 days.

**Q20d. It is important for police to enforce drunk driving laws.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	734	97.9%
Strongly agree	685	91.3%
Somewhat agree	49	6.5%
<b>Net disagree</b>	11	1.5%
Somewhat disagree	4	0.5%
Strongly disagree	7	0.9%
Don't know	5	0.7%
(Total)	750	99.9%

## SECTION V: POLICY QUESTIONS

Next, survey participants were invited to offer substantive preferences on a short sequence of policy-related items. The hypothetical policy questions raised by these items were selected on the basis of relevance to the broader research concerns of the survey and do not necessarily represent actual public policy measures currently under consideration by the State of South Dakota. Item Q21a prompted respondents to consider a statewide ban on the use of cell phones and other texting devices while driving. An overwhelming 93.1% expressed agreement that such a ban is desirable, up slightly from 2010 (91.3%). Younger respondents ( $\leq 30$  year olds at 84.2%) demonstrated the lowest comparative rates of support for this measure.

**Q21a. The State of South Dakota should ban texting—or using a cell phone to send text messages—when driving.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	698	93.1%
Strongly agree	633	84.4%
Somewhat agree	65	8.7%
<b>Net disagree</b>	43	5.7%
Somewhat disagree	21	2.8%
Strongly disagree	22	2.9%
Don't know	9	1.2%
(Total)	750	100.0%

In comparison with item Q21a, respondents to item Q21b were much more divided. The following table shows that a narrow majority of participants favored the idea of authorizing law enforcement personnel to ticket motorists for using cell phone headsets while driving. Support for this measure increased with significantly with respondent age (only 18.4% of those under 30 agreed while 69.5% of those over 70 indicated agreement) and declined with household income and education level. Respondents with children under the age of 16 were drastically less supportive (34.9%) of the proposal presented in item Q21b than were respondents without children in this age range (56.1%).

**Q21b. The State of South Dakota should pass legislation that permits police officers to pull over and issue tickets to drivers who are using cell phone headsets while driving.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	392	52.3%
Strongly agree	280	37.3%
Somewhat agree	112	14.9%
<b>Net disagree</b>	321	42.8%
Somewhat disagree	142	18.9%
Strongly disagree	179	23.9%
Don't know	37	4.9%
(Total)	750	100.0%

Support was strong in item Q21c for a state law mandating that protective helmets be worn by motorcycle occupants. Of all respondents, 75.1% agreed that helmets should be required, with 22.3% disagreeing and 2.7% not offering an opinion. Support tended to be consistently high across all demographic groups, though agreement waned somewhat among males (64.0%).

**Q21c. The State of South Dakota should require motorcycle riders to wear helmets while riding in the state.**

	n	%
<b>Net agree</b>	563	75.1%
Strongly agree	472	62.9%
Somewhat agree	91	12.1%
<b>Net disagree</b>	167	22.3%
Somewhat disagree	54	7.2%
Strongly disagree	113	15.1%
Don't know	20	2.7%
(Total)	750	100.0%

Respondents were also asked to offer judgment on the question of whether the state should raise the minimum driving age from 14 to 16 years. Overall, 58.7% of respondents agreed with this point. Parents of school-aged children were more likely to favor the current law, given that respondents with children under the age of 16 agreed at a rate of only 52.7%, compared with 59.7% of all other respondents. Females indicated greater agreement than (65.5%) compared to male respondents (50.9%). Generally support for establishing age 16 as the new minimum driving age decreased with level of education and income, though those earning between \$35,000 and \$49,999 indicated the highest level of agreement at 67.6%.

**Q21d. The State of South Dakota should increase its minimum driving age from 14 to 16 years.**

	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Net agree</b>	440	58.7%
Strongly agree	326	43.5%
Somewhat agree	114	15.2%
<b>Net disagree</b>	287	38.3%
Somewhat disagree	117	15.6%
Strongly disagree	170	22.7%
Don't know	23	3.1%
(Total)	<u>750</u>	<u>100%</u>



## SECTION VI: MEDIA RECALL

The closing section of the survey entailed a series of questions whose aim was to gauge the population coverage achieved by various public messaging efforts undertaken by the State of South Dakota. The first series of questions centered on three general categories of media messages, while the second, longer sequence of items was designed to probe respondents' recall of specific television, radio, and print media campaigns. All items were constructed with a simple "yes-no" response option format.

One condition is crucial to the inferences that might be made from this data. Because "yes" responses in these sections required both an encounter with and a recall of particular message types, "no" responses may not constitute a lack of coverage but a lack of salience. Put another way, the state's media efforts may be reaching a larger population share than is indicated in these results but may be underreported here due to a lack of audience attentiveness or a perceived lack of message importance.

### In the past 30 days, have you seen, heard, or read any messages...

#### Q22a. ...about drunk driving enforcement?

	n	%
Yes	358	47.7%
No	392	52.3%
(Total)	750	100.0%

#### Q22b. ...encouraging people to obey the speed limit?

	n	%
Yes	242	32.3%
No	508	67.7%
(Total)	750	100.0%

#### Q22c. ...that encourage people to wear their seat belts?

	n	%
Yes	486	64.8%
No	264	35.2%
(Total)	750	100.0%

The percentage of respondents answering "yes" was down across all three questions from 2010. Of the three general categories of public service messages included in the survey, seat belt messages appear to have generated the widest coverage (with 64.8% of respondents indicating a recent encounter as compared to 75.6 in 2010), followed by intoxicated driving enforcement (47.7%, 56.5% in 2010) and speed limit enforcement (32.3%, 36.4% in 2010). Across all three items, familiarity with these message types seems to demonstrate a small negative association with age. No clear response patterns emerged with respect to income, or educational attainment, though males tended to provide slightly higher rates of affirmative responses as do those with children under 16.

The following table provides data regarding participants' recall of a number of specific media campaigns.

<b>Do you recall hearing or seeing the following slogans in the past 30 days?</b>				
<b>Q23_1. Friends don't let friends drive drunk.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	558	74.4%	
	No	192	25.6%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_2. Click it or ticket.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	421	56.1%	
	No	329	43.9%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_3. Buckle up America.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	323	43.1%	
	No	427	56.9%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_4. Children in back.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	146	19.5%	
	No	604	80.5%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_5. You drink, you drive, you lose.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	426	56.8%	
	No	324	43.2%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_6. Didn't see it coming? No one ever does.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	158	21.1%	
	No	592	78.9%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_7. Get the keys.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	181	24.1%	
	No	569	75.9%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_8. Feed the habit, buckle up.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	311	41.5%	
	No	439	58.5%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_9. Act civilized.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	117	15.6%	
	No	633	84.4%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_10. Wear protective gear.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	179	23.9%	
	No	571	76.1%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_11. Parents matter, talk to your kids.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	413	55.1%	
	No	337	44.9%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>Q23_12. Alive at 25.</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	140	18.7%	
	No	610	81.3%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	
<b>[Did not recall any.]</b>				
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Yes	74	9.9%	
	No	676	90.1%	
	(Total)	750	100.0%	

Survey items Q22\_1 through Q22\_12 asked respondents to state which media slogans could be recalled from the most recent 30-day period. As seen above, the most frequently recalled messaging campaigns were “Friends don’t let friends drive drunk” (74.4%), “You drink, you drive, you lose” (56.8%) and “Click it or ticket” (56.1%). “Parents matter, talk to your kids” was also recognized by more than half of the survey sample (55.1%). Respondents were especially unlikely to recall “Act civilized” (15.6%), “Alive at 25” (18.7%), “Children in back” (19.5%), and “Didn’t see it coming? No one ever does” (21.1%). Overall, 90.1% of participants recalled at least one of the media slogans presented in this section. For every slogan, respondents recall was slightly less in 2011 than in 2010.

Cross-tabulations show few significant points of demographic variation. While variation exists on recall of individual slogans, no demographic patterns exist across all slogans.

Age group breakouts indicate significant difference from the results in 2010. The following tables show each slogan included in the survey, sorted by highest-recalling age group for both 2010 and 2011. As seen here, respondents age 30 and younger were the most likely to recall ten of the twelve slogan prompts whereas similar results were found last year for those 70 and older. The difference between the two years may just be anomalous but we should continue to analyze differences in the future to evaluate potential trends.<sup>10</sup>

	<b>Group</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Overall %</b>
Friends don't let friends drive drunk.	≤30	81.6%	74.4%
Buckle up America.	>70	47.8%	43.1%
Get the keys.	≤30	28.9%	24.1%
Wear protective gear.	≤30	44.7%	23.9%
Children in back.	≤30	23.7%	19.5%
Alive at 25.	≤30	34.2%	18.7%
Parents matter, talk to your kids.	41–50	68.8%	55.1%
Feed the habit, buckle up.	≤30	65.8%	41.5%
Didn't see it coming? No one ever does.	≤30	28.9%	21.1%
Act civilized.	≤30	31.6%	15.6%
Click it or ticket.	≤30	78.9%	56.1%
You drink, you drive, you lose.	≤30	68.4%	56.8%

<sup>10</sup> Whether respondents had actually encountered these slogans within the last 30 days is clearly debatable. Asking participants to recall specific media content over such a long reference period introduces the potential for a host of reporting errors. As a consequence, the figures reported above may best be thought of as reflections of general familiarity (but not recent encounters) with the slogans included in the survey.

### Items by Highest-Recalling Age Group (2010)

	<b>Group</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Overall %</b>
Friends don't let friends drive drunk.	>70	81.8%	78.7%
Buckle up America.	61-70	54.5%	45.5%
Get the keys.	61-70	32.9%	26.9%
Wear protective gear.	61-70	30.1%	24.1%
Children in back.	61-70	27.3%	20.5%
Alive at 25.	61-70	25.2%	19.4%
Parents matter, talk to your kids.	51-60	65.5%	59.9%
Feed the habit, buckle up.	51-60	54.5%	48.7%
Didn't see it coming? No one ever does.	51-60	30.3%	21.8%
Act civilized.	31-40	31.7%	18.0%
Click it or ticket.	≤30	88.9%	65.8%
You drink, you drive, you lose.	≤30	69.8%	61.1%

## CLOSING SUMMARY

Altogether, data generated from the 2011 Department of Public Safety Driver Survey would seem to contain a mix of good news and bad news for the department's policy planners and no dramatic changes from 2010. Policy planners should still be encouraged by respondents' stated attitudes toward risky driving practices. 83.7% of respondents reported that it is important for police to enforce seat belt laws, while 96.1% said the same of speed limit laws. A remarkable 97.9% still concurred that impaired driving enforcement is important. Basic knowledge of the state's seat belt law is high (91.3%), and 94.0% of respondents reported desiring to be secured by a seat belt in the event of an accident. Only 17.3% of participants profess the ability to drive safely after drinking multiple alcoholic beverages, and 87.1% agree that doing so raises the chance of an accident occurring.

However, analysis also reveals a level of dissonance between respondents' stated attitudes and actual driving behavior. For example, despite the perceived importance of speeding enforcement, 54.9% of respondents admitted to driving more than five miles per hour above the speed limit within the last year. Almost one in four respondents (24.9%) reported driving after drinking at least occasionally, despite the marked prevalence of negative views toward the act of intoxicated driving. Also, even though a robust 74.9% of drivers claim to wear seat belts at all times, cross-tabulation indicates that seat belt usage is relatively less consistent among the state's most frequent drivers. Such findings underscore a vital challenge faced by highway safety personnel, namely, overcoming the apparent disconnect between drivers' ideal and real driving practices. It also appears that respondents were less receptive to or had less recall of specific slogans addressed in the survey. Since we currently only have two years of data it is premature to read too much into various comparisons made throughout the report, however with future iterations of the survey we will continue to track changes and evaluate potential trends.



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