National Survey of Speeding and Other Unsafe Driving Actions

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Driver Attitudes & Behavior

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16. Abstract

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) commissioned the research firm of Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. (SRBI) to conduct the Nationwide Survey Regarding Speeding and Other Unsafe Driving Actions. Between February 20 and April 11, 1997 SRBI conducted a total of 6,000 telephone interviews among a national population sample. The percentages provided in the report are weighted to accurately reflect the national population of drivers age 16 or over.

Volume I: *Methodology Report*, describes the methods used to develop the questionnaires and conduct the interviews. It also contains copies of the questionnaires. This report, Volume II: *Driver Attitudes and Behaviors* reports respondents' attitudes toward speeding and speed limits; attitudes about unsafe and aggressive driving; experience riding with unsafe and aggressive drivers; frequency and patterns of specific unsafe driving actions; attitudes about and personal experience with enforcement; and crash experience. Volume III: *Countermeasures* reports on drivers attitudes regarding the acceptability and effectiveness of countermeasures, including photo-enforcement, that may discourage speeding and unsafe driving.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Speeding has been cited as a contributing factor in nearly one-third of all fatal motor vehicle crashes. In 1996, the cost of crashes involving speeding was estimated to be $28.8 billion. However, only limited information is available on driver attitudes and behavior regarding speeding and other forms of unsafe driving behavior, including those typically identified as aggressive driving, e.g., tailgating, weaving, running red lights, and making angry, insulting, or obscene gestures to other drivers. To help provide information in this important area, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) commissioned a national survey of the driving public to determine:

- the wide range of driver attitudes about speeding and other forms of aggressive/unsafe driving behavior;
- commonly occurring situations in which unsafe driving occurs;
- driver characteristics associated with those who commit these types of infractions; and
- the types of countermeasures the public believes are acceptable and effective for countering such behaviors.

Research of this nature supports NHTSA-sponsored efforts to more precisely specify targets (e.g., drivers, situations), and develop new or refine existing countermeasures that, ultimately, may reduce the occurrence of fatalities and injuries resulting from unsafe driving practices. (See Volume III: *Countermeasures*, for more detailed information about possible solutions.)

The survey was conducted by telephone by the national survey research organization, Schulman, Ronca and Bucuvalas, Inc. (SRBI). A national household sample was constructed using random digit dialing. Each household was screened to determine the number of adult (16 years of age or older) drivers in the household and one eligible driver was selected in each household to be interviewed for the survey. The interviews were conducted by professional interviewers, using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) to reduce interview length and minimize recording errors. A Spanish-language translation and bilingual interviewers were used to minimize language barriers to participation. The interviews, conducted between February 20 and April 11, 1997, averaged 30 minutes in length. A total of 6,000 interviews were completed with a participation rate of 73.5%. (For a detailed discussion of the methodology employed in this study, refer to Volume I: *Methodology Report*.)

Since this was the first national survey of speeding and unsafe driving practices, the number of issues to be covered was extensive. In order to accommodate the number of questions required without unduly burdening the public, two versions of the questionnaire were developed. One questionnaire focused primarily on speeding issues and the other focused primarily on other forms of unsafe driving. Each version is an independent national sample, constructed in an identical fashion. In addition, each version of the questionnaire used half-samples for some questions to extend the number of questions that could be covered in a 30 minute interview. This random assignment of questions to half of the sample within the two national cross-sectional samples effectively created four national samples. Hence, for some questions, we have national estimates based on sample sizes of about 1,500 or 3,000, while estimates for core questions about speeding and unsafe driving, as well as driver and driving characteristics shared by both versions are based on sample sizes of 6,000.

FINDINGS

The majority of drivers in the United States consider speeding and other forms of unsafe driving to be a major threat to the personal safety of themselves and their families. More than six out of 10 drivers (61%) say that speeding by other people is a major threat to personal safety of themselves and their families. Two-thirds (66%) of drivers say that other drivers' unsafe driving actions (other than speeding) on the roads they drive is a major threat to themselves and their families.

The threat of unsafe driving is real, rather than hypothetical for many drivers. More than six out of 10 drivers (62%) report that the behavior of another driver has been a threat to them or their passengers within the past year. Those who have felt threatened by the behavior of other drivers in the past year were asked the nature of the action they found threatening. Most commonly, these drivers reported that, "another driver had cut very closely in front of me" (36%), "drove very closely behind me" (19%), "passed me in a dangerous manner" (15%), "cut me off at an intersection or exit" (13%), "made an obscene or threatening gesture" (5%), "wove in and out of traffic" (4%), "ran a red light" (3%) or "ignored a stop sign" (1%).

Consequently, the majority of drivers (52%) believe that it is very important that something be done to reduce speeding, while another 41% feel that it is somewhat important that something be done. Even more dramatically, 75% of drivers feel that it is important to do something about unsafe driving, while another 23% feel that it is somewhat important to do something.

There also was some concern that the dangers of driving, including aggressive driving, were increasing. Although most drivers (54%) felt that driving was neither more dangerous nor safer than a year ago, one-third of drivers (33%) reported that they feel driving is more dangerous now than it was a year ago. Some of the factors cited by those who feel driving

is more dangerous now are: heavier traffic and more cars (33%), careless and inattentive drivers (20%), faster drivers (18%), increased speed limits (16%), aggressive driving (14%), young drivers (10%) and drinking drivers (10%). Regarding aggressive driving, the majority of drivers (65%) reported that other motorists in their area drove no more or less aggressively than they did a year ago. Nonetheless, 30% of drivers felt that other drivers in their area drive more aggressively now, and, of these, 13% believed that they drive a lot more aggressively now as compared to a year ago.

Unsafe speeds on our nation's roadways were commonly reported. Over half of drivers reported that they see vehicles traveling at unsafe speeds all or most of the time when they drive on residential streets (53% urban, 53% rural); three-fifths on non-interstate highways (59% urban, 55% rural); and two-thirds on interstate highways (70% urban, 67% rural). When asked what other (than speeding) types of unsafe driving they usually encounter on the roads they regularly drive, drivers most commonly reported: cars weaving in and out of traffic (24%), tailgating (17%), driver inattention (15%), unsafe lane changes (10%), unsafe passing (9%), ignoring stop signs (8%), failing to yield (6%), drinking and driving (5%), and running red lights (5%). Only 16% of all drivers reported that they usually did not see unsafe driving on the roads they drove. A majority of those who reported seeing unsafe driving on the roads they regularly travel also reported that all or most of those who were doing these unsafe actions were also speeding.

This national sample of drivers was also asked about their personal driving behaviors over the past year. Drivers were asked when was the most recent time in the past year they had personally committed certain types of driving actions, which would be classified as unsafe driving by many traffic safety experts. Three out of 10 drivers (30%) reported entering an intersection just as the light was turning red within the past week. A quarter (26%) reported slowing but not completely stopping at a stop sign in the past week. More than one in five reported that they have driven 10 miles per hour over the speed limit on an interstate in the past week (23%) or have driven 10 miles per hour than most other vehicles were going (22%) in the past week. How recently 17 other unsafe driving behaviors was also reported by the survey. The least commonly reported types of unsafe driving in the past year were driving when affected by alcohol (8%) and racing another driver (6%).

The survey confirms that age and gender are two important factors associated with of unsafe driving. Men are more likely than women to report committing all 21 types of unsafe behaviors examined in the survey. There was a 2-to-1 difference between the genders in past year performance of some unsafe driving behaviors (e.g., driving when affected by alcohol), while for others (e.g., entering an intersection on a red light) the difference was marginal. Age is an even more striking factor for unsafe driving. The proportion of drivers who engage in virtually all of the unsafe driving actions examined in the survey declines as age increases. The survey findings suggest that unsafe driving declines on a continuous basis as drivers age, rather than after a specific age.

The decline in unsafe driving as age increases is mirrored in the *perceived dangerousness* of these driving actions. In one striking example, when rating the safety of driving 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on two-lane rural roads, the average rating of the dangerousness of that act increases from 3.4[1] for drivers aged 16-20, to 3.5 for 21-24 and 25-34 year-olds, to 3.7 for 35-44 year-olds, to 3.8 for 45-54 year-olds, to 4.0 for 55-64 year-olds, to 4.2 for drivers aged 65 and older. Most strikingly, is that 16 to 30 year olds rated nearly every unsafe behavior as less dangerous than older drivers: e.g., of 22 behaviors examined the 16 to 20 year olds rated 17 of these as less dangerous than any other age group. Hence, it appears that as drivers age, there is an ongoing reevaluation of the dangerousness of these driving actions.

A total score was calculated for each driver based on the reported frequency of the 8 to 9 unsafe driving acts about which that driver had been asked. The average unsafe driving score was nearly 40 percent higher for male drivers (92) than female drivers (66). The mean unsafe driving score falls nearly fourfold between drivers aged 16-20 (150) to those aged 65 and over (37). One of the most striking differences reported in unsafe driving appears to be related to geography. The average unsafe driving score is nearly twice as high for drivers from New England, compared to drivers from the Pacific Northwest and the Mountain states.

Enforcement of traffic safety laws is the primary countermeasure for speeding and other forms of unsafe driving. About one in seven drivers (14%) report that they have been stopped by police for traffic-related reasons in the past year. Most commonly, these drivers report that they have been stopped for speeding (64%), followed by stop signal violations (8%), no lights (8%) and stop sign violations (7%). Over half of those stopped by police in the past year (57%) report that they received a ticket, while most of the rest (34%) received a warning on the most recent occasion.

A relationship was found between reported unsafe driving behavior and being stopped by the police. The likelihood of being stopped by police in the past year increased from 5% of those with no reported unsafe driving, to 38% of those with the highest unsafe driving scores. The good news from the survey is that the likelihood of being stopped by the police for safety violations increased with the frequency of those violations. The bad news is that a majority of those who drive in an unsafe and illegal manner — 62% of those with the highest unsafe driving scores — were never stopped by the police.

Nonetheless, the survey finds that a majority of drivers are satisfied with the current amount of police enforcement of speeding laws on the types of roads they normally drive — from 52% who feel it is about right on residential streets, to 67%, who feel it is about right on non-interstate highways in predominantly urban areas. About four in 10 drivers (38%) say that they see police every day or nearly every day on the roads they drive most frequently. Three-quarters see police once a week or more often when driving.

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1. This series used a 5-point scale where 1 = Extremely Safe and 5 = Extremely Dangerous.

Less than 1% of drivers felt that the police issued tickets whenever they saw a driver just exceed the speed limit. A small number, 4%, felt drivers could go no more than 4 miles above the limit before a ticket would be issued. About two-thirds of all drivers felt the police would issue a ticket if they saw someone going 5 miles per hour above the limit. This drops to about one in five who feel tickets are not issued until police see someone going more than 10 miles per hour above the limit.

A majority of drivers are satisfied with the current amount of police enforcement of traffic laws related to running red lights (52%), failure to stop at signs (53%), failure to yield (52%) and speeding (50%). However, a majority of drivers feel that there is too little police enforcement of traffic laws in the areas of tailgating (61%) and weaving (58%). Moreover, a very substantial minority of drivers, ranging from 40% to 44% believe that there is too little police enforcement of traffic laws in the other areas.

CHAPTER I.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

BACKGROUND

Speeding has been implicated as a contributing factor in about one-third of all fatal motor-vehicle crashes. In addition, increased attention has been given to other unsafe driving behavior — running red lights, tailgating, cutting other drivers off, etc. — which may lead to crashes. However, very little information is available on when, where, and under what conditions drivers engage in speeding and other unsafe driving actions or behaviors; nor is there adequate information on the types of drivers who engage in these behaviors.

To help fill this information gap, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) contracted with Schulman, Ronca, & Bucuvalas, Inc., a national survey research firm, to conduct a survey of the driving public's attitudes and experience related to speeding and other unsafe driving actions. Research of this nature supports NHTSA-sponsored efforts to more precisely specify targets (e.g., drivers, situations), and develop new or refine existing countermeasures that, ultimately, may reduce the occurrence of fatalities and injuries resulting from unsafe driving practices.

The unsafe driving behaviors examined in the survey, including tailgating, weaving, and making obscene gestures to other drivers, are sometimes used as examples of "aggressive driving." There is increased public concern about the role of aggressive driving and "road rage" in crashes and traffic fatalities. Unfortunately, there is no general agreement among traffic safety experts as to what constitutes aggressive driving. Consequently, the survey focuses more on specific unsafe driving acts rather than on aggressive driving.

That the American public is very concerned about the consequences of speeding and other unsafe driving actions, can be seen from the results of NHTSA's 1997 Customer Satisfaction Survey where 87% of the driving age public said it was important that something be done to reduce speeding on highways and fully 97% said it was important to do something about speeding on residential streets.[1] In the earlier 1995 Customer Satisfaction Survey, 90% said it was important for the federal government to conduct public education campaigns to increase compliance with stop signs and signals.[2] The 1997 Customer survey also showed that the public believes the problem of unsafe driving is becoming worse — 60% of the driving-age public said they believe drivers were driving less safely now than 10 years ago, compared with only 8% who thought drivers are driving more safely now.

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1. U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1997 Customer Satisfaction Survey, April 1998.

2. U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1995 Customer Satisfaction Survey, May 1996.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this survey were to determine:

1) The characteristics of drivers who engage in speeding and other driving actions considered unsafe, including their demographic characteristics (such as age and gender), their driving characteristics (e.g., frequency, types of unsafe driving actions they commonly engage in), their attitudes about unsafe driving actions (which are most/least dangerous), and their attitudes about driving laws and the enforcement of them;

2) The situations (road type, weather, enforcement experience, etc.), and driver attitudes and motivations associated with speeding and other unsafe driving actions;

3) The public's attitudes regarding speed limits, (e.g., are the limits too high or too low on specific road types) and the enforcement of these limits (what enforcement methods should be used, how much over the limit is tolerated by police, etc.);

4) Activities that the public would support to reduce the occurrence of these unsafe driving actions, including use of photo-enforcement, fines and other penalties, and public information and education.

The first three objectives are the focus of this report. The fourth objective is discussed in the Volume III: *Countermeasures* report. Overall, the survey provides a status report on public attitudes and behavior related to speeding, aggressive and unsafe driving behaviors as well as provides information that can aid in the development of appropriate countermeasure activity.

SAMPLE DESIGN

The survey was conducted by telephone by the national survey research organization of Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. (SRBI). A national telephone household sample was constructed using random digit dialing. Each household was screened to determine the number of adult (age 16 or older) drivers in the household. One eligible driver was systematically selected in each eligible household by the interviewers. The survey was conducted using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) to reduce interview length and minimize recording errors. A Spanish-language translation and bilingual interviewers were used to minimize language barriers to participation.

Since this was the first national survey of speeding and unsafe driving practices the number of issues to be covered was extensive. In order to accommodate the number of questions required without unduly burdening the public, two versions of the questionnaire were initially developed. One questionnaire (Version 1) focused primarily on speeding

issues. The other questionnaire (Version 2) focused primarily on other forms of unsafe driving. Each version was fielded as an independent national sample, constructed in an identical fashion. Hence, for some questions we have national estimates based on sample sizes of 3,000, while estimates for core questions about speeding and unsafe driving behavior, as well as driver and driving characteristics shared by both versions, are based on sample sizes of 6,000.

Each of the two questionnaire versions used split-half samples for some questions to extend the number of questions that could be covered in a 30 minute interview (see Table 1-1, Below). This random assignment of questions to half of the sample within the two national cross-sectional samples effectively created four national samples. Hence, the total sample size of 6,000 drivers in the survey is comprised of four independent samples of approximately 1,500 respondents, each. Individual questions may be asked of 1,500 drivers (one national sample), 3,000 drivers (two national samples) or all 6,000 drivers.

TABLE 1-1

Unweighted Size of Sample Components

	Split-Half		**Total**
	A	B	
Version 1 - Speeding	1,489	1,511	3,000
Version 2 - Unsafe Driving	1,467	1,533	3,000
Total	2,956	3,044	6,000

The survey was conducted between February 20 and April 11, 1997. The telephone interviews averaged 30 minutes in length. A total of 6,000 interviews were completed with a participation rate of 73.5 percent.

The completed interviews were weighted to correct for selection bias as a result of the number of telephone lines and eligible respondents in the household. The complete weighting procedure and other aspects of the survey methodology are described in greater detail in Volume I: *Methodology Report*. The questionnaires used in this survey also appear in Volume I.

All sample surveys are subject to sampling variability or sampling error. The sampling error is the range within which sample estimates are expected to vary from true population values. At the 95 percent confidence level, the maximum expected sampling error for a simple random sample declines with size from $\pm$ 2.5 percentage points for a sample of 1,500 (i.e., 47.5%-52.5% for a sample estimate of 50%), to $\pm$ 1.8 percentage points for a sample of 3,000, to $\pm$ 1.3 percentage points for a sample of 6,000. The formula for

calculating sampling variances and a table of expected sampling errors by sample size is included in Volume I: *Methodology Report*.

Some percentages in the report are based on the total sample of survey participants (6,000), while others are based on one or two of the independent samples which comprise the total sample. Each table is labeled to show the appropriate, unweighted base. Due to rounding, the percentages in some tables may add to slightly more or less than 100%. We have labeled questions that permit multiple responses because they will add to more than 100%.

CHAPTER II.

DRIVERS, VEHICLES AND ROADS

The population for this survey was limited to drivers, i.e., persons aged 16 and older who drive a motor vehicle at least a few times a year. The basic contextual factors associated with the "driving experience" — the characteristics of drivers, the vehicles they drive and the types of roads on which they travel — are presented here. Other contextual factors — the presence of other adults or children in the car, the need to be some place at a specific time, traffic control device (stop lights, stop signs, school bus stop arms, etc.), time of day, etc. — likely to affect unsafe driving experiences are discussed in later chapters.

DRIVING CHARACTERISTICS

Almost nine out of 10 (88%) drivers drove almost every day and an additional 9% drove a few days a week (Table 2-1, next page). The remaining handful of drivers drove either a few days a month (2%) or a few days a year (1%).

Driving frequency varied by gender. Where 92% of male drivers reported driving almost every day, only 85% of female drivers reported the same frequency of driving. Conversely, the rates for driving a few days a week were twice as high for women as they were for men — 14% vs. 6%. Taken together, the frequencies for both men and women who report driving at least a few times a week are almost identical — 98% for men and 97% for women.

The frequency of driving almost every day also varied by age. Fully 85% of those in the 16 to 20 age group reported driving every day. This increased to 88% of those 21 to 24 years-old, to 93% for those 25 to 34, peaked at 94% for those 35 to 44 and then decreased to 91% for those 45 to 54, 85% for those 55 to 64, and finally 72% for those 65 and over.

Educational attainment also appeared to be related to frequency of driving. Almost four out of five (78%) of those with less than a high school education reported driving almost every day. This increased to 87% of those who graduated high school, to 90% of those with some college and to 92% of those with a college degree.

The frequency of driving almost every day did not vary greatly from the overall proportion of 88% with community type. Urban residents reported driving almost every day at very near the nationwide proportion (87%). Suburban residents reported a slightly higher proportion (90%) and rural residents reported the lowest frequency of driving almost every day (85%).

TABLE 2-1

Frequency of Driving Almost Every Day and a Few Days a Week by Various Demographic Groups

Qx: *How often do you usually drive a car or other motor vehicle? Would you say that you usually drive almost every day, a few days a week, a few days a week or a few days a year?*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*

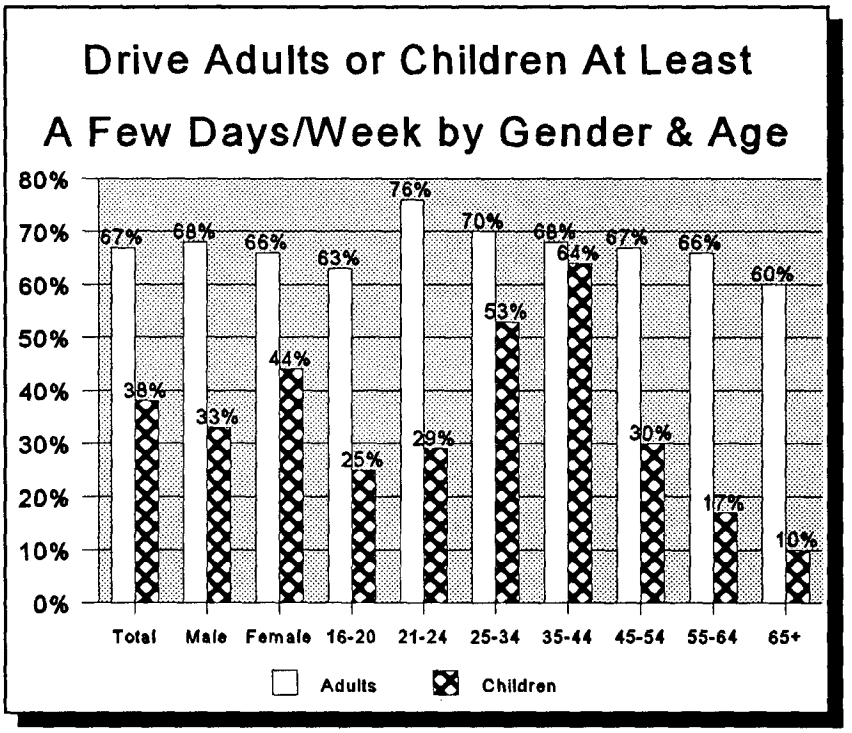
	*Unweighted N**	Almost Every Day	A Few Days A Week	A Few Days A Month	A Few Days A Year
Total sample	*6,000*	**88%**	**9%**	**2%**	**1%**
Gender					
Male	*2,886*	92%	6%	1%	*
Female	*3,114*	85%	14%	2%	1%
Age					
16 to 20	*343*	85%	11%	3%	*
21 to 24	*305*	88%	7%	3%	2%
25 to 34	*1,257*	93%	6%	1%	*
35 to 44	*1,440*	94%	5%	1%	*
45 to 54	*1,068*	91%	8%	1%	1%
55 to 64	*664*	85%	12%	2%	1%
65 or more	*870*	72%	23%	4%	1%
Educational Attainment					
Less than high school	*684*	78%	19%	3%	*
High school graduate	*1,937*	87%	10%	2%	1%
Some college	*1,580*	90%	7%	1%	1%
College graduate	*1,779*	92%	6%	1%	1%
Community Type					
Urban	*1,557*	87%	10%	2%	1%
Suburban	*2,863*	90%	8%	1%	*
Rural	*1,306*	85%	12%	2%	1%

* Detail excludes non-responses for specific demographic groups.

Two drivers in three (67%) drove with other adults almost every day (19%) or a few days a week (48%) (Figure 2-1). Additionally, one driver in four (23%) drove with other adults a few days a month and less that one in 10 (7%) drove with an adult only a few times a year. Only 3% of drivers reported that they never drive with other adults. The proportion of men and women who drove with other adults at least a few days a week is almost the same — 68% and 66% respectively.

Slightly more than three drivers in five (63%) age 16 to 20 drove with other adults at least a few days a week. This increased to three in four (76%) of drivers 21 to 24, and slowly decreased for each successive age cohort until it reached 66% for the 55 to 64 age group; it then dropped to 60% for those 65 and older.

FIGURE 2-1



Qx: How often do your drive with other adults in your [vehicle]?
Qx: How often do you drive with children in your [vehicle]?
Base: Vehicle drive most often is not a motorcycle; adults=Group A questionnaire; children=Group B questionnaire.
Unweighted N(adults)=2,952; N(children)=3,039

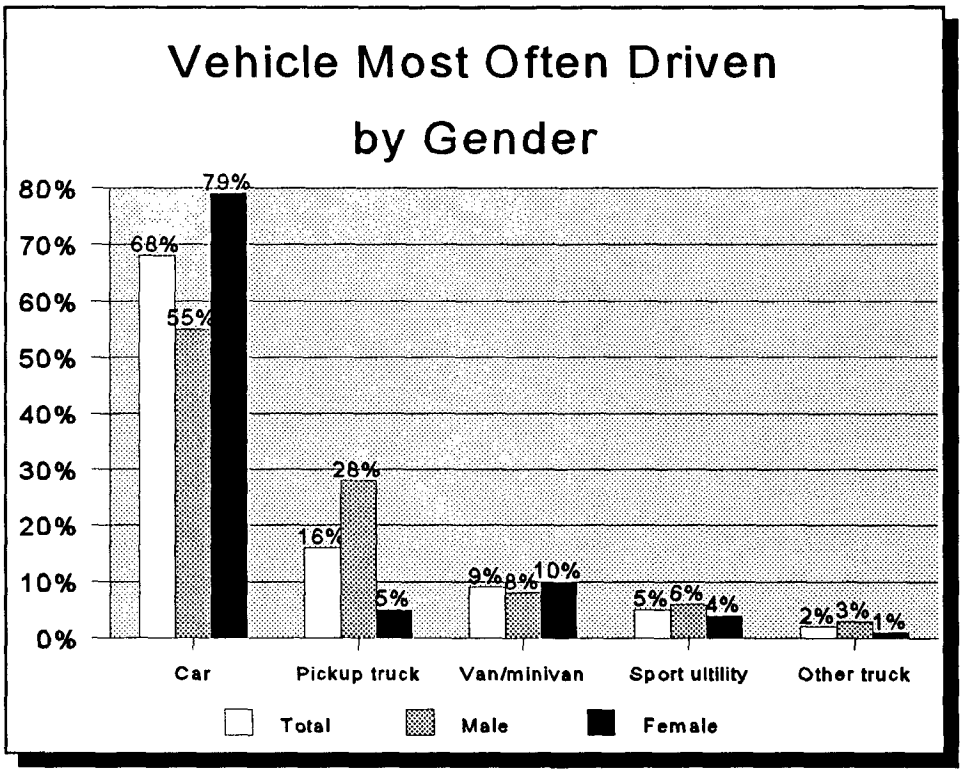
A very different pattern appeared for driving with children. Overall, slightly less than two in five (38%) drivers drove with children almost every day (20%) or a few days a week (18%). Additionally, one driver in seven (14%) drove with a child only a few times a month and one in four (24%) drove with children only a few times a year. One driver in four (24%) reported never driving with a child. Unlike driving with adults, where there was no difference by gender, there was a large difference between men and women who reported driving with children. Women reported driving with children one-third more than men — 44% and 33% respectively.

The pattern by age is even more dramatic. Only one in four (25%) of drivers 16 to 20 reported driving with children at least a few days a week. This proportion doubles to 29% for drivers 21 to 24 and almost doubles again to 53% for drivers 25 to 34. Driving with children at least a few days a week peeks at 64% for drivers 35 to 44 before it starts to drop precipitously — 30% for drivers 45-54, 17% for drivers 55 to 64, and 10% for drivers 65 and over.

VEHICLE CHARACTERISTICS

Drivers were asked to identify their primary vehicle, that is the type of vehicle they drove most often. Fully two-thirds (68%) of drivers drove a car most often (Figure 2-2). The second most often driven vehicle was the pickup truck, which was mentioned by 16% of drivers. This is followed by van or minivan, mentioned by one in 10 (9%), sport utility vehicles, mentioned by one in twenty (5%) and other trucks, mentioned by 2%. Motorcycles and other vehicles were mentioned by a handful of drivers who accounted for less than 0.5%.

FIGURE 2-2



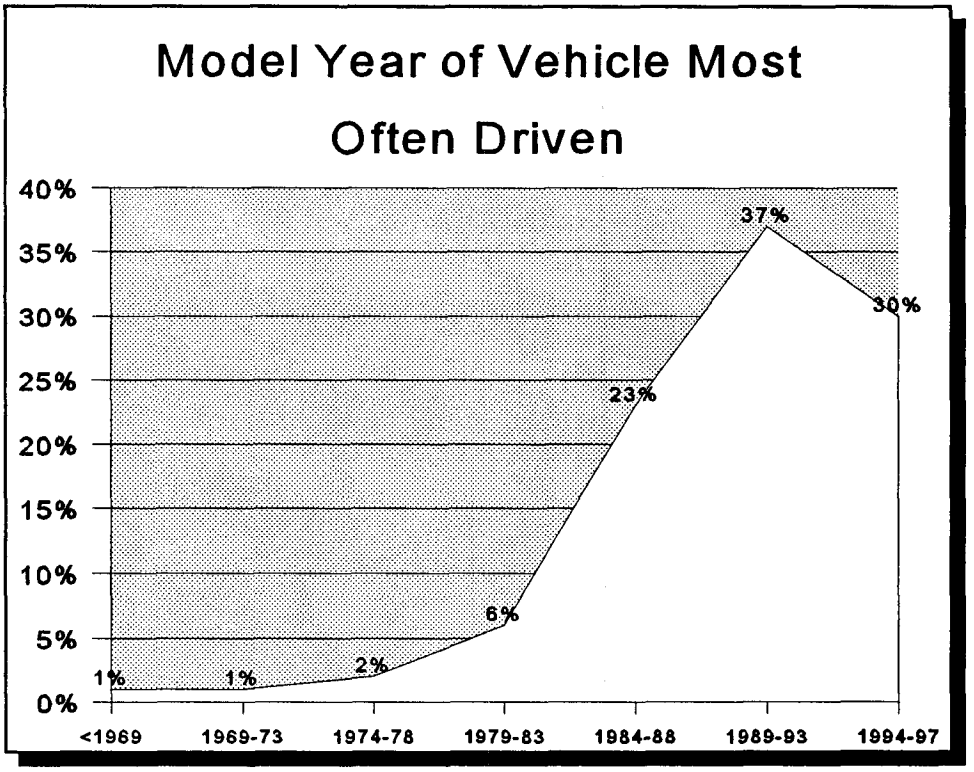
Qx: What kind of vehicle do you drive most often? Is it a car, van or minivan, motorcycle, pickup truck, or something else?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=6,000

This distribution hides major differences that exist between the genders for vehicle most often driven. While cars were mentioned overall by two-thirds of all drivers, they were mentioned by a little more than half (55%) of male drivers, but four out of five (79%) women drivers. Similarly, while pickup trucks were mentioned by 16% of all drivers, they were mentioned by almost twice as many men (28%) and one-third as many women (5%).

One area where a difference did not appear was in the selection of the van/minivan. The minivan has been characterized as the vehicle of choice of the "soccer mom," yet is the vehicle most often driven by 10% of women and 8% of men.

Fully 30% of motor vehicles (other than motorcycles) driven most often were from the last four model years (Figure 2-3). An additional 37% were five to nine years old. Together, two-thirds of the vehicles on the road at the time of the study were less than 10 years-old. Additionally, nine vehicles in 10 (90%) were less than 15 years old. The median model year of all vehicles was 1992.

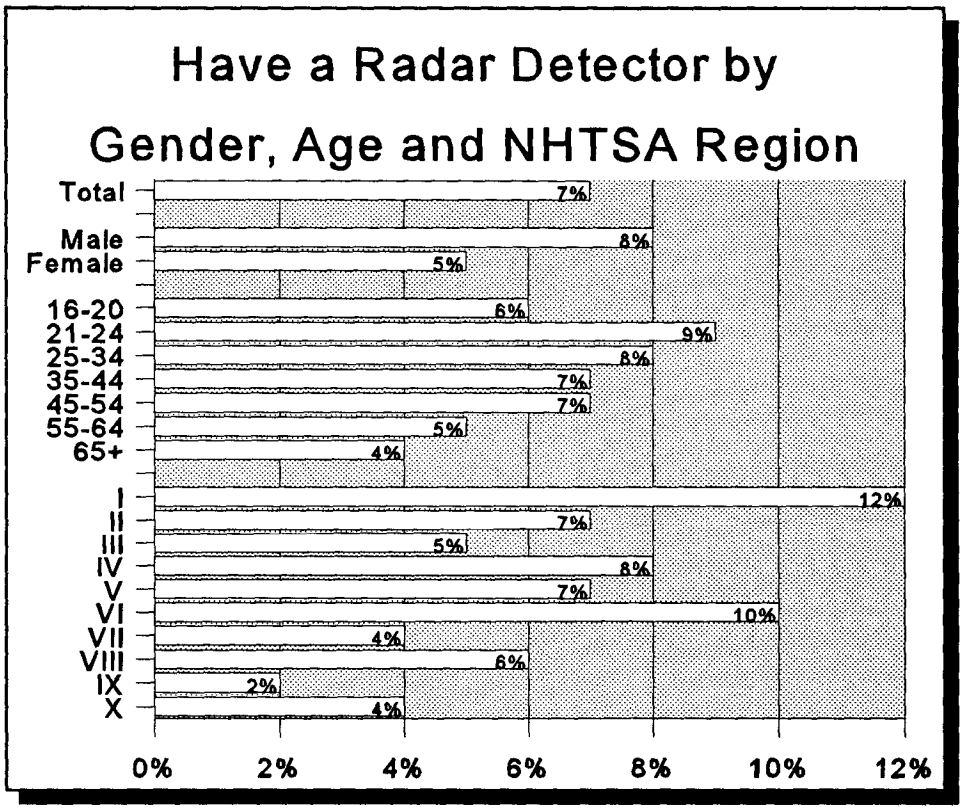
FIGURE 2-3



Qx: What model year is the [vehicle] you drive most often?
Base: Vehicle driven most often is not a motorcycle.
Unweighted N=5,991

Approximately one driver in 14 (7%) had a radar detector in their vehicle (Figure 2-4). Radar detectors were used by almost twice as many males (8%) as females (5%). In addition, they were used by about one driver in 10 (9%) in the 21 to 24 age groups, followed by 8% of drivers in the 25 to 34 age group. Radar detectors were used least by drivers in the 55 to 64 age group (5%) and those drivers age 65 and over (4%).

FIGURE 2-4



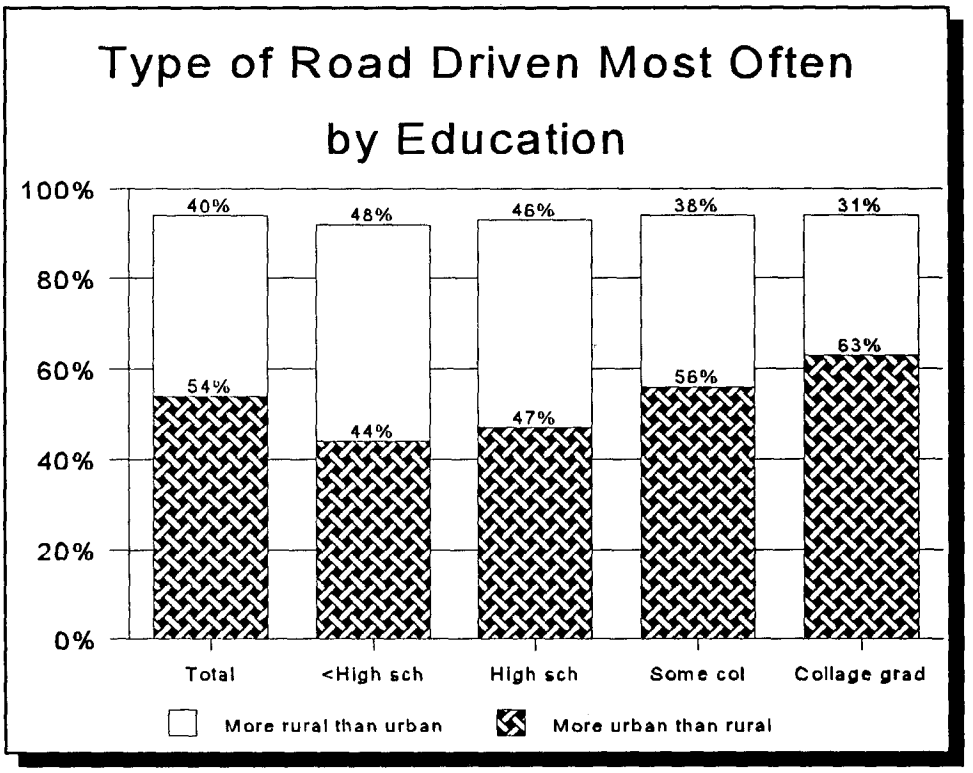
Qx: Do you have a radar detector in your vehicle?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=6,000

One driver in eight (12%) in the northeastern states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont (NHTSA Region I) had a radar detector in his/her vehicle. This was followed by the south central states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas (Region VI) with 10% of drivers having a radar detector in their vehicle. States in the Gulf and south Atlantic areas — Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee — (Region IV), with 8%, was the only other region above the national average.

PRIMARY ROAD TRAVELED CHARACTERISTICS

Slightly more than half (54%) of drivers reported that they most often drove on primarily urban rather than primarily rural roads (Figure 2-5). Conversely, two drivers in five (40%) reported that they most often drive on rural rather than urban roads. The remaining 6% reported that they drove equal time on both.

FIGURE 2-5

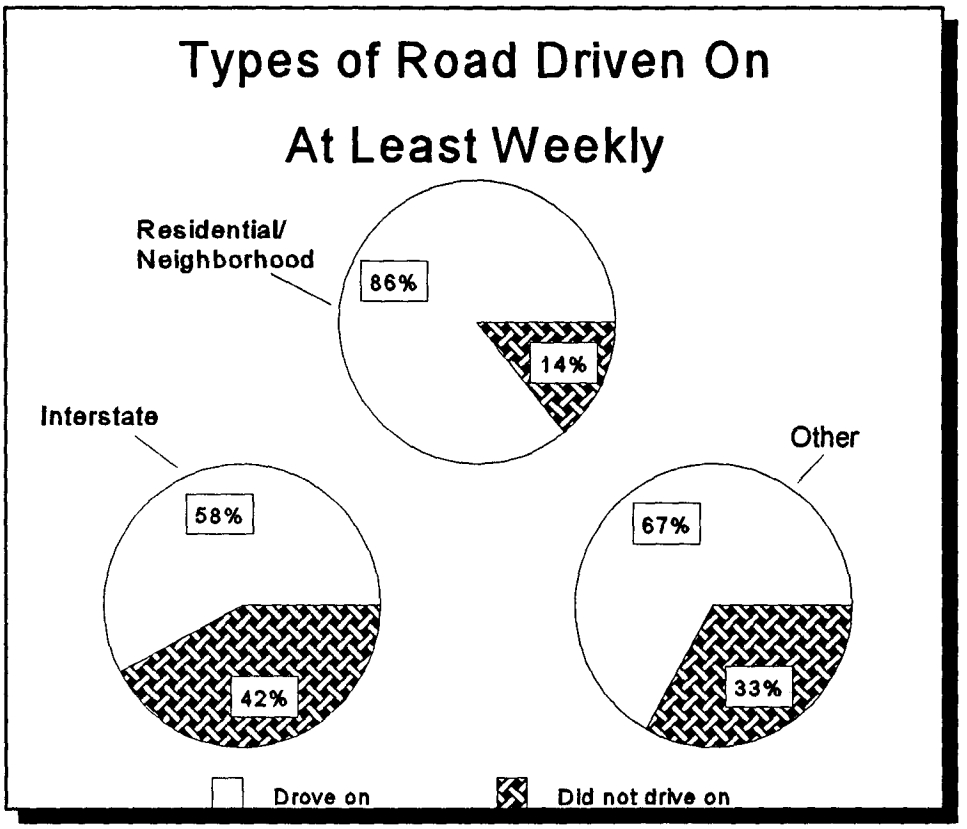


Qx: Now, thinking about the roads you normally drive on, would you say that the roads where you drive most often are in areas that are more urban than rural or more rural than urban?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=6,000

Drivers who primarily used urban roads increased with their amount of education, going from 44% of those with less than a high school education to 63% of college graduates. The fact that the proportion of drivers who drive most often on urban roads increases as educational attainment increases, says more about the educational levels of the residence of urban and rural areas than it does about the driving habits of these drivers.

Slightly more than five drivers in six (86%) drive at least weekly on residential or neighborhood streets with posted speed limits of 35 miles per hour or less (Figure 2-6). Between 83% and 89% of all major sub-populations analyzed in this study drove on residential or neighborhood streets at least weekly.

FIGURE 2-6



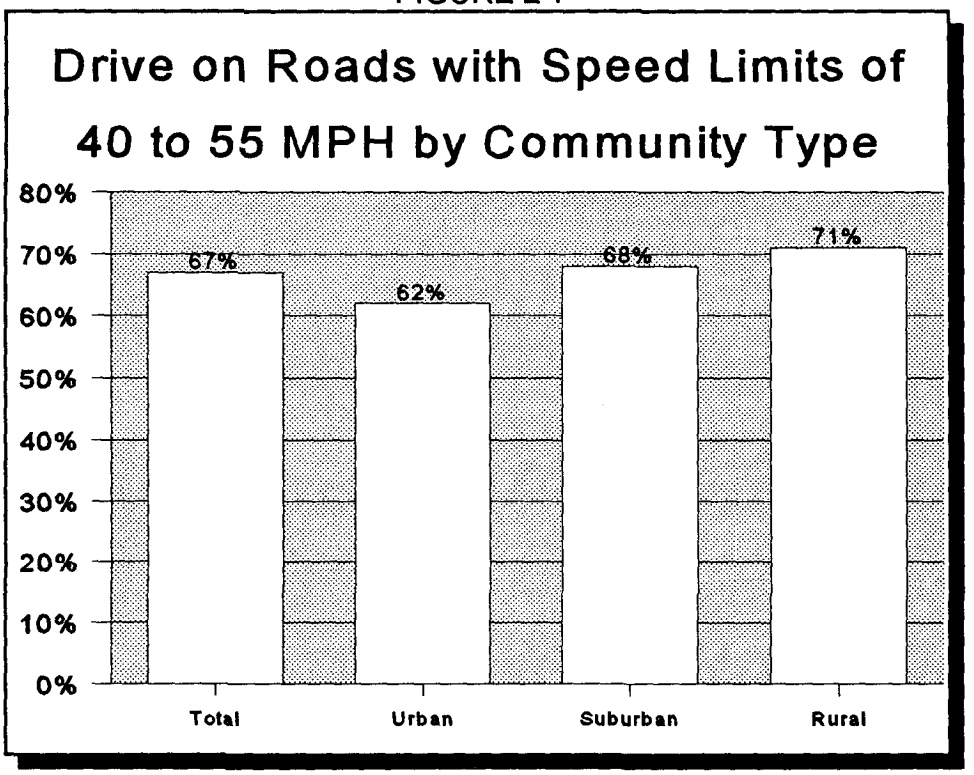
Qx: *Do you drive at least weekly on residential or neighborhood street with posted speed limits of 35 miles per hour or less, interstate highways or other types of roads with speed limits of 40 to 55 miles per hour?*

Base: *Total population of drivers.*

Unweighted N=6,000

As was shown in Figure 2-6 (page 17), fully two-thirds of all drivers drove at least weekly on major roads with posted speed limits between 40 and 55 miles per hour. These roads were used most by residents of rural areas (71%) and least by residents of urban areas (62%).

FIGURE 2-7



Qx: *Do you drive at least weekly on ... roads with speed limits of 40 to 55 miles per hour?*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*
Unweighted N=6,000

SUMMARY

Nine out of 10 drivers drove almost every day. Two-thirds of drivers rode with other adults at least a few days a week and nearly two-fifths drove with children at least a few days a week. Cars were the most frequently driven vehicles, outnumbering all other vehicles (trucks, vans or minivans and sport utility vehicles) combined by two to one. These cars were generally newer models, with two-thirds of all cars being no more than eight years old.

CHAPTER III.

DRIVERS' BELIEFS ABOUT UNSAFE DRIVING

WHAT IS UNSAFE DRIVING

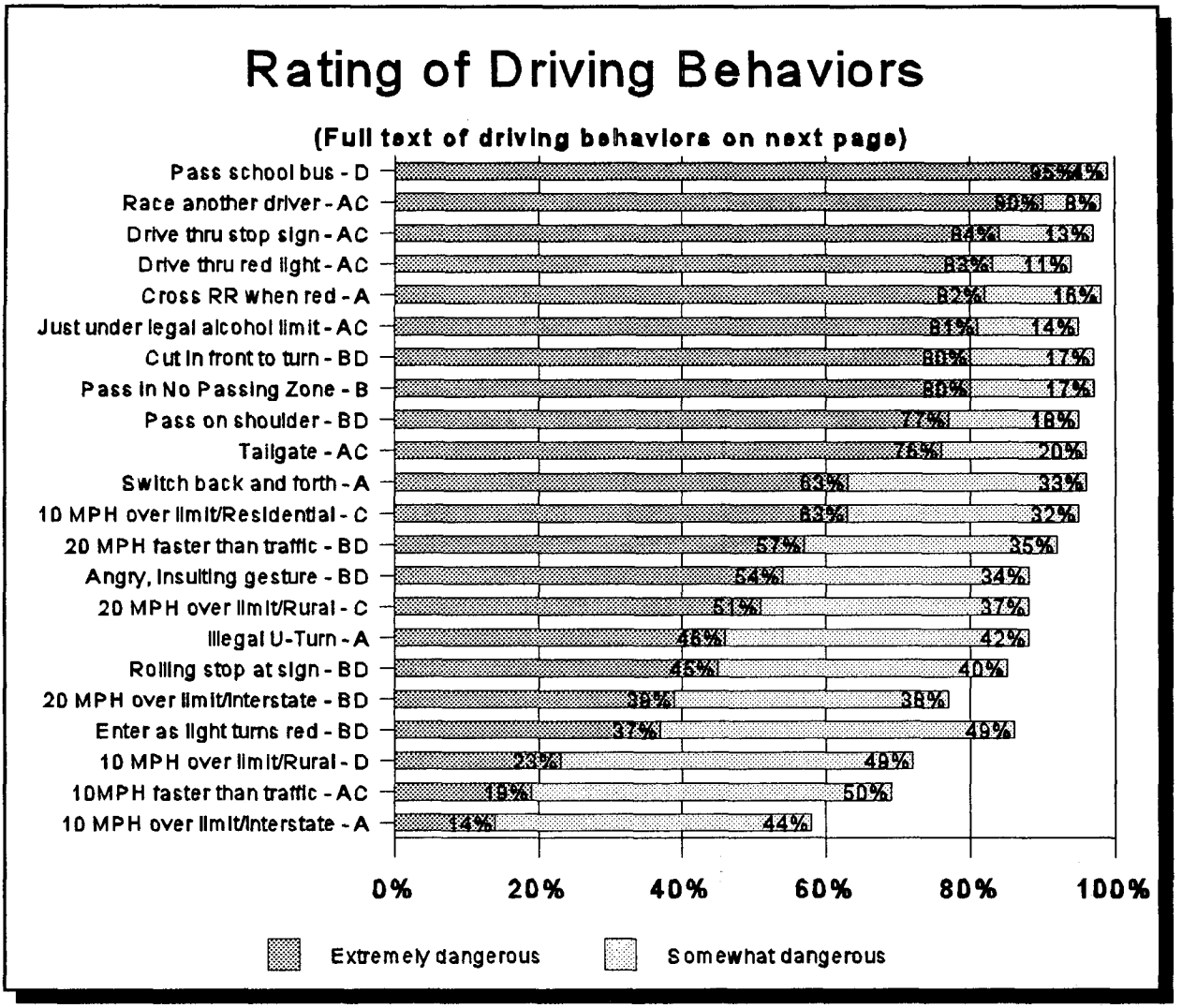
To explore public attitudes and behaviors related to unsafe driving practices, the national sample of drivers was asked how safe or dangerous they felt a set of driving behaviors usually were. The full text of each driving behavior measured as well as the shortened text used in the figures is shown in the following table. The rating of each behavior is shown in Figure 3-1 (next page).

TABLE 3-1

Driving Behaviors

Full Text	Shortened Text
Pass a school bus that has its red lights flashing and the stop arm in full view.	Pass school bus
Race another driver.	Race another driver
Drive through a stop sign without slowing.	Drive thru stop sign
Drive through a traffic light that was already red before you entered the intersection.	Drive thru red light
Cross railroad tracks when the red light is blinking.	Cross RR when red
Drive when just under the legal alcohol limit.	Just under legal alcohol limit
Cut in front of another car in order to make a turn.	Cut in front to turn
Pass a vehicle in a no-passing zone.	Pass in No Passing Zone
Use the shoulder to pass in heavy traffic.	Pass on shoulder
Tailgate another vehicle on a highway with one lane in each direction.	Tailgate
Drive through traffic by switching back and forth between lanes.	Switch back and forth
Go 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on a two	10 MPH over limit/Residential
Drive 20 miles an hour faster than most other vehicles are going.	20 MPH faster than traffic
Make an angry, insulting or obscene gesture or comment toward another driver such that they hear or see you.	Angry, Insulting gesture
Driving 20 miles an hour over the speed limit on a rural road.	20 MPH over limit/Rural
Make a U-turn where a sign says not to.	Illegal U-Turn
Slow but not completely stop at a stop sign.	Rolling stop at sign
Drive 20 miles an hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway.	20 MPH over limit/Interstate
Enter an intersection just as the light is turning from yellow to red.	Enter as light turns red
Drive 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on a two-lane rural road.	10 MPH over limit/Rural
Drive 10 miles an hour faster than most other vehicles are going.	10 MPH faster than traffic
Drive 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway.	10 MPH over limit/Interstate

FIGURE 3-1



Qx: *People feel differently about how safe or dangerous different types of driving behavior are. How safe do you feel it is to ... ?*

Base: *Total population of drivers.*

Unweighted N: As discussed in Chapter 1, and shown in Table 1-1 (page 5), the sample for this survey can be thought of as the combination of 4 smaller, nation-wide sample of drivers, denoted as A, B, C, and D with unweighted N's of 1489, 1511, 1467 and 1533 respectively. The combinations of A and C, and B and D have unweighted N's of 2956 and 3044, respectively.

The survey indicates that the driving public differentiates between a broad list of activities that might be classified as unsafe driving. A majority of drivers agree that each of the 22 behaviors was at least somewhat dangerous. However, the proportion of drivers who consider the act to be at least somewhat dangerous ranges from 58% for driving 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway to 99% for illegally passing a school bus with its lights flashing and stop arm extended. The forty-one point difference in the public perception of the safety of these two driving behaviors pales when focusing on what drivers consider to be extremely dangerous. Only 14% of the driving public considers driving 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway as extremely dangerous, compared to 95% of drivers who rate passing a school bus as extremely dangerous.

In general, the public appears to rate speeding, i.e., exceeding posted speed limits or the average speed of traffic, as less dangerous than most other traffic violations. All of the speeding activities, including driving 20 miles an hour faster than the traffic and exceeding posted limits by 10 miles an hour in a residential area, are in the bottom half of the dangerousness ratings. These are all rated as extremely dangerous by far fewer than those who consider driving when just under the legal alcohol limit as extremely dangerous. By contrast, driving through stop lights, stop signs and railroad crossings with flashing red lights are rated among the most dangerous activities — equal to or worse than driving just below the legal alcohol limit.

There is a fairly consistent difference across age groups in the degree of perceived danger of these driving activities. The youngest age groups consistently rate each of these activities as less dangerous than the older groups. Generally, the ratings of these activities increase toward "extremely dangerous" as the driver's age increases. For example, when asked how safe they felt it was to go 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on a two-lane rural road, the mean rating increased from 3.38 (3=Neither safe nor dangerous) for 16-20 year-olds, to 3.55 for 21-24 year-olds, to 3.55 for 25-34 year-olds, to 3.72 for 35-44 year-olds, to 3.82 for 45-54 year-olds, to 4.02 (4=Somewhat Dangerous) for 55-64 year-olds, to 4.20 for drivers aged 65 and older. In the case of some other driving activities, the greatest difference in the perceived safety of these activities occurs between the 16-24 year old age groups, on the one hand, and the older age groups, on the other. In any event, the survey demonstrates that younger drivers have lower perceptions of the risk of unsafe driving actions than do older drivers.

TABLE 3-2

Mean Rating of Safety of Select Driving Behaviors

Qx: *People feel differently about how safe or dangerous different types of driving behavior are. How safe do you feel it is to ...?*
Base: *Total population of drivers*
Unweighted N: A=1,489; B=1,511; C=1,4567; D=1,533; AC=2,956; BD=3,044

Mean rating is on a five-point scale where **1=extremely safe** and **5=extremely dangerous.**	*Unweighted N*	**Mean Rating of Safety by Age**						
		16-20	**21-24**	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65+**
Drive through a light that was already red before you enter an intersection	AC	4.55	4.70	4.68	4.72	4.79	4.77	4.78
Drive 10 miles an hour faster than most other vehicles are going	AC	3.39	3.45	3.47	3.79	3.80	3.90	3.88
Drive 20 miles an hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway	BD	3.74	3.86	3.82	4.02	4.08	4.11	4.30
Tailgate another vehicle on a highway with one lane in each direction	AC	4.54	4.66	4.68	4.74	4.74	4.74	4.74
Enter an intersection just as the light is turning from yellow to red	BD	3.74	3.89	4.18	4.16	4.25	4.22	4.17
Drive through a stop sign without slowing	AC	4.65	4.82	4.79	4.83	4.84	4.85	4.76
Slow but not completely stop at stop sign	BD	3.82	3.83	4.09	4.21	4.34	4.42	4.38
Cut in front of another car in order to make a turn	BD	4.57	4.62	4.73	4.77	4.83	4.86	4.78
Race another driver	AC	4.70	4.83	4.90	4.86	4.90	4.90	4.94
Drive when just under legal alcohol limit	AC	4.79	4.75	4.80	4.75	4.78	4.82	4.73
Use the shoulder to pass in heavy traffic	BD	4.37	4.48	4.70	4.72	4.79	4.78	4.73

TABLE 3-2, continued

Mean Rating of Safety of Select Driving Behaviors

Mean rating is on a five-point scale where **1=extremely safe** and **5=extremely dangerous.**	*Unweighted N*	**Mean Rating of Safety by Age**						
		16-20	**21-24**	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65+**
Make an angry, insulting or obscene gesture or comment toward another driver so that they heard or saw it	BD	4.07	3.93	4.27	4.43	4.49	4.53	4.70
Cross railroad tracks when the red light is blinking	A	4.68	4.76	4.82	4.77	4.79	4.86	4.89
Pass a vehicle in a no-passing zone	B	4.58	4.65	4.74	4.76	4.82	4.83	4.86
Drive 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway	A	3.29	3.19	3.21	3.43	3.39	3.66	3.99
Made a U-turn where a sign said not to	A	4.22	3.93	4.13	4.18	4.33	4.48	4.74
Drive 20 miles an hour faster than most other drivers are going	BD	4.32	4.44	4.33	4.47	4.58	4.60	4.49
Drive through traffic switching quickly back and forth between lanes	A	4.16	4.31	4.50	4.58	4.68	4.65	4.79
Pass a school bus that has its red lights flashing and the stop arm is in full view	D	4.86	4.85	4.95	4.95	4.96	4.96	4.94
Going 10 miles an hour over the speed limit in a residential neighborhood	C	4.17	4.34	4.53	4.54	4.62	4.64	4.64
Go 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on a two-lane rural road	D	3.39	3.56	3.55	3.72	3.82	4.01	4.18
Driving 20 miles an hour over the speed limit on a rural road	C	3.84	4.17	4.24	4.40	4.45	4.51	4.45

The information presented in Table 3-2 is presented again in Table 3-2a with some of the mean safety ratings shaded. The mean ratings for "Driving when just under legal alcohol limit" are used as an index of safety. The assumption used in this selection is that it is generally agreed that driving while impaired by alcohol is dangerous. Mean ratings meeting or exceeding the index value for each age group are shaded and appear in bold face type.

Only one other driving behavior — passing a school bus with its red light flashing and the stop arm fully extended — was considered to be more dangerous by every age group. Two other driving behaviors — racing another driver and crossing railroad tracks when the red light is blinking — met or exceeded the index value for all but the youngest age group. One other behavior — driving through a stop sign without slowing — would have fallen into this group had it not been for the fact that the mean rating for the 25 to 34 age group fell .01 below the index value.

Cutting in front of another driver in order to make a turn met or exceeded the index value for driver age 35 and over.

The number of behaviors considered to be dangerous generally increases by age. As was mentioned above, only two behaviors met or exceeded the index value for those in the 16 to 20 age group. The same is true of four to five behaviors for those in the 21 to 24 and 25 to 34 age groups. The next three age groups, covering ages 35 to 64, had 7 to 9 behaviors met the criterion. Over half of the behaviors — 12 of the 22 considered — met the criterion for drivers age 65 or over.

TABLE 3-2a

Mean Rating of Safety of Select Driving Behaviors, continued

Qx: People feel differently about how safe or dangerous different types of driving behavior are. How safe do you feel it is to ...?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N: A=1,489; B=1,511; C=1,4567; D=1,533; AC=2,956; BD=3,044

Mean rating is on a five-point scale where **1=extremely safe** and **5=extremely dangerous.**	*Unweighted N*	**Mean Rating of Safety by Age**						
		16-20	**21-24**	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65+**
Drive through a light that was already red before you enter an intersection	AC	4.55	4.70	4.68	4.72	**4.79**	4.77	**4.78**
Drive 10 miles an hour faster than most other vehicles are going	AC	3.39	3.45	3.47	3.79	3.80	3.90	3.88
Drive 20 miles an hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway	BD	3.74	3.86	3.82	4.02	4.08	4.11	4.30
Tailgate another vehicle on a highway with one lane in each direction	AC	4.54	4.66	4.68	4.74	4.74	4.74	**4.74**
Enter an intersection just as the light is turning from yellow to red	BD	3.74	3.89	4.18	4.16	4.25	4.22	4.17
Drive through a stop sign without slowing	AC	4.65	**4.82**	4.79	**4.83**	**4.84**	**4.85**	**4.76**
Slow but not completely stop at stop sign	BD	3.82	3.83	4.09	4.21	4.34	4.42	4.38
Cut in front of another car in order to make a turn	BD	4.57	4.62	4.73	**4.77**	**4.83**	**4.86**	**4.78**
Race another driver	AC	4.70	**4.83**	**4.90**	**4.86**	**4.90**	**4.90**	**4.94**
Drive when just under legal alcohol limit	AC	**4.79**	**4.75**	**4.80**	**4.75**	**4.78**	**4.82**	**4.73**
Use the shoulder to pass in heavy traffic	BD	4.37	4.48	4.70	4.72	**4.79**	4.78	**4.73**

TABLE 3-2a, continued

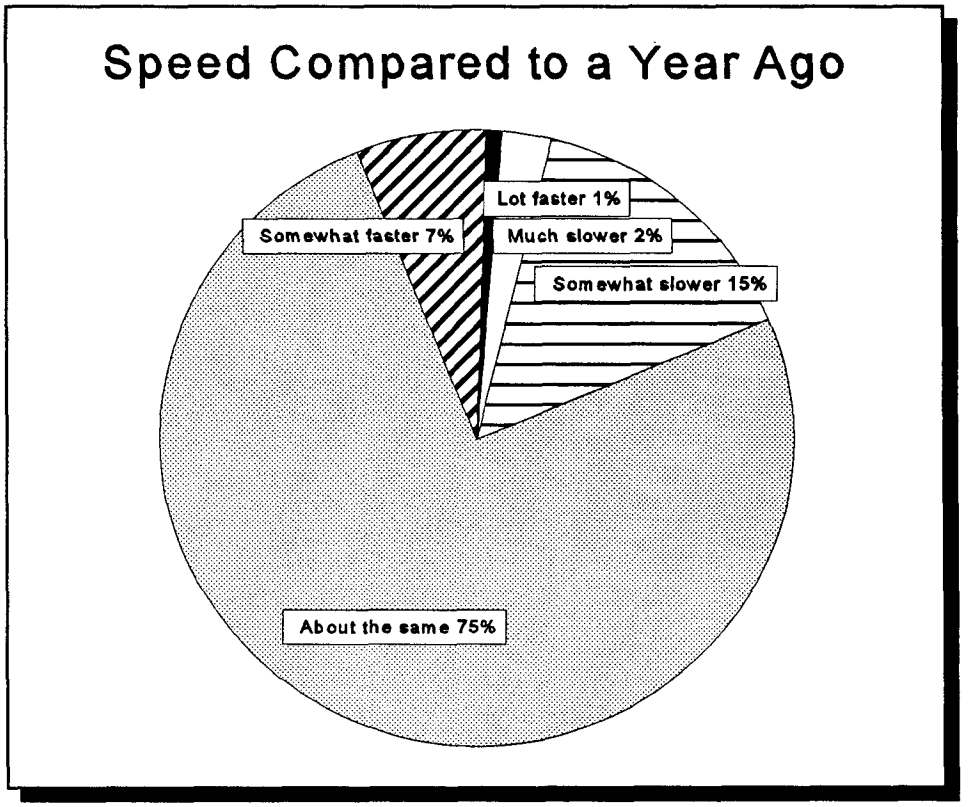
Mean Rating of Safety of Select Driving Behaviors, continued

Mean rating is on a five-point scale where **1=extremely safe** and **5=extremely dangerous**.	*Unweighted N*	**Mean Rating of Safety by Age**						
		16-20	**21-24**	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65+**
Make an angry, insulting or obscene gesture or comment toward another driver so that they heard or saw it	BD	4.07	3.93	4.27	4.43	4.49	4.53	4.70
Cross railroad tracks when the red light is blinking	A	4.68	**4.76**	**4.82**	**4.77**	**4.79**	**4.86**	**4.89**
Pass a vehicle in a no-passing zone	B	4.58	4.65	4.74	**4.76**	**4.82**	**4.83**	**4.86**
Drive 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway	A	3.29	3.19	3.21	3.43	3.39	3.66	3.99
Made a U-turn where a sign said not to	A	4.22	3.93	4.13	4.18	4.33	4.48	**4.74**
Drive 20 miles an hour faster than most other drivers are going	BD	4.32	4.44	4.33	4.47	4.58	4.60	4.49
Drive through traffic switching quickly back and forth between lanes	A	4.16	4.31	4.50	4.58	4.68	4.65	**4.79**
Pass a school bus that has its red lights flashing and the stop arm is in full view	D	**4.86**	**4.85**	**4.95**	**4.95**	**4.96**	**4.96**	**4.94**
Going 10 miles an hour over the speed limit in a residential neighborhood	C	4.17	4.34	4.53	4.54	4.62	4.64	4.64
Go 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on a two-lane rural road	D	3.39	3.56	3.55	3.72	3.82	4.01	4.18
Driving 20 miles an hour over the speed limit on a rural road	C	3.84	4.17	4.24	4.40	4.45	4.51	4.45
Items at or above index		2	5	4	7	9	7	12

RECENT CHANGES IN DRIVING BEHAVIOR

Drivers were asked if they felt they were driving faster or slower than they were a year ago (see Figure 3-2). Less than one driver in ten (8%) said they were driving faster while twice as many drivers (17%) said they were driving slower. The vast majority of drivers (75%) said they were driving about the same as they were last year.

FIGURE 3-2



Qx: Compared to a year ago, would you say that you generally drive [faster/slower]?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=1,489

Among drivers in the 16 to 20 age group, those driving faster outnumbered those driving slower by ten percentage points — 27% to 17%. But for the next age group, those 21 to 24, there was almost a two to one advantage in favor of those driving slower — 10% faster to 18% slower.

For drivers with less than a high school education the percentage of drivers who were driving faster was equal to those who were driving slower — 13% for both. For other educational levels drivers who reported driving slower outnumbered drivers who were driving faster by large margins: among high school graduates 6% faster to 18% slower; among drivers with some college 7% to 20%; and among college graduates 7% to 15%.

Drivers who reported that they drove faster now than they had one year ago were asked why they were driving faster. More than half the drivers (52%) said they were driving faster as a result of increased speed limits (see Table 3-3). The second most mentioned reason for driving faster, mentioned by one in five (18%) was the increased experience of the driver. Traffic flow was mentioned by 15%.

TABLE 3-3

Why Drive Faster

Qx: Why do you drive faster now?
Base: Drive faster than a year ago.

	Total
Unweighted N	*110*
More experience as a driver	**18%**
Traffic flow	**15%**
Keep up with traffic	14%
Other	1%
Meet schedule	**3%**
Other mentions	**55%**
Increase in speed limit	52%
Other	4%
Don't know, Not applicable, No answer	**5%**

Totals do not add to 100% since respondents were allowed to give more than one answer.

Drivers who reported they were driving slower also were asked to elaborate on the reasons. Two drivers in five (41%) mentioned driver-related issues, primarily the maturity of the driver (see Table 3-4). Safety concerns were the reason for driving slower for one driver in three (33%). About half of these concerns (14%) were related to being more cautious. One driver in 14 (7%) was driving slower to avoid crashes and 6% were driving slower because they had been in a crash. One driver in five (19%), who is driving slower this year than last, reported doing so because of vehicle-related factors, primarily having children or other family members in the car. Lastly, enforcement was mentioned by about one driver in twelve (8%) as the reason for driving slower. However, it is mentioned by twice that many (16%) drivers who admitted to exceeding the speed limit at least a few days a week.

TABLE 3-4

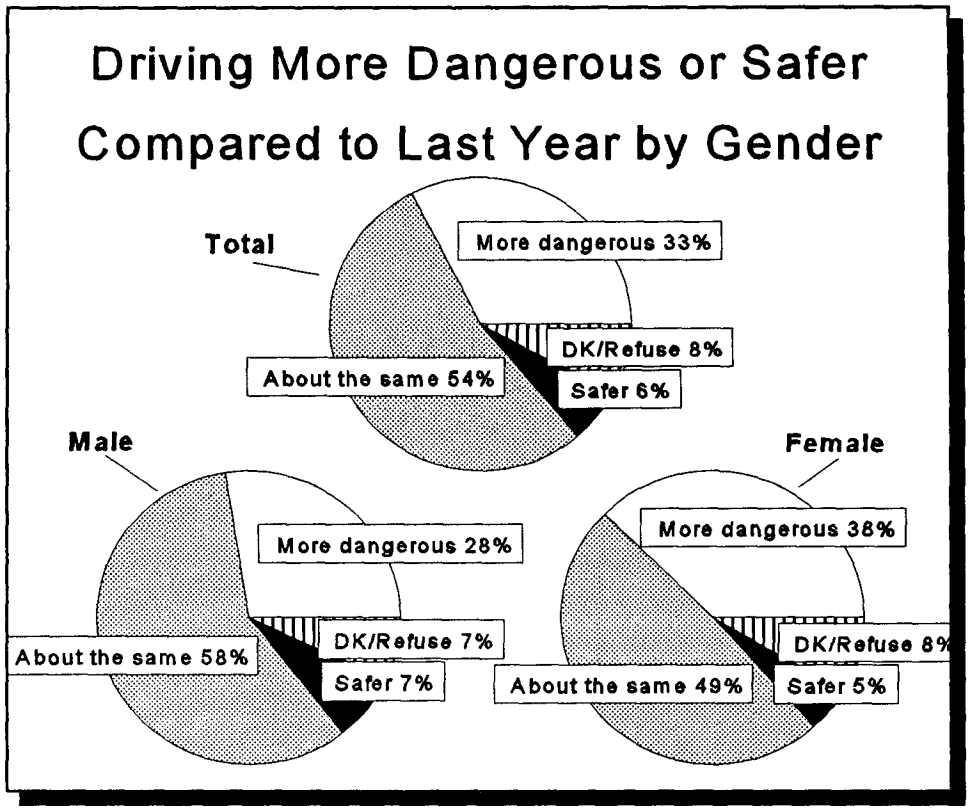
Why Drive Slower

Qx: Why do you drive slower now?
Base: Drive slower than a year ago.

	Total
Unweighted N	*263*
Driver-related	**41%**
Driver maturity	34%
Slower reflexes	5%
Other	5%
Safety	**33%**
More Cautious	14%
Avoid accidents	7%
Been in accident	6%
Other	5%
Vehicle-related	**19%**
Children/family in the car	17%
Other	2%
Enforcement	**8%**
Other mentions	**12%**
None, No Reason, Don't know, Not applicable, No answer	**7%**

Totals do not add to 100% since respondents were allowed to give more than one answer.

FIGURE 3-3



Qx: *Compared to a year ago, do you feel that driving is more dangerous or safer?*
Base: *Speeding questionnaire.*
Unweighted N=3,000

The national sample of drivers was also asked if, compared to a year ago, they felt driving was more dangerous or safer today. One driver in three (33%) felt that driving was either: a lot more dangerous (13%) or somewhat more dangerous (19%) than it was one year ago. Conversely, only 6% felt it was safer*. Over half (54%) of all drivers responded that driving was about the same as last year.

While roughly similar proportions of men and women felt driving was safer now than it was a year ago, there is a difference in the proportions who felt it is more dangerous. Where almost three in ten (28%) male drivers felt driving was more dangerous, almost four in ten (38%) female drivers felt the same way.

* Total may not be equal to sum of elements due to rounding.

Not unexpectedly, younger drivers are less likely than older drivers to say driving is more dangerous — 24% of drivers in the 16 to 20 and 26% of drivers in the 21 to 24 age group versus 42% in the 55 to 64 age group and 43% for drivers 65 and over — and more likely to say it is safer — 13% and 7% in the two youngest age groups versus 6% in the two oldest.

About one third (32%) of White drivers felt driving is more dangerous than it was a year ago compared to 39% of Black drivers and 42% of Hispanic drivers (see Table 3-5, next page). These different views of the increased dangerousness of driving are paralleled with regard to the increased safety of driving — 5% of Whites compared to 9% of Blacks and 8% of Hispanics feel driving is safer today than it was a year ago.

Drivers who felt it was more dangerous to drive now compared to a year ago were asked to elaborate. Overall, almost three drivers in five (58%) mentioned driver-related factors. One driver in five (20%) specifically mentioned careless or inattentive drivers. This was followed by faster drivers or speeders (18%); aggressive, reckless and risky driving (14%); young drivers coming of age (10%); and drivers on alcohol or drugs (10%).

The second most commonly mentioned category (33%) dealt with traffic conditions, primarily heavier traffic and more cars. The third most commonly cited factor in making driving more dangerous than last year was increases in the speed limit (16%). No other category was mentioned by more than one driver in 10.

TABLE 3-5

Why Driving is More Dangerous by Race and Ethnicity

Qx: Why is driving more dangerous?
Base: Driving is more dangerous than a year ago.

	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Unweighted N	*1,012*	*791*	*84*	*95*
Driver-related	**58%**	**56%**	**74%**	**58%**
Careless/inattentive	20%	20%	22%	12%
Faster drivers/speed	18%	18%	20%	12%
Aggressive/reckless	14%	15%	9%	11%
Young drivers	10%	8%	19%	25%
Alcohol/drugs	10%	9%	19%	11%
Other	4%	3%	5%	7%
Traffic related	**33%**	**36%**	**23%**	**19%**
Speed limit	**16%**	**15%**	**10%**	**22%**
Enforcement	**7%**	**7%**	**7%**	**5%**
Safety	**6%**	**5%**	**9%**	**11%**
Meet schedule	**6%**	**6%**	**6%**	**4%**
Road conditions	**2%**	**3%**	**1%**	**1%**
Other	**2%**	**2%**	**2%**	**1%**
Don't know, Not applicable, No answer	**4%**	**3%**	**5%**	**7%**

Totals do not add to 100% since respondents were allowed to give more than one answer.

Overall, three drivers in five (58%) who felt driving was more dangerous point to driver-related reasons. This proportion increases to three in four (74%) among Black drivers. The concerns of these drivers focus more attention on young drivers and the use of alcohol and drugs as the causes of the increased danger than do drivers in general. Hispanic drivers also reported higher concern about young drivers. Fully one in four (25%) Hispanic drivers mentioned younger drivers as the reason driving is more dangerous — two and one-half times the overall rate — while at the same time they were less concerned about careless and inattentive drivers or those who speed.

Drivers who said that driving was safer now than it was a year ago were asked why they felt this way. Three drivers in ten (31%) felt public awareness had an impact on making the roads safer (see Table 3-6). Additionally, one driver in five (20%) mentioned increased enforcement. Two drivers in five (40%) mentioned something else.

TABLE 3-6

Why Driving is Safer

Qx: Why is driving safer?
Base: Driving is safer than a year ago.

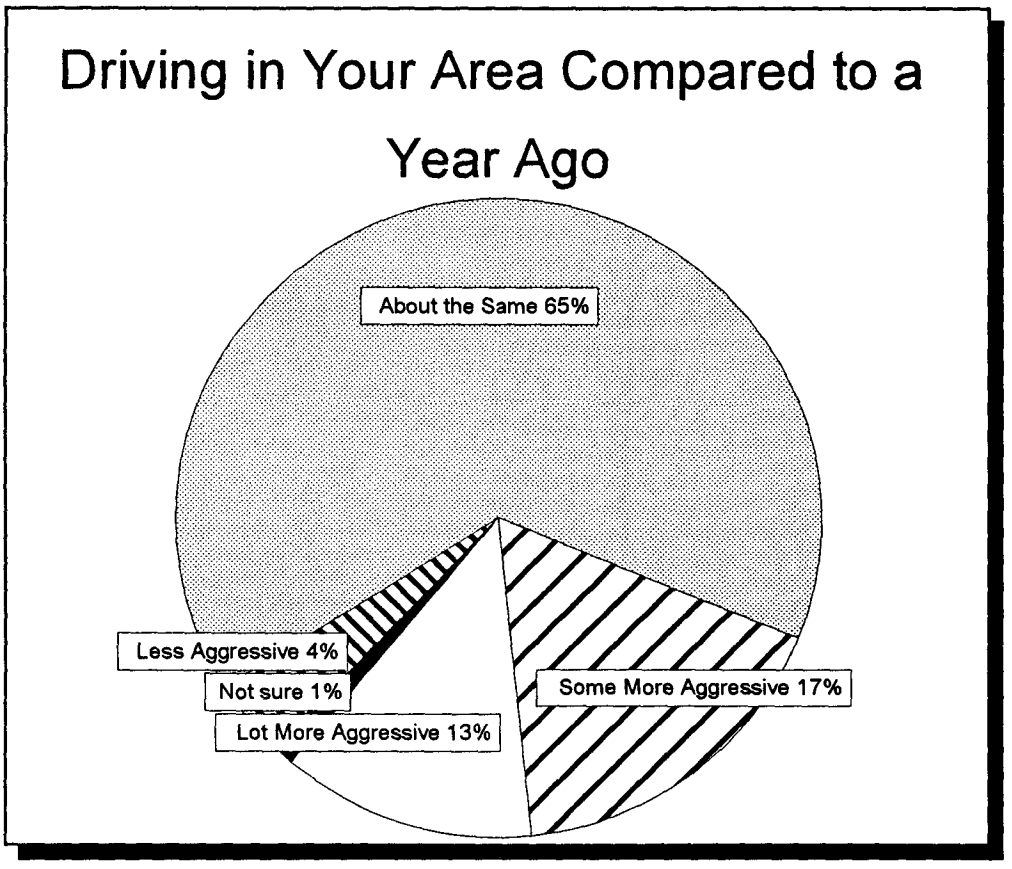
	Total
Unweighted N	*190*
Public Awareness	**31%**
Enforcement	**20%**
Other	**40%**
Don't know, None, No answer	**11%**

Totals do not add to 100% since respondents were allowed to give more than one answer.

AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

The national sample of drivers was asked whether they felt that drivers in their area were **driving more or less aggressively** (self-defined) than a year ago. Most drivers (65%) reported no difference in the aggressiveness of drivers in their area (see Figure 3-4). However, a substantial minority (30%) reported that drivers in their area were driving a lot more aggressively (13%) or somewhat more aggressively (17%) than a year ago. By comparison, very few drivers (4%) reported that drivers in their area were driving somewhat less aggressively (3%) or a lot less aggressively (1%) than a year ago.

FIGURE 3-4

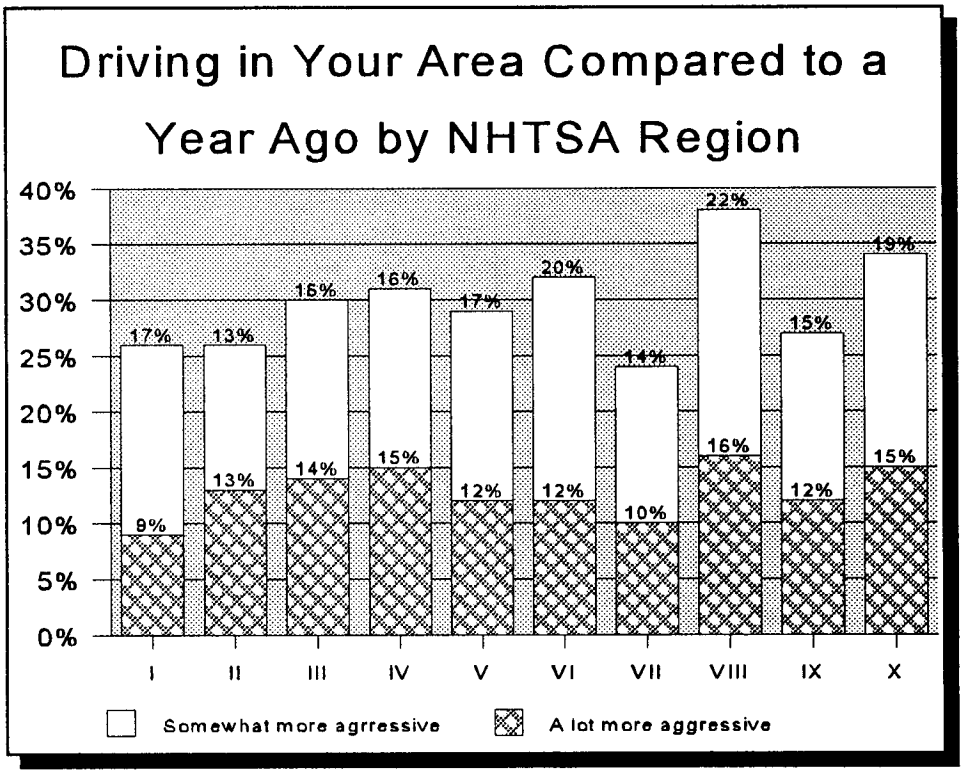


Qx: *Compared to a year ago, would you say that other drivers in your area drive a lot more aggressively now, somewhat more aggressively, about the same, somewhat less aggressively, or much less aggressively?*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*
Unweighted N=3000

Female drivers were more likely to feel that drivers in their area were driving more aggressively (14% a lot more aggressively and 18% somewhat more aggressively) this year compared to last year than were male drivers (11% and 17% respectively). Drivers from urban (30%) and suburban (30%) areas were somewhat more likely than those from rural areas (26%) to feel that drivers in their area were more aggressive than a year ago.

One in four (24%) to two in five (38%) drivers in all NHTSA Regions felt drivers in their areas were driving at least somewhat more aggressively at the time of the interview than they were a year prior to the interview.

FIGURE 3-5



Qx: *Compared to a year ago, would you say that drivers in your area drive a lot more aggressively now, somewhat more aggressively, about the same, somewhat less aggressively, or much less aggressively?*

Base: *Total population of drivers.*

Unweighted N=3,000

Almost two drivers in five (38%) in Region VIII (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming) felt drivers in their area were driving either a lot more aggressively (16%) or somewhat more aggressively (22%) than they were a year ago.

One-third (34%) of the drivers in Region X (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington) also felt drivers in their area were more aggressive. Conversely, drivers in Region VII (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska) were the least willing to say drivers in their area were driving either a lot more aggressively (10%) or somewhat more aggressively (14%) than they were last year.

Those drivers who reported that other drivers drive more aggressively in their area than a year ago were asked why other drivers are more aggressive now. Nearly a quarter (23%) say that drivers drive more aggressively now because they are hurried, rushed or behind schedule (see Table 3-7). About an equal number (22%) attribute the increased aggressiveness of driving in their areas to traffic flow, particularly increased traffic volume and congestion.

TABLE 3-7

Reasons for Increased Aggressive Driving in Your Area

Qx: Why do they drive more aggressively now?
Base: Report other drivers drive more aggressively in their area than they did a year ago.

	TOTAL
Unweighted N	*870*
In a hurry/rushed/behind schedule	**23%**
Traffic flow/increased traffic/congestion	**22%**
Careless/inconsiderate drivers	**12%**
Immature/young drivers	**12%**
New drivers coming into area	**7%**
Angry/frustrated/hostile drivers	**7%**
Higher speed limits	**8%**
Fewer police officers	**6%**
Higher stress levels/more stressed drivers	**3%**
Overly confident drivers	**3%**
Speeding/driving too fast	**7%**
Not sure	**18%**

Totals do not add to 100% since respondents were allowed to give more than one answer.

Two groups of drivers are singled out as contributing to increases in aggressive driving — young drivers (12%) and careless or inconsiderate drivers (12%). Higher speed limits are blamed by some drivers (8%) for increases in aggressive driving in their areas. Fewer police (6%) are also seen as a factor in increased aggressive driving by some. New populations with different lifestyles moving into the area (7%) are cited by others as factors in increased aggressive driving in the local area. Nearly one in five (18%), however, do not know why driving in their area has become more aggressive.

SUMMARY

Three drivers in four said they were driving about the same speed as last year. Half of all drivers felt driving was no more dangerous than it was a year ago, and two-thirds of all drivers felt that aggressive driving was about the same as last year. Drivers' perceptions of the risk of speeding and other unsafe driving behaviors varied considerably among specific behaviors. Some behaviors — passing a school bus while it was stopped or racing other drivers — were thought to be extremely dangerous, while others — driving 10 or 20 miles above the posted speed limit, entering an intersection as the light turned red or a rolling stop at a stop sign — were felt to be only somewhat dangerous.

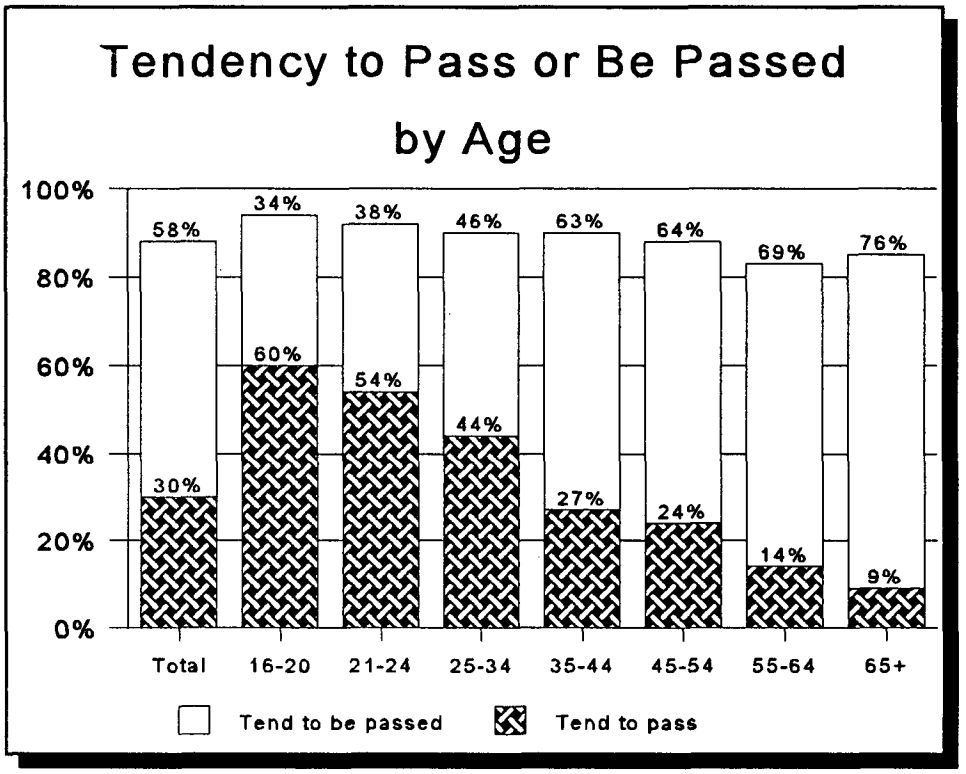
CHAPTER IV.

DRIVERS ATTITUDES TOWARD SPEED AND SPEEDING

BEHAVIOR RELATED TO SPEED

One possible indicator of aggressive driving is the tendency to pass other drivers on the road. Overall, 30% of drivers reported that they tend to pass other cars more than other cars tend to pass them (see Figure 4-1). Almost twice that many drivers (58%) reported that other drivers tended to pass them more often than they pass others. One driver in 10 (10%) said it was about even, as far as passing or being passed, and the remainder did not know or refused.

FIGURE 4-1

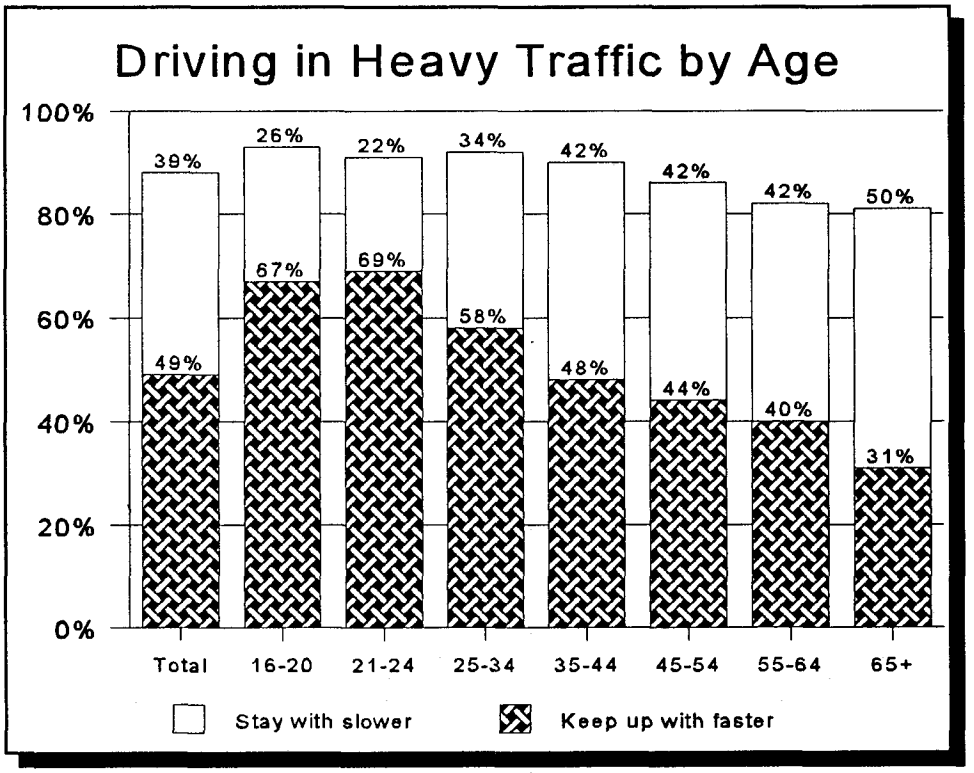


Qx: *Which of the following statements best describes your driving: I tend to pass other cars more often than other cars pass me, or other cars tend to pass me more?*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*
Unweighted N=2,956

As might be expected, there is an inverse relationship between the tendency to pass and age, that is, as age increases the tendency to pass decreases. Fully twice the proportion (60%) of 16 to 20 year-old drivers tend to pass as be passed. This proportion dropped steadily across age groups until it reached 9% of drivers 65 and older. Males were more likely to pass other cars than were females — 34% vs. 27%.

Drivers were also asked if they tended to stay with slower moving traffic or keep up with the faster traffic. About half (49%) reported they keep up with the faster traffic and about two drivers in five (39%) reported they stay with the slower moving traffic. One driver in ten (10%) said it was about equal (see Figure 4-2).

FIGURE 4-2

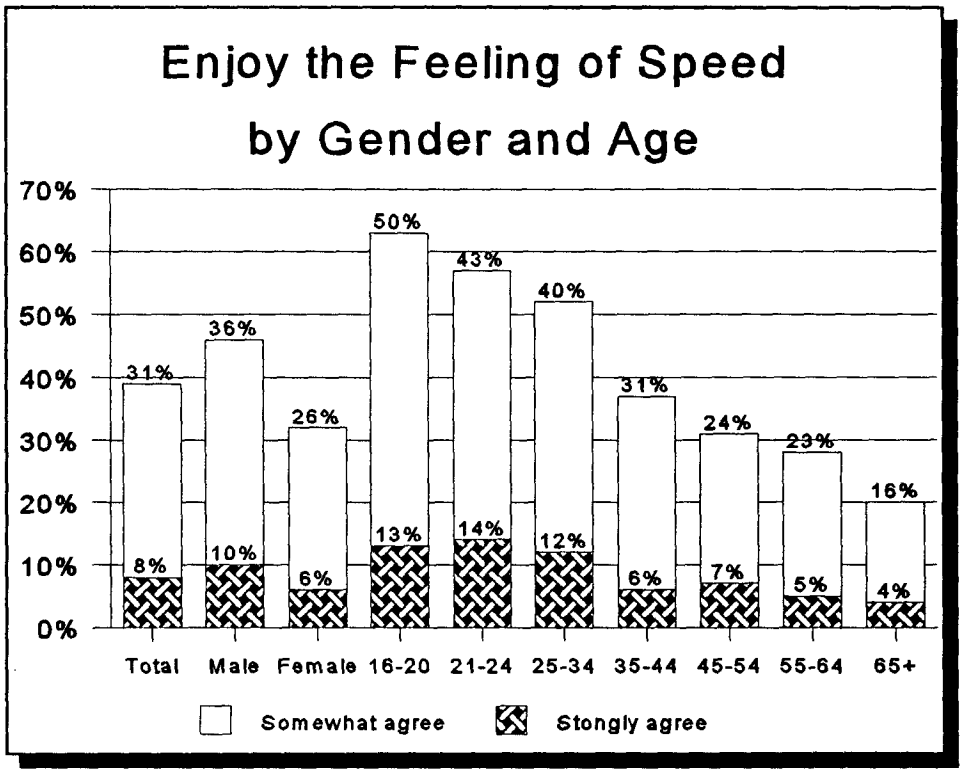


Qx: *Which of the following statements best describes your driving: In heavy traffic I tend to stay with the slower moving traffic, or keep up with the faster traffic?*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*
Unweighted N=2,956

As illustrated in the previous discussion of passing, there is also an inverse relationship between age and keeping up with the faster traffic, although it is not as dramatic. Two-thirds (67%) of the drivers in the 16 to 20 age group reported that they keep up with the faster traffic. While this is higher than the proportion that tended to pass, the pattern and ultimate drop off is not as steep. In point of fact, the proportion increases to 69% for the 21 to 24 age group before declining to 31% among drivers 65 and over. Female drivers were more likely to stay with the slower moving traffic (43%) than were male drivers (34%).

Drivers were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a series of five statements dealing with driving and speed. The first of these was "I enjoy the feeling of speed." Overall two drivers in five (39%) either strongly agree (8%) or somewhat agree (31%) with this statement (see Figure 4-3); those who disagree are almost equally split between somewhat disagree (29%) or strongly disagree (31%).

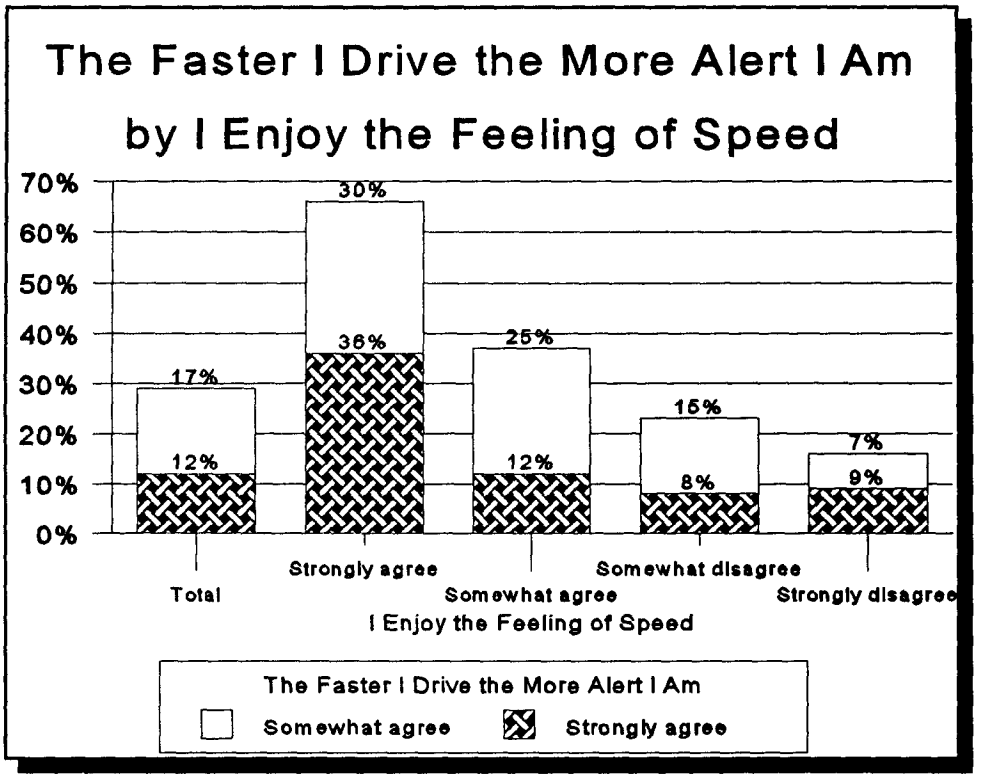
FIGURE 4-3



Qx: People have different feelings about driving. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement about driving: "I enjoy the feeling of speed."
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=3,044

Males and females reported different attitudes toward the statement, "I enjoy the feeling of speed." Slightly less than half (46%) of males agreed with this statement, only about one-third (32%) of females agreed. Agreement with this statement is inversely related to age. While agreement decreased steadily as age increased, there was a sizeable drop after the 25-34 age group. From age 35 on, agreement with this statement is at or below the overall average.

FIGURE 4-4



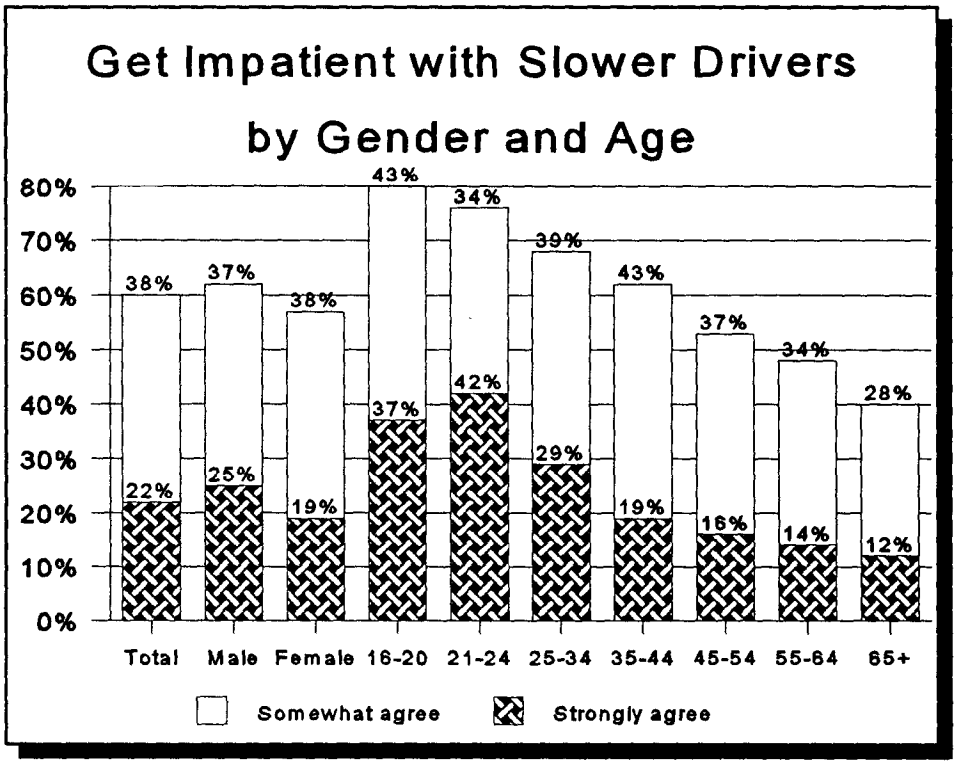
Qx: *People have different feelings about driving. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about driving: "The faster I drive the more alert I feel."*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*
Unweighted N=3,044

Less than one driver in three (29%) strongly agreed (12%) or somewhat agreed (17%) with the statement, "the faster I drive the more alert I am" (see Figure 4-4). There was little deviation from the overall proportions by gender, age or education. Agreement with this statement was most closely related to agreement with the statement, "I enjoy the feeling of speed." More than one driver in three (36%) who enjoy the feeling of speed, strongly agreed that driving fast makes them more alert than driving slow. An additional 30% somewhat agree. Only one driver in eight (12%) who somewhat agreed that they enjoy the feeling of speed, strongly agreed that fast driving keeps them alert. This is one-third the proportion of drivers who felt strongly about enjoying the feeling of speed.

Male drivers were more likely to agree with this statement (14% strongly agree and 19% somewhat agree) than were female drivers (10% and 15% respectively).

The third statement in this series was, "I often get impatient with slower drivers." Fully, three drivers in five (60%) either strongly (22%) or somewhat (38%) agreed with this statement (see Figure 4-5). There is a clear relationship between responses to this statement and age. The only deviation from the pattern was among drivers in the 16 to 20 age group who were in slightly less agreement with the statement than were drivers in the 21 to 24 age group. This could possibly be a reflection that many of the younger drivers are relatively new drivers and may be slow drivers themselves.

FIGURE 4-5

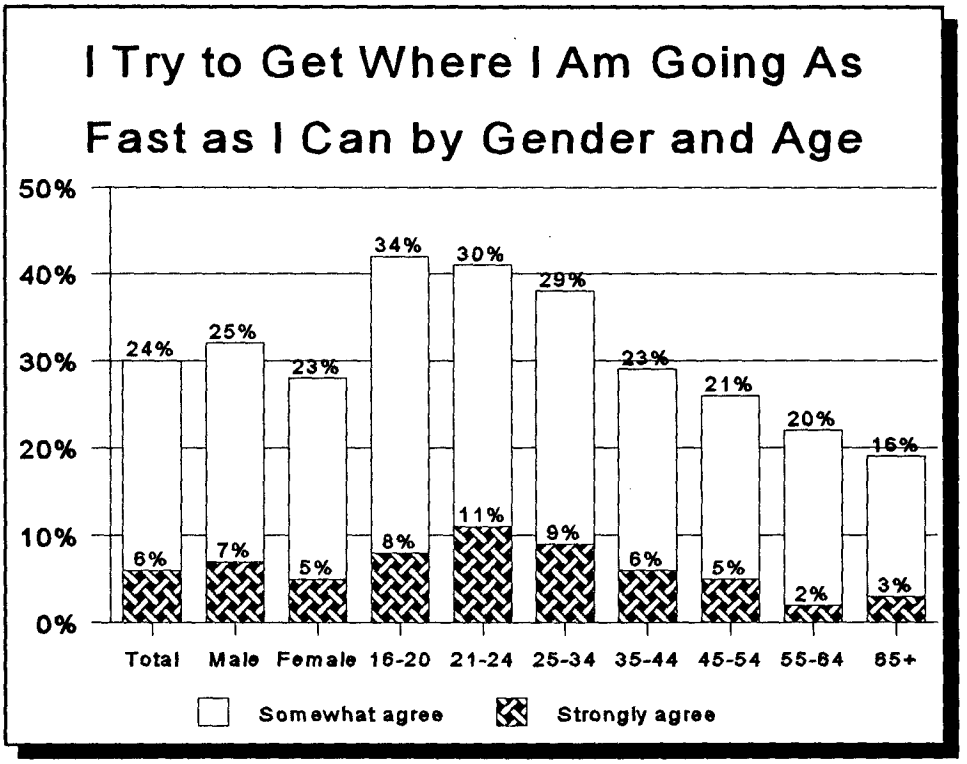


Qx: People have different feelings about driving. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement about driving: "I often get impatient with slower drivers."
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=3,044

Male drivers were more likely to strongly agree with this statement (25%) than were female drivers (19%). There was virtually the same proportion of male and female drivers who somewhat agreed with this statement — 37% and 38% respectively.

One driver in three (30%) either strongly (6%) or somewhat (24%) agreed with the statement, "I try to get where I am going as fast as I can" (see Figure 4-6). Male drivers agreed with this statement only slightly more than did female drivers — 32% vs. 28%. Agreement with this statement decreased as age increased with the largest drop between the 25 to 34 and the 35 to 44 age groups.

FIGURE 4-6



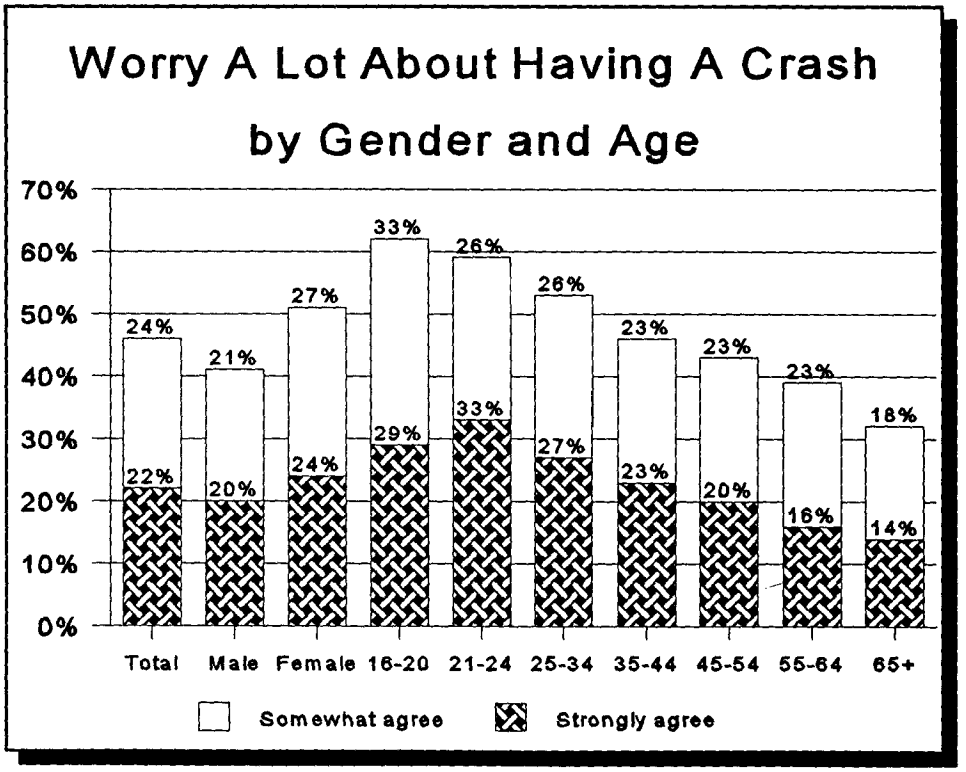
Qx: *People have different feelings about driving. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement about driving: "I try to get where I am going as fast as I can."*

Base: *Total population of drivers.*

Unweighted N=3,044

The last statement in this series was, "I worry a lot about having a crash." Less than half (46%) of drivers agreed with this statement (see Figure 4-7). There was a fairly even split between respondents that strongly (22%) or somewhat (24%) agreed with this statement.

FIGURE 4-7



Qx: People have different feelings about driving. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement about driving: "I worry a lot about having a crash."
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=3,044

Figure 4-7 shows the familiar pattern of agreement with this statement decreasing with age. However, the same categories of drivers who were most likely to have attitudes condoning speed were also most concerned about being in a crash. This finding is contrary to what might be expected — that those most concerned about getting into a crash would be most likely to behave in ways that could reduce the likelihood of a crash.

A more consistent behavior was seen in regard to gender. Men were in slightly more agreement with the statements about speeding than were women. While the differences were not great, they were consistent. Yet in the responses to this statement, half the female drivers (51%) and only two male drivers in five (41%) reported being worried about being in a crash. For every age group, with the exception of drivers over 65, female drivers worry more about being in a crash than do male.

IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS IN SELECTING DRIVING SPEED

Drivers were asked how important a series of factors were in selecting the speed at which they drive (see Table 4-1, next page). The most important factor was the weather condition. Five out of six drivers (86%) felt weather was extremely important and another 10% felt it was moderately important.

The second most important factor in the minds of drivers is the posted speed limit. This factor was rated as extremely important by slightly more than half (54%) and as moderately important by an additional one-third (35%) of all drivers.

Past experience on the road, the third most important factor, had slightly more than five drivers in six (84%) rating this as extremely important (48%) or moderately important (37%). (The total of these proportions equals more than 100% since drivers were allowed to mention more than one factor).

Overall, the next three factors were rated very similarly. Four drivers in five (81%) felt that traffic density was extremely important (49%) or moderately important (32%). This is followed by chances of being stopped by police. Here, three drivers in four (75%) rated this factor as extremely important (48%) or moderately important (27%). The next factor, the speed of other traffic, was rated as important by 75% of all drivers who were evenly split between thinking this factor was extremely or moderately important.

The least important factor was how much time there is to reach your destination. While three drivers in five (60%) rated this factor as important, it was the only factor where extremely important (27%) had less support than moderately important (33%).

TABLE 4-1

Importance of Various Factors in Selecting Driving Speed by Gender

Q13: How important are the following factors in selecting the speed at which you drive?
Base: Total population of drivers.

Factor	Total	Male	Female
Unweighted N	*3,000*	*1439*	*1561*
Weather conditions			
Extremely/Moderately Important	96%	95%	96%
Extremely Important	86%	83%	88%
Moderately Important	10%	12%	8%
Posted speed limit			
Extremely/Moderately Important	90%	87%	93%
Extremely Important	54%	48%	61%
Moderately Important	35%	39%	32%
Your past experience driving road			
Extremely/Moderately Important	84%	83%	85%
Extremely Important	48%	46%	49%
Moderately Important	37%	37%	37%
How much traffic there is			
Extremely/Moderately Important	81%	80%	81%
Extremely Important	49%	49%	48%
Moderately Important	32%	31%	32%
Chances of being stopped by police			
Extremely/Moderately Important	75%	73%	77%
Extremely Important	48%	44%	53%
Moderately Important	27%	29%	25%
Speed of other traffic			
Extremely/Moderately Important	75%	77%	75%
Extremely Important	38%	37%	39%
Moderately Important	38%	39%	36%
How much time you have to get to destination			
Extremely/Moderately Important	60%	57%	63%
Extremely Important	27%	23%	30%
Moderately Important	33%	34%	33%

Total may not be equal to sum of elements due to rounding.

For the most part, males and females have the same overall ranking of the importance of each of the seven specific factors. For example, both males and females rated weather conditions as the most important factor when "extremely important" is combined with "moderately important" (95% versus 96% respectively). However, for all but one specific factor, females felt the factors were more important in the selection of driving speed than did males. The exception was the "speed of other traffic," which females rated only one point less important overall. One factor, "posted speed limits", was six percentage points more important for females (93%) than males (87%).

Females rated every factor more important than males when only responses of "extremely important" were considered. For one factor, "posted speed limits", the difference was 13 percentage points, 61% for females versus 48% for males.

In addition to the seven specific factors, respondents were asked if there were any other factors which were important in selecting a driving speed. Only one other factor — a combination of familiarity with the vehicle, whose vehicle it was, and if there was a passenger in the car — was mentioned by almost as many as one in ten (9%).

SAFE AND UNSAFE SPEED

Drivers were asked about the speed limits on one of the randomly selected roads they drove on at least weekly. Specifically, they were asked what they considered the maximum safe speed for that type of road (see Table 4-2).

TABLE 4-2

Maximum Safe Speed for Various Road Types

Qx: What do you consider to be the maximum safe speed for [road type]?
Base: Total population of drivers.

Road Type	*Unweighted N*	First Quartile[1]	Median[2]	Third Quartile[3]
Residential Urban	*1,320*	**25 MPH**	**30 MPH**	**35 MPH**
Residential Rural	*834*	**25 MPH**	**30 MPH**	**35 MPH**
Non-Interstate Urban	*1,016*	**45 MPH**	**50 MPH**	**55 MPH**
Non-Interstate Rural	*894*	**50 MPH**	**55 MPH**	**60 MPH**
Interstate Urban	*938*	**65 MPH**	**70 MPH**	**70 MPH**
Interstate Rural	*606*	**65 MPH**	**65 MPH**	**70 MPH**

1 The point at which 25% of the responses fall below and 75% fall above.
2 The point at which 50% of the responses fall above and below.
3 The point at which 75% of the responses fall below and 25% fall above.
The median and one of the quartiles can fall at the same point when a large number of responses are clustered at that point.

There was a great deal of agreement among drivers regarding the maximum safe speed for the six road types. For four of the road types the middle 50%, sometimes called the inter-quartile range, of responses had a range of only 10 miles per hour and in the other two road types the range was only five miles per hour. Drivers felt the maximum safe speed for residential streets, whether in urban or rural settings, was 25 to 35 miles per hour. The maximum safe speed for non-interstate (roads with posted speed limits of 45 to 55 miles per hour) urban roads was 45 to 55 miles per hour, while the same roads in a rural setting were rated at 50 to 60 miles per hour. Interstate highways, regardless of setting, were rated at 65 to 70 miles per hour.

Males and females agreed that the maximum safe speed for residential roads, regardless of their setting, was in the range of 25 to 35 miles per hour (the inter-quartile range) with

a median of 30 MPH. In addition, both males and females agreed that the maximum safe speed for non-interstate rural roads, as measured by the median, was 55 miles per hour. For other types of roads, males considered the maximum speed to be slightly higher than did females. Males felt the median maximum safe speed for non-interstate roads should be 55 miles per hour, while females felt 45 miles per hour was more appropriate. For interstate roads, regardless of the setting, males felt the maximum safe speed was 70 miles per hour, while females felt the maximum safe speed was 65 miles per hour.

Drivers on residential roads, regardless of their setting, had very similar reasons for feeling that driving at speeds higher than reported in Table 4-2 would be unsafe (See Table 4-3 on pages 57, 58, and 59). Almost four residential road drivers in five mentioned the presence of people (non-drivers) — primarily children, schools and playgrounds (mentioned by about 70%) — in close proximity to the roads as the primary reason that driving faster would be unsafe. This is twice the proportion who mentioned road conditions on non-interstate rural roads (40%), the next highest mentioned category in Table 4-3.

The second most often cited reasons, mentioned by about one driver in four, concerned individual reaction times and the ability of the vehicle to stop quickly. The most often mentioned reason under this heading related to the fact that it takes longer to stop at higher speeds and that it is harder to stop quickly.

The next most often mentioned concern, cited by about one in six drivers, centered around traffic patterns, primarily heavy traffic and merging. No other category was mentioned by more than 10% of the drivers.

Drivers on non-interstate roads, that is, roads with speed limits in the 40 to 55 miles per hour range, in urban areas were most concerned about traffic patterns and flows (34%), followed by road conditions (25%), people (24%), reaction time and vehicle stopping (17%) and safety(14%).

TABLE 4-3

Why Driving at Speeds Greater than the Maximum Safe Speed is Unsafe by Road Type

Qx: Why do you consider speeds greater than [maximum speed] to be unsafe on [road type]?
Base: Total population of drivers.

	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
	Urban	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**
Unweighted N	*1,320*	*834*	*1,016*	*894*	*938*	*606*
People	**77%**	**78%**	**24%**	**18%**	**2%**	**2%**
Children/schools/playgrounds	69%	70%	12%	8%	*	*
Pedestrians	13%	12%	8%	5%	1%	*
Animals/pets/animal crossing	11%	9%	6%	7%	1%	1%
Populated areas/people near	4%	5%	5%	2%	1%	*
Bicyclists	3%	5%	1%	*	-	*
Seniors/elderly in area	3%	2%	1%	*	*	*
Joggers	1%	1%	*	*	-	-
Other people mentions	-	1%	-	-	-	*
Traffic patterns/flow	**17%**	**15%**	**34%**	**28%**	**29%**	**26%**
Driver-related factors	4%	2%	11%	10%	19%	17%
High traffic/merge areas	10%	10%	12%	11%	1%	1%
General pattern or flow	2%	2%	8%	6%	8%	10%
Traffic lights/signs	1%	1%	4%	2%	*	*
Stop & go traffic	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	*
Makes passing riskier	*	*	1%	1%	*	*
Reaction time and vehicle stopping	**24%**	**26%**	**17%**	**14%**	**33%**	**28%**
Takes longer/harder to stop	15%	17%	9%	6%	10%	11%
Limits/cuts down reaction time	5%	5%	4%	3%	14%	9%
Harder to react to emergency situations	3%	3%	3%	3%	8%	7%
Harder to react to others' unpredictability	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	3%
Other reaction time mentions	-	-	-	*	-	-

Table continues on next two pages. Footnotes are at the end of the table.

TABLE 4-3, continued

Why Driving at Speeds Greater than the Maximum Safe Speed is Unsafe by Road Type

	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
	Urban	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**
Unweighted N	*1,320*	*834*	*1,016*	*894*	*938*	*606*
Safety	**6%**	**7%**	**14%**	**15%**	**34%**	**36%**
Too fast/easy to lose control	3%	2%	6%	8%	22%	25%
Increases accident risks	3%	5%	8%	6%	11%	10%
Increases fatalities/death rate	1%	*	1%	1%	2%	3%
More damage in accidents	*	*	*	*	1%	3%
Other safety mentions	-	-	*	-	*	*
Road conditions	**7%**	**7%**	**25%**	**41%**	**6%**	**6%**
Winding/bending/curvy roads	2%	2%	7%	16%	2%	2%
Narrow/two-lane roads/on-coming traffic	2%	2%	10%	13%	*	*
General road conditions	1%	1%	6%	8%	2%	3%
Roads not built/designed for speed	1%	1%	4%	5%	1%	2%
Poor road surfaces	1%	1%	3%	6%	1%	*
Steep/hilly roads	*	*	1%	3%	-	*
Other road mentions	*	*	1%	1%	1%	-
Weather conditions	**1%**	**1%**	**4%**	**5%**	**3%**	**4%**
General weather conditions	*	*	2%	2%	2%	3%
Poor/limited visibility level	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	*
Snow/ice/rain/drizzle/fog	*	*	1%	1%	*	1%
Presence of other vehicles	**3%**	**2%**	**3%**	**4%**	**1%**	**2%**
Slower moving vehicles	*	*	2%	3%	1%	*
Parked cars	3%	1%	*	-	*	*
Trucks/truck traffic	*	-	*	1%	1%	2%

Table continues on next two pages. Footnotes are at the end of the table.

TABLE 4-3, continued

Why Driving at Speeds Greater than the Maximum Safe Speed is Unsafe by Road Type

	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
	Urban	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**
Unweighted N	*1,320*	*834*	*1,016*	*894*	*938*	*606*
Miscellaneous	**1%**	**1%**	**4%**	**5%**	**10%**	**11%**
General unsafe speed limit	*	1%	2%	2%	3%	5%
Prefer speed I drive	*	*	1%	2%	4%	3%
Other safety mentions	*	*	1%	1%	3%	3%
Nothing	*	-	*	*	*	*
Don't know/no answer	**6%**	**6%**	**10%**	**10%**	**7%**	**9%**

* Less than .5%.
- None.
Individuals responses may not sum to subtotals and subtotals may not add to 100% due to multiple mentions.

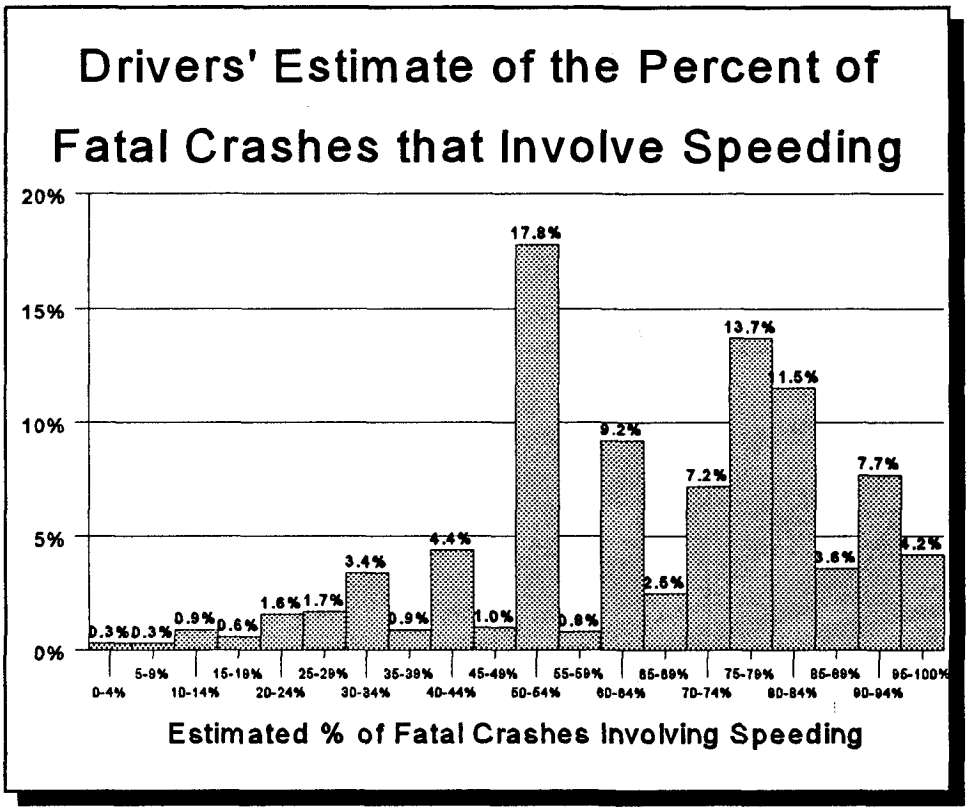
Two in five (41%) drivers of rural non-interstate roads are concerned about road conditions, primarily winding roads (16%) and narrow roads (13%). The second most mentioned reason for not driving faster on these roads was traffic patterns and flows, mentioned by 28% of these drivers. This was followed by people (18%), safety (15%) and reaction time and vehicle stopping (14%).

Like drivers of residential roads, the reasons drivers of interstate highways do not drive any faster is independent of the setting of the highways. The number one reason, mentioned by about one-third of the drivers, concerned safety— primarily that it was too easy to lose control. This was followed by concerns related to reaction time and vehicle stopping, mentioned by about 30%. The third most mentioned concern, mentioned by a little less than 20%, related to traffic patterns and flows.

Drivers were asked what percent of all fatal crashes they thought involved speeding. There are two ways to report the overall results of these questions; the first is the mean, or arithmetic average. Using this measure, drivers felt that 64% of fatal crashes involved speed. However, since the mean can be affected by a relatively small number of responses that are far away from the mean, it is sometimes useful to also report the median, the point at which the responses are split in half, since it reports the clustering of responses. Using the median, drivers felt that 70% of fatal crashes involved speed.

Slightly less than one driver in six (15%) felt that speeding was a factor in less than 50% of all fatal crashes (see Figure 4-8). A slightly larger proportion of drivers (17.8%) felt 50% to 54% of fatal crashes involved speed and about one-third (32.4%) felt speed was a factor in 70% to 85% of fatal crashes.

FIGURE 4-8



Qx: What percent of ALL fatal crashes do you think involve speeding?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=3,000

SUMMARY

Approximately half of all drivers reported keeping up with faster traffic and almost one-third reported being more likely to pass other drivers than to be passed. Both of these driving behaviors decreased with age. In general, positive feelings toward speeding — as measured by agreement with the statements "I enjoy the feeling of speed," "I often get impatient with slower drivers" and "I try to get where I am going as fast as I can" — decreased with age. However, agreement with the statement, "I worry a lot about having a crash" also decreased with age.

Drivers said that the major factors in determining the speed at which they drive were weather conditions, the posted speed limit and type of road. A large proportion of drivers felt it was "safe" to speed in certain situations (not in areas where children, playgrounds or schools were located). Yet three drivers in ten felt speeding was a factor in at least 75 percent of fatal crashes, and two-thirds felt speeding was involved in at least 50 percent of all fatal crashes.

CHAPTER V.

ATTITUDES ABOUT SPEED LIMITS

CURRENT SPEED LIMITS — TOO HIGH, TOO LOW, ABOUT RIGHT?

Drivers were asked their opinions of the speed limits on various types of roads (see Table 5-1). Overall, at least three-quarters of drivers felt that the speed limits on the five road types considered in this series of questions were about right. Four out of five drivers (82%) felt that speed limits on residential or neighborhood streets were about right. Three-quarters of drivers (76%) felt the speed limits on interstate highways were about right. Drivers were somewhat more satisfied with speed limits on non-interstate roads in urban areas (85%) than in rural areas (78%).

Although the majority of drivers believed current speed limits were about right on all of these road types, a minority felt that current speed limits were too high or too low. One driver in 10 (10%) felt that speed limits on residential or neighborhood streets were too high, compared to 7% who felt they were too low. This was the highest rating of "too high" given to any road type and the only road type where responses of "too high" outnumbered responses of "too low." In addition, similar opinions were given by both males and females. Among the 25 to 34 age group, the group most likely to have the largest number of small children, 17% felt that speeds were too high, with 5% responding "too low."

The second highest rating where speed limits were considered too high, 9%, was for interstate highways in urban areas. For this road type, 13% responded that speeds were too low. There was also less agreement between males and females — females felt speeds were too high (11% versus 8%) and males felt speeds were too low (15% versus 12%).

Interstate highways in rural areas received the highest mention, 17%, of speed limits being too low. This was the highest rating of "too low" given to any road type. Even though for both males and females ratings of "too low" out polled ratings of "too high," there were major differences of opinion on the speed limits between the genders. Twice as many females (8%) as males (4%) felt speed limits were too high. Conversely, more males (21%) than females (13%) felt that speeds on rural interstates were too low.

The second highest mention of speed limits being too low (13%) versus too high (5%) was for non-interstate roads in rural areas. While there were differences between the genders on opinions of the speed limits of these roads, they were not as dramatic as those seen for the rural interstates.

Lastly, almost equal numbers of males and females felt that speed limits on non-interstate roads in urban areas were both too high and too low. Five drivers in six (85%) felt the speed limits on these roads were about right.

TABLE 5-1

Opinions of Speed Limits on Various Road Types by Gender

Qx: In general, do you think that speed limits on [road type] are too high, too low, or about right?
Base: Total population of drivers.

	Total*	Male	Female
Unweighted N	*1,489*	*707*	*782*
Interstate highways in rural areas			
Too high	6%	4%	8%
Too low	17%	21%	13%
About right	76%	73%	78%
Interstate highways in urban areas			
Too high	9%	8%	11%
Too low	13%	15%	12%
About right	76%	76%	75%
Residential or neighborhood streets			
Too high	10%	11%	10%
Too low	7%	7%	7%
About right	82%	81%	82%
Non-interstate roads in rural areas			
Too high	5%	4%	6%
Too low	13%	16%	11%
About right	78%	78%	78%
Non-interstate roads in urban areas			
Too high	5%	5%	5%
Too low	6%	6%	6%
About right	85%	87%	83%

* Totals do not include responses of "don't know" or refusals.

EFFECT OF CHANGING SPEED LIMITS

As was discussed in Section IV of this report, drivers were categorized by the type of road they drive frequently. The next series of tables reports responses to questions concerning the effects of increasing the speed limits on each of these roads. The first question asks drivers **how fast they would drive** if the posted speed limit were increased by 10 miles per hour (see Table 5-2).

TABLE 5-2

Effect of a 10 MPH Increase in the Posted Speed Limits on Driving Speed by Road Type

Qx: *If the posted limits were INCREASED BY 10 MILES PER HOUR on [road type], do you think you would normally drive ... ?*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*

	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
	Urban	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**
Unweighted N	*692*	*426*	*495*	*446*	*453*	*311*
Slower	**56%**	**54%**	**38%**	**50%**	**31%**	**40%**
Much slower than the limit	15%	13%	4%	6%	5%	8%
A little slower than the limit	41%	40%	33%	44%	26%	32%
Right at the limit	**37%**	**36%**	**51%**	**42%**	**54%**	**44%**
Faster	**6%**	**9%**	**10%**	**8%**	**15%**	**15%**
A little faster than the limit	6%	8%	10%	8%	14%	15%
Much faster than the limit	-	*	*	-	*	*
Don't know/refuse	*	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**

* less than .5%.
\- None.
Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.

If posted speed limits were increased by 10 miles per hour, over half of the drivers of residential streets, regardless of the setting, would drive at least a little slower than the posted speed limit. A little over one-third of drivers felt they would drive at the posted speed limit. Only 9% of drivers of rural residential roads and 6% of urban residential road drivers would drive faster than the limit as a result of the increase in the posted speed limit.

Drivers were asked their opinion of the **impact on safety** of increasing the posted speed limit by 10 miles per hour on the selected road. Regardless of road type or setting, less than one driver in 10 felt that increasing the posted speed limit would make the roads safer (see Table 5-3). Three drivers in four felt that increasing the speed limit on residential streets would make these streets more dangerous; one-third of the drivers felt it would make it much more dangerous.

TABLE 5-3

Effect of a 10 MPH Increase in the Posted Speed Limits on Safety by Road Type

Qx: *If the posted limits for that road were INCREASED BY 10 MILES PER HOUR, do you think that it would make driving on the road ... ?*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*

	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
	Urban	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**
Unweighted N	*692*	*426*	*495*	*446*	*453*	*311*
Safer	**6%**	**6%**	**8%**	**6%**	**7%**	**8%**
Much safer	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Somewhat safer	4%	4%	6%	4%	6%	5%
No difference	**17%**	**18%**	**30%**	**24%**	**31%**	**30%**
More dangerous	**76%**	**74%**	**60%**	**70%**	**61%**	**61%**
Somewhat more dangerous	43%	42%	40%	45%	41%	35%
Much more dangerous	34%	33%	20%	25%	20%	26%
Don't know/refuse	*	**1%**	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	*

* less than .5%.
Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.

More drivers felt that it would be dangerous to increase speed limits on non-interstate rural roads (70%) than on the same roads in urban settings (60%). Six drivers in 10 (61%) felt that increasing the speed limit on interstates, regardless of the setting, would make these roads more dangerous.

For the most part, drivers felt that increasing the speed limit by 10 miles an hour would **make driving less comfortable** (see Table 5-4). A majority (51%) of drivers felt it would make driving less comfortable on residential roads in urban areas. The proportion of drivers who felt increasing the posted limit would make driving less comfortable dropped slightly (46%) for rural residential drivers.

TABLE 5-4

Effect of a 10 MPH Increase in the Posted Speed Limits on Driving Comfort by Road Type

Qx: *If the posted limits for that road were INCREASED BY 10 MILES PER HOUR, do you think that it would make driving on the road ... ?*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*

	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
	Urban	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**
Unweighted N	*692*	*426*	*495*	*446*	*453*	*311*
More comfortable	**14%**	**16%**	**26%**	**17%**	**23%**	**20%**
Much more comfortable	3%	3%	6%	3%	9%	9%
Somewhat more comfortable	11%	13%	20%	14%	13%	11%
No difference	**34%**	**39%**	**36%**	**40%**	**35%**	**37%**
Less comfortable	**51%**	**46%**	**37%**	**43%**	**41%**	**43%**
Somewhat less comfortable	27%	24%	22%	24%	23%	24%
Much less comfortable	24%	22%	15%	19%	18%	18%
Don't know/refuse	**1%**	*	**1%**	-	**1%**	*

* less than .5%.
\- None.
Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Drivers of non-interstate roads are almost evenly divided in their opinions that increasing the speed limit by 10 miles per hour would make driving less comfortable or make no difference. One driver in four (26%), however, felt that driving on non-interstate roads in urban areas would be more comfortable if the limit was increased.

About one in five interstate drivers felt a 10 mile per hour increase would make driving on these roads more comfortable. About twice as many drivers felt an increase would make driving less comfortable, while the remaining drivers felt it would make no difference.

Overall, regardless of road type, two drivers in five (41%) felt a 10 mile per hour increase in the posted speed limit would make driving somewhat more dangerous (see Table 5-5). Almost equal proportions feel driving would be much more dangerous (26%) or there would be no impact on safety (24%). Half (2.6% of 5.4%) of the drivers who felt that any increase in the speed limit would make driving much more comfortable felt there would be no difference in safety, and an additional one in three felt driving would either be somewhat safer (0.8% of 5.4%) or much safer (1.1% of 5.4%).

TABLE 5-5

Effect of a 10 MPH Increase in the Posted Speed Limits: Safety versus Comfort

Qx: *If the posted limits INCREASED BY 10 MILES AN HOUR, do you think it would make driving on the road much safer, somewhat safer, no different, somewhat more dangerous, or much more dangerous?*

Qx: *If the posted limits INCREASED BY 10 MILES AN HOUR, do you think it would make driving on the road much more comfortable for you, somewhat more comfortable, no different, somewhat less comfortable, or much less comfortable?*

Base: *Total population of drivers.*

Change in Safety	Change in Comfort						
	Total	Much More	Some-what More	No Differ-ent	Some-what Less	Much Less	Don't Know
Unweighted N	*3,000*	*158*	*391*	*1,092*	*730*	*609*	*20*
Much Safer	2.0%	1.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	-
Somewhat Safer	5.0%	0.8%	2.0%	1.6%	0.4%	0.2%	-
No Different	24.3%	2.6%	6.5%	13.4%	1.4%	0.3%	*
Somewhat More Dangerous	41.2%	0.5%	4.1%	16.8%	15.9%	3.8%	0.2%
Much More Dangerous	26.4%	0.3%	0.7%	4.0%	6.1%	15.2%	0.2%
Don't Know/Refuse	1.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Total	100.0%	5.4%	13.7%	36.5%	24.1%	19.7%	0.6%

- None; * Less than 0.05%
Total may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Almost half (6.5% of 13.7%) of drivers who would be somewhat more comfortable with a 10 mile per hour increase in the posted speed limit felt the increase would make no difference in safety. None the less, a sizable proportion of these drivers (4.1% of 13.7%) felt the increase would be somewhat more dangerous.

Among drivers who felt the increase in the posted speed limit would make no difference in driving comfort, slightly less than half (16.8% of 36.5%) said such an increase would make driving slightly more dangerous. Less than two drivers in five (13.4% of 36.5%) feel there would be no difference in driving safety.

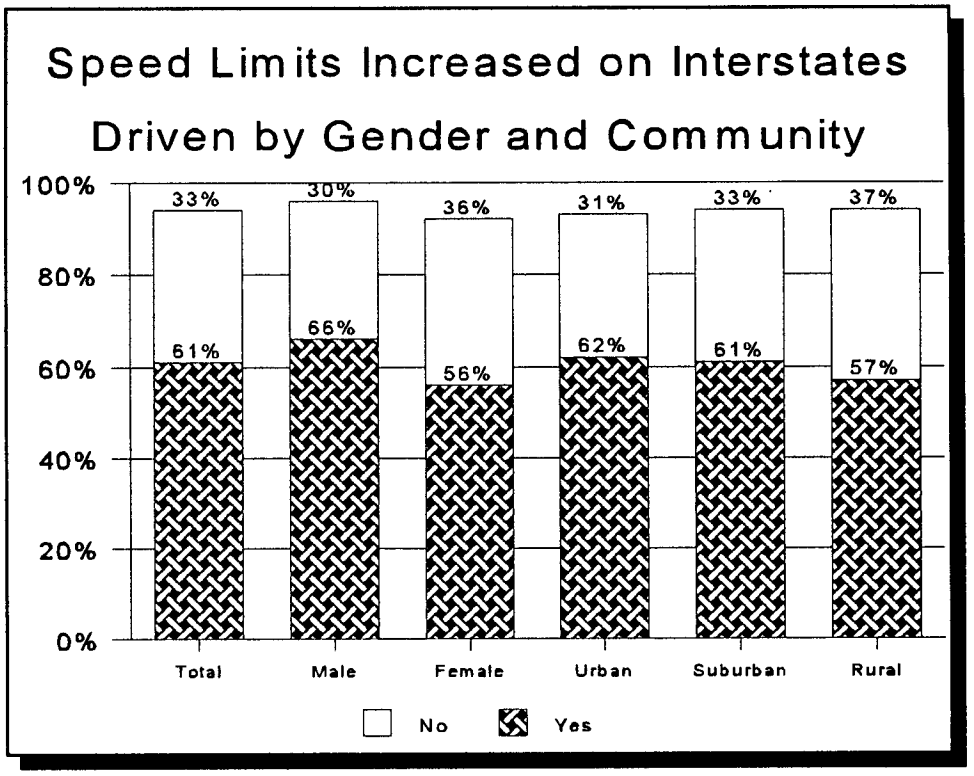
Two-thirds (15.9% of 24.1%)) of drivers who feel increasing the speed limit would make driving somewhat less comfortable felt the increase would make driving somewhat more dangerous. An additional one in four (6.1% of 24.1%) of these drivers felt driving would be much more dangerous.

All but a handful of the drivers who felt that a 10 mile per hour increase in the speed limit would make driving much less comfortable felt the increase would also make driving either much more dangerous (15.2 of 19.7%) or somewhat more dangerous (3.8% of 19.7%).

The general population of drivers felt that a 10 mile an hour increase in the posted speed limit would be both more dangerous and decrease driving comfort.

In 1974, speed limits on interstate highways were reduced to 55 miles per hour. Recently, states were given the option to increase the speed limits on these roads. Drivers were asked if speed limits on interstate roadways had increased in any areas in their state where they drive. Overall, three drivers in five (61%) report speed limits have been increased on interstate roadways in areas that they drive (see Figure 5-1).

FIGURE 5-1



Qx: You may be aware that the National Speed Limit law was repealed. Have the speed limits on interstates affected by that law been increased in your state in any areas in which you drive?

Base: Total population of drivers.

Unweighted N=6,000

Drivers who had driven on interstate highways where the speed limit had been increased were asked a follow-up question— if they felt more drivers obeyed the increased speed limits. Slightly less than half the drivers (45%) agreed that more drivers were driving within the speed limits (see Table 5-6). About one in five of these drivers (22%) felt that a lot more drivers were driving within the new limits. The remaining drivers were split, feeling that some more drivers (12%) and a few more drivers (10%) were obeying the new limits. Half the drivers (50%) felt there had been no change in the number of drivers staying within the speed limit.

TABLE 5-6

How Higher Limits Have Effected the Number of Speeders by Gender

Qx: *How have the higher limits on those roads affected the number of people who speed?*
Base: *Interstate speed limits is increased on roads in which drive on as a result of National Maximum Speed Limit law repeal.*

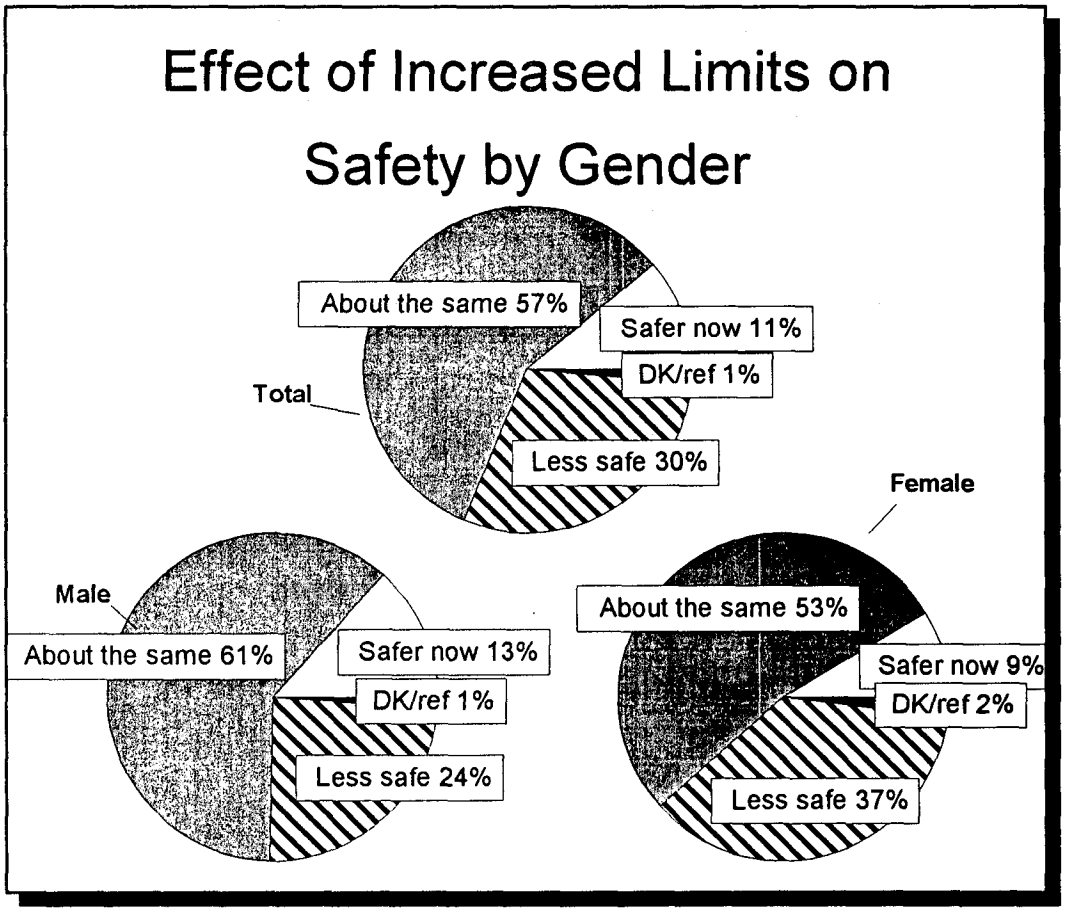
	Total	Male	Female
Unweighted N	*3,651*	*1,904*	*1,747*
More drivers obey new limits	**45%**	**47%**	**42%**
A lot more drivers	22%	24%	20%
Some more drivers	12%	12%	12%
Only a few more	10%	11%	10%
About the same as the old law	**50%**	**49%**	**50%**
Fewer now	**1%**	**1%**	**2%**
Don't know/refuse	**4%**	**2%**	**6%**

Total may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Slightly more males (47%) than females (42%) felt that more drivers were obeying the new limit. The difference carries over to those who felt there were a lot more drivers obeying the new laws — 24% of males versus 20% of females.

These drivers were also asked if they felt the interstate highways were more or less safe as a result of increasing the posted speed limit. Overall, more than half (57%) felt the interstates were about as safe as before the limit was increased (see Figure 5-2). Further, 30% of the drivers felt the increased limits made the roads less safe while 11% said they were safer.

FIGURE 5-2



Qx: *Do you think that driving on those roads is safer now with the higher limits, about the same, or less safe than with the old limits?*

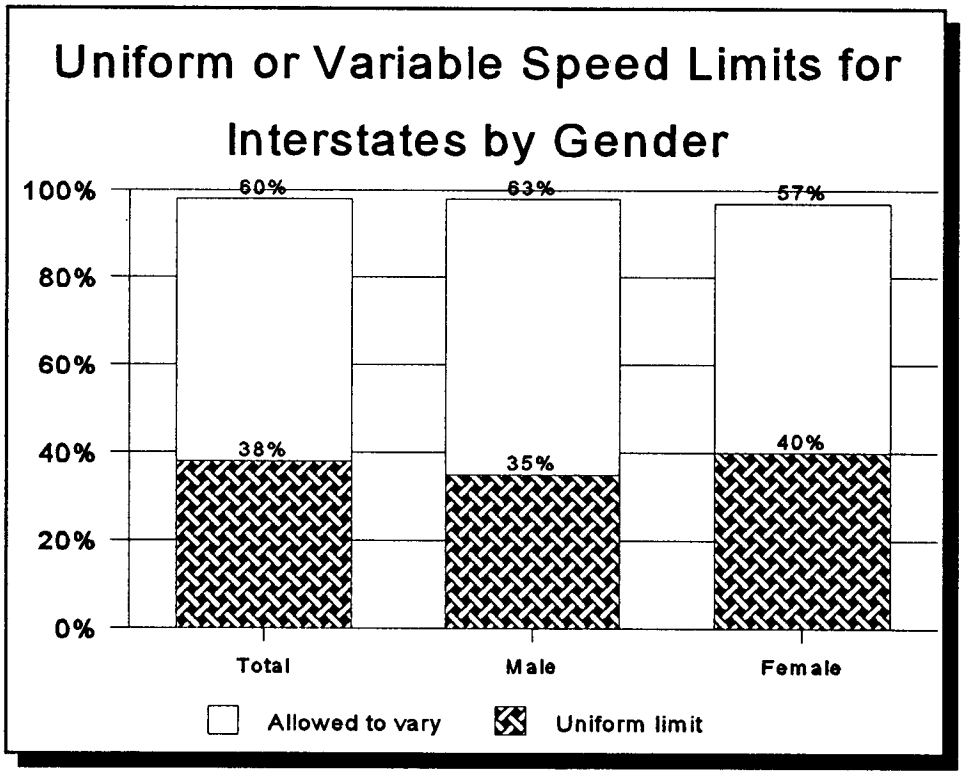
Base: *Speed limits on interstate roadways in which drive on have increased as a result of National Maximum Speed Limit law repeal.*

Unweighted N=3,651

Males, more so than females, felt the interstates were about as safe (61% of males versus 53% of females) or safer (13% versus 9%) as a result of the increased speed limits. Women, on the other hand, felt the increased speed limit on interstates made the roads less safe (37% of females versus 24% of males).

All drivers were asked their opinion about a uniform speed limit for interstate roads. Specifically, they were asked if they felt there should be a uniform speed limit across the nation or if the speed limit should be allowed to vary by state. Overall, three drivers in five (60%) feel the limits should be allowed to vary from state to state (Figure 5-3).

FIGURE 5-3



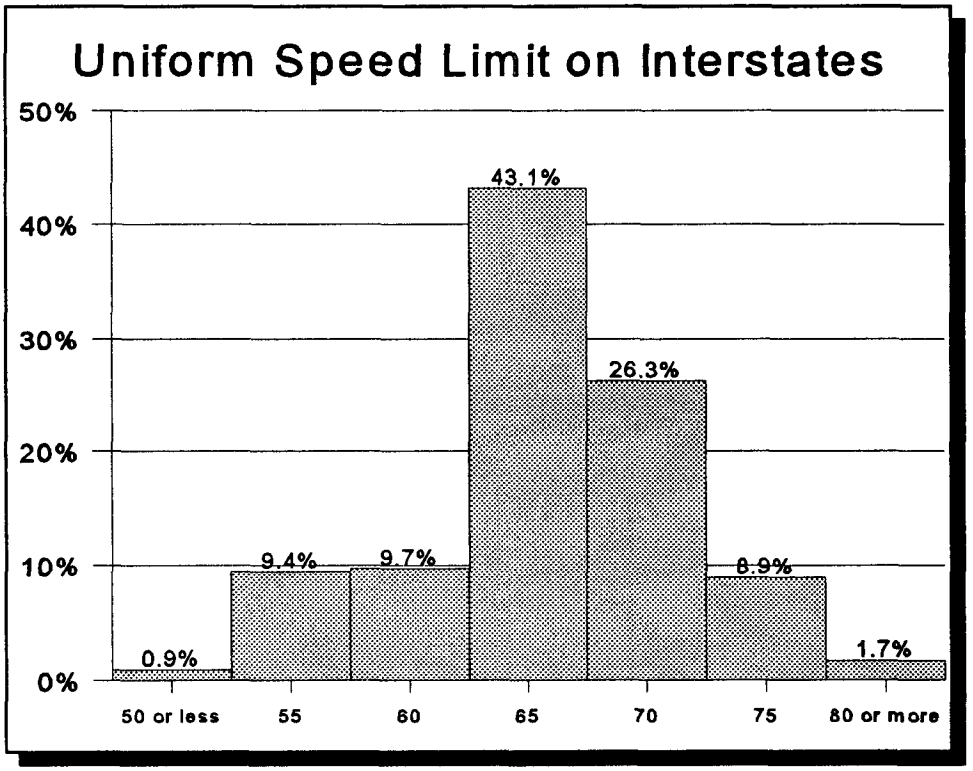
Qx: Do you think that a uniform speed should be set for all interstate highways or should it be allowed to vary from state to state?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=6,000

More males (63%) than females (57%) were willing to allow speed limits to vary by state. With the exception of those age 65 and over, every age group favored allowing the limit to vary by state. Fully three-quarters (75%) of drivers in the 16 to 20 age group favor this option. This decreases to 69% of the 21 to 24 group, to 65% of those 25 to 29, to 59% of those 35 to 44, and then tapering to 50% of those 65 and over.

Drivers who felt there should be a uniform speed limit for interstate highways were asked what the speed limit should be. Most preferred 65 or 70 miles per hour (see Figure 5-4). Overall, the mean (arithmetic average) speed limit was 66 miles per hour while the median was 68 miles per hour.

Males opted for only a slightly higher uniform speed limit for interstate highways than females — mean 67 versus 65; median 70 versus 68.

FIGURE 5-4



Qx: What do you think that speed limit should be for interstate highways?
Base: All interstate highways should have a uniform speed limit.
Unweighted N= 2,270

SUMMARY

Over three-fourths of drivers felt that speed limits were about right for most road types. Most drivers felt that increased speed limits would be more dangerous and less comfortable, no matter which road type. In respect to the recent increase in speed limits, drivers were almost equally divided between those who felt that more drivers were driving within the posted limits, and those who felt that the number of drivers obeying the new limits had not changed. Although drivers were generally satisfied with present speed limits, the majority felt 65 to 70 miles per hour was a satisfactory speed for interstate highways.

CHAPTER VI.

UNSAFE AND AGGRESSIVE DRIVING BY ROAD TYPE

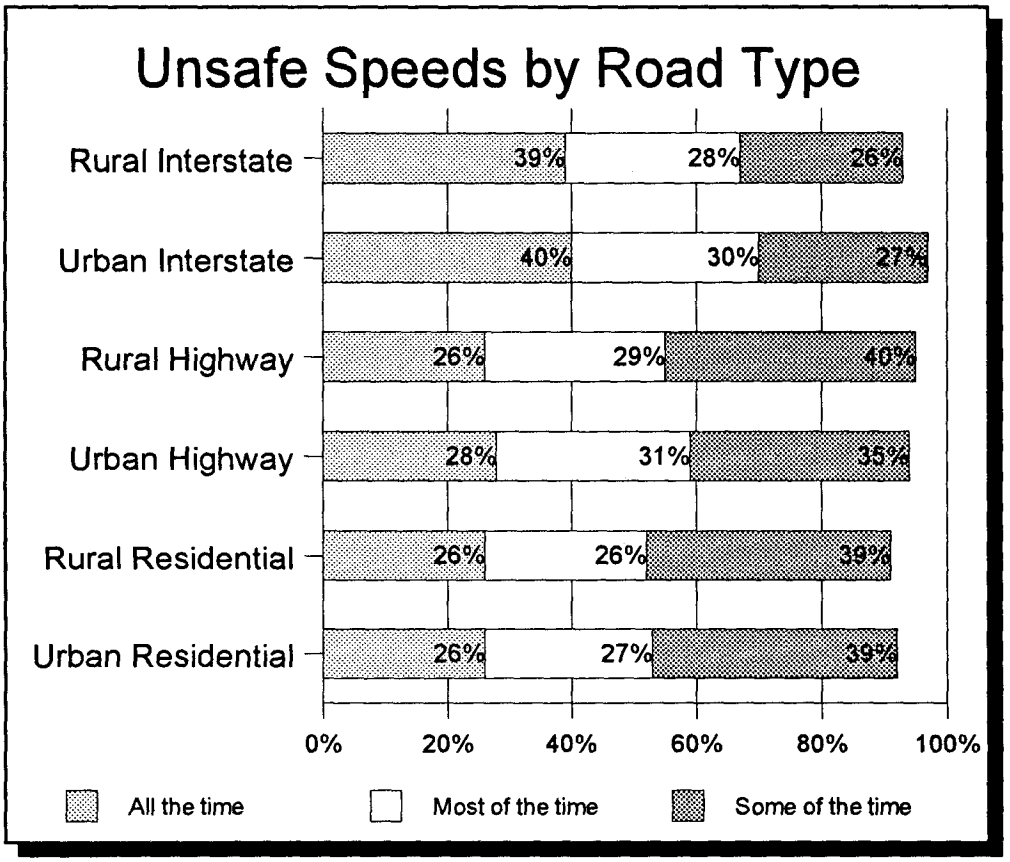
UNSAFE DRIVING BY ROAD TYPE

The traffic speed, flow and driving behaviors will vary by road type. Most drivers regularly drive on a variety of road types. Hence, it is difficult to measure road experiences outside of the context of a specific road type. For this reason, the national sample of drivers was asked whether they drove regularly (at least weekly) on certain types of roads. Subsequently, the drivers were asked about their experiences on one, randomly selected road type from among those on which they regularly drove. This permits us to examine the frequency and nature of unsafe driving reported by road type.

Drivers were asked about the frequency with which they observed other vehicles traveling at unsafe speeds on the roads they regularly drive. The majority of drivers (59%) say that they see vehicles traveling at unsafe speeds either all (31%) or most (28%) of the time when driving on the roads they regularly travel. Another third (35%) say that they see other vehicles traveling at unsafe speed on the roads they travel some of the time. Only a small proportion of drivers report that they see other vehicles traveling at unsafe speeds only rarely (6%) or never (less than 1%) on the roads they travel.

There is some variation in this experience by the type of road being traveled. A majority of those traveling on residential streets, both in mostly urban (53%) and mostly rural (52%) areas, see other vehicles traveling at unsafe speeds all or most of the time when they drive (see Figure 6-1). A slightly larger proportion of those driving on non-interstate highways in urban (59%) and rural (55%) areas report others driving at unsafe speeds all or most of the time. However, more than two-thirds of those driving on interstate highways in urban (70%) or rural (67%) areas say that see other vehicles traveling at unsafe speeds all or most of the time on those roads.

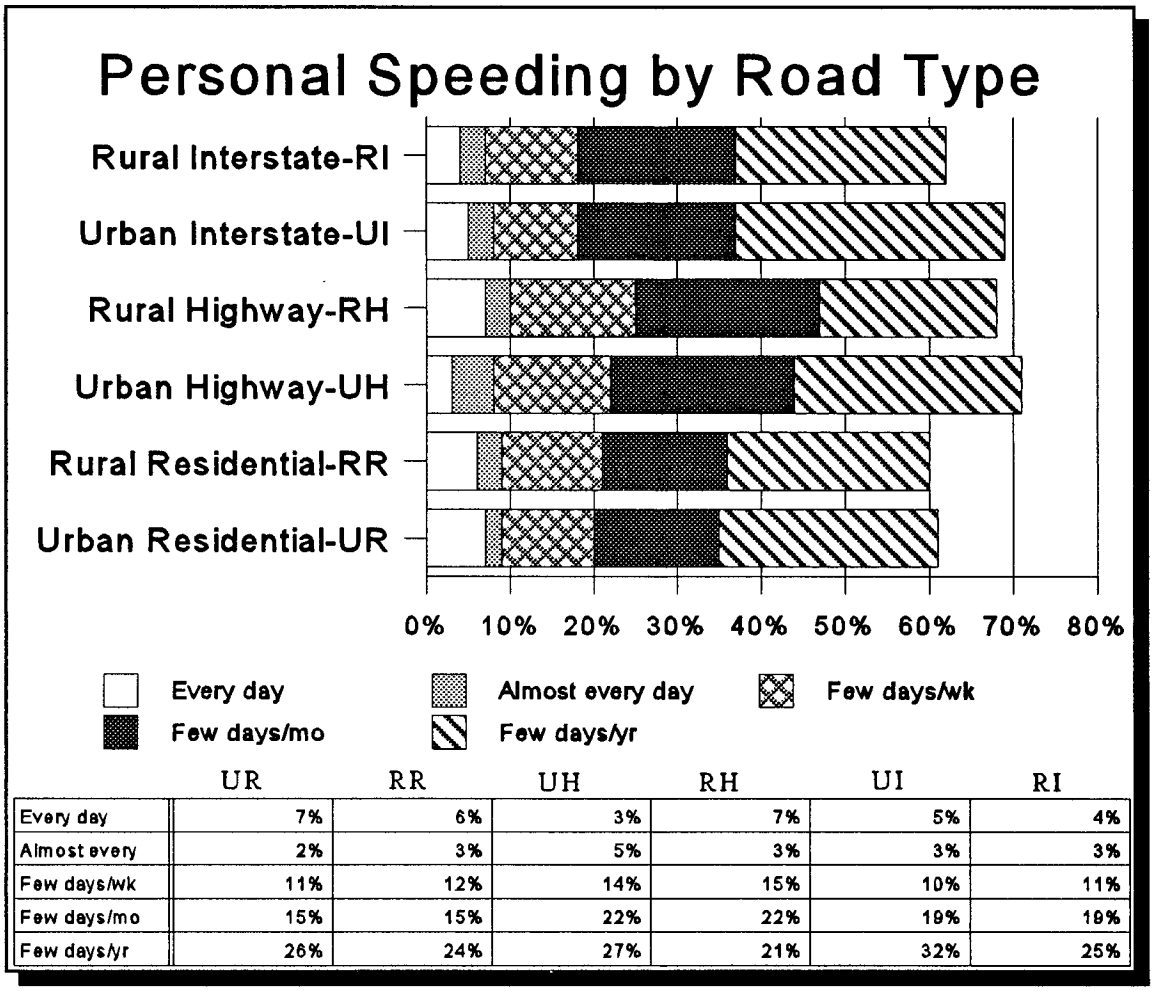
FIGURE 6-1



Qx: How often do you see vehicles traveling at an unsafe speed on [road type]?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=6,000

The drivers were also asked how often they drive faster than the speed they considered to be the maximum safe speed for these roads. About two-thirds of all drivers (65%) report that they at least occasionally exceed what they consider to be the maximum safe speed on the roads they regularly drive (see Figure 6-2). About one in ten drivers (9%) say that they exceed what they consider to be the maximum safe speed for the road either everyday or almost every day. Another 12% say that they exceed the maximum safe speed on roads they regularly travel a few days a week. And, another 19% say that they exceed the maximum safe speed a few days a month. Finally, 25% of drivers say that they exceed the maximum safe speed a few days a year.

FIGURE 6-2



	UR	RR	UH	RH	UI	RI
Every day	7%	6%	3%	7%	5%	4%
Almost every	2%	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Few days/wk	11%	12%	14%	15%	10%	11%
Few days/mo	15%	15%	22%	22%	19%	19%
Few days/yr	26%	24%	27%	21%	32%	25%

Qx: How often do you drive faster than [maximum speed] MPH on that road?
Base: Mentioned a maximum speed for that road.
Unweighted N=2,916

There is surprisingly little variation by road type in the proportion of drivers who exceed the posted speed limit. The proportion of drivers who exceed the posted speed limit every day or almost every day varies from 7% of drivers on rural interstates to 10% of drivers on non-interstate rural highways. Similarly, the proportion of drivers who exceed the speed limit at least a few days a week only varies from 18% on interstate highways (urban and rural) to 25% on non-interstate rural highways. However, the proportion of drivers who never exceed the posted speed limits is higher for residential streets (36%-38%) than on non-interstate highways (28%-32%) and urban interstate highways (31%).

Drivers reported that the most common reason they drive at speeds they consider to be unsafe on these roads is being late or behind schedule (44%) (see Table 6-1). This includes being late for work (11%), late for an appointment (7%), and simply running behind schedule (12%), among other things. The second most common set of reasons for driving at unsafe speeds on these roads relates to the traffic flow (12%). Most commonly, this means trying to keep up with the traffic.

TABLE 6-1

Reasons for Exceeding the Safe Speed by Road Type

Qx: *What are the most common reasons that you have driven on [road type] at speeds that you consider to be unsafe?*
Base: *Have driven at speeds considered unsafe.*

	Total	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Unweighted N	*1,933*	*420*	*261*	*348*	*299*	*309*	*198*
Late/behind schedule	**44%**	**50%**	**46%**	**44%**	**42%**	**43%**	**38%**
Unaware of speed	**12%**	**15%**	**15%**	**10%**	**12%**	**9%**	**9%**
Traffic flow	**12%**	**4%**	**3%**	**10%**	**9%**	**20%**	**27%**
Emergency	**11%**	**9%**	**17%**	**9%**	**13%**	**10%**	**9%**
Good conditions	**11%**	**11%**	**8%**	**12%**	**11%**	**12%**	**10%**
Comfort/familiarity with speed/road	**3%**	**2%**	**3%**	**4%**	**3%**	**1%**	**3%**
Speed limit	**3%**	**5%**	**4%**	**3%**	**2%**	**3%**	**3%**
Safe speed	**2%**	*	**1%**	**4%**	**2%**	**2%**	**1%**
Driver-related factors	**1%**	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	**2%**	**2%**
Other	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	**3%**	**1%**
Not sure/No answer	**14%**	**12%**	**13%**	**15%**	**18%**	**12%**	**9%**

* Less than 0.5%.
More than one response was permitted, therefore detail adds to more than 100%.

Third, lack of attention to their speed (12%) is given as a common reason for those occasions when they exceed the maximum safe speed. Fourth, good physical conditions (11%) are given as a reason that drivers exceed what they consider the maximum safe speed for the road. Usually, this means a deserted area with no traffic (8%). Fifth, emergency situations (11%) are given as a reason that drivers sometimes exceed the maximum safe speed. Drivers rarely report that their mood, stress, or enjoying the feeling of speed was a common reason for exceeding what they felt was the maximum safe speed for the road.

There was very little difference between the reasons why males and females give for exceeding the safe speed on all types of roads (see Table 6-2). The same cannot be said for the reasons given by age group. Being late or behind schedule is mentioned by three in five 16 to 20 year old drivers (62%) and declines for each successive age group until it is given by only one driver in five (20%) in the 65 and over group.

TABLE 6-2

Reasons for Exceeding the Safe Speed by Gender and Age

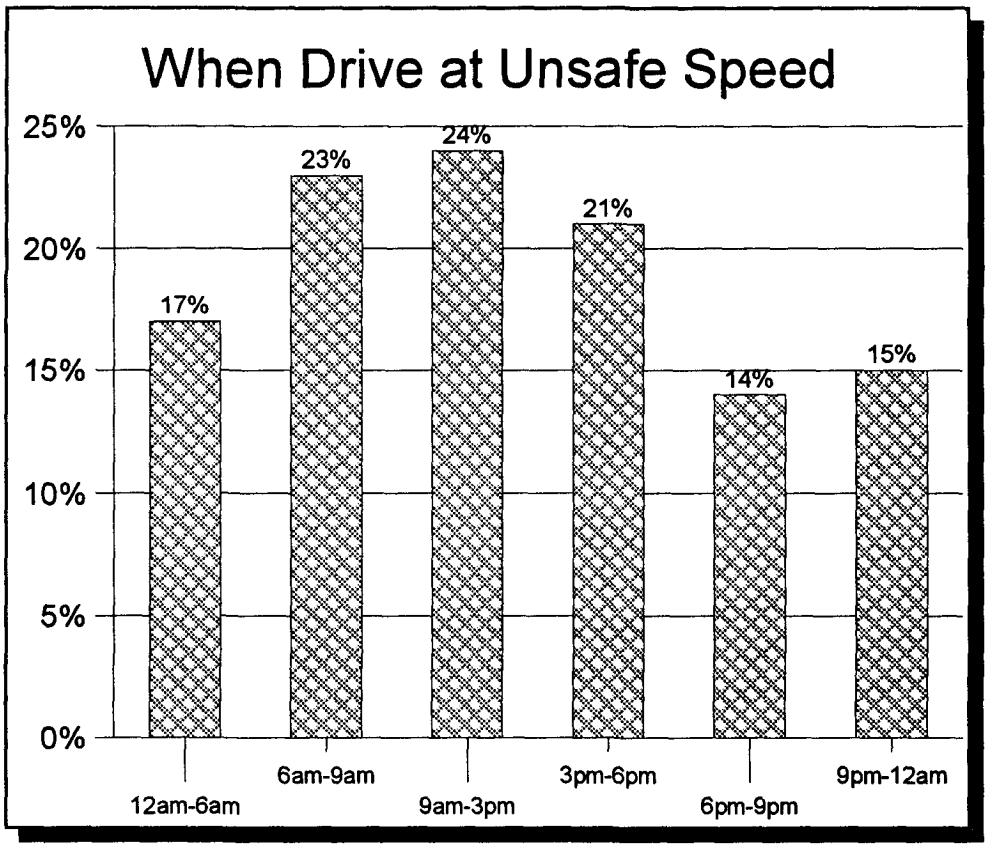
Qx: *What are the most common reasons that you have driven on [all road types] at speeds that you consider to be unsafe?*
Base: *Have driven at speeds considered unsafe.*

	Gender		Age						
	M	F	16-20	21-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Unweighted N	*965*	*968*	*150*	*116*	*454*	*449*	*349*	*184*	*218*
Late/behind schedule	**43%**	**44%**	**62%**	**56%**	**53%**	**44%**	**38%**	**24%**	**20%**
Unaware of speed	**11%**	**12%**	**10%**	**8%**	**11%**	**15%**	**15%**	**10%**	**8%**
Traffic flow	**11%**	**12%**	**4%**	**13%**	**11%**	**14%**	**11%**	**15%**	**13%**
Emergency	**9%**	**12%**	**9%**	**8%**	**10%**	**11%**	**11%**	**15%**	**12%**
Good conditions	**11%**	**10%**	**6%**	**9%**	**9%**	**11%**	**13%**	**13%**	**10%**
Comfort/familiarity with speed/road	**3%**	**2%**	**2%**	**2%**	**2%**	**2%**	**3%**	**2%**	**4%**
Speed limit	**4%**	**3%**	**2%**	**2%**	**1%**	**3%**	**6%**	**4%**	**6%**
Safe speed	**2%**	**2%**	**2%**	**1%**	**2%**	**2%**	**2%**	**2%**	**1%**
Driver-related factors	**1%**	**1%**	*	**2%**	**3%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	*
Other	**2%**	**1%**	**3%**	**1%**	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	*	**2%**
Not sure/No answer	**14%**	**15%**	**11%**	**9%**	**9%**	**11%**	**12%**	**25%**	**32%**

* Less than 0.5%.
More than one response was permitted, therefore detail adds to more than 100%.

About one driver in four (24%) reported that they are most likely to drive at an unsafe speed between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. (see Figure 6-3). Almost equal proportions reported speeding in the morning (6 to 9 a.m.) and evening (3 to 6 p.m.) drive time — 23% and 21 % respectively

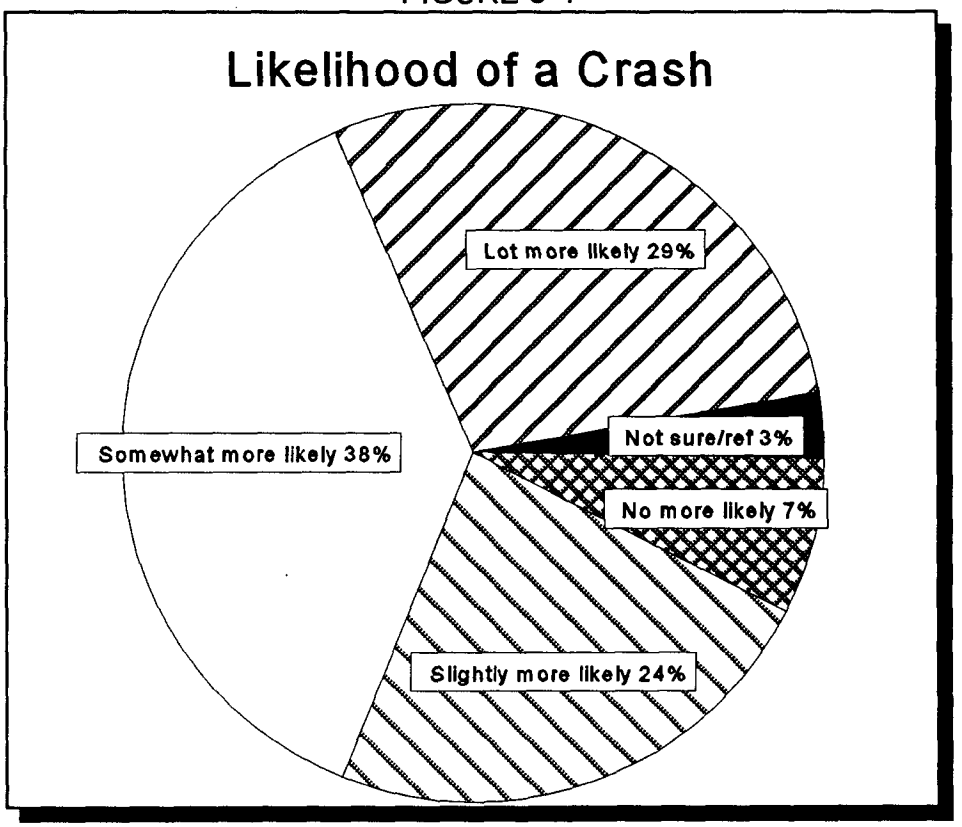
FIGURE 6-3



Qx: What times of the day are you most likely to drive at an unsafe speed?
Base: Have driven at speeds considered unsafe.
Unweighted N=1,933

The national sample of drivers had defined what they considered to be the maximum safe speed for the type of road on which they drive and how frequently they exceed that limit. They were then asked the likelihood of having a crash for someone who exceeded that safe speed limit compared to someone who was traveling at the posted speed for that road. The majority of drivers felt that someone who was exceeding what they considered to be the maximum safe speed for the road would either be a lot more likely (29%) or somewhat more likely (38%) to have a crash than someone traveling at the posted speed (see Figure 6-4). Another quarter (24%) felt that someone driving over the maximum safe speed would be slightly more likely to have a crash than someone traveling at the posted speed. Only 7% felt that those exceeding the maximum safe speed for the road would be no more likely to have a crash than someone traveling at the posted speed.

FIGURE 6-4



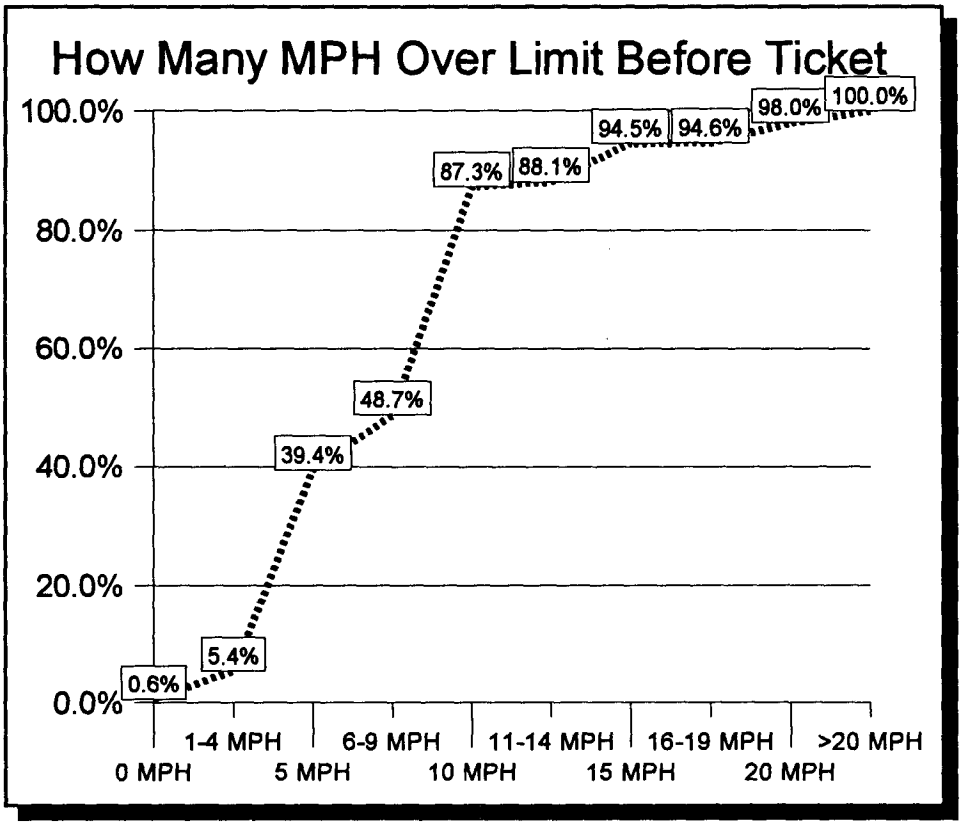
Qx: *Compared to someone driving at the speed limit on that road, how much more likely is someone traveling faster than [maximum safe speed] MPH to have a crash? Is it ... ?*

Base: *Consider maximum safe speed to be more than the current posted speed limit.*

Unweighted N=845

Another issue that was examined was the speed at which it was felt police will normally give a speeding ticket. Overall, sightly over one in twenty (5.4%) of drivers felt that they could drive at speeds up to 4 miles per hour or less over the speed limit before police would give them a speeding ticket. A total of three in five (39.4%) said that speeds of 5 miles per hour or more over the limit could result in being ticketed. Slightly less than nine in 10 (87.3%) agreed that speeds 10 miles above the speed limit could result in getting a ticket. This proportion increases 19 in 20 for speeds 15 miles an hours above the speed limit, and 49 out of 50 for speeds 20 miles above the speed limit.

FIGURE 6-5

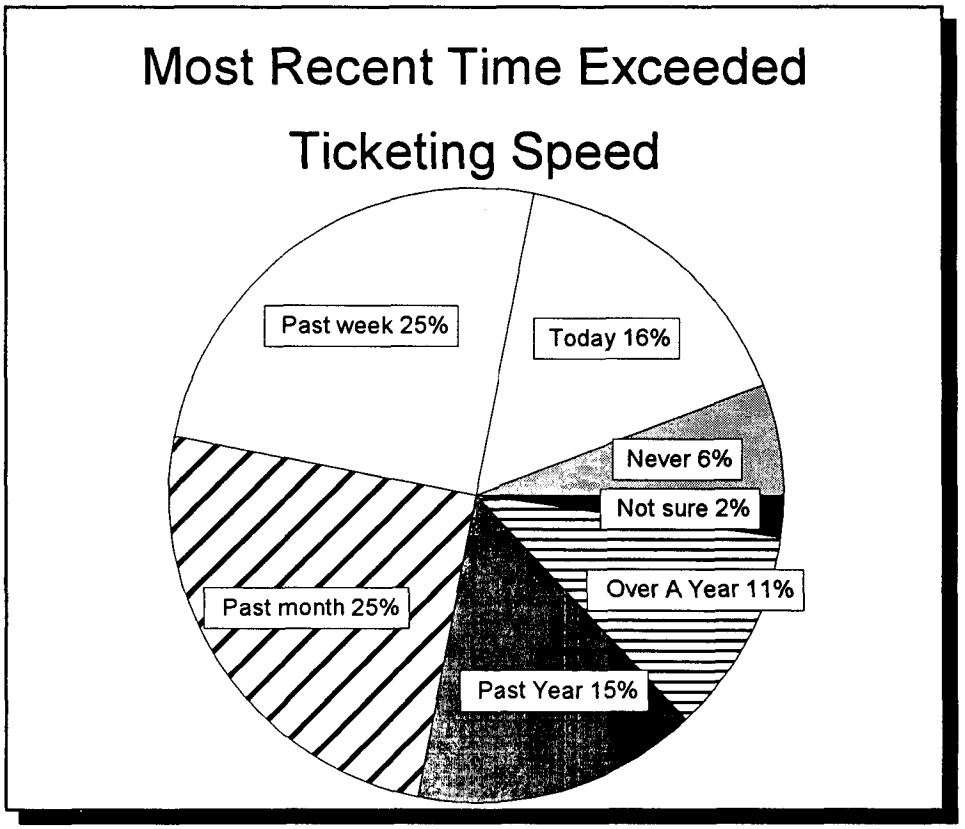


Qx: In your opinion, how much OVER THE SPEED LIMIT can you go on this road before police will normally give you a speeding ticket (if they see you)?
Base: Have driven at speeds considered unsafe and gave a response.
Unweighted N=1,761

The survey also examined the frequency that drivers exceed the posted speed limits at a rate of speed which they believe police will normally give a speeding ticket if they observe it. The question was not asked of drivers who never exceeded a safe speed. It was also not asked of drivers who could not estimate how much over the speed limit they believed drivers could go before police would ticket them.

Nearly one out of six drivers (16%) report that they last exceeded the posted speed, at a rate that would normally get them a speeding ticket if observed by police, on the day of the interview (see Figure 6-6). Another 25% report that they have exceeded the speed at which police normally ticket within the past week. Hence, well over one-third of those who have exceeded the speed limit and gave an estimate of permissible speed before being ticketed exceed, not only the speed limit, but the speed at which police normally ticket drivers at least once a week. Another 25% report that they have done so in the past month, while another 15% report having exceeded the ticketing speed within the past year. In total, over three-fourths of all drivers report having driven over the posted speed limit in the past year at a rate of speed that would normally get them a speeding ticket if observed by police.

FIGURE 6-6



Qx: When was the last time that you drove [faster than ticketing speed] MPH over the speed limit in [road type]?
Base: Gave an estimate of permissible speed before being ticketed.
Unweighted N=1,748

The reasons that drivers give for driving at speeds at which they are likely to get a ticket are very similar to the reasons given for driving at speeds they consider to be unsafe. On the most recent speeding occasion, the most common reason for going at a speed that they considered themselves likely to get a ticket if seen by police was being late or behind schedule (42%) (see Table 6-3). This includes being late for work (12%), late for an appointment (5%), hurrying home (6%) and simply running behind schedule (8%), among other things. Lack of attention to their speed (14%) is given as the second most common reason for exceeding the ticketing speed on the most recent occasion. The third most common set of reasons for driving over the speed at which police ticket on those roads relates to the traffic flow (13%). Most commonly, this means trying to keep up with the traffic.

TABLE 6-3

Reasons for Exceeding the Ticketing Speed by Road Type

Qx: Why were you going that fast on that occasion?
Base: Have driven over speed limit that would result in a ticket.

	Total	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Unweighted N	*1,588*	*337*	*202*	*288*	*245*	*273*	*170*
Late/behind schedule	**42%**	**44%**	**50%**	**45%**	**39%**	**40%**	**37%**
Unaware of speed	**14%**	**17%**	**17%**	**15%**	**12%**	**7%**	**14%**
Traffic flow	**13%**	**6%**	**3%**	**13%**	**8%**	**26%**	**24%**
Emergency	**5%**	**6%**	**9%**	**5%**	**5%**	**4%**	**2%**
Good conditions	**7%**	**6%**	**5%**	**6%**	**8%**	**9%**	**11%**
Comfort/familiarity with speed/road	**4%**	**3%**	**2%**	**3%**	**5%**	**4%**	**6%**
Speed limit	**2%**	**3%**	*	**2%**	**3%**	**2%**	-
Driver-related factors	**2%**	**3%**	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**
Safe speed	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**2%**	**4%**	**3%**	-
Other	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	**4%**	**2%**	**3%**
Don't know/No answer	**14%**	**17%**	**15%**	**14%**	**18%**	**9%**	**11%**

* Less than 0.5%.
\- None.
More than one response was permitted, therefore detail adds to more than 100%.

Good physical conditions (7%) are given as the fourth most common reason that drivers exceed what they consider the ticketing speed for police on the road; usually, this means a deserted area with no traffic (6%). Fifth, emergency situations are given by 5% of drivers as the reason they exceeded the speed at which police normally ticket on their most recent occasion. A handful of drivers (4%) report that their comfort or familiarity with the road was the reason they exceeded the ticketing speed on the most recent occasion. Only 2% of drivers reported driver-related factors, such as their mood or stress, as the reason they exceed what they felt was the speed at which police were likely to ticket on that road.

Drivers were asked, aside from driving at an unsafe speed, what other types of unsafe driving **behaviors they normally encountered** on the (selected) road they drive. Most commonly, about one driver in four (24%) has encountered someone weaving in and out of traffic, most often on interstate highways in both urban (45%) and rural (36%) areas (see Table 6-4). Tailgating was the second most common unsafe driving behavior mentioned by 17%. This, too, occurred most frequently on interstates. The third most mentioned behavior was driver inattention (15%). While this was observed on interstates, it was also observed in relatively similar proportions on other road types. Only one other unsafe behavior, unsafe lane changes, was observed most often on interstate roads in an urban setting by more than 10% of drivers overall. In addition, unsafe passing was observed by 19% of drivers on non-interstates in rural areas and ignoring stop signs was observed by 17% of drivers on urban residential streets.

TABLE 6-4

Types of Unsafe Driving Usually Encountered by Road Type

Qx: Aside from driving at an unsafe speed, what other types of unsafe driving behaviors do you normally encounter on that road?
Base: Total population of drivers.

	Total	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Unweighted N	*6,000*	*1,320*	*834*	*1,016*	*894*	*938*	*606*
Weaving in and out	**24%**	**14%**	**12%**	**27%**	**17%**	**45%**	**36%**
Tailgating	**17%**	**11%**	**10%**	**17%**	**16%**	**27%**	**21%**
Driving inattention	**15%**	**13%**	**14%**	**15%**	**13%**	**17%**	**16%**
Unsafe lane changes	**10%**	**8%**	**6%**	**11%**	**9%**	**14%**	**11%**
Unsafe passing	**9%**	**5%**	**8%**	**14%**	**19%**	**5%**	**5%**
Ignoring stop signs	**8%**	**17%**	**10%**	**6%**	**4%**	**1%**	**1%**
Failing to yield	**6%**	**7%**	**6%**	**7%**	**6%**	**6%**	**6%**
Drinking and driving	**5%**	**5%**	**5%**	**4%**	**9%**	**4%**	**6%**
Running red lights	**5%**	**7%**	**4%**	**9%**	**3%**	**2%**	**2%**
Cutting in front	**4%**	**3%**	**2%**	**6%**	**4%**	**6%**	**3%**
Driving too slow	**3%**	**1%**	**1%**	**2%**	**4%**	**5%**	**3%**
Only speeding	**2%**	**3%**	**2%**	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**3%**
Other	**13%**	**13%**	**12%**	**15%**	**13%**	**13%**	**15%**
None	**16%**	**21%**	**26%**	**12%**	**14%**	**9%**	**13%**
Not sure	**5%**	**6%**	**6%**	**5%**	**5%**	**4%**	**4%**

More than one response was permitted, therefore detail adds to more than 100%.

If more than one unsafe behavior was reported, drivers were asked which they **encountered most often on that road**. The most often encountered unsafe driving behavior was similar to what was reported in Table 6-3. One driver in six (15%) saw drivers weave in and out of traffic (see Table 6-5). This is most often encountered on interstates in urban (30%) and rural (26%) settings. This was followed by tailgating — reported by 11% of all drivers, but seen most often on interstates (17%). Driver inattention was also mentioned by 11% of drivers overall and was seen mostly on rural residential roads. While no other behavior was mentioned by 10% or more of drivers overall, unsafe passing was encountered by 13% of drivers of rural non-interstates and ignoring stop signs was encountered by 11% of drivers of urban residential roads.

TABLE 6-5

Most Often Encountered Types of Unsafe Driving Behavior by Road Type

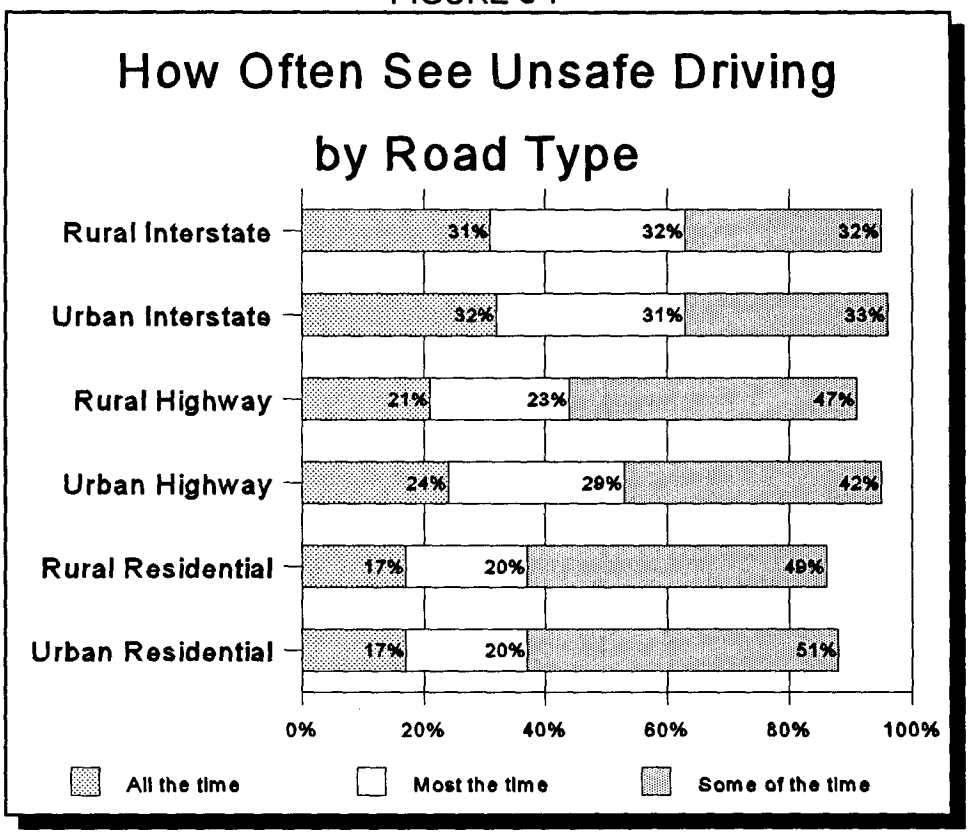
Qx: Which of these behaviors do you encounter most often on [road type]?
Base: Total population of drivers.

	Total	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Unweighted N	*3000*	*628*	*408*	*521*	*448*	*485*	*295*
Weaving in and out	**15%**	**10%**	**8%**	**18%**	**6%**	**30%**	**26%**
Tailgating	**11%**	**6%**	**5%**	**10%**	**12%**	**17%**	**17%**
Driver inattention	**11%**	**10%**	**14%**	**10%**	**10%**	**10%**	**12%**
Unsafe lane changes	**6%**	**6%**	**4%**	**8%**	**7%**	**7%**	**6%**
Unsafe passing	**6%**	**2%**	**7%**	**8%**	**13%**	**3%**	**2%**
Ignoring stop signs	**5%**	**11%**	**7%**	**4%**	**2%**	**-**	*****
Failing to yield	**4%**	**4%**	**5%**	**4%**	**4%**	**3%**	**2%**
Drinking and driving	**3%**	**3%**	**5%**	**1%**	**5%**	**2%**	**3%**
Running red lights	**2%**	**4%**	*****	**3%**	**3%**	*****	*****
Cutting in front	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**3%**	**3%**	**4%**	**2%**
Driving too slow	**3%**	**2%**	**1%**	**3%**	**3%**	**4%**	**3%**
Only speeding	**2%**	**4%**	**3%**	**2%**	**3%**	**1%**	**2%**
Other	**9%**	**9%**	**11%**	**10%**	**9%**	**9%**	**11%**
None	**14%**	**21%**	**22%**	**11%**	**14%**	**7%**	**8%**
Not sure	**7%**	**7%**	**7%**	**6%**	**6%**	**4%**	**7%**

- None.
* Less than 0.5%.
More than one response was permitted, therefore detail adds to more than 100%.

Those who reported that they observed unsafe driving behaviors were asked how often they saw those behaviors on that road. Unsafe driving behaviors are most often encountered on interstate highways. About three drivers in 10 observe these behaviors all of the time (see Figure 6-7). This compares to 21% of rural non-interstate drivers, 24% of urban non-interstate drivers and 17% of drivers of residential streets encountering unsafe behaviors all of the time.

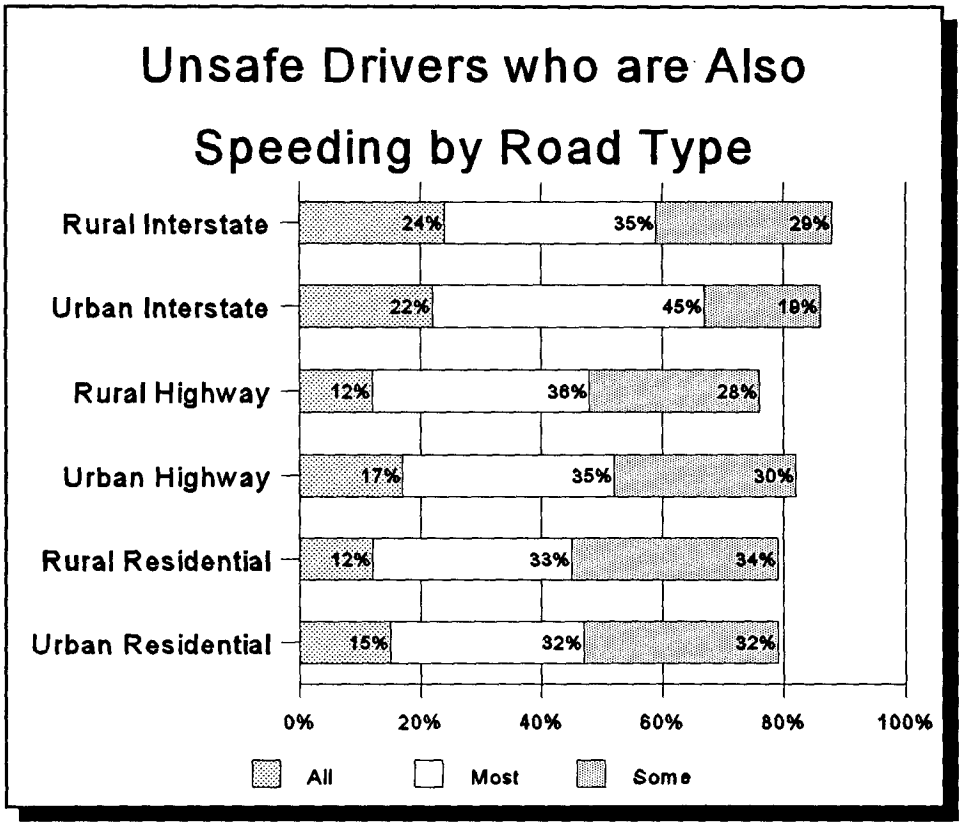
FIGURE 6-7



Qx: How often do you see [unsafe driving behavior] by [road type]?
Base: Encountered unsafe driving behavior.
Unweighted N=2,578

Drivers were asked if they observed the unsafe driving behavior they mentioned concurrently with speeding. Over one driver in five (23%) on interstate highways observed unsafe drivers who were also speeding (see Figure 6-8). More than three drivers in five (63%) on interstates encounter speeding and another unsafe behavior together at least most of the time. Speeding and another unsafe behavior were observed at least most of the time by no more than half of the drivers on all other types of roads.

FIGURE 6-8



Qx: How many of the drivers who do this are also speeding?
Base: Encountered unsafe driving behavior.
Unweighted N=2,578

Drivers were asked which unsafe driving behavior mentioned that they considered the most dangerous. Weaving in and out of traffic was cited as the most dangerous overall by one driver in six (16%) (see Table 6-6). Further, it was considered the most dangerous by drivers of interstates in both urban (30%) and rural (26%) areas as well as on non-interstates in urban areas (17%). Driver inattention was the second most dangerous driving behavior and was mentioned by one driver in 10 (11%) overall. This behavior was mentioned by 14% of drivers of residential roads in rural areas. Other behaviors mentioned as being most dangerous by at least one driver in 10 were tailgating on interstates, unsafe passing on non-interstate highways, and ignoring stop signs on rural residential roads.

TABLE 6-6

Most Dangerous Type of Unsafe Driving Behaviors Encountered by Road Type

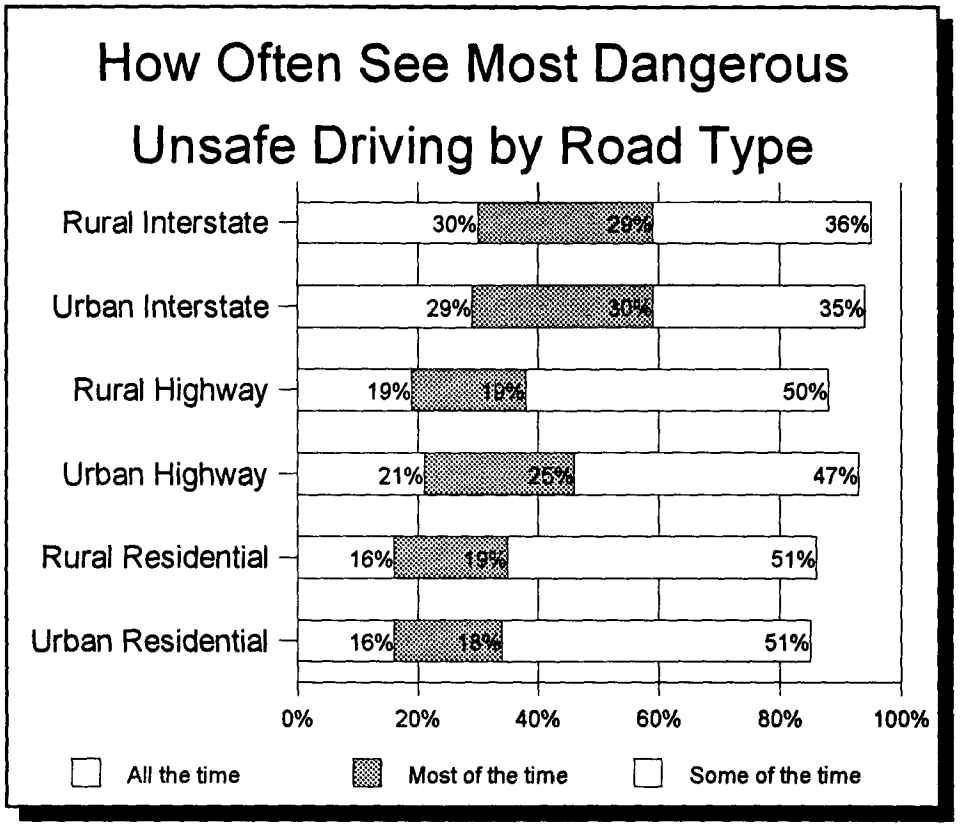
Qx: Which of these behaviors do you consider the most dangerous on [road type]?
Base: Total population of drivers.

	Total	Residential		Non-Interstate		Interstate	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Unweighted N	*3000*	*628*	*408*	*521*	*448*	*485*	*295*
Weaving in and out	**16%**	**10%**	**8%**	**17%**	**10%**	**30%**	**26%**
Tailgating	**9%**	**5%**	**4%**	**8%**	**9%**	**16%**	**17%**
Driver inattention	**11%**	**11%**	**14%**	**11%**	**8%**	**11%**	**12%**
Unsafe lane changes	**5%**	**5%**	**4%**	**6%**	**5%**	**6%**	**5%**
Unsafe passing	**6%**	**2%**	**7%**	**10%**	**13%**	**2%**	**2%**
Ignoring stop signs	**5%**	**11%**	**8%**	**3%**	**3%**	*	*
Failing to yield	**3%**	**4%**	**4%**	**3%**	**5%**	**2%**	**1%**
Drinking and driving	**5%**	**4%**	**5%**	**2%**	**7%**	**3%**	**6%**
Running red lights	**3%**	**5%**	**2%**	**5%**	**3%**	*	*
Cutting in front	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**3%**	**2%**	**4%**	**2%**
Driving too slow	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**3%**	**3%**	**3%**	**3%**
Only speeding	**2%**	**3%**	**3%**	**2%**	**2%**	**1%**	**2%**
Other	**10%**	**10%**	**10%**	**10%**	**9%**	**9%**	**9%**
None	**14%**	**21%**	**22%**	**11%**	**14%**	**7%**	**8%**
Not sure	**6%**	**7%**	**7%**	**5%**	**7%**	**3%**	**6%**

* Less than 0.5%.
More than one response was permitted, therefore detail adds to more than 100%.

About three drivers in 10 saw unsafe driving all of the time on interstate highways. An equal number saw unsafe driving most of the time (see Figure 6-9). Taken together, three drivers in five reported observing unsafe driving at least most of the time on interstate highways. About one driver in five on non-interstate highways reported witnessing unsafe driving behavior all of the time. A slightly smaller proportion, one in six, reported seeing unsafe driving all of the time on residential roads. For both non-interstates and residential roads, about half the drivers reported observing unsafe driving behavior only some of the time.

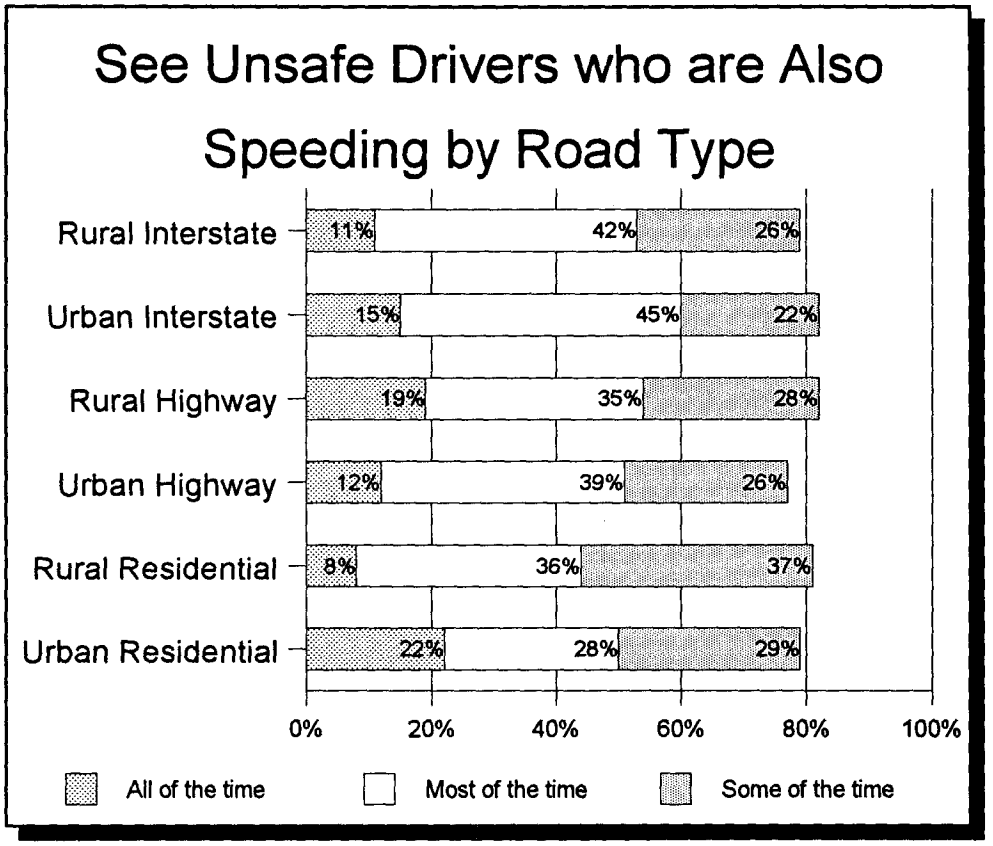
FIGURE 6-9



Qx: How often do you see [most dangerous behavior] on [road type]?
Base: Encountered unsafe driving behavior.
Unweighted N=2,578

Drivers who observed an unsafe driving behavior other than speeding were asked if the driver who was driving unsafely was also speeding. Speeding was reported together with another unsafe behavior all of the time by 22% of urban residential drivers and 19% of rural non-interstate drivers (see Figure 6-10). Speeding together with another unsafe behavior was observed all of the time by only 8% of rural residential road drivers. The combination of unsafe driving was observed at least most of the time by 60% of urban interstate drivers.

FIGURE 6-10



Qx: How many of the drivers who do this were also speeding?
Base: Unsafe driving behavior encountered most often is not speeding.
Unweighted N=434

SUMMARY

Overall, the majority of drivers said they see vehicles driving at an unsafe speed all or most of the time on all road types, particularly interstate highways. Over two-thirds of the drivers said they had personally exceeded the safe speed some time in the past year, with little variation by road types. The most often mentioned reason for exceeding the safe speed was being behind schedule. Even though many drivers said they had exceeded the safe speed, the majority felt that increasing the speed limit would result in more crashes. More than half of all drivers felt that driving up to 9 miles per hour over the speed limit did not warrant a ticket and three out of five felt there was at least a 5 MPH leeway when enforcing speed limits.

Drivers found unsafe speed and unsafe driving behaviors present on all road types, but more frequently on interstate highways. Aside from speeding, the most often encountered unsafe driving behaviors were other drivers weaving in and out of traffic and tailgating. Drivers felt these behaviors, along with driver inattention, were the most dangerous.

CHAPTER VII.

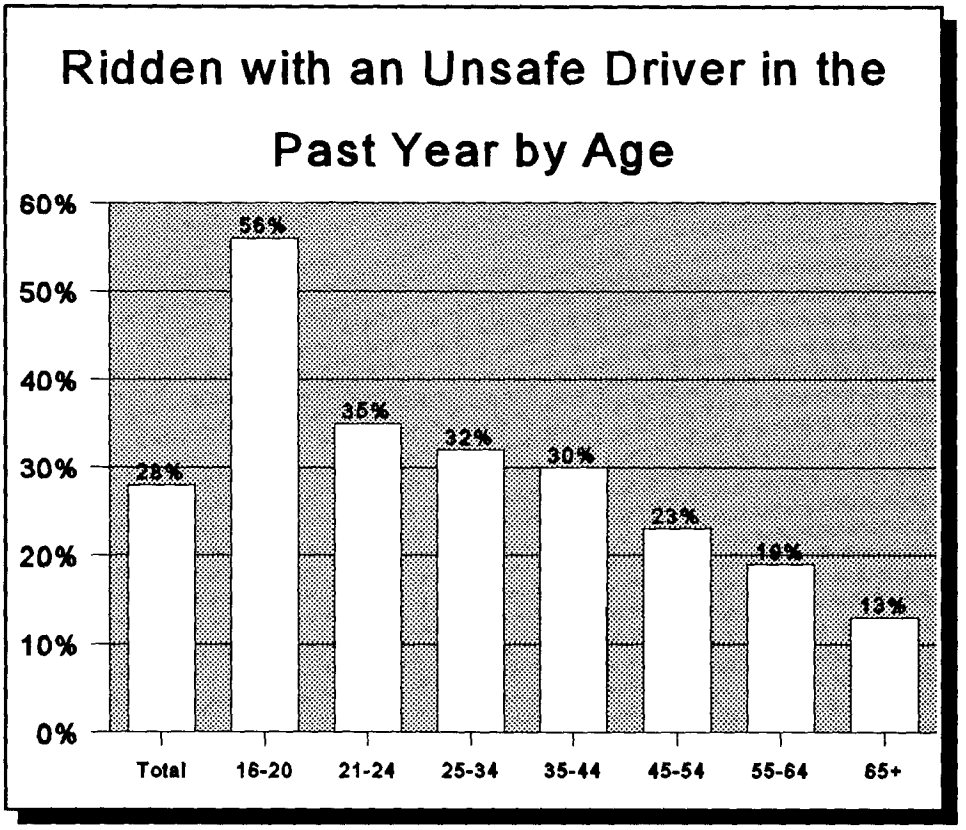
EXPERIENCE RIDING WITH UNSAFE AND AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS

EXPERIENCE WITH UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIOR

Other sections of this report have focused on the driving experience of the respondents. This section will focus on the experience as a passenger with someone else driving. The first part deals with unsafe driving in general.

Overall, almost three in 10 (28%) reported riding with an unsafe driver in the past year (see Figure 7-1). A higher proportion of men reported riding with an unsafe driver (32%) than did women (25%).

FIGURE 7-1

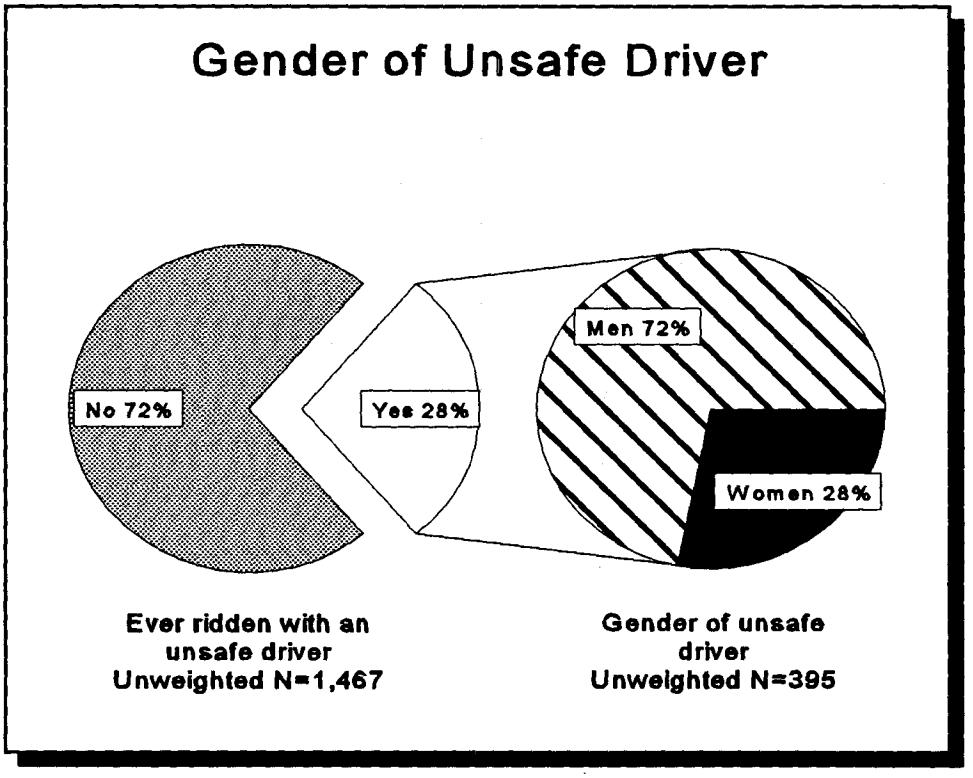


Qx: In the past year, have you ever ridden with someone who you felt was driving in an unsafe manner?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=1,467

Riding with an unsafe driver decreased as age increased. Where 56% of those in the 16 to 20 age group reported riding with an unsafe driver, the same was true of only 35% of those in the 21 to 24 age group. The proportion continued to decrease slowly until the 34 44 group when the decrease became steeper until it reached a low of 13% for those 65 and over.

Seven in 10 (72%) of the unsafe drivers with whom respondents had ridden were men (see Figure 7-2). Residents of rural communities reported an even higher proportion of unsafe drivers as men (81%).

FIGURE 7-2



Qx: *In the past year, have you ever ridden with someone who you felt was driving in an unsafe manner?*

Qx: *Thinking back on the most recent occasion, was the person who was driving in an unsafe manner a man or a woman?*

Base: *Total population of drivers; ridden with an unsafe driver.*

Half (49%) of the drivers had ridden in an unsafe manner were friends (see Table 7-1) of the person reporting the unsafe driving. The second most often mentioned (15%) relationship of the driver was the spouse of the passenger. This, in turn, was followed by co-worker (8%), a relative other than spouse, sibling or parent (8%), and boy/girlfriend (8%). Other categories were mentioned by less than one person in 15.

TABLE 7-1

Relationship to Unsafe Driver by Gender of Unsafe Driver

Qx: Thinking about the most recent occasion, was the person who was driving in an unsafe manner a man or a woman?
Qx: What was their relationship to you?
Base: Rode with someone in the past year who was driving in an unsafe manner.

	Total	Man	Woman
Unweighted N	*395*	*284*	*111*
Friend	49%	48%	52%
Spouse	15%	15%	14%
Co-worker	8%	9%	6%
Other relative	8%	9%	5%
Boy/girlfriend	8%	7%	9%
Sibling	5%	4%	9%
Parent	1%	1%	2%
Boss/supervisor	1%	1%	-
Other	3%	3%	2%
Don't know/refuse	2%	2%	2%

- None.

The most frequently reported unsafe driving behavior by riders was speeding. Over half (54%) of all persons who have ridden with someone driving in an unsafe manner mention this behavior (see Table 7-2). Speeding was the most frequently mentioned unsafe behavior whether or not the driver was a man (55%) or a woman (51%). The second most frequently mentioned unsafe behavior (13%) was tailgating, attributed to 15% of men and 11% of women who have exhibited unsafe driving behavior.

Weaving in and out of traffic was the third most common unsafe driving behavior mentioned by 9% and attributed to 10% of men and 5% of women who have driven unsafely. The fourth most frequently mentioned (7%) unsafe behavior was driver inattentiveness. While this was attributed to 3% of men who have driven unsafely, it was attributed to 15% of women making it the second most frequent unsafe driving behavior for women. No other unsafe driving behavior was mentioned by more than 5% of those who rode with a driver who had driven unsafely.

TABLE 7-2

Unsafe Driving Behavior by Gender of Unsafe Driver

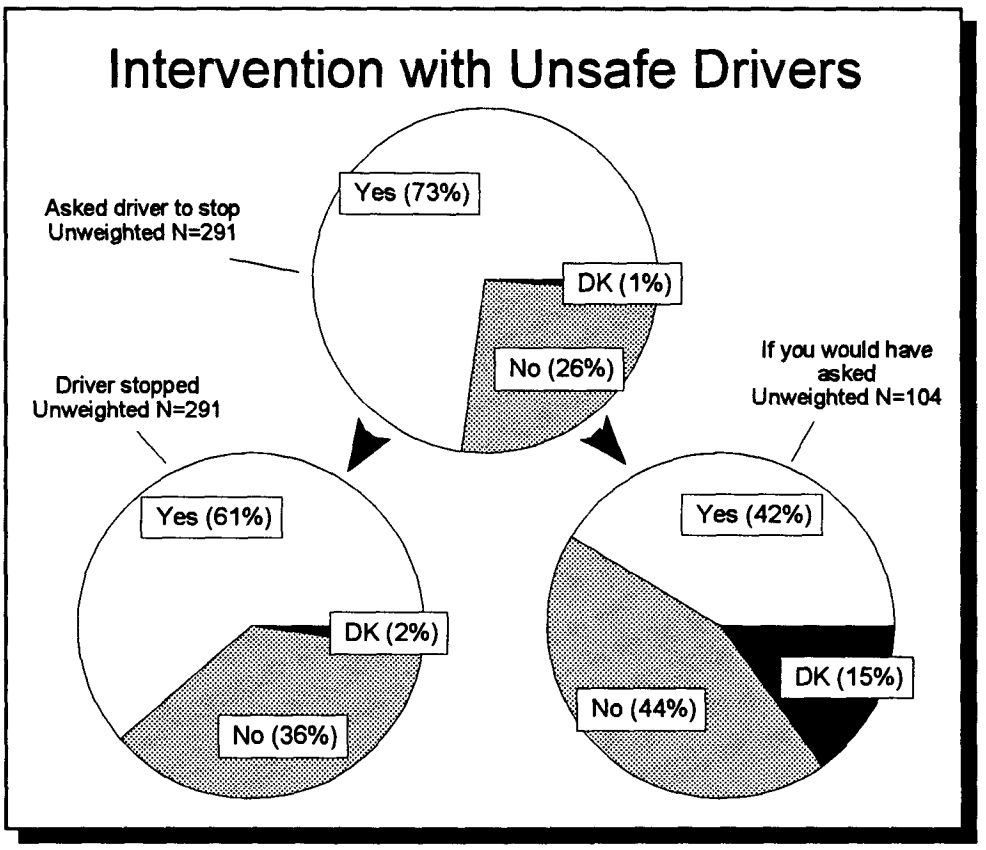
Qx: *What types of unsafe driving behaviors did [this person] do?*
Base: *Rode with someone in past year who was driving in an unsafe manner.*

	Total	Man	Woman
Unweighted N	*395*	*284*	*111*
Speeding	54%	55%	51%
Tailgating	13%	15%	11%
Weaving in and out of traffic	9%	10%	4%
Driver inattentiveness	7%	3%	16%
Failing to yield	2%	2%	4%
Running red lights	2%	2%	2%
Ignoring stop signs	2%	2%	1%
Drinking and driving	1%	1%	2%
Other	8%	7%	9%
Don't know/refuse	3%	3%	2%

Almost three persons in four (73%) who had ridden with a driver who had driven unsafely said they asked the driver to stop driving unsafely (see Figure 7-3). Females were more likely to make this request (84%) than were males (63%).

In three cases out of five (61%) where the driver was asked to change his/her behavior, the driver complied. In those cases where the driver was not asked to change their driving behavior, 42% of riders felt that had they asked the driver to stop the unsafe behavior, they would have.

FIGURE 7-3

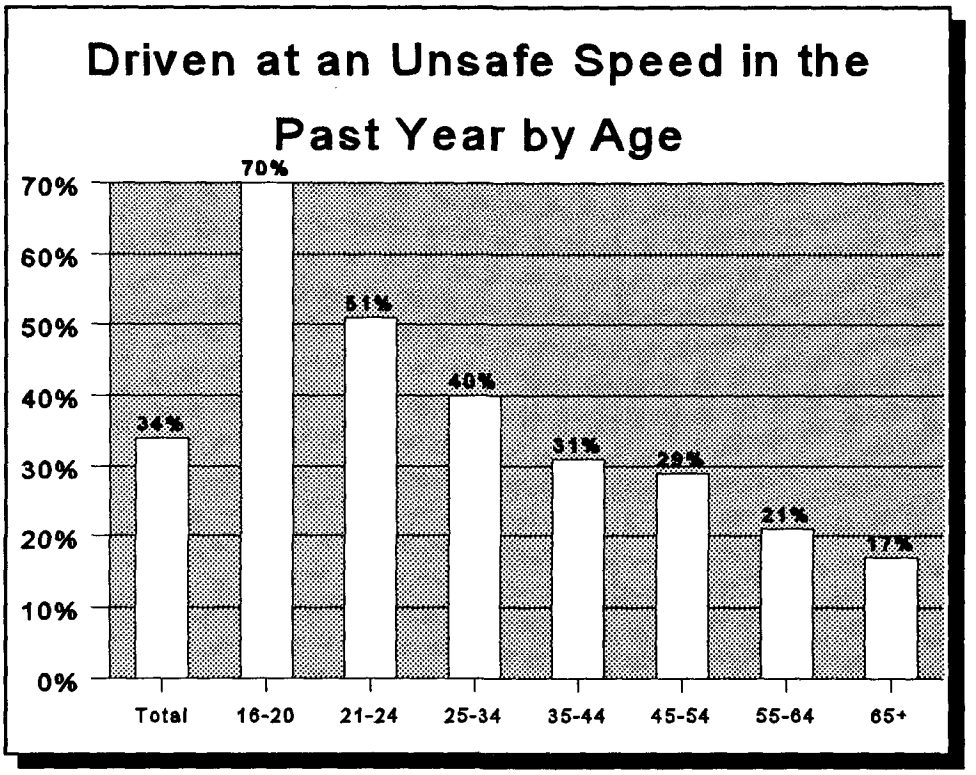


Qx: Did you ask or tell them to stop driving like that?
Qx: Did they do what you asked?
Qx: If you had asked them to drive differently, do you think they would have done what you asked?
Base: Rode with someone in past year who was driving in an unsafe manner.

EXPERIENCE WITH SPEEDING DRIVERS

Overall, one person in three (34%) has ridden with someone in the last year who they felt was driving at an unsafe speed (see Figure 7-4). There was no difference from this proportion by gender. There was, however, a relationship between riding with someone who was driving at an unsafe speed and age. Fully 70% — twice the overall proportion — of those in the 16 to 20 age group rode with someone who was speeding in the past year. The proportion dropped 20 percentage points to 51% for those in the 21 to 24 age group and continued to drop to 17% for those 65 and over.

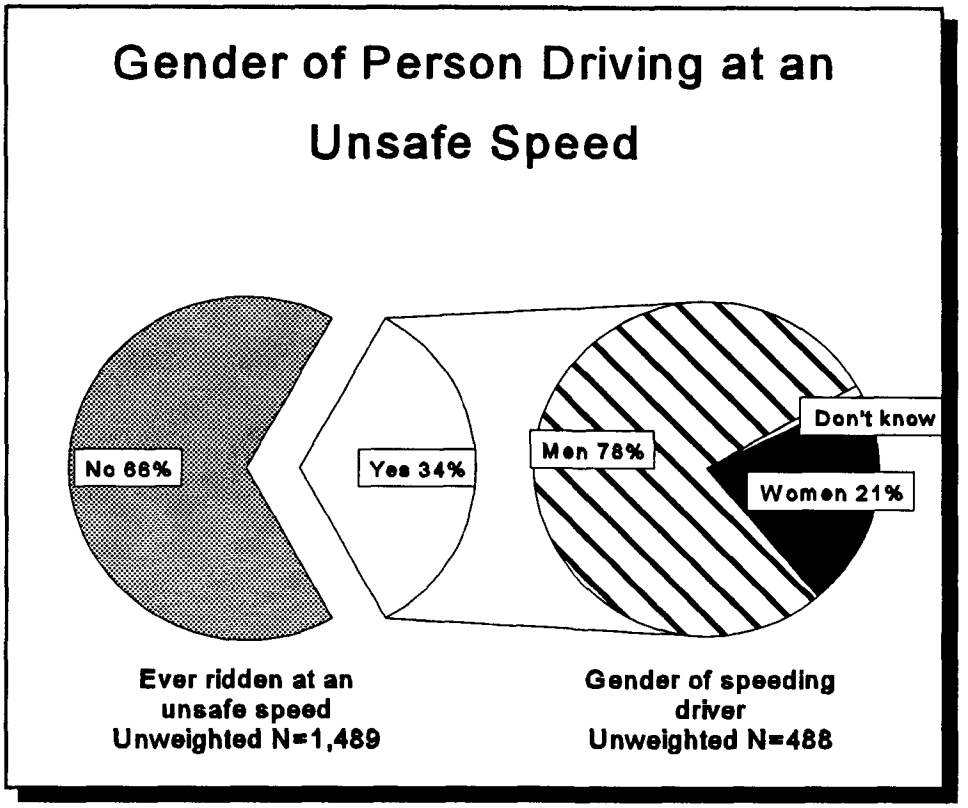
FIGURE 7-4



Qx: In the past year, have you ever ridden with someone who you felt was driving at an unsafe speed?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=1,489

Almost four speeding drivers in five (78%) were men (see figure 7-5). This proportion was slightly higher for male passengers (81%) than it was for females (75%). In comparing Figure 7-2 with Figure 7-5, it is interesting to note that women are less likely to drive at an unsafe speed (21%) than they are to drive in an unsafe manner (28%).

FIGURE 7-5



Qx: *In the past year, have you ever ridden with someone who you felt was driving at an unsafe speed?*

Qx: *Thinking back on the most recent occasion, was the person who was driving at an unsafe speed a man or a woman?*

Base: *Total population of drivers; ridden with someone who was driving at an unsafe speed.*

Almost half (45%) of those who were driving at an unsafe speed were a friend of the rider (see Table 7-3). While 15% of those driving were the spouse, husbands (17%) outnumbered wives (8%). Some other relative — not the parent, sibling, or spouse — accounted for 9% of the speeders, but 17% of the female speeders.

TABLE 7-3

Relationship to Speeding Driver by Gender of Speeding Driver

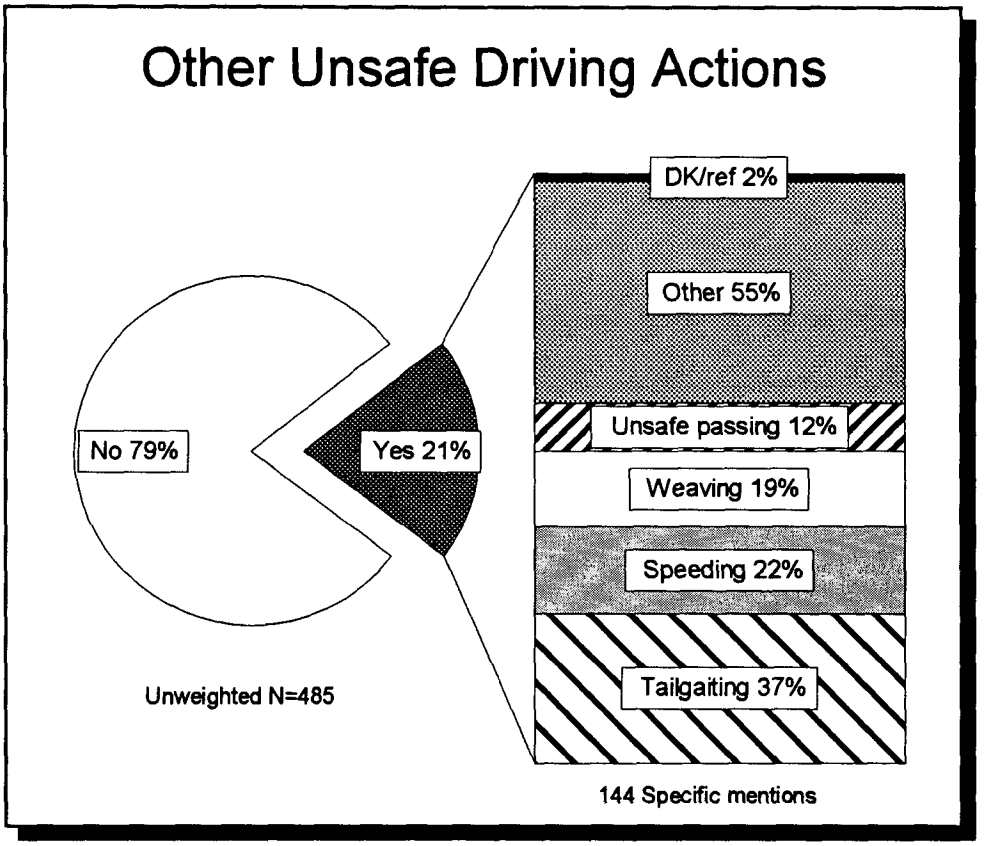
Qx: Thinking about the most recent occasion, was the person who was driving at an unsafe speed a man or a woman?
Qx: What was their relationship to you?
Base: Gave gender of person who was driving at an unsafe speed.

	Total	Man	Woman
Unweighted N	*485*	*381*	*104*
Friend	45%	46%	44%
Spouse	15%	17%	8%
Other relative	9%	7%	17%
Sibling	8%	7%	11%
Boy/girlfriend	7%	7%	8%
Co-worker	6%	6%	5%
Parent	3%	3%	2%
Boss/supervisor	2%	2%	-
Other	4%	3%	4%
Don't know/refuse	2%	2%	1%

- None.

In addition to driving at an unsafe speed, one driver in five (21%) engaged in another unsafe driving action (see Figure 7-6). The most common unsafe driving actions included tailgating (37%), speeding (22%), weaving in and out of traffic (19%), and unsafe passing (12%). Other specific actions included running red lights (9%), unsafe lane changes (8%), failing to yield (6%), drinking and driving (5%), and driver inattentiveness (3%).

FIGURE 7-6

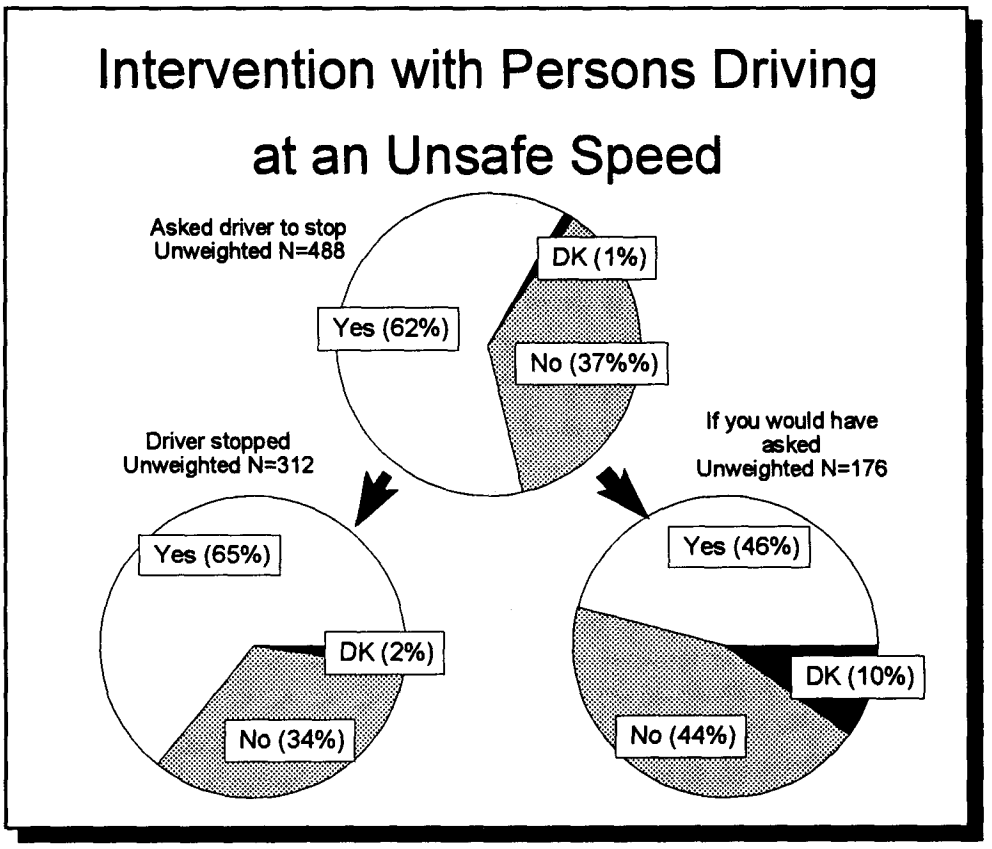


Qx: Besides the unsafe speed, did the driver engage in any other unsafe driving action on that occasion?
Qx: What type of unsafe driving behaviors did [this person] do?
Base: Gave gender of person who was driving at an unsafe speed.

About three persons in five (62%) who, in the past year, were riding with someone who was driving at an unsafe speed asked the driver to slow down (see Figure 7-7). Females were more likely to make this request (70%) than were males (54%).

In approximately two-thirds (65%) of the cases where the driver was asked to change their behavior, the request was granted. In those cases where the driver was not asked to slow down, almost half (46%) felt that had they asked, the driver would have slowed down.

FIGURE 7-7

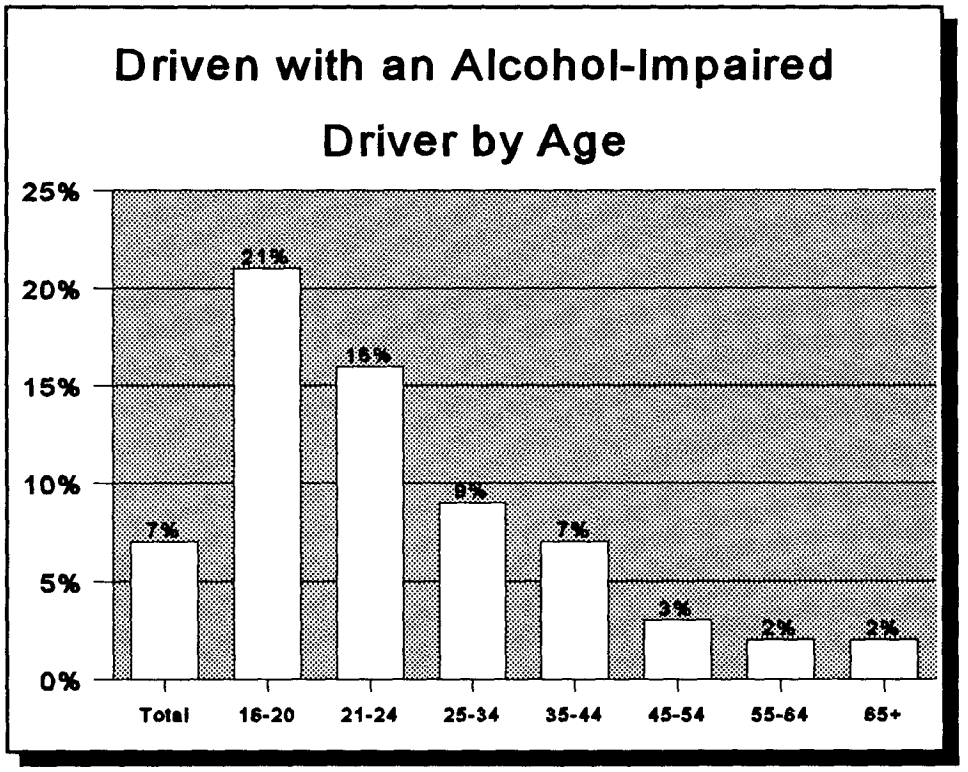


Qx: *Did you ask or tell them to stop driving like that?*
Qx: *Did they do what you asked?*
Qx: *If you had asked them to drive differently, do you think they would have done what you asked?*
Base: *Rode with someone in past year who was driving at an unsafe speed.*

EXPERIENCE WITH AN ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVER

By contrast to the 28% who had ridden with someone driving in an unsafe manner, and 34% who had ridden with some driver at an unsafe speed, less than one person in 10 (7%) has ridden with a driver in the last year who had too much to drink to drive safely (see Figure 7-8). Experience with a driver who had too much to drink is strikingly related to age. One person in five (21%) in the 16 to 20 age group and one in six (15%) in the 21 to 24 age group have been with a driver who had too much to drink. This proportion continued to drop from 9% for 25 to 34 year-olds and 2% for those 65 and older.

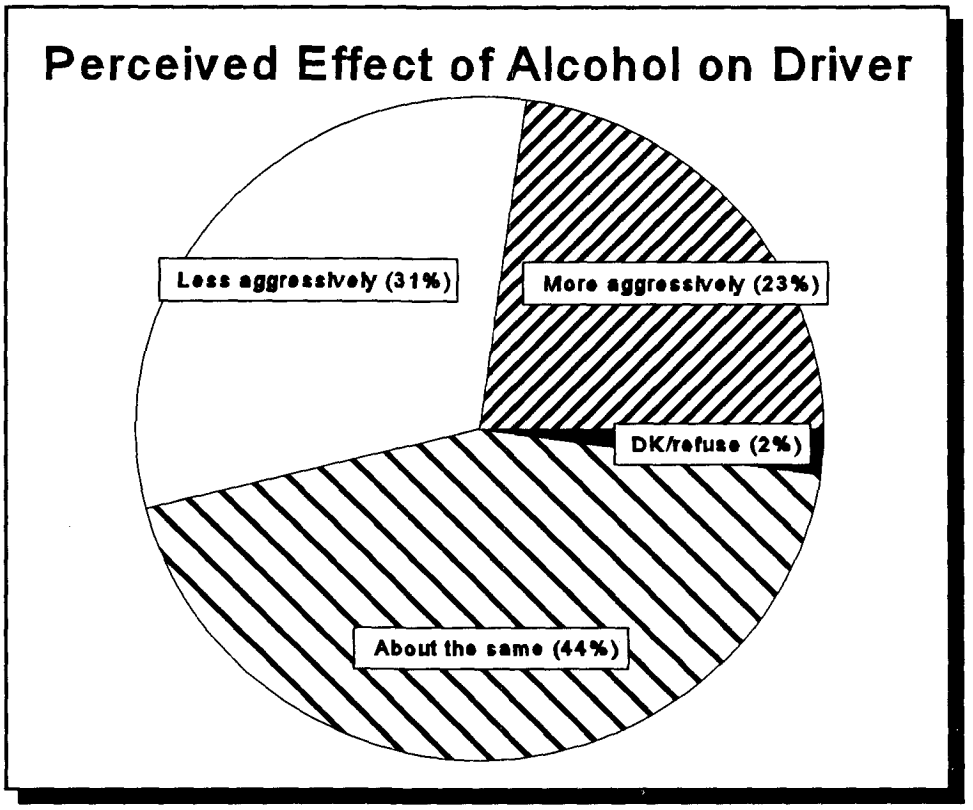
FIGURE 7-8



Qx: In the last year, were you ever in a situation where you were riding with a friend who had too much to drink to drive safely?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=2,956

Persons who had been in a car with someone who had too much to drink were asked if they were driving more aggressively, less aggressively or about the same as usual. More than two persons in five (44%) said the driver was driving about the same as usual (see Figure 7-9). Three in 10 (31%) felt the driver was driving less aggressively than normal and only one in four (23%) felt they were driving more aggressively than normal.

FIGURE 7-9



Qx: On those occasions, did the driver usually drive more aggressively, less aggressively, or about the same as they normally did?
Base: In a car in the past year with someone who had too much to drink.
Unweighted N=193

SUMMARY

Nearly one-third of all drivers have ridden with someone who was driving in an unsafe manner in the past year. Similarly, one-third of drivers have ridden with someone who was driving at an unsafe speed. The likelihood of riding with an unsafe driver declined with age. In both unsafe driving situations approximately three-fourths of the drivers were men and about one-half of the drivers were friends of the rider. A majority of those finding themselves in these situations asked the driver to stop the unsafe driving behavior. When asked, most said the driver did stop, although over one-third said the driver did not stop. By contrast, less than one driver in ten reported riding with an alcohol-impaired driver in the last year.

CHAPTER VIII.

FREQUENCY AND PATTERN OF UNSAFE DRIVING

PAST YEAR UNSAFE DRIVING

Aside from their experience with what they considered unsafe or aggressive driving by others, the national sample of drivers was asked how often they, personally, drove in a manner that would be considered unsafe. Specifically, the survey respondents were asked: "Thinking back over the past year, when was the most recent time that you...?" The answers were classified as, "today," "within the past week," "within the past month," "more than a month ago" or "not in the past year."

In order to minimize interview length and respondent burden, the items dealing with different driving behaviors were administered as part of split-half (and split-quarter) sub-samples. Thirteen of the items were asked of half of the sample, and eight of the items were asked of only a quarter of the sample. Each of the sub-samples was a random subset of a national sample and was, therefore, a national sample in themselves which produced estimates for each item projectable to the population within the limits of sampling error. Moreover, since the smallest sample size was 1,500 drivers, the sampling precision for these estimates is quite good. (This is discussed in more detail in Appendix A.)

The most frequent of the 21 unsafe driving behaviors measured in the survey is, **"entering an intersection just as the light was turning from yellow to red."** Three out of 10 drivers (30%) report that they have done this within the past week (see Table 8-1, next page, or Figure 8-1, page 123). Over half (52%) have entered an intersection as the light was changing to red within the past month. Seven out of 10 drivers (71%) have done this within the past year.

The next most frequent unsafe driving behavior, at least on a weekly basis, is, **"slowing but not completely stopping at a stop sign."** A quarter (26%) of drivers report that they have done this in the past week. Another 12% have done so in the past month. Half (51%) of drivers report they have slowed, but not stopped at a stop sign in the past year.

The other most common unsafe driving behaviors related to speeding. Nearly a quarter (23%) of this national sample of drivers report **driving 10 miles per hour over the speed limit on an interstate** highway in the past week. About the same proportion (22%) reported driving **10 miles per hour faster than most other vehicles were going** within the past week. One in six drivers (16%) reported **driving 10 miles per hour over the speed limit on rural roads within the past week**. And, about one in eight drivers (13%) reported **driving 10 miles per hour over the speed limit in a residential** area within the past week. In terms of past year behaviors, 60% have driven 10 miles per hour over the speed limit on interstate highways, 52% on rural roads and 40% in residential neighborhoods. Similarly, over half of all drivers (56%) have driven 10 miles an hour faster than most other vehicles were going at some point in the past year.

TABLE 8-1

Prevalence of Unsafe Driving Behaviors in the Past Year by Most Recent Occurrence

Qx: Thinking back over the past year, when was the most recent time that you ...?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N: A=1,489; B=1,511; C=1,467; D=1,533; AC=2,956; AD=3,022; BD=3,044.

	Unweighted N	Total in Past Year	Most recent occurrence			
			Today	Past Week	Past Month	Past Year
Entered an intersection just as the light was turning from yellow to red	*BD*	71%	9%	21%	22%	19%
Drove 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway	*A*	60%	7%	16%	17%	20%
Drove 10 mph faster than most other vehicles were going	*AD*	56%	8%	14%	16%	18%
Went 10 mph over the speed limit on a two lane rural road	*D*	52%	5%	11%	17%	19%
Slowed but didn't completely stop at a stop sign	*BD*	51%	11%	15%	12%	14%
Went 10 mph over the speed limit in a residential neighborhood	*C*	40%	5%	8%	10%	16%
Drove through traffic switching quickly back and forth between lanes	*BD*	32%	2%	6%	8%	16%
Drove 20 mph over the speed limit on an interstate highway	*BD*	29%	2%	5%	7%	15%
Drove 20 mph over the speed limit on a rural road	*C*	26%	2%	4%	7%	13%
Drove through a light that was already red before you entered an intersection	*AC*	23%	1%	3%	6%	14%

TABLE 8-1, continued

Prevalence of Unsafe Driving Behaviors in the Past Year by Most Recent Occurrence

	Unweighted N	Total in Past Year	Most recent occurrence			
			Today	Past Week	Past Month	Past Year
Tailgated another vehicle on a highway with one lane in each direction	*AC*	23%	2%	3%	6%	12%
Drove 20 miles an hour faster than most other vehicles were going	*BD*	21%	1%	3%	6%	10%
Made an angry, insulting or obscene gesture or comment toward another driver so that they heard or saw it	*BD*	20%	2%	4%	6%	8%
Cut in front of another car in order to make a turn	*BD*	18%	1%	2%	4%	11%
Made a U-turn where a sign said not to	*A*	16%	1%	2%	5%	8%
Drove through a stop sign without slowing	*AC*	15%	1%	3%	3%	7%
Crossed railroad tracks when the red light was blinking	*A*	13%	*	2%	3%	8%
Passed a vehicle in a no-passing zone	*B*	10%	*	1%	2%	7%
Used the shoulder to pass in heavy traffic	*BD*	10%	1%	2%	3%	5%
Drove when affected by alcohol	*AC*	8%	*	1%	2%	5%
Raced another driver	*AC*	6%	1%	1%	1%	3%

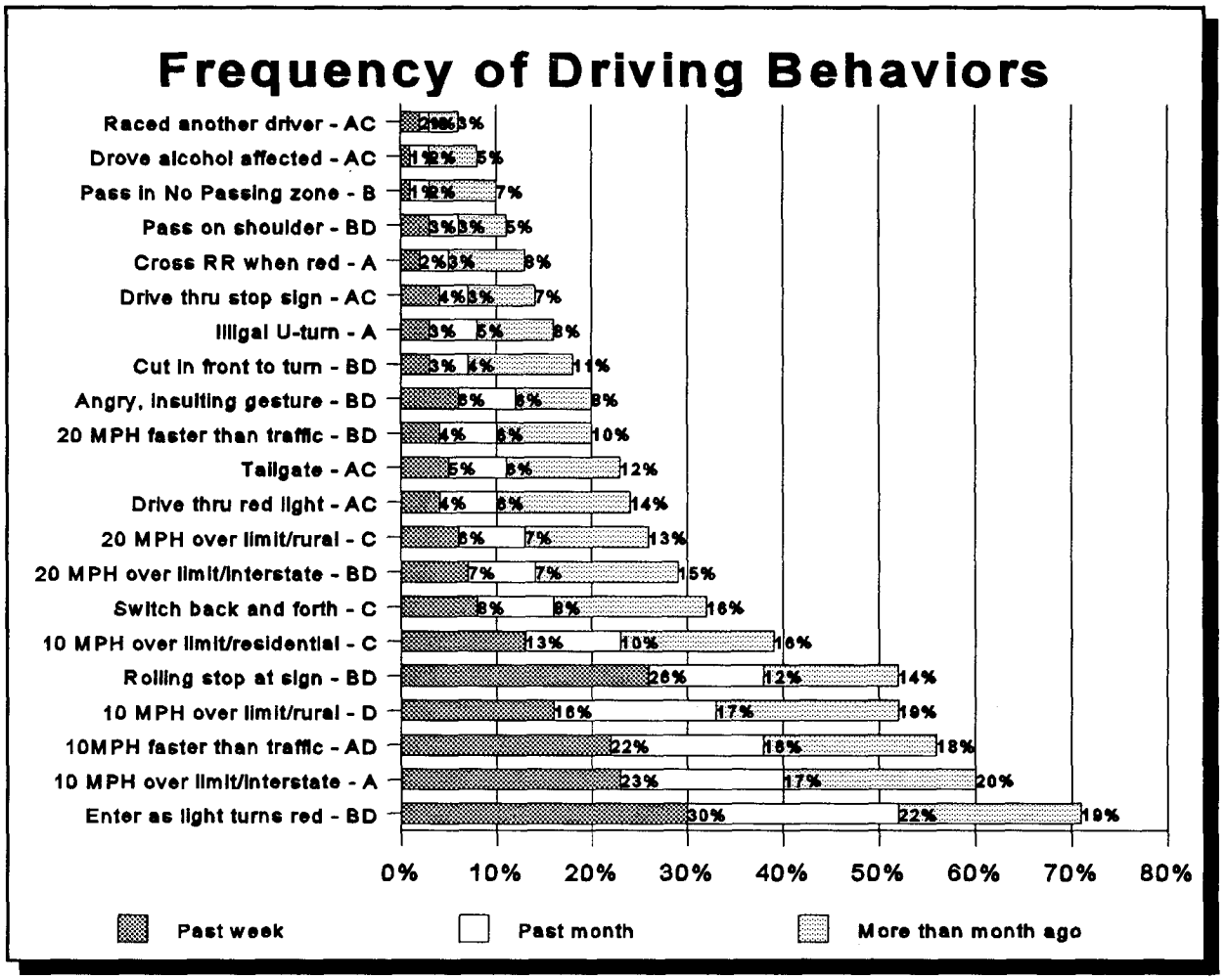
Total may not equal sum of the parts due to rounding.

Although they occur less frequently, at least one in five drivers report that in the past year they **have driven through traffic by switching quickly back and forth between lanes** (32%), **driven 20 miles per hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway** (29%), **driven 20 miles per hour over the limit on a rural road** (26%), **tailgated on a two-lane highway** (23%), **drove through a light that was already red before you entered the intersection** (23%), **driven 20 miles per hour faster than most other vehicles were going** (21%) or **made an angry, insulting or obscene gesture or comment to another driver** (20%).

Less than one in five drivers report that at any time during the past year that they have: **cut in front of another car in order to make a turn** (18%); **made a U-turn where a sign said not to (16%); drove through a stop sign without slowing** (15%); **crossed railroad tracks when the red light was blinking** (13%); **used the shoulder to pass in heavy traffic** (10%); or **passed a vehicle in a no passing zone** (10%).

In only two of 21 types of unsafe driving behaviors did fewer than one in 10 drivers report that they had not done this in the past year. The least commonly reported types of unsafe driving in the past year were: **driving when affected by alcohol** (8%), and **racing another driver** (6%).

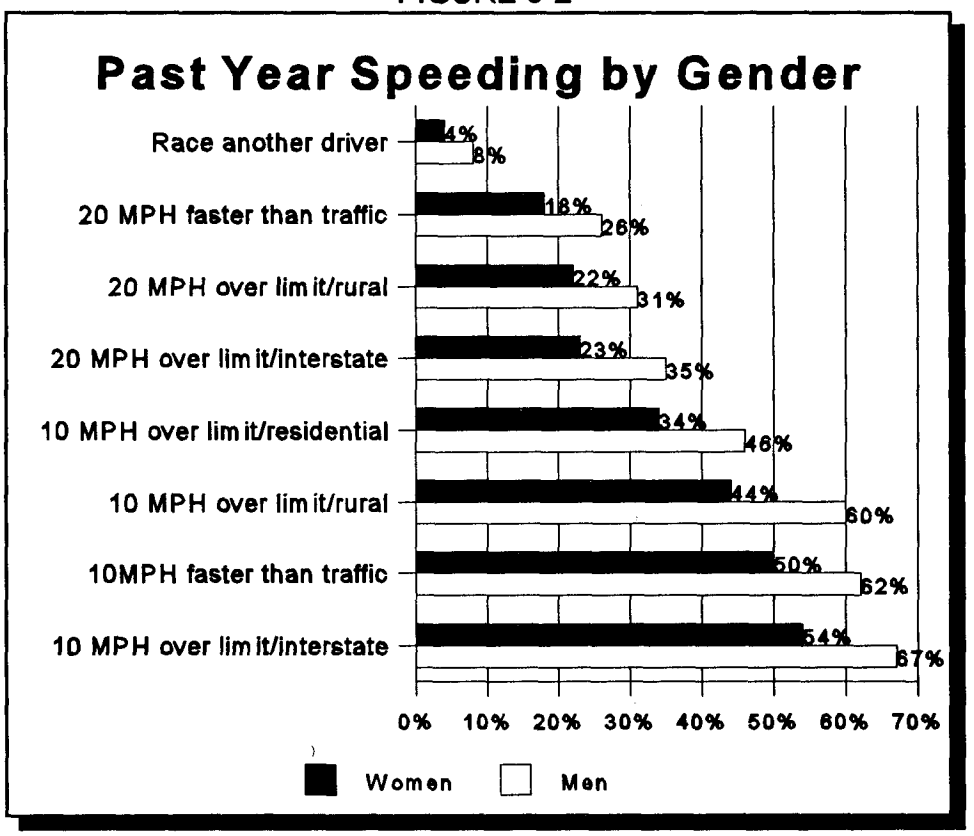
FIGURE 8-1



Qx: Thinking back over the past year, when was the most recent time that you ... ?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N: A=1,489; B=1,511; C=1,467; D=1,533; AC=2,956; AD=3,022; BD=3,044.

There are significant differences by gender in the frequency of speeding behaviors. Men are more likely than women to report exceeding the speed limit and the speed of other traffic in every category tested (see Figure 8-2). Twice as many men (8%) as women (4%) report racing another driver in the past year. About 50% more men (26%) than women (18%) report driving 20 miles an hour faster than most other vehicles in the past year; driving 20 miles per hour over the speed limit on an interstate (35%-23%); and driving 20 miles per hour over the speed limit on rural roads (31%-22%). However, although more men than women report exceeding posted speed limits and traffic speed by 10 miles an hour, the difference between male and female drivers diminishes at these lower speeds.

FIGURE 8-2

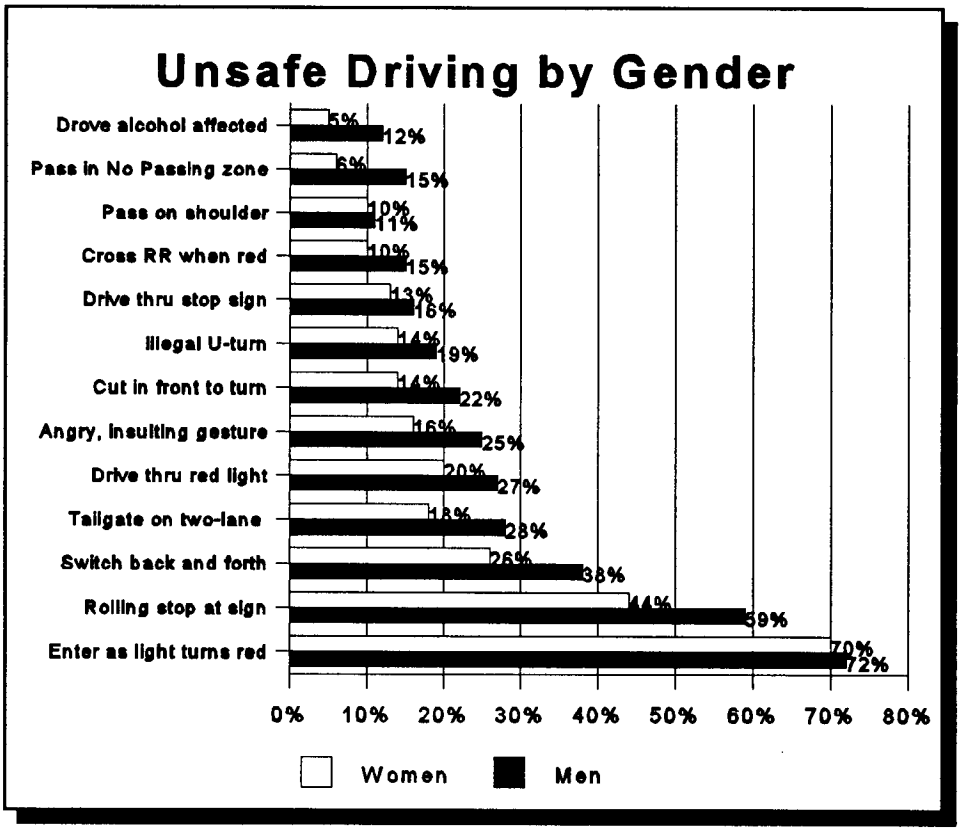


Qx: *Thinking back over the past year, when was the most recent time that you...?*

Base: *Total population of drivers.*

Similarly, the proportion of men who report other (than speeding) unsafe driving behaviors in the past year was larger than the proportion of women (see Figure 8-3). In the lowest incidence driving behaviors — driving when affected by alcohol (12%-5%) and passing in a no passing zone (15%-6%) — male drivers are more than twice as likely as female drivers to have done this in the past year. Male drivers are about 50% more likely than female drivers to: cut in front of another vehicle to make a turn (22%-14%); to make angry, insulting or obscene gestures or comments to other drivers (25%-16%); to tailgate on a two-lane highway (28%-18%) and to drive through traffic by switching back and forth quickly between lanes (38%-26%). In a few areas, however, there is virtually no difference between male and female drivers, e.g., passing on a shoulder (11%-10%) and entering an intersection as the light is turning red (72%-70%).

FIGURE 8-3



Qx: *Thinking back over the past year, when was the most recent time that you ... ?*
Base: *Total population of drivers.*

The frequency with which different age groups report past year experience with different types of speeding is charted below (see Table 8-2). For all groups, the incidence of past year speeding declines as the speed increases from 10 miles per hour over the speed limit or prevailing traffic to 20 miles per hour over the speed limit or prevailing traffic. Within specified speed ranges, past year incidence varies with road type. However, the notable finding is the relatively clearly defined pattern of speeding by age group. Racing another driver decreases precipitously with age, from 26% for driver 16 to 20, to 12% for those 21 to 24, and then trailing off to single digits.

TABLE 8-2

Speeding in the Past Year by Age

Qx: Thinking back over the past year, when was the most recent time that you ...?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N: A=1,489; B=1,511; C=1,467; D=1,533; AC=2,956; AD=3,022; BD=3,044.

	Unweighted N	Age						
		16-20	**21-24**	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65+**
Drove 10 MPH over the speed limit on an interstate highway	*A*	75%	73%	74%	63%	56%	45%	37%
Drove 10 MPH faster than most vehicles were going	*AD*	82%	78%	69%	58%	51%	39%	28%
Drove 10 MPH over the speed limit on a two-lane rural road	*D*	80%	59%	58%	55%	52%	42%	22%
Drove 10 MPH over the speed limit in a residential neighborhood	*C*	69%	63%	45%	37%	31%	36%	25%
Drove 20 MPH over the speed limit on an interstate highway	*BD*	53%	54%	38%	27%	20%	18%	13%
Drove 20 MPH over the speed limit on a rural road	*C*	49%	39%	37%	26%	20%	14%	9%
Drove 20 MPH faster than most vehicles were going	*BD*	45%	37%	26%	19%	15%	11%	10%
Raced another driver	*AC*	26%	12%	7%	4%	3%	1%	1%

TABLE 8-3

Unsafe Driving Behavior in the Past Year by Age

Qx: Thinking back over the past year, when was the most recent time that you ...?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N: A=1,489; B=1,511; C=1,467; D=1,533; AC=2,956; AD=3,022; BD=3,044.

	Unweighted N	Age						
		16-20	21-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Entering an intersection just as the light was turning red.	*BD*	79%	81%	74%	72%	71%	65%	61%
Drove through a stop sign without slowing	*AC*	81%	71%	61%	50%	44%	40%	31%
Switching back and forth between lanes	*C*	63%	60%	45%	29%	24%	16%	8%
Tailgated on a highway with one lane in each direction	*AC*	44%	37%	30%	30%	23%	15%	6%
Drove through a red light	*AC*	44%	33%	28%	21%	19%	20%	12%
Made an angry, insulting or obscene gesture or comment toward another driver	*BD*	37%	39%	31%	18%	13%	13%	6%
Cut in front of another car in order to make a turn	*BD*	39%	40%	24%	16%	10%	9%	7%
Made an illegal U-turn	*A*	29%	32%	21%	14%	14%	7%	5%
Drove through a stop sign without slowing	*BD*	46%	19%	13%	13%	10%	8%	13%
Crossed railroad tracks when the red light was blinking	*A*	10%	18%	16%	14%	14%	7%	6%
Passed a vehicle in a no-passing zone	*B*	21%	21%	13%	10%	7%	8%	2%
Used the shoulder to pass	*BD*	18%	20%	12%	10%	8%	7%	5%
Drove when affected by alcohol	*AC*	13%	14%	14%	8%	7%	*	1%

* Less than 0.5%.

The frequency with which different age groups report past year experience with different types of unsafe driving behavior is shown in Table 8-3. The types of unsafe driving activities are ordered from most common to least common. What is significant is the relatively clearly defined pattern of unsafe driving by age. As with speeding behaviors, each 10-year age cohort tends to have a lower incidence rate. The exception is occasional overlap of the 16-20 year-old and 21-24 year-old behaviors. Also, stop sign violations stand out as unusually common to 16-20 year-olds, compared to other types of unsafe driving behaviors.

PERCEIVED RISK AND RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR

One important question in considering why drivers undertake unsafe behaviors is whether they perceive those behaviors as risky or safe. Drivers in the current survey were asked about how safe or unsafe they considered 21 driving behaviors. Subsequently, they were asked how often they personally had done these acts in the past year. The correlation between the perceived safety/risk of a driving action and the frequency with which the same driver performs that action provides a means of evaluating the link between perceived risk and risk-taking behavior.

There is a relatively high and consistent correlation between the evaluation of the riskiness of most speeding behaviors and the reported frequency of those behaviors by drivers (see Table 8-4, next page). This suggests that speeding tends to be a calculated act. Those who believe it is relatively safe to exceed speed limits or the average speed of surrounding traffic are most likely to engage in that behavior. Those who believe that it is dangerous to exceed the speed limit or average traffic speed are least likely to engage in that behavior.

By contrast, there is a very weak correlation (.110) between the perceived risk of entering an intersection when the light is already red and the frequency of that behavior. This suggests that this type of unsafe driving behavior tends not to be calculated, at least in terms of risk.

The other unsafe driving behaviors fall between these two extremes. The reported frequency of slowing, but not stopping at stop signs, is relatively highly correlated (.381) with the perceived risk of the action. Other unsafe driving actions with at least moderate correlations with their perceived risk include: using a shoulder to pass in heavy traffic (.329), making an angry, insulting or obscene gesture or comment to another driver (.329), crossing railroad tracks when the red light is blinking (.325), and making an illegal U-turn (.323).

By contrast, much weaker correlations are found between the perceived risk and the frequency of behavior for: passing in a no-passing zone (.198); tailgating on two-lane highways (.204); cutting in front of another car to make a turn (.218); driving when affected by alcohol (.223); and entering an intersection when the light is changing to red (.248).

It should be noted that the overall size of these correlations is limited by the skewed marginal distribution of both the perceived risk and the frequency of these behaviors. Nonetheless, the variation in the pattern of correlation suggests that some types of unsafe driving behaviors may be more calculated than others. At the one extreme, many drivers who exceed posted speed limits do so, at least in part, because they believe it may not be dangerous. At the other extreme, most drivers who enter an intersection after the light has turned red may not have intended to do so.

TABLE 8-4

Correlation Between the Perceived Safety of Selected Driving Behaviors and the Reported Frequency of those Behaviors by Drivers in the Past Year

Qx: During the past year how often have you.....?	*Unweighted N*	Correlation with How Safe
10 mph over speed limit on interstate	*1,464*	.431
10 mph over speed limit in residential area	*1,439*	.421
10 mph over speed limit on rural road	*1,508*	.412
20 mph over speed limit on rural road	*1,432*	.397
Slowed but didn't stop at stop sign	*2,979*	.381
10 mph faster than most other vehicle	*1,423*	.357
20 mph over speed limit on interstate	*2,968*	.348
Used shoulder to pass in heavy traffic	*2,968*	.329
Made an angry, insulting or obscene gesture or comment	*2,966*	.329
Crossed RR tracks when red light blinking	*1,456*	.325
Made a U-turn where a sign said not to	*1,447*	.323
Switching back and forth between lanes	*1,455*	.318
20 mph faster than most other vehicles	*2,959*	.301
Raced another driver	*2,902*	.281
Entered as light changing from yellow	*2,951*	.248
Drove when affected by alcohol	*2,868*	.223
Cut in front of another car to make a turn	*2,957*	.218
Drove thru stop sign without slowing	*2,890*	.204
Tailgated on highway with two lanes	*2,873*	.204
Passed a vehicle in no passing zone	*1,470*	.198
Drove thru light that was already red	*2,890*	.110

UNSAFE DRIVERS

The national sample of drivers were queried on the frequency with which they had done various driving acts within the past year. From these answers, we have learned the relative frequency with which drivers commit acts that might be considered unsafe. However, a single act probably does not constitute an unsafe driver classification. An unsafe driver would be someone who commits unsafe driving acts more than occasionally.

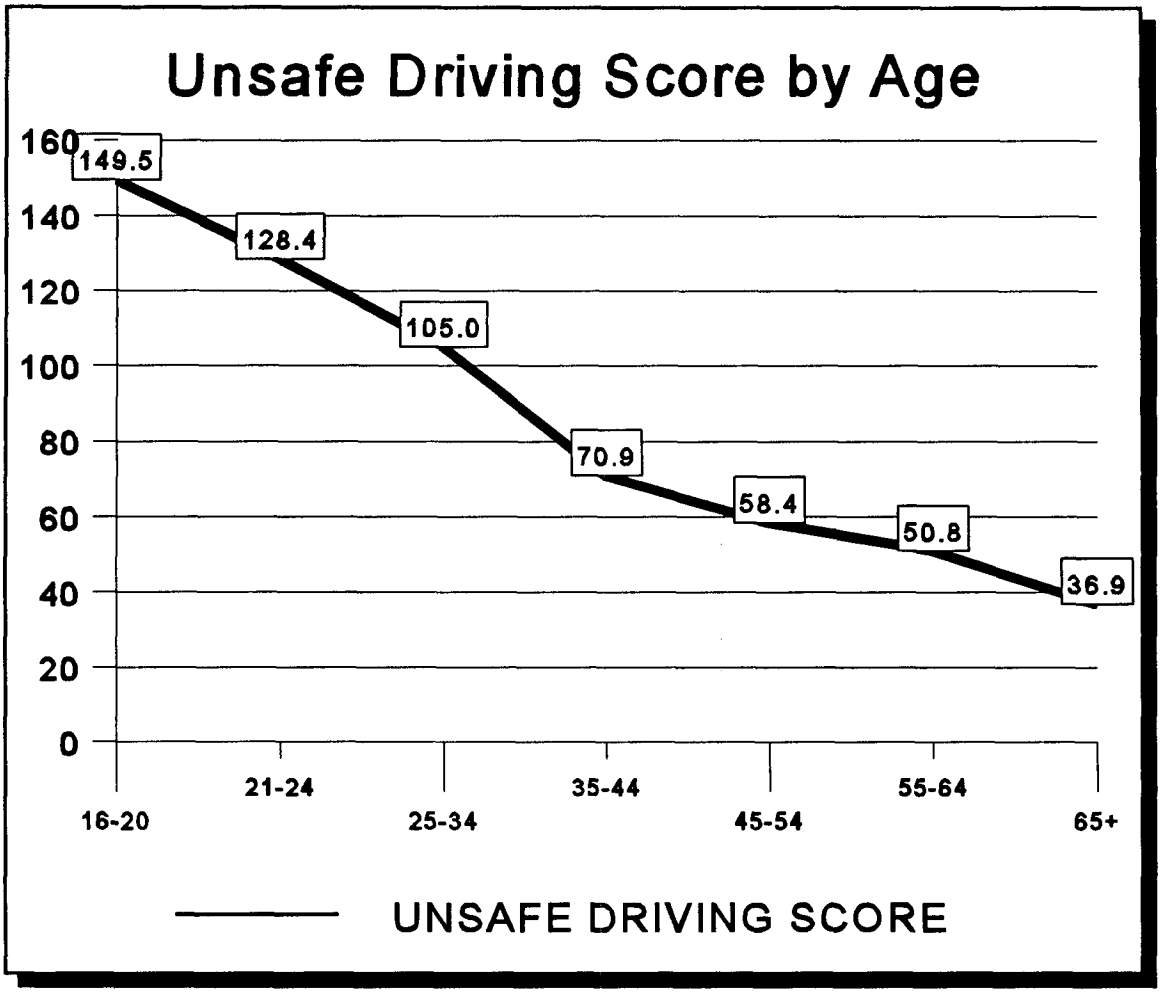
The survey data does not permit a precise estimate of the relative frequency of unsafe driving acts among all survey respondents. As noted earlier, half of the sample were asked about a total of eight different unsafe driving acts while the other half was asked about a total of nine unsafe driving acts. Moreover, since some of these driving acts are relatively common, while others are comparatively rare, any individual's score will depend somewhat on the particular driving acts about which he or she was asked.

In addition, our frequency measure is based on the most recent time that the individual committed the act, not the actual frequency. We have converted recency measures to frequency measures in the following manner. If the most recent time was today, we treat this as 150 times in the past year (i.e., every other day). If the most recent time was within the past week, we treat this as 52 times in the past year (i.e., at least once a week). If the most recent time was within the past month, we treat this as 12 times in the past year (i.e., at least once a month). If the most recent time was more than a month ago, we treat this as three times in the past year (i.e., every four months). Although not a precise measure of frequency of unsafe driving acts, this composite score permits some estimate of the magnitude of the problem. The score associated with a driver should not be considered exact. It assumes that the driver can accurately remember the most recent time and that this is indicative of how often a given behavior is encountered.

In the total sample of drivers, less than one in five (18%) reported that in the past year they had not done any of the eight or nine unsafe driving acts they were asked about. Half of the sample (51%) reported fewer than 24 unsafe driving acts in the past year (using our calculations) or about once every two weeks. A quarter of the drivers (26%) reported 204 or more unsafe driving acts during the past year, or about four times a week. At the furthest extreme, three percent of drivers reported more than 365 unsafe driving acts in the past year, or at least one a day.

Using the mean score on the composite measure of unsafe driving frequency, the relationship of unsafe driving actions with gender and age comes into sharp focus (see Figure 8-4, next page). The mean unsafe driving score for male drivers (mean=92) was nearly 40% higher than for female drivers (mean=66). The unsafe driving score is highest among the 16-20 year-old age group (mean=150). It then falls progressively with age to 128 for 21-24 year-olds, 105 for 25-34 year-olds, 71 for 35-44 year-olds, 58 for 45-54 year-olds, 51 for 55-64 year-olds and 37 for drivers aged 65 and older. In short, most drivers tend to mature out of unsafe driving behaviors as they grow older.

FIGURE 8-4


Unsafe Driving Score by Age
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
149.5
128.4
105.0
70.9
58.4
50.8
36.9
16-20
21-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+
UNSAFE DRIVING SCORE

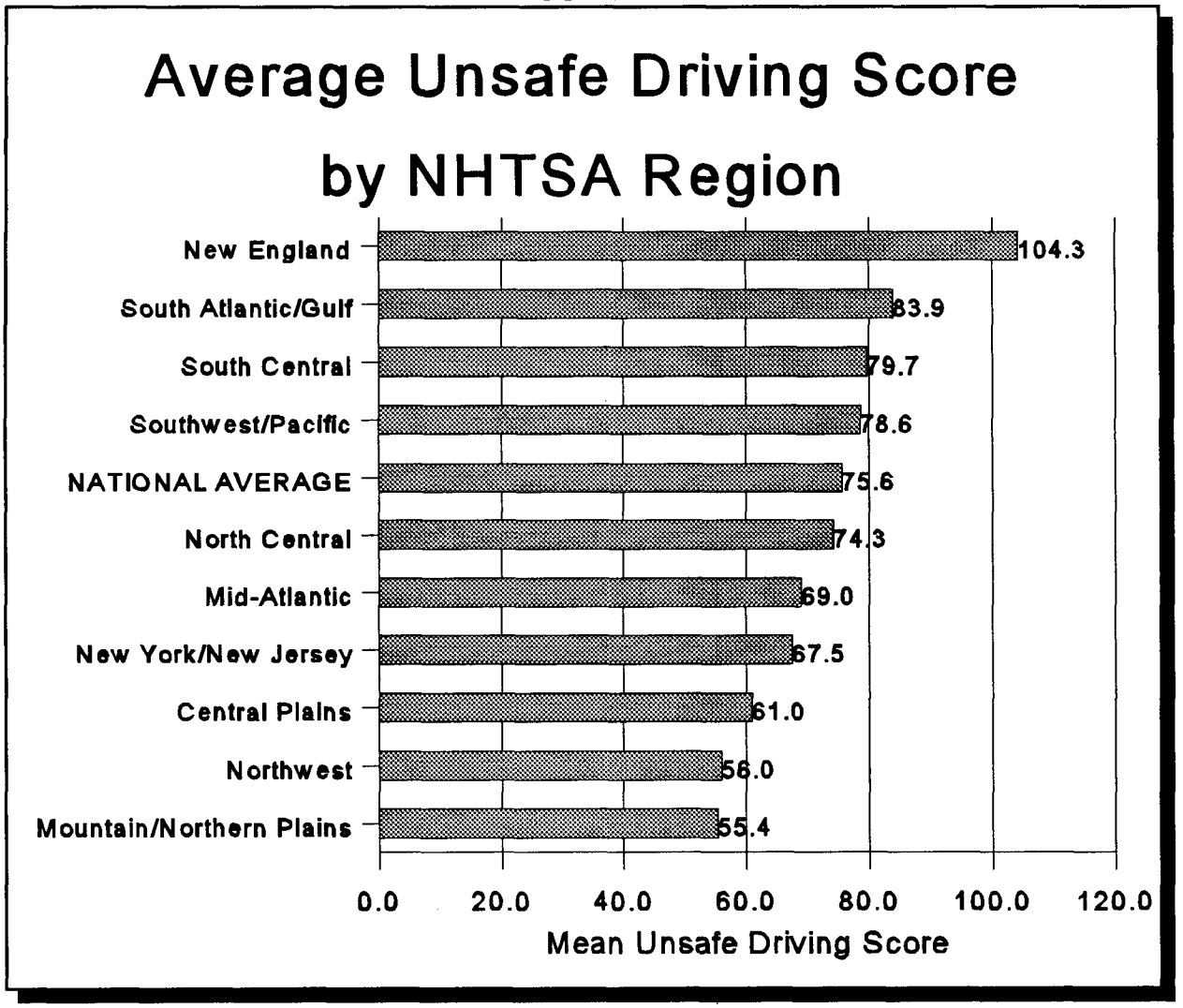
By contrast, there is relatively little relationship between unsafe driving score and educational attainment. The mean unsafe driving score is 78.6 for those with less than a high school degree, 67.42 for high school graduates, 78.9 for those with some college, and 80.3 for college graduates.

With the exception of the lowest income group, there is a direct relationship between household income and unsafe driving score. The unsafe driving score increases from 55.5 for drivers with household incomes of $5,000-$14,999, to 67.2 for those with incomes between $15,000-$29,999, to 70.2 for those with incomes between $30,000-$49,999, to 88.1 for those with incomes between $50,000-$74,999, to 91.8 for those with incomes of $75,000-$99,999, to 103.5 for those with incomes of $100,000 or more. The exception to this pattern is the extremely high unsafe driving score (90.6) among those with household incomes under $5,000.

Perhaps the most striking difference in unsafe driving scores is geographic. The average unsafe driving score across all drivers is 75.6. Drivers from two NHTSA regions report unsafe driving scores that are about a third less than the national average. These are the Mountain/Northern Plaines states (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming) with a score of 55.4 and the Northwest states (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington) with a score of 56.0. By contrast, drivers from one NHTSA region report unsafe driving scores about one third higher than the national average.

Drivers from the New England States (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont) report an average unsafe driving score of 104.3. Three other NHTSA regions with higher than average unsafe driving score are the South Atlantic/Gulf states, the South Central States and the Southwest/Pacific states. Earlier in this report it was noted that the regions with the highest rates of radar detectors were NHTSA the New England states, the South Atlantic/Gulf states, and the South Central states.

FIGURE 8-5



New England	Region I:	CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, & VT
New York/New Jersey	Region II:	NY & NJ
Mid-Atlantic	Region III:	DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, & WV
South Atlantic/Gulf	Region IV:	AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, & TN
North Central	Region V:	IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, & WI
South Central	Region VI:	AR, LA, NM, OK, & TX
Central Plains	Region VII:	IA, KS, MO, NE
Mountain/Northern Plains	Region VIII:	CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, & WY
Southwest/Pacific	Region IX:	AZ, CA, HI, & NV
Northwest	Region X:	AK, ID, OR, & WA

SUMMARY

Within the past year, the majority of drivers have committed one or more unsafe driving actions. In the past month, over half of all drivers had entered an intersection just as the light was turning from yellow to red. In the past year, over half of all drivers have driven 10 miles per hour over the speed limit on an interstate highway, driven 10 miles per hour faster than most other vehicles were going, driven 10 miles per hour over the limit on a two lane rural road, or slowed but did not completely stop at a stop sign. By contrast, in the last year only one driver in ten or fewer raced another car, drove when affected by alcohol, used the shoulder to pass in heavy traffic, or passed in a no passing zone. While drivers considered weaving in and out of traffic as among the most dangerous unsafe driving behaviors, almost one-third said they had done this within the past year. The frequency of these unsafe driving behaviors tended to peak in the younger age groups and decreased with age.

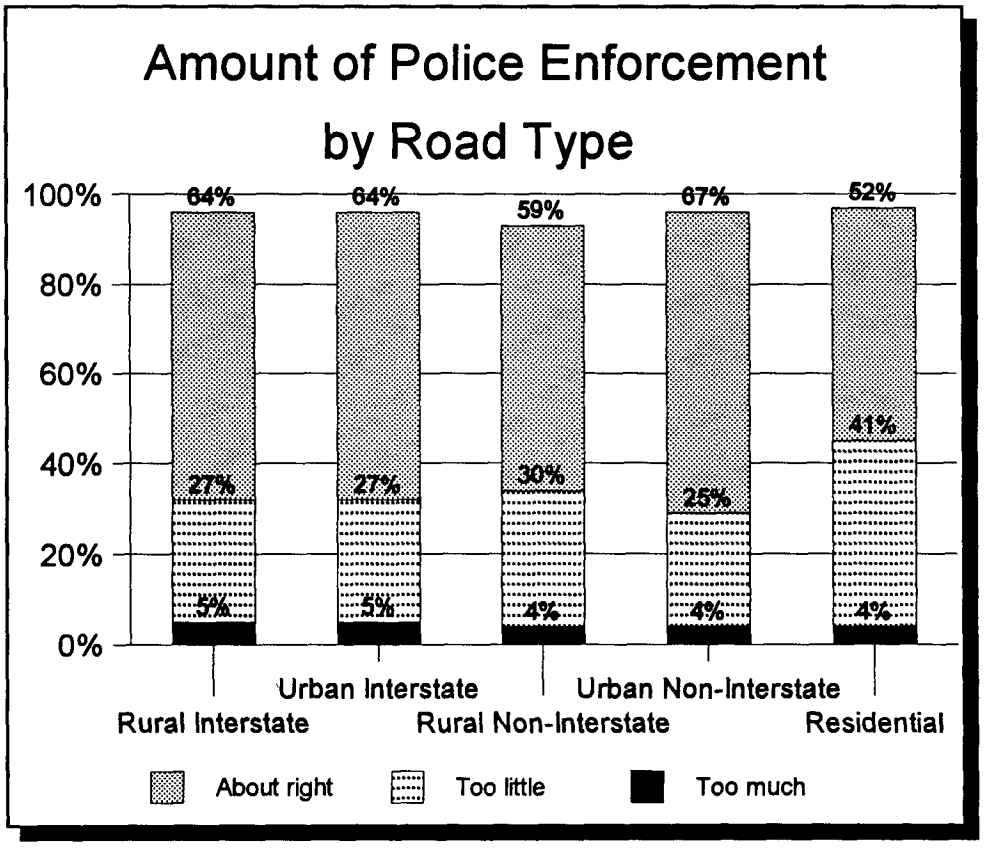
CHAPTER IX.

ATTITUDES ABOUT ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS

ENFORCEMENT OF SPEEDING LAWS

Perceptions about police enforcement of speeding laws differ somewhat by the type of roads used as a frame of reference. The majority of drivers feel that the current level of enforcement is about right on all types of roads — 64% of interstate highways in both rural and urban areas, 59% of other non-interstate roads in rural areas, 67% of other non-interstate roads in urban areas, and 52% of residential or neighborhood streets. Only a small proportion feel that there is too much enforcement on these types of roads (4%-5%). By contrast, a substantially larger proportion feel there is too little enforcement of speeding laws in residential or neighborhood roads (41%) than interstate or other non-interstate roads (25%-30%).

FIGURE 9-1



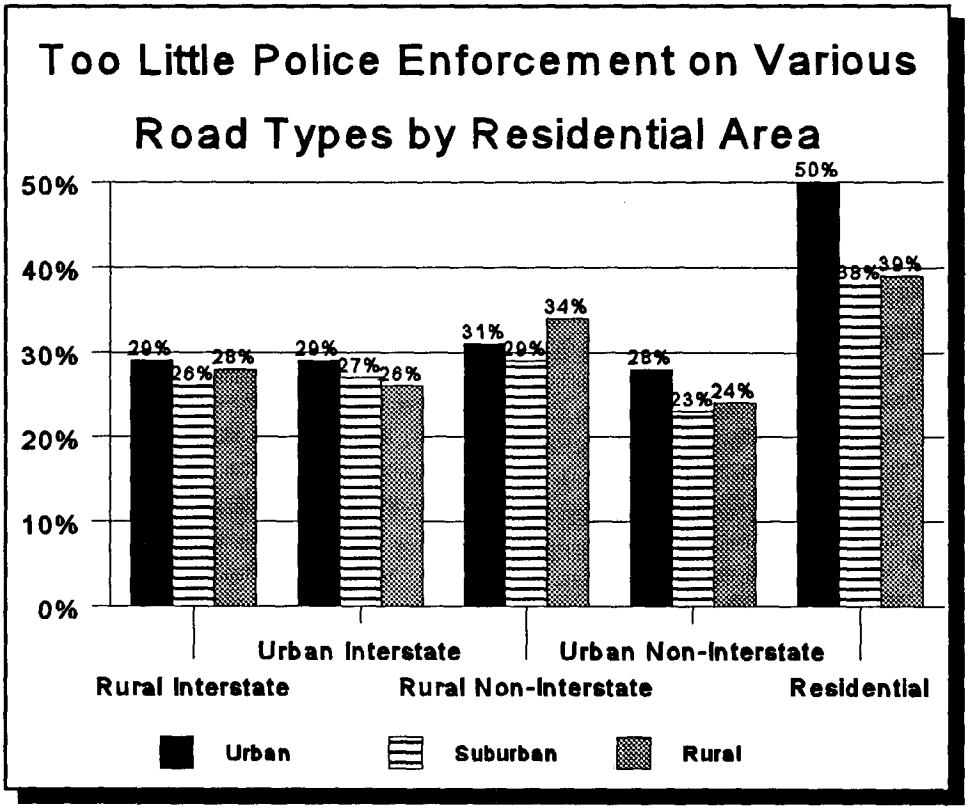
Qx: In your area do you think that the amount of police enforcement of speeding laws on [type of road] is too much, too little or about right?

Base: Total population of drivers.

Unweighted N=1,511

When comparing the type of area in which the respondent resides, the proportion of drivers who feel that there is too little enforcement of speeding laws is similar on interstate and other non-interstate roads. Drivers who live in urban, suburban or rural areas differ by 5% or less in their opinion that there is too little enforcement of speeding laws. However, urban drivers (50%) are more likely than suburban (38%) or rural drivers (39%) to feel there is too little enforcement on residential or neighborhood streets.

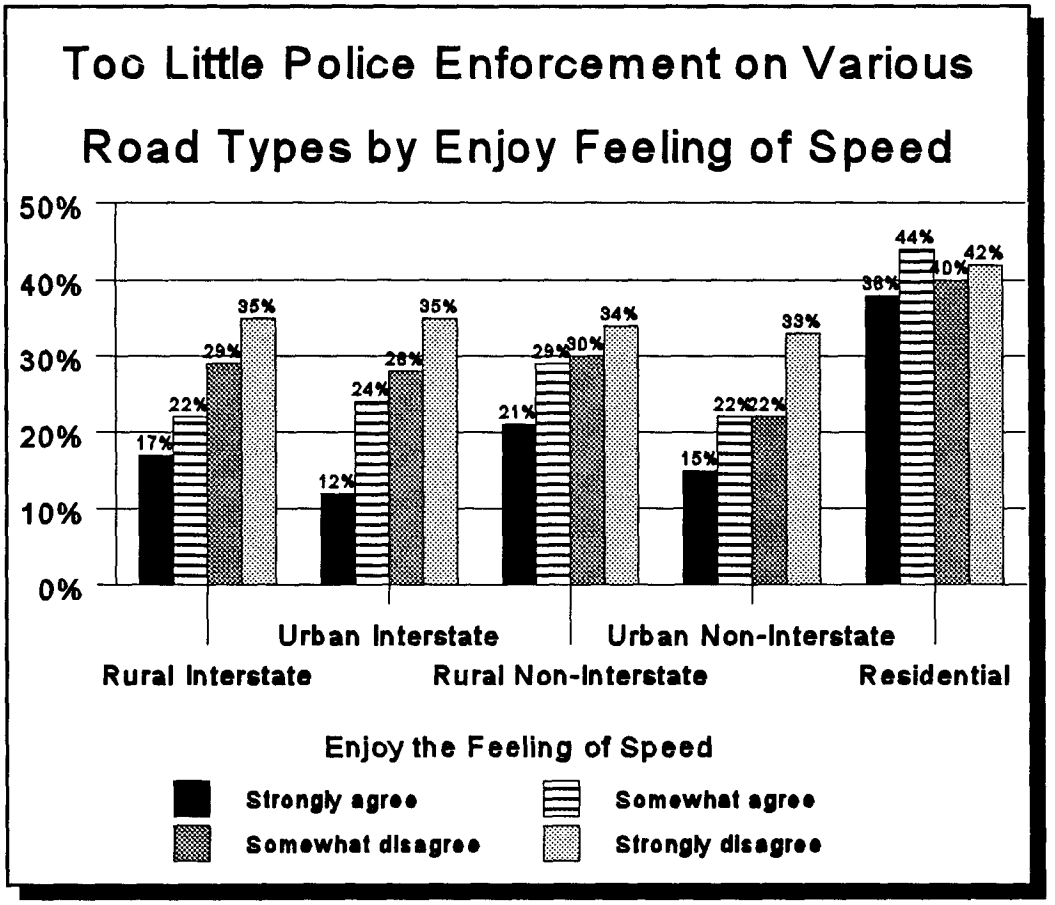
FIGURE 9-2



Qx: In your area do you think that the amount of police enforcement of speeding laws on [type of road] is too much, too little or about right?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=1,511

The perception that there is too little enforcement of speeding laws on interstates and other non-interstate roads is directly affected by the driver's enjoyment of the feeling of speed. Drivers who strongly or somewhat agree that they enjoy the feeling of speed are less likely than others to say there is too little enforcement. However, perception that there is too little enforcement on residential or neighborhood roads is high regardless of enjoying the feeling of speed.

FIGURE 9-3



Qx: In your area do you think that the amount of police enforcement of speeding laws on [type of road] is too much, too little or about right?

Qx: I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement about driving: "I enjoy the feeling of speed."

Base: Total population of drivers.

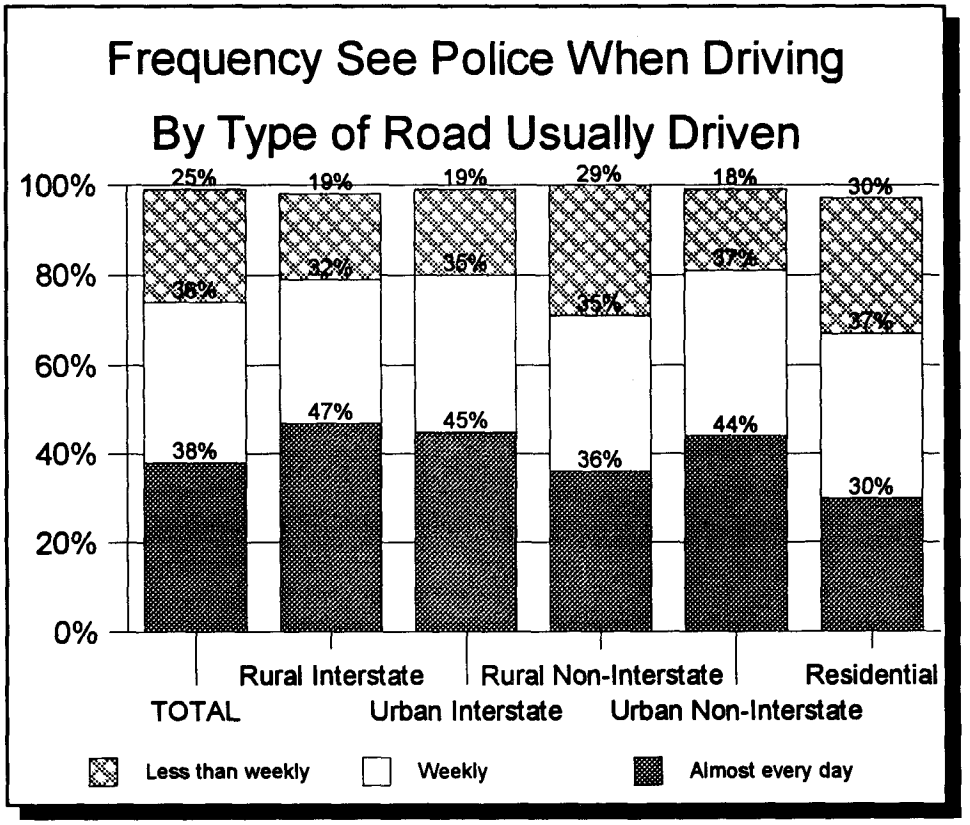
Unweighted N=1,511

POLICE PRESENCE AND TOLERANCE FOR OFFENDERS

Three-quarters of drivers see police once a week or more when driving. Almost four in 10 (38%) said they see police every day or nearly every day when they drive. More than one-third (36%) said they see police weekly. The remaining quarter see police once a week or less.

Police are seen at least weekly by eight in 10 drivers who most often drive on urban interstates (80%), rural interstates (79%), and other urban non-interstate roads (81%). However, seven in 10 drivers who most often travel residential streets (67%) and rural non-interstate roads (71%) see police at least weekly.

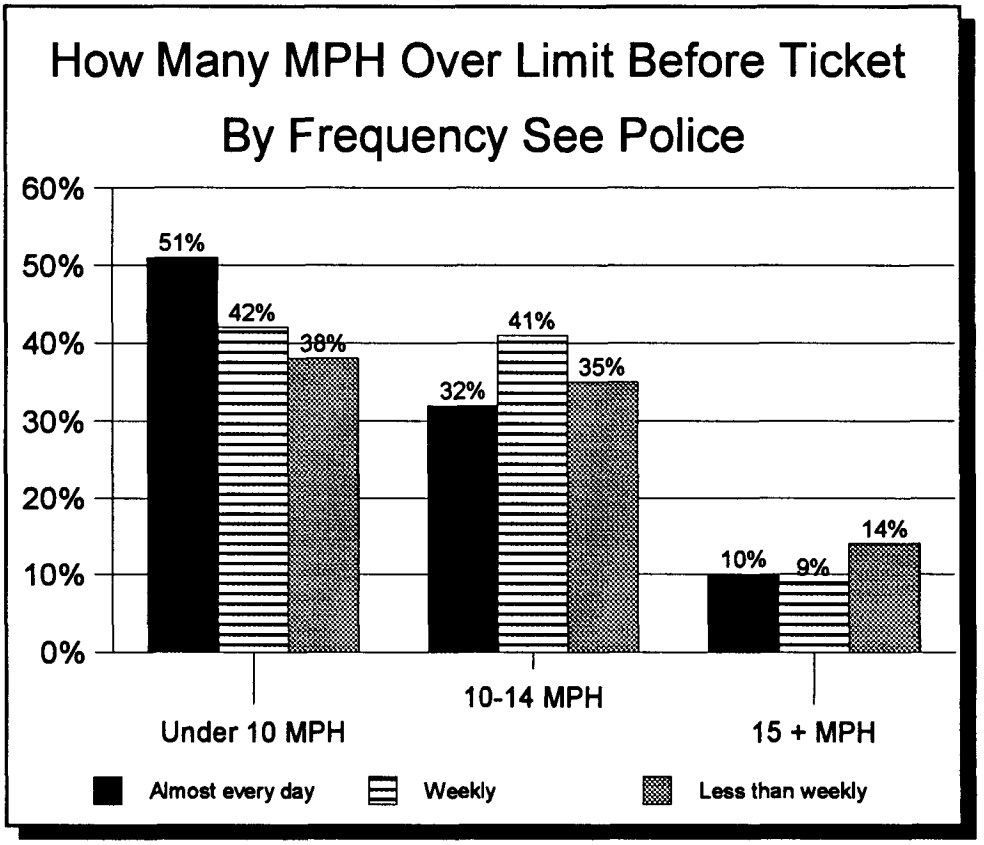
FIGURE 9-4



Qx. How often do you see police when you are traveling on [primary road type]?
Base: Have driven at speeds considered unsafe.
Unweighted N=1,933

Figure 6-5 (page 88) reported how fast over the speed limit drivers felt they could drive before police would give them a speeding ticket. Figure 9-5 reports this information by how often drivers see police. Drivers who see police nearly every day (51%) are more likely to say that police would give them a ticket even for going less than 10 miles per hour over the speed limit than drivers who see police weekly (42%) or less than weekly (10%). Conversely, drivers who see police less than weekly (14%) are slightly more likely than those who see police weekly (12%) or almost every day (10%) to say they could go 15 or more miles per hour over the limit before police would give them a ticket.

FIGURE 9-5



Qx: In your opinion, how much over the speed limit can you go on this road before police will normally give you a speeding ticket (if they see you)?

Qx. How often do you see police when you are traveling on [primary road type]?

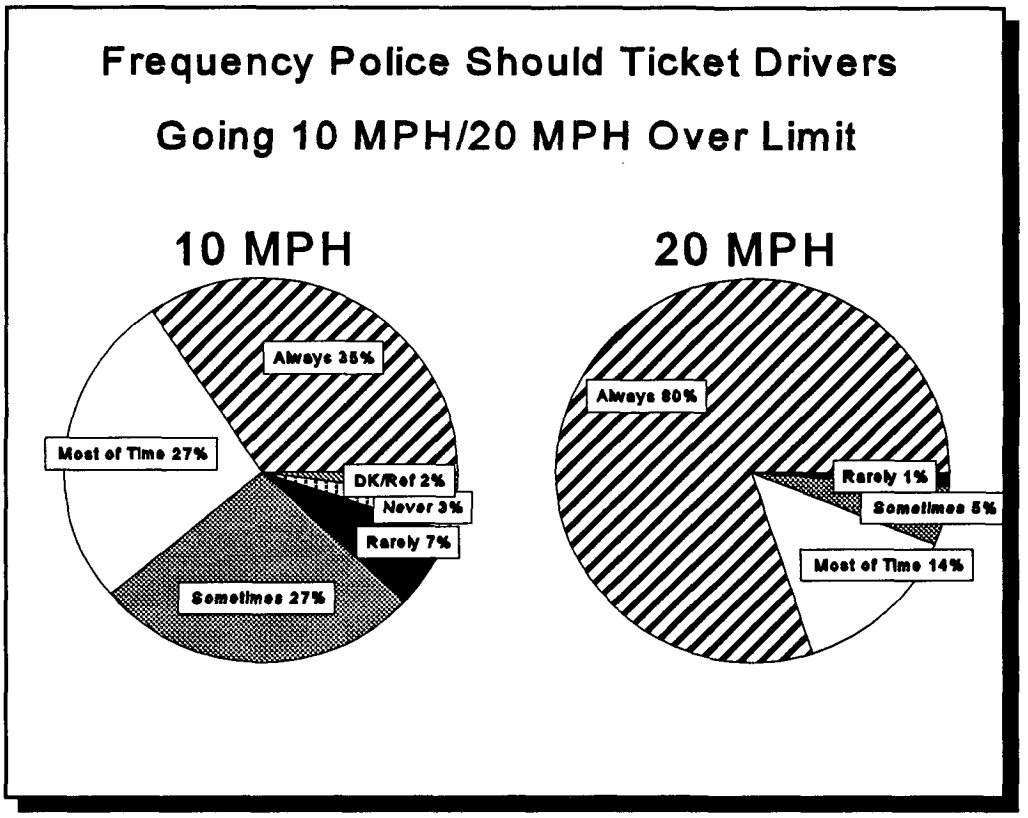
Base: Have driven at speeds considered unsafe.

Unweighted N=1,933

SPEEDING AND POLICE ACTION

Drivers set a limit where speeding becomes unacceptable and deserves police intervention. Only one-third (35%) said that police should always ticket drivers going 10 miles an hour over the posted limit on a highway with traffic lights. However, when asked how often police should ticket drivers going 20 miles an hour over the speed limit on the same type of road, 80% said "always."

FIGURE 9-6

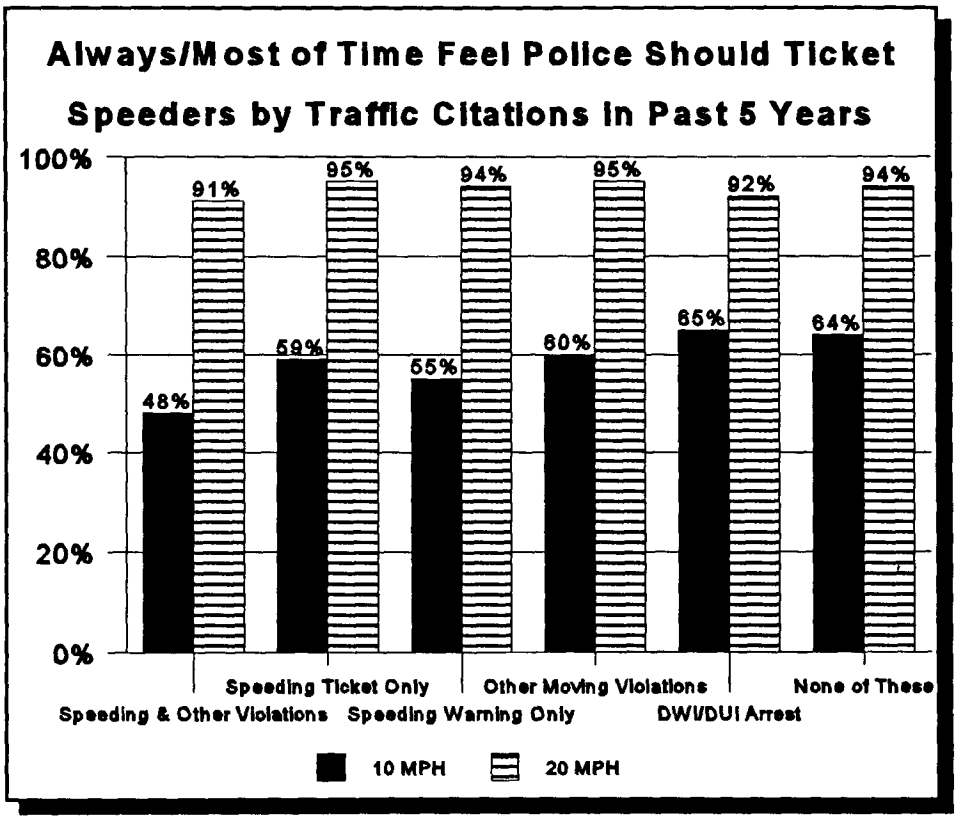


Qx: How often do you think police should ticket drivers who are going [10 miles per hour/20 miles per hour] over the posted speed limit on a highway with traffic lights?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=3,000

Drivers who have not received any traffic/driving citations in the past five years (64%) are more likely to say that police should ticket drivers who are going 10 miles an hour over the limit always or most of the time as compared to drivers who received tickets or warnings (48%-60% with citations). Only drivers who have been arrested for DUI/DWI are as likely as those without citations to feel police should always or sometimes give tickets for going 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on a highway with traffic lights.

However, when asked about drivers going 20 miles an hour over the posted limit on a highway with traffic lights, the vast majority of drivers feel police should always or sometimes give a ticket, regardless of the drivers past traffic citations (91%-95%).

FIGURE 9-7



Qx: *How often do you think police should ticket drivers who are going [10 miles per hour/20 miles per hour] over the posted speed limit on a highway with traffic lights?*

Qx: *Within the past 5 years, have you gotten a ticket for speeding, gotten a warning for speeding, gotten a ticket for any other moving violation, been convicted of DWI or DUI, or had your car insurance canceled or premiums increased as a result of claims or points?*

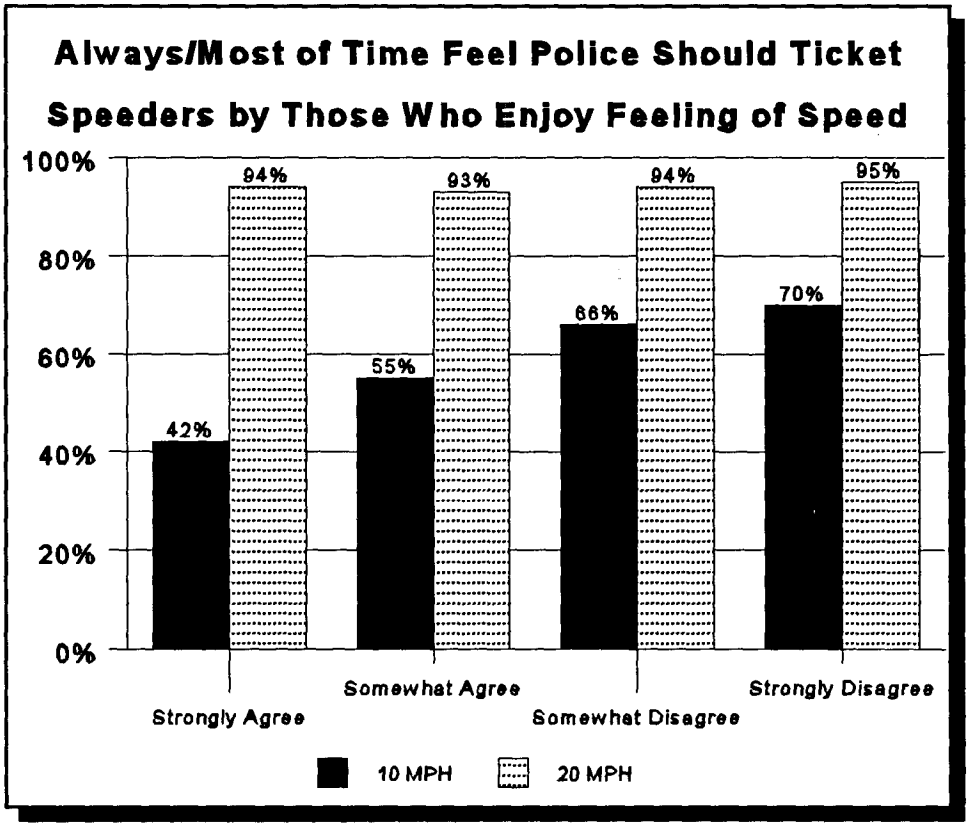
Base: *Total population of drivers.*

Unweighted N=3,000

Even drivers who agree strongly with the statement, "I enjoy the feeling of speed," are nearly unanimous in the feeling that police should always or most of the time ticket drivers going 20 miles per hour over the speed limit (93%-95%).

When asked about drivers who are going 10 miles an hour over the limit, those who strongly agree (42%), "I enjoy the feeling of speed," are least likely to say that police should always or most of the times give a ticket. Support for ticketing drivers going 10 miles per hour over the limit increases as enjoyment of speed decreases (55% of those who somewhat agree, 66% of those who somewhat disagree, and 70% of those who strongly disagree).

FIGURE 9-8



Qx: How often do you think police should ticket drivers who are going [10 miles per hour/20 miles per hour] over the posted speed limit on a highway with traffic lights?

Qx. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement about driving: "I enjoy the feeling of speed".

Base: Total population of drivers.

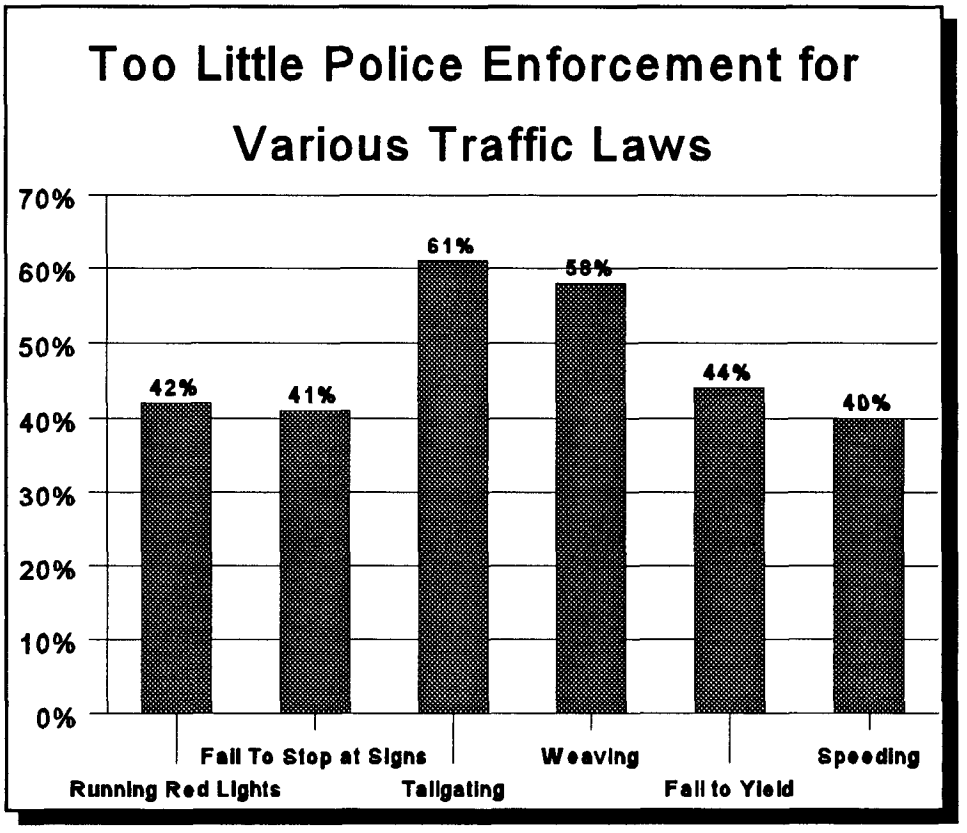
Unweighted N=3,000

FREQUENCY OF ENFORCEMENT BY VIOLATION

Drivers were asked about their beliefs concerning of police enforcement of various traffic laws. Over half of drivers said that there was too little enforcement of laws for tailgating and weaving in and out of traffic. About one in four said that enforcement was too little for running red lights (42%), failing to stop at stop signs (41%), failing to yield (44%), and speeding (40%).

Only a very small proportion said that there was too much enforcement for running red lights (3%), failing to stop at stop signs (3%), tailgating (2%), weaving in and out of traffic (2%), failing to yield (1%), and speeding (8%). About half of drivers said the level of enforcement was about right for running red lights (52%), failing to stop at stop signs (53%), failing to yield (52%), and speeding (50%). However, only 32% said the level of enforcement was about right for tailgating and 37% said it was about right for weaving.

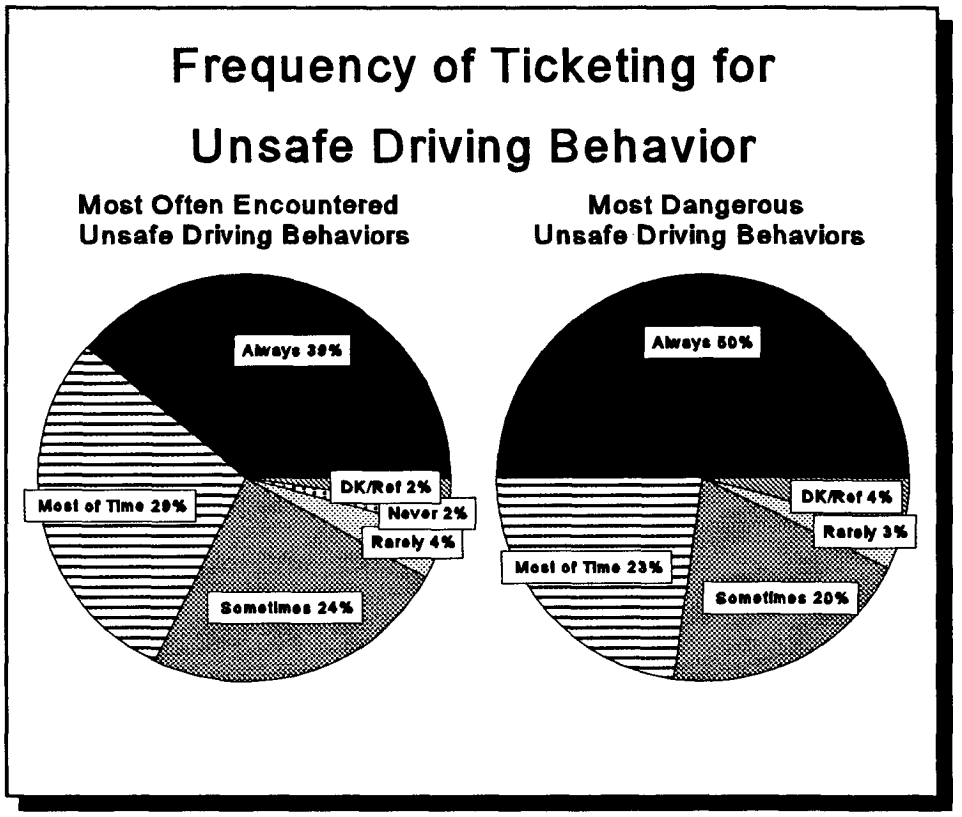
FIGURE 9-9



Qx: Do you think that the amount of police enforcement of traffic laws on the roads that you drive on is too much, too little, or about right for [type of violation]?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=1,533

When asked to think of the unsafe driving behavior they encounter most often, 39% of those who encountered an unsafe driving behavior said that police should always ticket drivers and 29% said they should ticket most of the time. However, when asked about the driving behavior they consider most dangerous, half (50%) said police should always ticket these drivers and 23% said they should ticket these drivers most of the time.

FIGURE 9-10



Qx: How often do you think police should ticket drivers who are [most often encountered unsafe behavior/most dangerous unsafe behavior]?

Base: Encountered unsafe driving behavior.

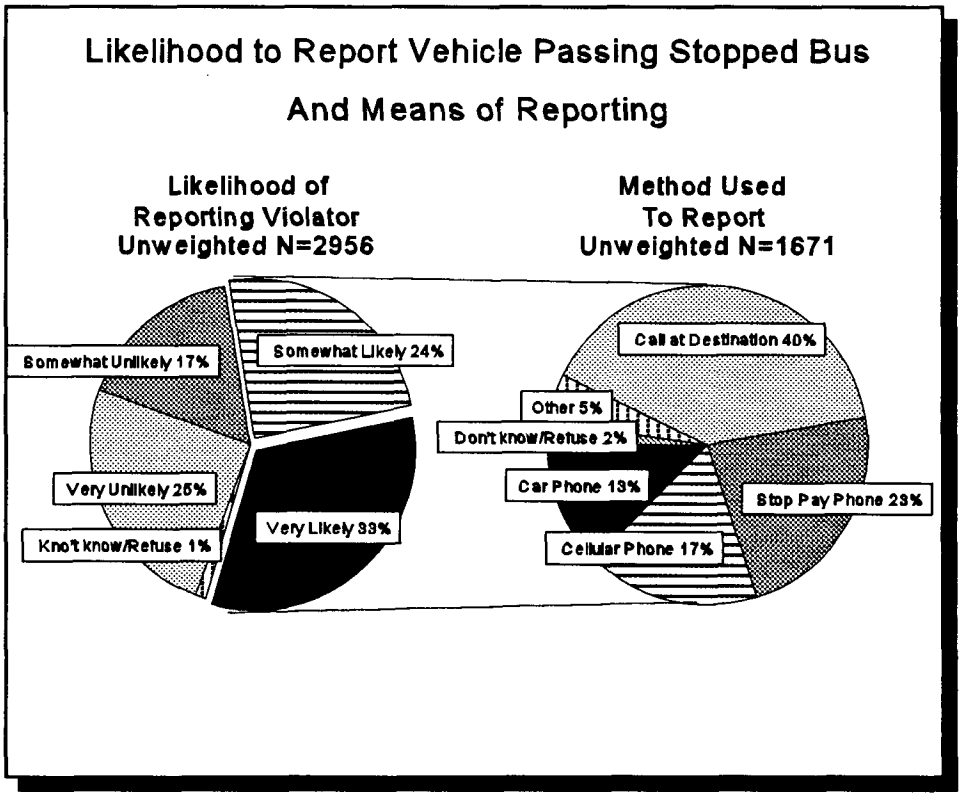
Unweighted N=2,578

REPORTING SCHOOL BUS VIOLATIONS

If drivers saw a vehicle pass a stopped school bus that had its red lights flashing and its stop arm in full view, one-third (33%) said they would be very likely to call and report it to the police. Another quarter (24%) said they would be somewhat likely to call and report it. However, more than four out of 10 drivers say they would be unlikely to report this type of traffic safety violation.

Three in 10 drivers (30%) who are likely to report a school bus violation said they would use their cell phone (17%) or car phone (13%). Another quarter (23%) would stop at a pay phone to report the violation. Four in 10 drivers (40%) would call when they get to their destination.

FIGURE 9-11



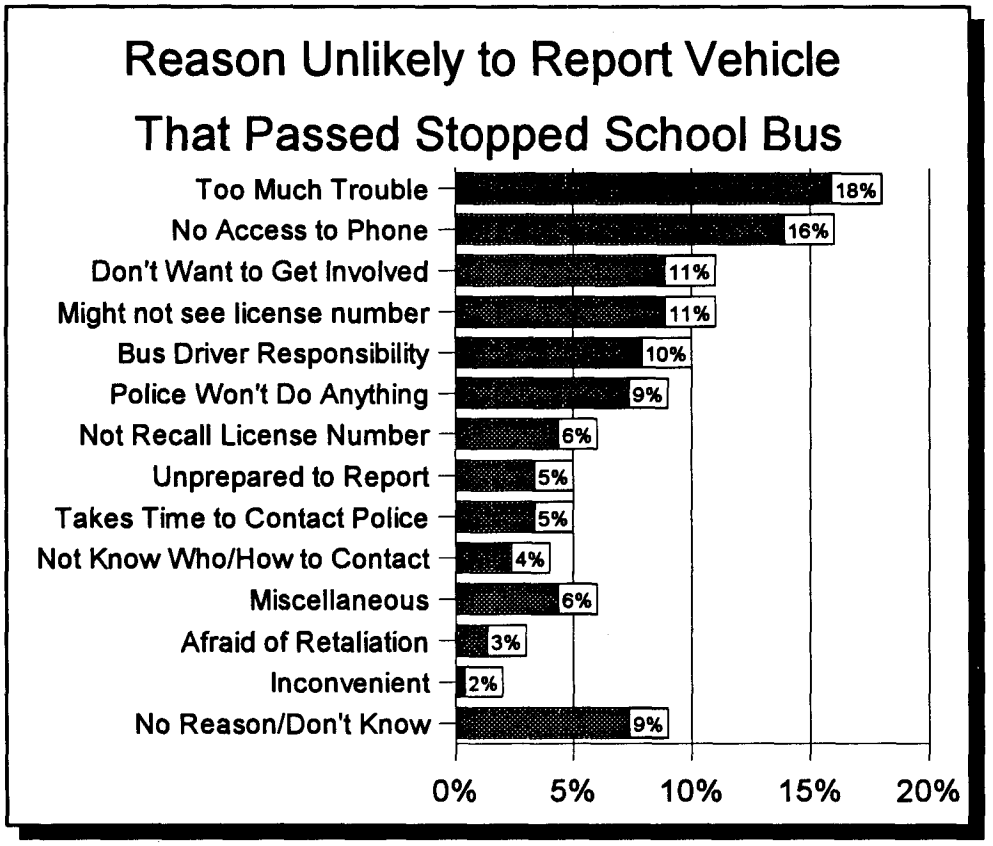
Qx: If you saw a vehicle pass a stopped school bus that has its red lights flashing and its stop arm in full view, how likely would you be to call and report it to the police?
Qx: How would you report it?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=2,956

Drivers who said they would be very unlikely to report school bus driving violations most often said that it was just too much trouble (18%), they don't want to get involved (11%), or it takes too much time (5%).

Access to a phone was mentioned by 15% of those very unlikely to report a violation. One in 10 said that it was the bus driver's responsibility to report violators (10%). One in 10 said they would be very unlikely to report it because the police wouldn't do anything about it (9%).

Possible misreporting was also a concern, with 11% saying they might not see the license number, 6% saying that they might not recall the license number, 5% saying they are unprepared (without pencil or paper) to report it.

FIGURE 9-12



Qx: Why would you be unlikely to report it?
Base: Very unlikely to report vehicle passing a stopped school bus.
Unweighted N=1,261

SUMMARY

A majority of drivers felt police enforcement was about right for all road types. However, one driver in four felt there was too little police enforcement on most roads. For residential roads, two in five drivers felt there was too little enforcement. Even those who said they "enjoy the feeling of speed" felt more enforcement was needed on residential roads. Over half of all drivers felt that tailgating and weaving in and out of traffic needed more enforcement. At the same time, a majority of drivers felt that enforcement was about right for running red lights, running stop signs and failing to yield. Over one-third of all drivers said they would not report a vehicle passing a stopped school bus, the majority of whom said it would be too much trouble.

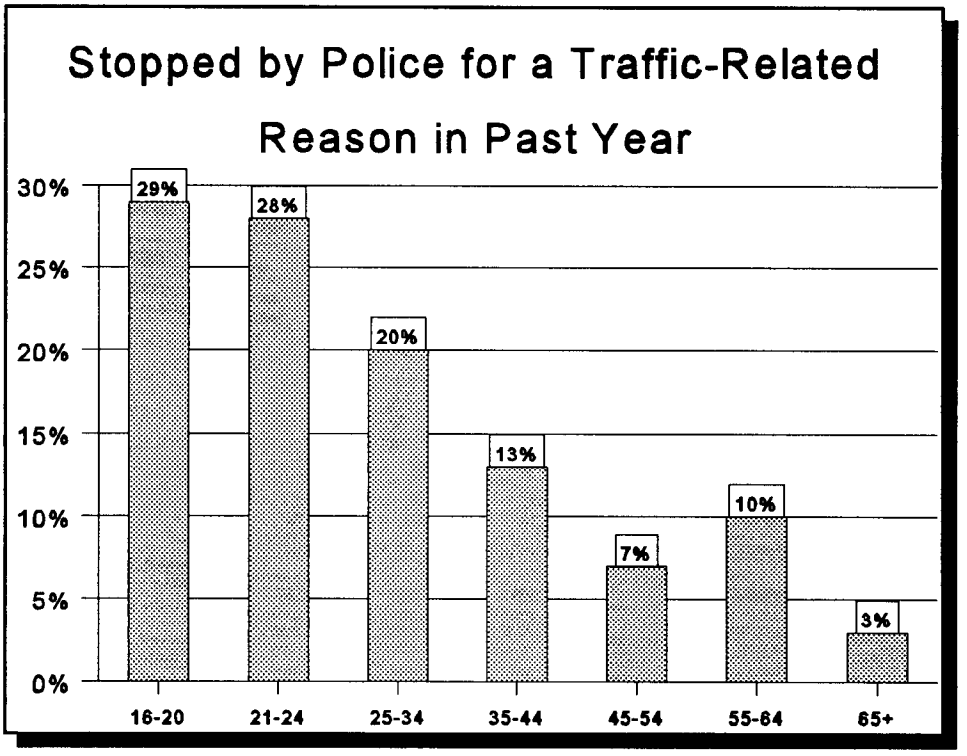
CHAPTER X.

PERSONAL ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE

PERSONAL ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE

About one in seven drivers (14%) report that they have been stopped by police for a traffic-related reason in the past 12 months. Male drivers (16%) are somewhat more likely than female drivers (12%) to have been stopped by police. Drivers from urban areas (15%) are slightly more likely than drivers from suburban (13%) and rural areas (12%) to report being stopped by police for traffic-related reasons in the past year. The really striking difference in the frequency of encounters with police, however, is by age. Nearly three out of 10 drivers aged 16-20 (29%) and 21-24 (28%) report being stopped by police in the past year. The proportion of drivers stopped for traffic-related reasons drops to 20% among 25-34 year-olds, 13% among 35-44 year-olds, 7% among 45-54 year-olds, and 3% among those 65 and older. This almost linear relationship between age and being stopped by police is interrupted by a 10% rate among 55-64 year-olds.

FIGURE 10-1

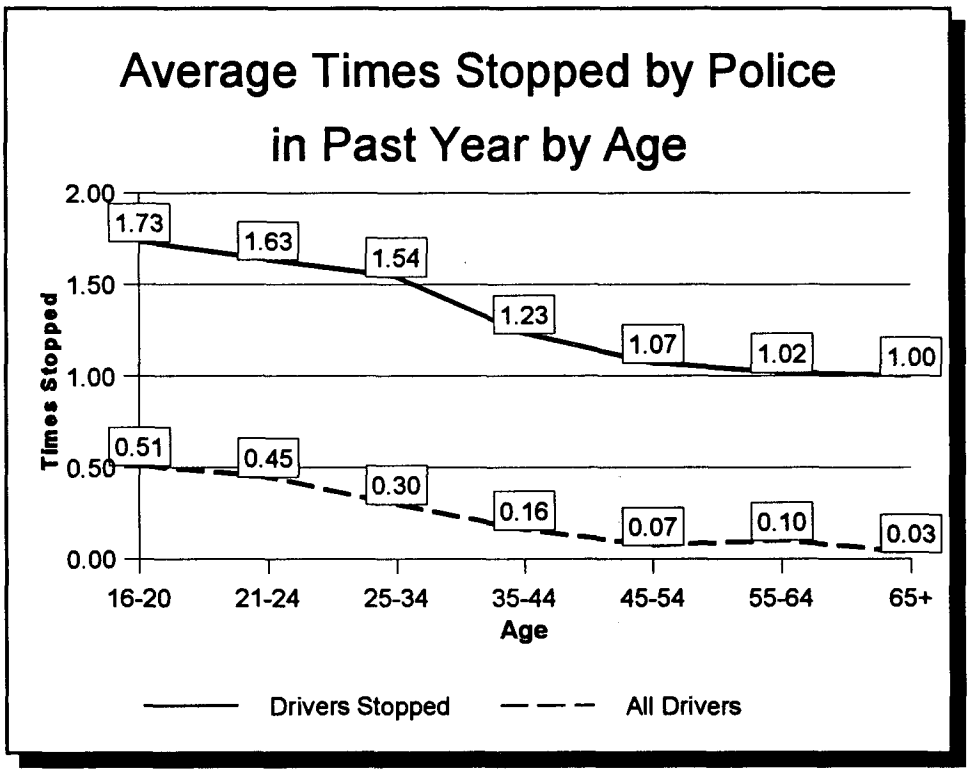


Qx: In the past 12 months, have you been stopped by the police for any traffic-related reason?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=2,956

Not only is the prevalence of a driver being stopped by police in the past 12 months related to age, but the number of times they are stopped by police for traffic-related reasons is also related to age. For those with any police stops for traffic- related reasons in the past year, the average (mean) number of stops in the 12 month period is 1.73 for those aged 16-20, 1.63 for those aged 21-24, 1.54 for those 25-34, 1.23 for those 35-44, 1.07 for those 45-55, and 1.02 for those 55-64 years-old and 1.00 for those 65 and older.

Overall, drivers age 16 to 20 average one-half a stop per driver, that is one stop for every two drivers. But those who were stopped, on average one and three-quarter times. Both the average number of times stopped for all drivers and for those drivers who were ever stopped decreased with age.

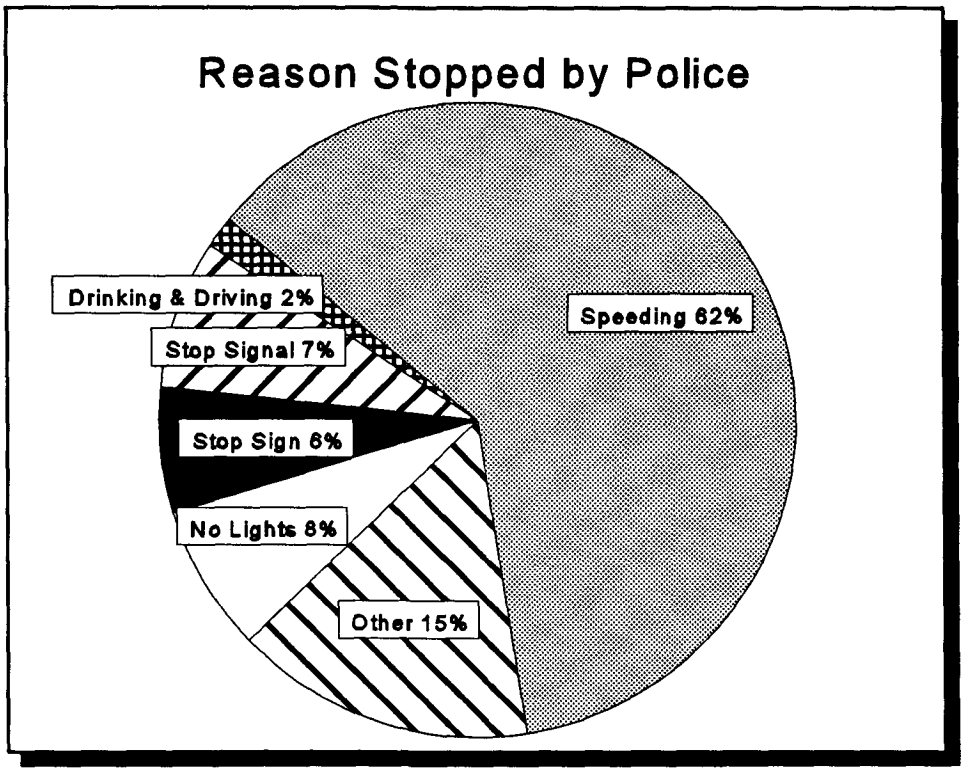
FIGURE 10-2



Qx: How many times have you been stopped by the police in the past 12 months (for a traffic-related reason)?
Base: Stopped by the police for a traffic-related reason
Unweighted N=405

Those drivers who had been stopped by police in the previous 12 months were asked for the reason police stopped them. The most common reason (62%) was speeding. Stop signal violations (7%) were the next most common traffic offense. Other reasons for being stopped by police in the last 12 months included: no lights (8%), stop sign violations (6%), and drinking and driving (2%).

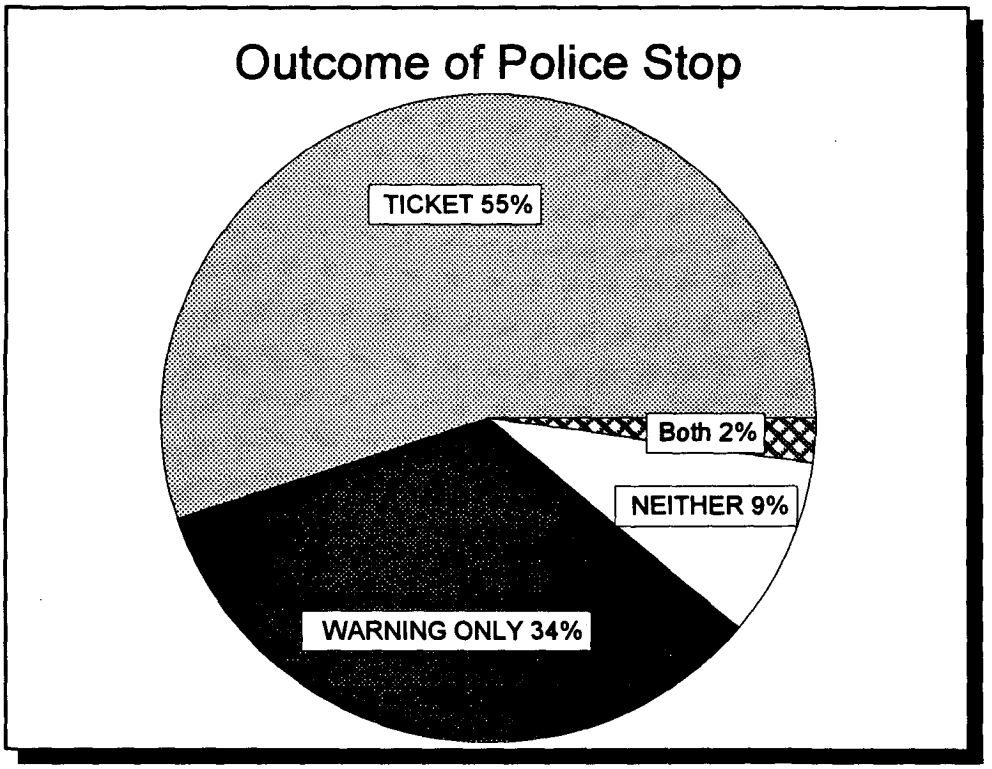
FIGURE 10-3



Qx: What were you stopped for?
Base: Stopped by the police for a traffic-related reason
Unweighted N=405 (442 responses)

The vast majority (91%) of those stopped by police for traffic-related reasons in the past 12 months reported that they received a ticket or warning. Over half reported that they received a ticket (55%) or a ticket and a warning (2%) on those occasions. A third (34%) reported that they only got a warning when stopped by police. Less than one in 10 (9%) drivers stopped by police reported that they got neither a ticket nor a warning.

FIGURE 10-4

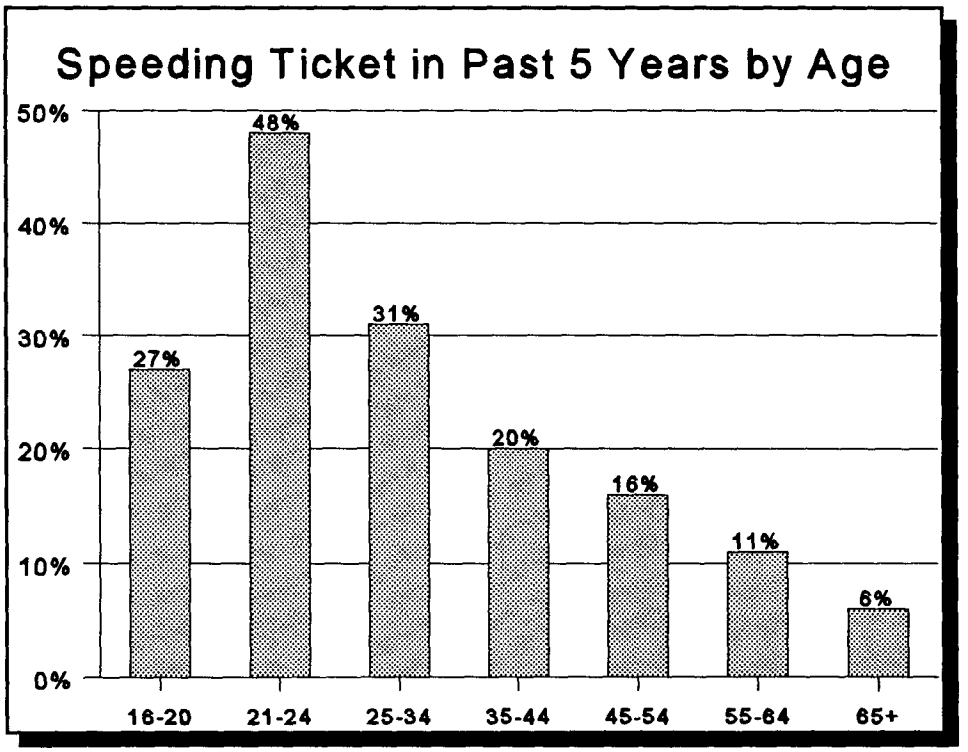


Qx: Did you receive a ticket or warning (on any of those occasions)?
Base: stopped by the police for a traffic-related reason
Unweighted N=405

Looking at a somewhat longer time frame, one out of five drivers (21%) report that they have gotten a ticket for speeding in the past five years. Male drivers (26%) are more likely than female drivers (16%) to have been ticketed for speeding.

Drivers' age is directly related to likelihood of being ticketed for speeding in the last five years. Over a quarter (27%) of 16-20 year-olds report that they have gotten a ticket for speeding in the past five years, despite the fact that none of them have had a full five years of driving experience. With a full five years of driving experience, nearly half (48%) of the 21-24 year-olds report that they have gotten a ticket for speeding during that period. The prevalence of speeding tickets then declines progressively to 31% of the 25-34 year-olds, 20% of the 35-44 year-olds, 16% of the 45-54 year-olds, 11% of the 55-64 year-olds, and 6% of drivers aged 65 and older.

FIGURE 10-5

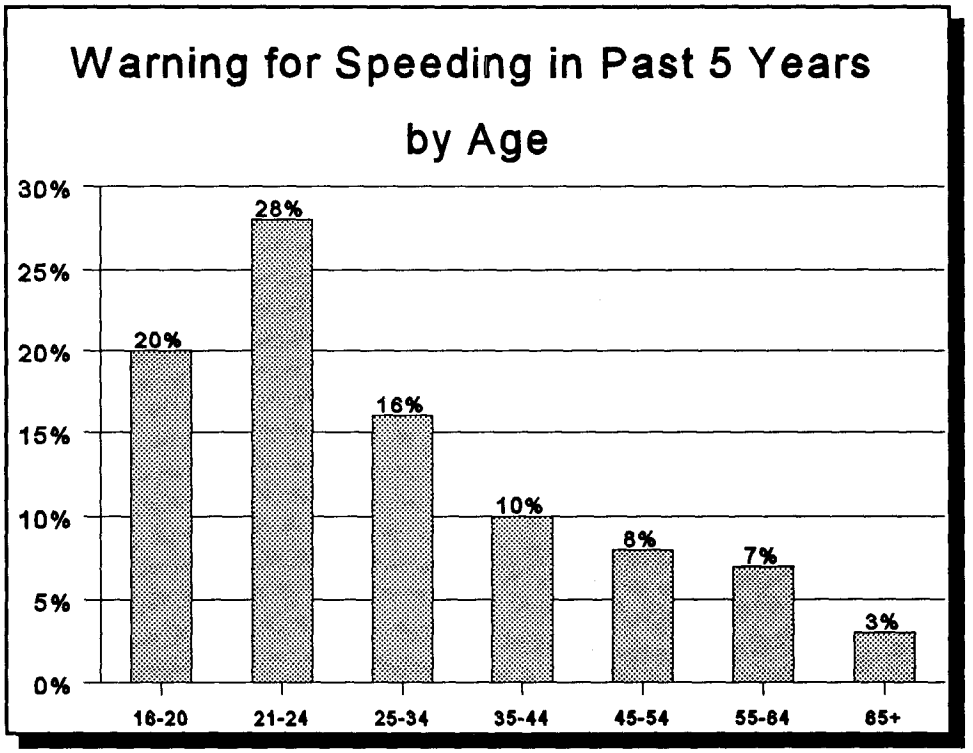


Qx: Within the past five years, have you gotten a ticket for speeding?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=6,000

About one in eight drivers (12%) report that they have gotten a warning for speeding in the past five years. Males (14%) are more likely the female drivers (10%) to have gotten speeding warnings in this period. There is no appreciable difference in the prevalence of speeding warnings between drivers from urban (11%), suburban (11%) and rural (12%) areas.

Like speeding tickets, warnings for speeding vary directly with age. One in five (20%) of 16-20 year-olds have received a warning for speeding in the past five years, even though none of them have been driving for a full five years. Nearly three out of 10 (28%) 21-24 year-olds have received a speeding warning in the past five years. The prevalence of speeding warnings declines progressively with age to 16% of 25-34 year-olds, 10% of the 35-44 year-olds, 8% of the 45-54 year-olds, 7% of the 55-64 year-olds, and 3% of those 65 and older.

FIGURE 10-6

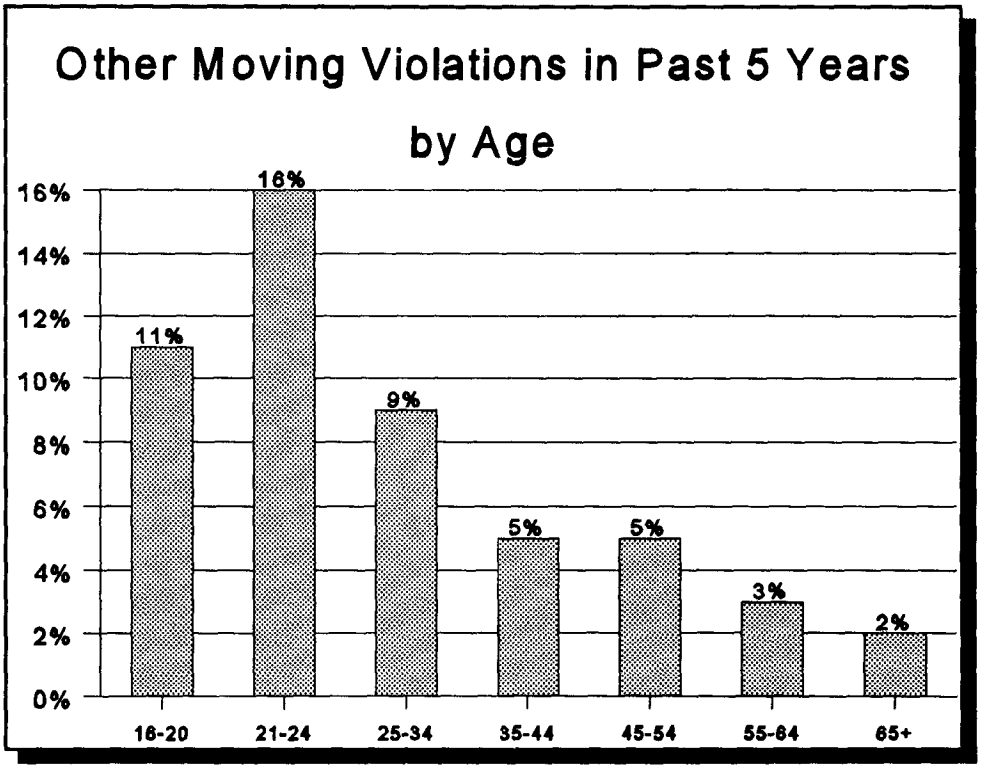


Qx: Within the past five years, have you gotten a warning for speeding?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=6,000

Only one in 20 drivers (6%) report receiving tickets for moving violations other than speeding in the past five years. The ratio of tickets for speeding (21%) to other moving violations (6%) in the past five years is not inconsistent with the proportion of stops for speeding (62%) out of all police stops for traffic reasons reported in the past year.

Male drivers (8%) are more likely than female drivers (5%) to report being stopped for moving violations other than speeding in the past five years. As with speeding, age is a factor in the prevalence of other moving violations. One in 10 (11%) 16-20 year-olds report a ticket for some other moving violation in the past five years. With a full five years experience, the prevalence of tickets for moving violations increases to one out of seven (16%) 21-24 year-olds. The proportion of drivers with tickets for other moving violations declines to 9% for 25-34 year-olds, 5% of 35-44 year-olds, 5% of 45-54 year -olds, 3% of 55-64 year-olds, and 2% of drivers 65 and older.

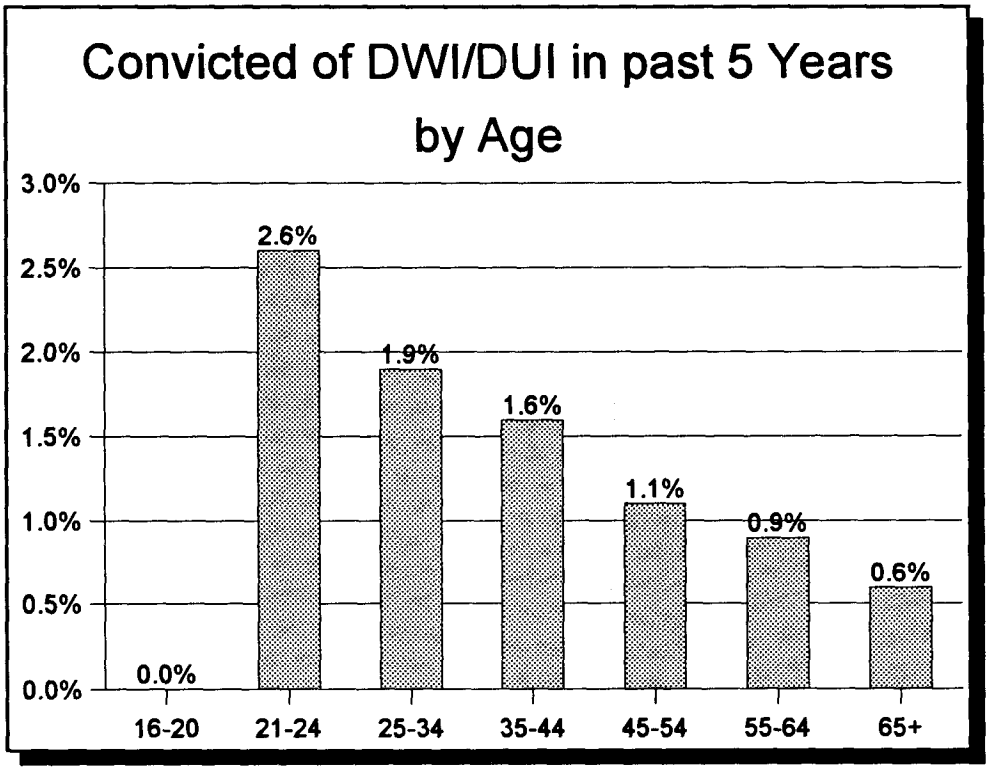
FIGURE 10-7



Qx: Within the past five years, have you gotten a ticket for any other moving violation (such as running a red light or stop sign)?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=6,000

Only one percent of drivers report that they have been convicted of driving while intoxicated (DWI) or driving under the influence (DUI) in the past five years. Male drivers represent 88% of the one percent of drivers convicted of DWI or DUI in the past five years. None of the 16-20 year old drivers in our sample reported being convicted for DWI/DUI in the past five years. Beginning with 2.6% of 21-24 year-old drivers convicted of DWI/DUI in the past five years, the proportion declines with age steadily to 0.6% of drivers 65 and older.

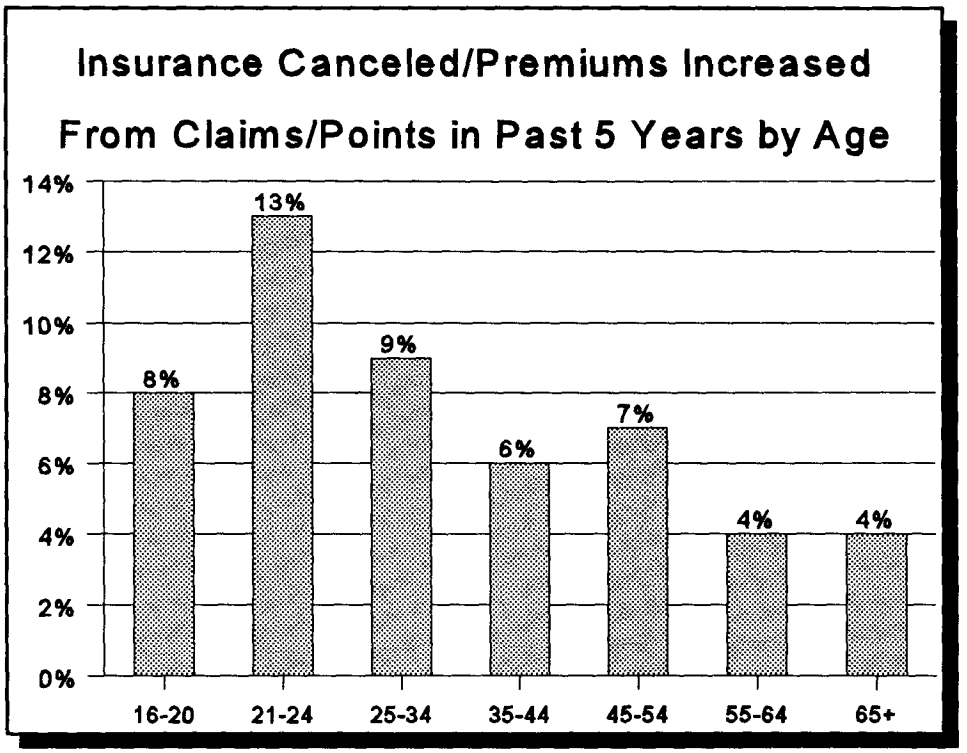
FIGURE 10-8



Qx: Within the past five years, have you been convicted of DWI or DUI?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=6,000

Seven percent of drivers report that their insurance has been canceled or their premiums increased as a result of claims or points in the past five years. Male drivers (8%) are more likely than female drivers (5%) to report increased premiums or insurance cancellation as a result of claims or points in the past five years. There are some age-related differences in the proportion of drivers with increased premiums or insurance cancellation in the past five years, ranging from a high of 13% for 21-24 year-old drivers to 4% of drivers aged 55 and older.

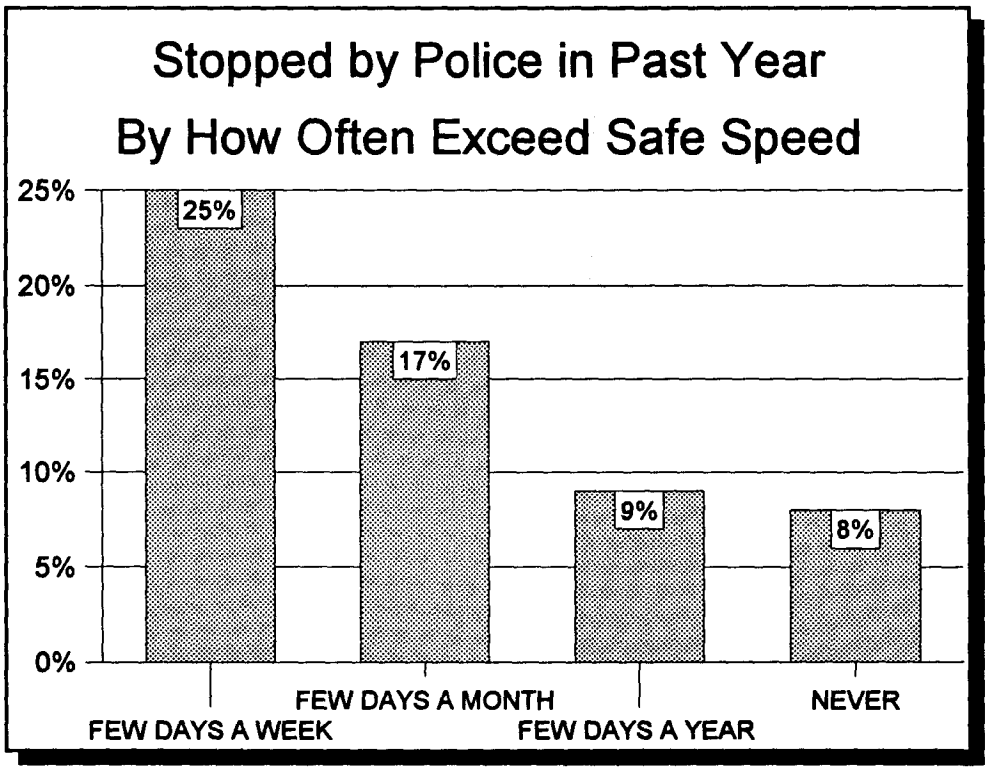
FIGURE 10-9



Qx: Within the past five years, have you had your car insurance canceled or premiums increased as a result of claims or points?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=6,000

Among those who currently exceed what they consider to be the safe speed for the roads they drive a few days a week, 25% have been stopped for traffic-related reasons in the past year. The proportion of drivers stopped for traffic-related offenses declines to 17% for those who exceed safe speeds a few days a month. The proportion stopped by police for traffic-related offenses drops further to 9% of those who exceed safe speed a few days a year, and 8% of those who report that they never exceed the safe speed for the roads they drive.

FIGURE 10-10



Qx: In the past 12 months, have you been stopped by police (for a traffic-related reason)?

Qx: How often do you drive faster than the (maximum safe speed) on that road?

Base: Ever stopped by police

Unweighted N=1,494

However, there is relatively little relationship between the frequency with which drivers currently exceed what they consider to be the safe speed and many of their previous enforcement experiences over the past five years. In all cases, those who never currently exceed the safe speed have the lowest prevalence of tickets, warnings and other penalties for speeding and unsafe driving over the past five years. However, only in the case of warnings for speeding is there a consistent relationship between the frequency with which the driver currently exceeds safe speeds and the prevalence of tickets, warnings and other penalties for traffic violations during the previous five years.

TABLE 10-1

Received a Ticket or a Warning For Speeding in the Past 5 Years by How Often Exceed Safe Speed

Qx: Within the past five years have you gotten a ticket for speeding, gotten a warning for speeding, gotten a ticket for any other moving violation, been convicted of DWI or DUI, or had your car insurance canceled or premiums increased as a result of claims or points?
Qx: How often do you drive faster than [maximum speed] MPH on that road?
Base Total population of drivers.

	How Often Currently Exceed Safe Speed			
	Few Days a Week	**Few Days a Month**	**Few Days a Year**	**Never**
Unweighted N	*604*	*579*	*754*	*1,074*
Gotten a ticket for speeding	**25%**	**27%**	**23%**	**14%**
Gotten a warning for speeding	**20%**	**14%**	**12%**	**7%**
Gotten ticket for other moving violation	**6%**	**9%**	**6%**	**4%**
Been Convicted of DWI/DUI	**1%**	**2%**	**2%**	**1%**
Had Insurance canceled/premiums increased	**7%**	**7%**	**8%**	**4%**

There is, however, a relationship between the driver's unsafe driving score (frequency of eight to nine types of unsafe driving behaviors in the past year) and the likelihood of being stopped by police for traffic reasons in the past year. Among those who report no unsafe driving in the past year (based on only eight to nine types of unsafe driving), 5% report being stopped by police in the past year. This doubles to 11% being stopped by police in the past year for those with a score of 3-12 (once a month or less). The likelihood of being stopped by police increases by 50 percent to 16% for those whose unsafe driving score is 13-103 (twice a week or less). The likelihood of being stopped by police in the past year for traffic-related reasons continues to increase with the driver's score on the frequency of unsafe driving behaviors in the past year. Among the three percent of drivers with the highest unsafe driving score, the incidence of being stopped by police in the past year is 38%.

FIGURE 10-11

Qx: *In the past 12 months have you been stopped by the police for any traffic-related reason?*

Qx: *Thinking back over the past year, when was the most recent time that you...?*

Base: *Total population of drivers*

The survey findings represent both good news and bad news for traffic safety agencies. The good news is that the likelihood of being stopped by police for traffic safety violations clearly increases with the frequency of committing traffic violations since there is more opportunity to be observed by the police. Hence, those who frequently drive in an unsafe and illegal manner are more likely to be stopped by police than those who do not.

The bad news is that the majority (62%) of those who frequently drive in an unsafe and illegal manner (unsafe driving score over 300) have never been stopped by police for traffic related reasons in the past year. There is clearly an increased risk for enforcement and sanctions for those who frequently break traffic safety laws. At the same time, if you can violate these laws on a daily basis and have less than a fifty-fifty likelihood of being stopped even once over the course of a year, the risk appears to be relatively low.

SUMMARY

One driver in seven has been stopped for a traffic violation within the past year. Over the past five years one in five received a speeding ticket, one in eight received a warning for speeding, one in 20 received a citation for other moving violations, and one in 100 had been convicted of DUI/DWI. All of these violations peaked among 21 to 24 year olds and then steadily decreased with age. In addition, only one driver in fourteen reported that their insurance had been canceled or premiums had been increased as a result of claims or points in the past five years.

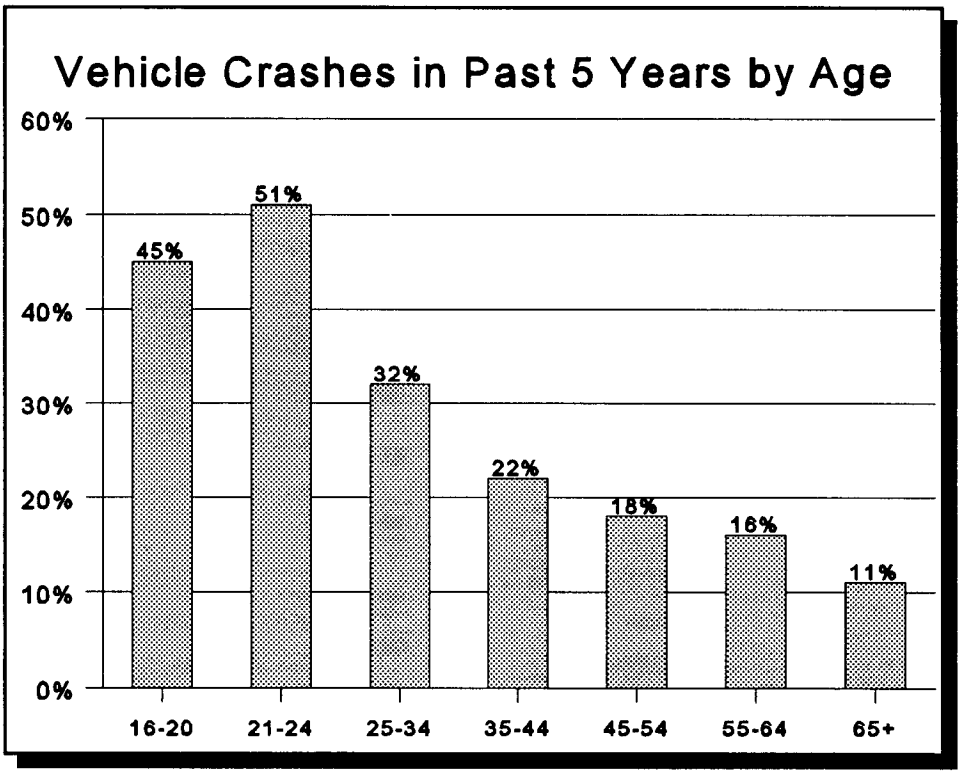
CHAPTER XI.

CRASH EXPERIENCE

CRASH EXPERIENCE

One out of four drivers (25%) have been in a vehicle crash in the past five years. Slightly more male drivers (26%) than female drivers (23%) report crash experience in the past five years. However, age is the primary risk factor for vehicle crashes. The prevalence of vehicle crashes in the past five years is highest among drivers aged 16-20 (45%) and 21-24 (51%). It then declines progressively with age from 32% of the 25-34 year-olds, 22% of the 35-44 year-olds, 18% of the 45-54 year-olds, 16% of the 55-64 year-olds and 11% of those aged 65 and older.

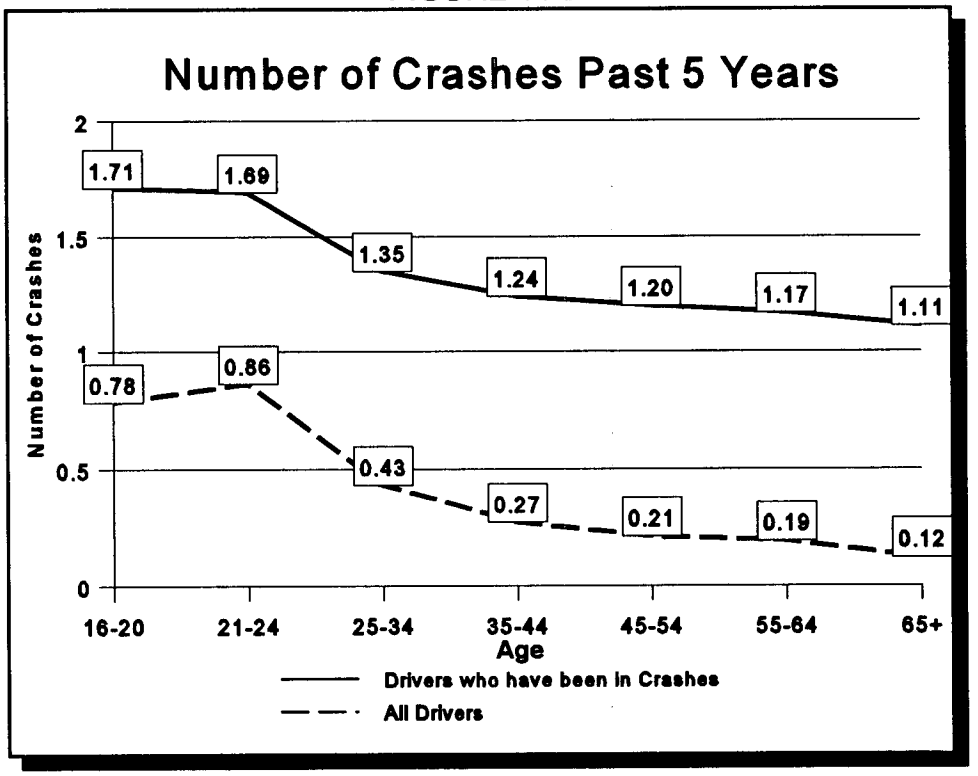
FIGURE 11-1



Qx: Have you been in a vehicle crash in the past five years?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=6,000

Not only is the prevalence of vehicle crashes in the past five years related to age, but also the number of crashes in the past five years. Among all drivers, the rate at which accidents occur seem to be related to age. All drivers age 24 or less average 0.8 crashes per person, or about 4 crashes for every 5 drivers. (Keep in mind that drivers age 16 to 20 have not been driving for 5 years.) The proportion of crashes drops to less than one crash for every two drivers in the 25 to 34 age group, and continues to drop to one crash for every 8 drivers in the 65 and over age group. For those with any crashes in the past five years, the average (mean) number of crashes in the five-year period is 1.7 for those aged 16-24, 1.4 for those 25-34, 1.2 for those 35-64, and 1.1 for those 65 and older.

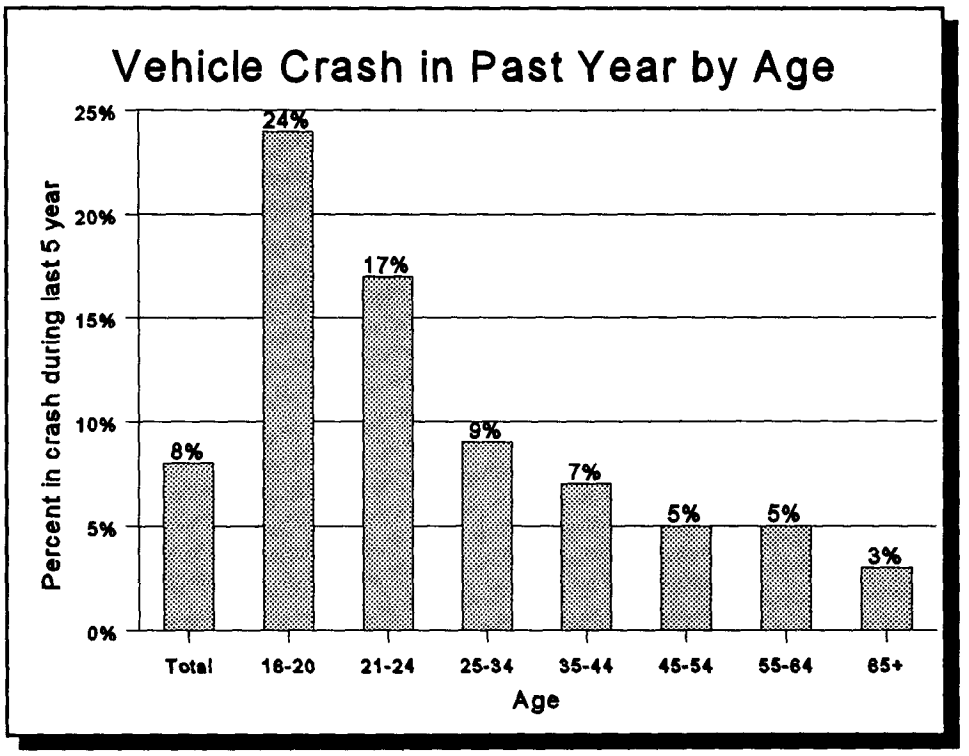
FIGURE 11-2



Qx: How many times has this happened to you (in the past five years)?
Base: Those who have been in a crash in the past five years
Unweighted N=1,434

Those drivers who had been in a vehicle crash in the past five years were asked how long ago their most recent crash (or only crash) had occurred. About one out of 12 drivers (8%) reported that they have been in a crash in the past year. The prevalence of past year vehicular crashes varies substantially by a driver's age. Nearly one out of every four drivers aged 16-20 (24%) report that they have been in a crash in the past year. The proportion of drivers with past year crashes drops by about one-third to 17% of the 21-24 year-olds. The proportion of drivers with past year crashes then drops by about half to 9% for 25-34 year-olds. The prevalence of past year crashes then declines more gradually to 7% of the 35-44 year-olds, 5% of the 45-64 year-olds, and 3% of drivers aged 65 and older.

FIGURE 11-3

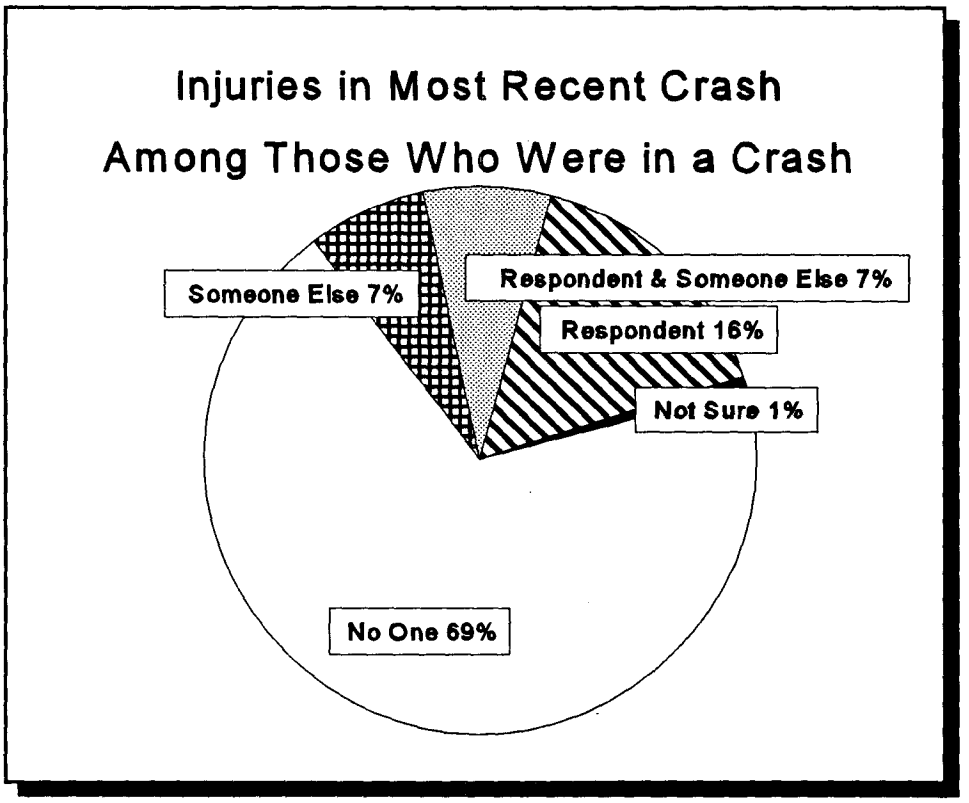


Qx: How long ago did (that/the latest) crash occur?
Base: Been in crash in past five years
Unweighted N=6,000

In three out of 10 (30%) motor vehicle crashes in the past five years, someone was injured sufficiently to require medical attention. Among those who reported motor vehicle crashes in the past five years, nearly a quarter (23%) reported that they had been injured (16%) or both they and someone else (7%) had been injured in the (most recent if more than one) crash. About half that number 14% reported that someone else had been injured in the crash, either along with themselves (7%) or only someone else was injured (7%).

Although age is a risk factor for crashes, it does not appear that there is any relationship between age and injuries sustained in these crashes. However, female drivers in crashes in the past five years were more likely to report someone had been injured in the most recent crash (36%) compared to male drivers (25%). Indeed, they were more likely to report that they had been injured in the crash (29%) more often than male drivers (18%).

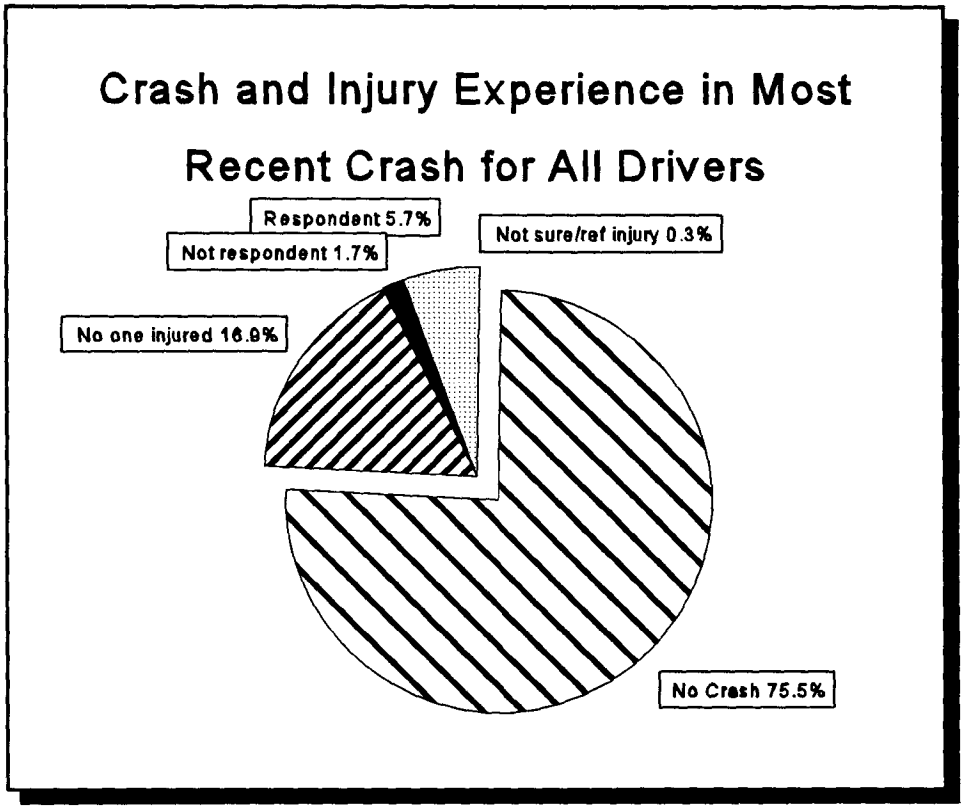
FIGURE 11-4



Qx: Was anyone injured in that crash (only count injuries that required medical attention)?
Base: Been in a crash in past five years
Unweighted N=1,434

Overall, about one in 14 drivers (7%) report that they have been in a motor vehicle crash in the past five years that resulted in injuries to themselves or someone else requiring medical attention. Indeed, one in 16 drivers (5.7%) report that they have personally been injured in a motor vehicle crash in the past five years.

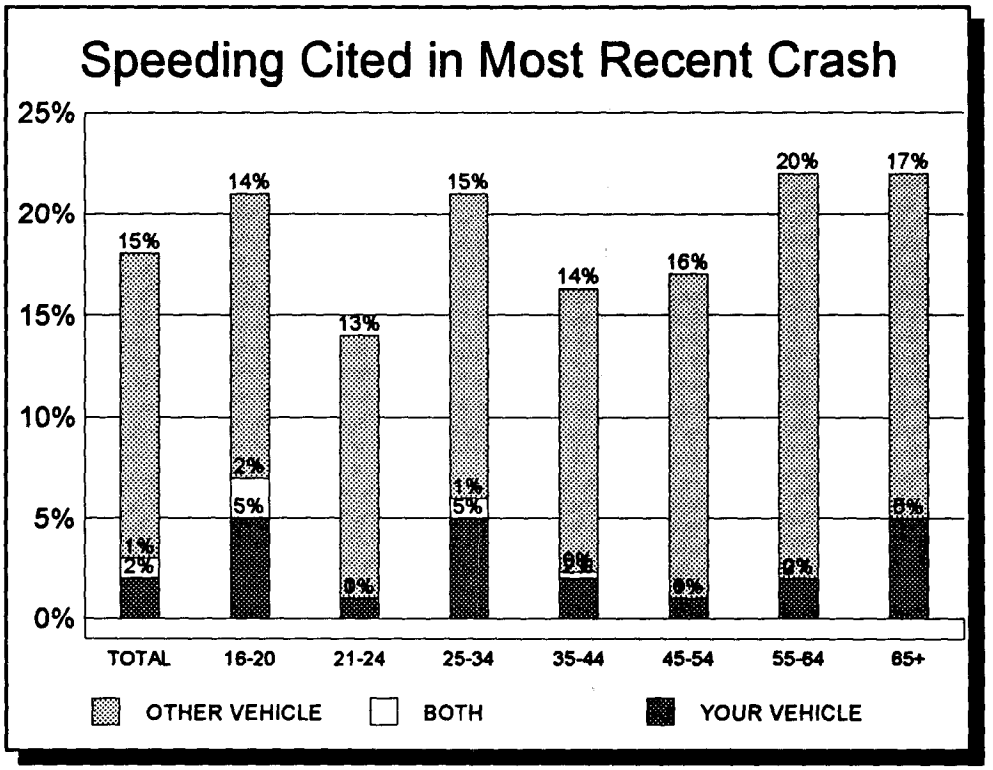
FIGURE 11-5



Qx: Was anyone injured in that crash (only count injuries that required medical attention)?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=6,000

In about one in five motor vehicle crashes in the past five years (18%), the driver of one or both vehicles was cited by police for speeding in the crash. In only 1% of crashes were both vehicles cited for speeding in the crash. According to survey respondents, the driver of the other vehicle was cited for speeding (15%) nearly seven times as often as the driver of their own vehicle (2%). This may represent reporting bias. However, it also may represent a relatively small proportion of drivers who contribute an inordinate amount to the incidence of speeding related crashes.

FIGURE 11-6

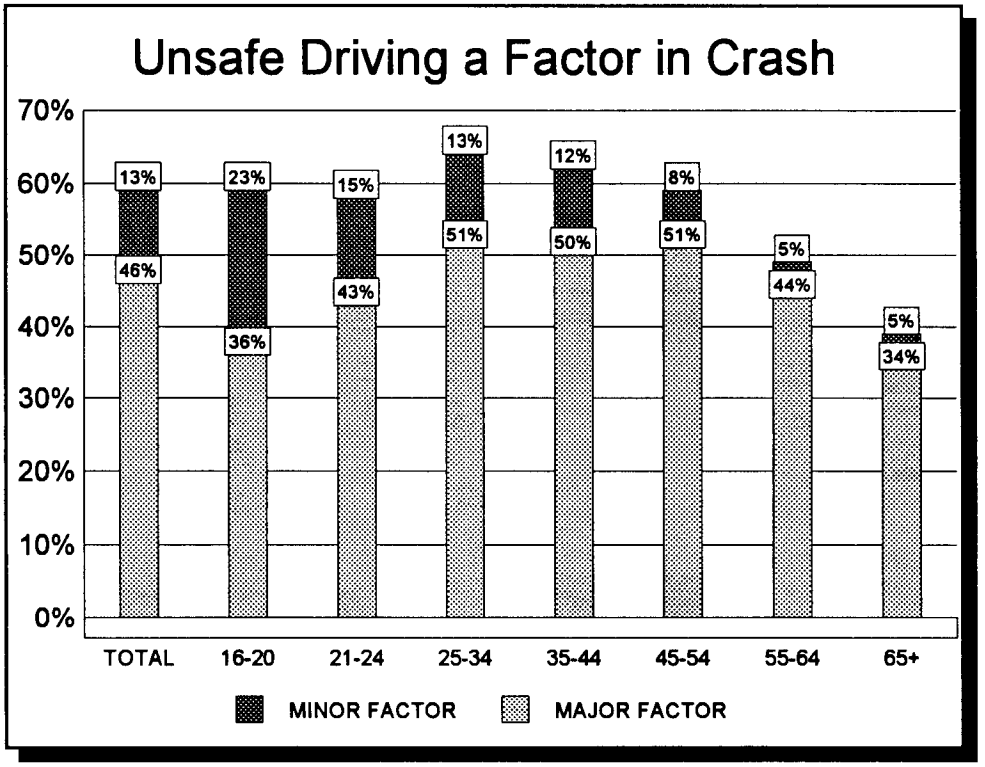


Qx: Was the driver of your vehicle or the other vehicle cited for speeding in that crash?
Base: Been in a crash in the past five years
Unweighted N=1,434

Those drivers who had been in crashes in the past five years were asked whether other unsafe driving actions had been a factor in the (most recent) crash. The majority (59%) reported that unsafe driving actions had been a factor in their crash. Indeed, nearly half (46%) felt that unsafe driving actions had been a major factor in the most recent crash.

There is no appreciable difference between the proportion of male drivers (60%) and female drivers (58%) who report unsafe driving was a factor in their most recent crash. There is also no appreciable difference between drivers from urban (57%), suburban (59%) and rural areas (59%) in this perception. Among drivers under age 55, there is little difference in the proportion who say that unsafe driving was a factor in their crash (58%-64%). However, fewer drivers aged 55-64 (49%) and 65 or older (39%) feel that unsafe driving was a factor in their crash.

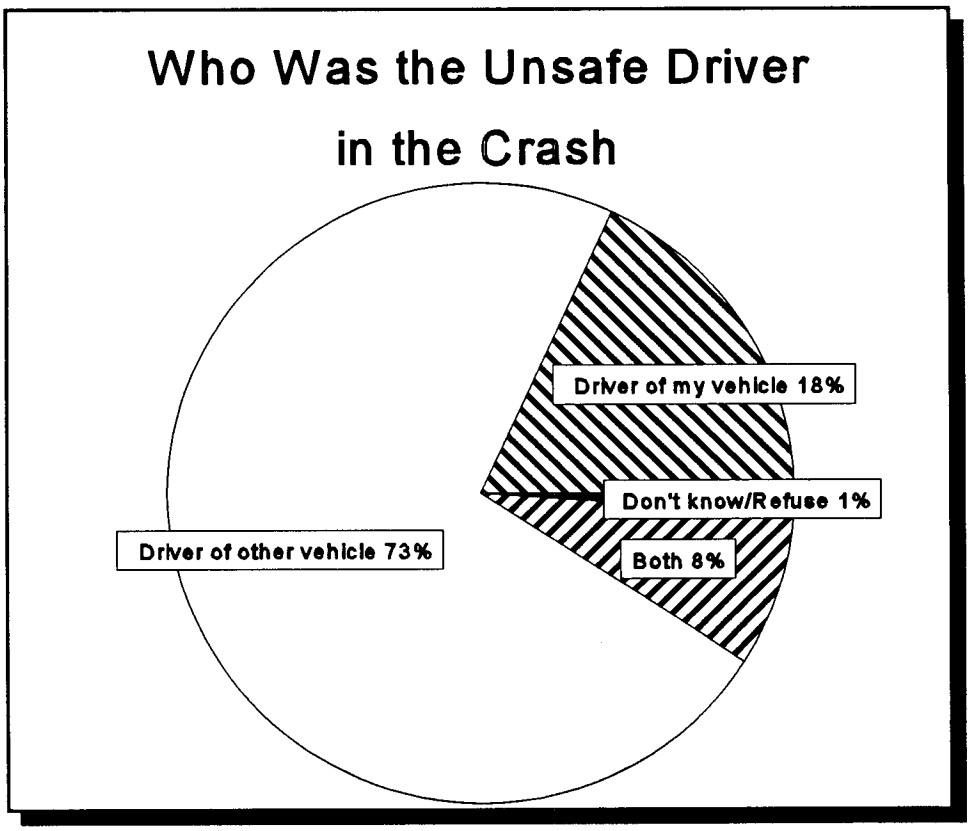
FIGURE 11-7



Qx: Were any other unsafe driving actions a factor?
Base: Been in a crash in the past five years
Unweighted N=1,434

Those who said that unsafe driving was a factor in their crash were asked who was responsible for the unsafe action. In a relatively small proportion of cases (8%), respondents reported that the drivers of both vehicles had been involved in unsafe driving actions. About four times as many reported that only the driver of the other vehicle had committed unsafe driving actions (73%) as reported that only the driver of their vehicle (18%) had committed unsafe driving actions that had been a factor in the crash.

FIGURE 11-8



Qx: Was the unsafe driving by the driver of your vehicle, the driver of the other vehicle, or both?
Base: Other unsafe driving was a factor in the crash.
Unweighted N=867

SUMMARY

One-quarter of all drivers have been in a crash in the past five years. The number and frequency of crashes decreased with age. Three in 10 of the most recent crashes resulted in injuries that required medical attention. Overall, about one driver in 12 in the general population was in a crash in the last five years where someone was injured and required medical attention. Among those who were in a crash in the last five years, speeding was cited as a factor in the crash by less than one in five, while unsafe driving was cited as a factor by three in five.

CHAPTER XII.

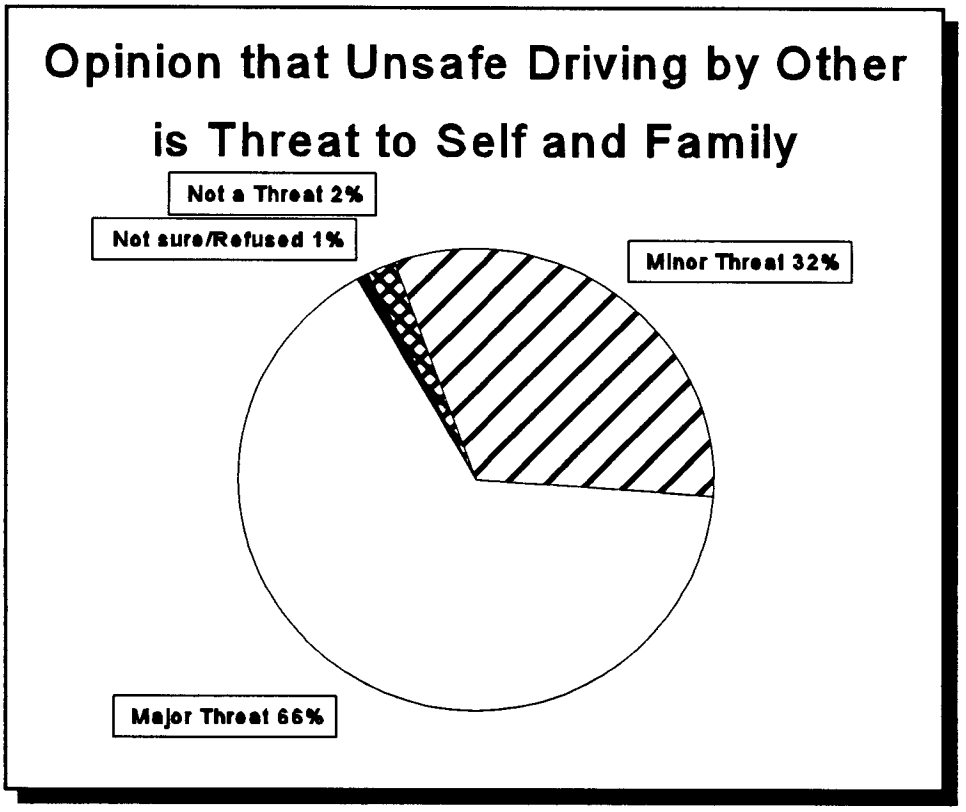
DRIVER CONCERNS ABOUT SPEEDING AND UNSAFE DRIVING ON SELF AND FAMILY

DRIVER CONCERNS ABOUT SPEEDING AND UNSAFE DRIVING ON SELF AND FAMILY

The vast majority of American drivers believe that unsafe driving by others represents a **threat to the personal safety** of themselves and their families. Two thirds (66%) said that they considered unsafe driving actions, excluding speeding, by other people as a **major threat** to themselves and their families. Another 32% said that they considered unsafe driving by others as a **minor threat** to themselves and their families. Only 2% of drivers felt that unsafe driving by others was **no threat** for them or their families.

Although a majority of drivers in every group felt that unsafe driving was a major threat, there was some variation between groups. Women (68%) were somewhat more likely than men (63%) to consider unsafe driving by others as a major threat. Those with children under sixteen in the household (70%) were somewhat more likely than those without children (63%) to consider unsafe driving as a major threat. Sixteen to twenty year-olds (58%) were least likely to feel that unsafe driving by others was a major threat to them.

FIGURE 12-1

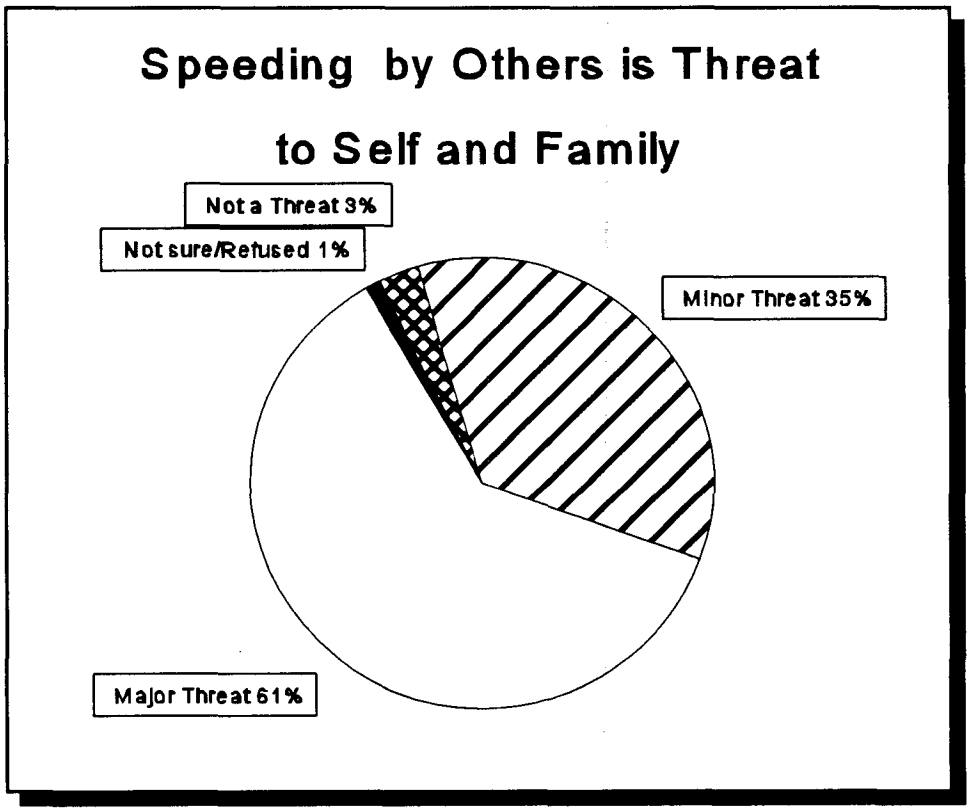


Qx: In your opinion, how much are unsafe driving actions by other people a threat to the personal safety of you and your family?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=3,000

The driving public also sees speeding, specifically, as a threat to themselves and their families. Six out of ten drivers (61%) say that speeding by others is a major threat to the personal safety of them and their families. Almost all of the rest (35%) consider speeding as a minor threat to themselves and their families. Only 3% of drivers say that speeding by others is not a threat to the personal safety of them and their families.

Women are more likely (69%) than men (53%) to see speeding as a major threat to them and their families. The perception that speeding is a major threat increases with age from a minority of 16-20 year-olds (48%) to the vast majority of those 65 and older (70%).

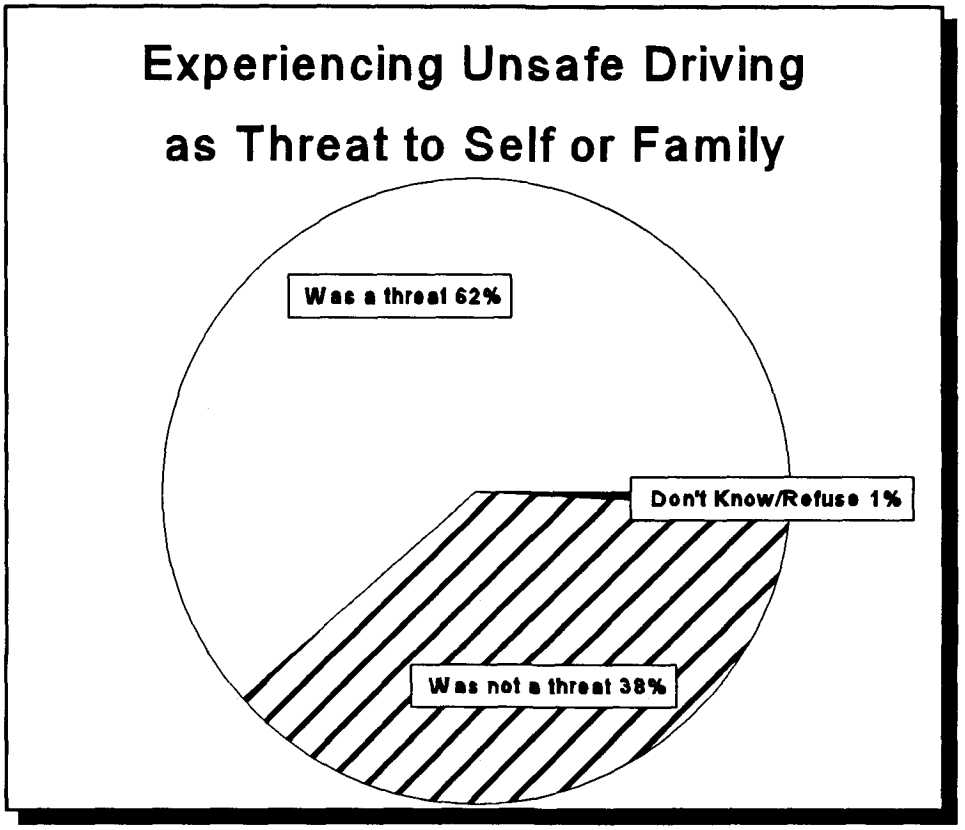
FIGURE 12-2



Qx: *In your opinion, how much is speeding by other people a threat to the personal safety of you and your family? Would you say driving at an unsafe speed is...?*
Base: *Total population of drivers*
Unweighted N=3,000

The proportion of drivers who feel that unsafe driving by others represents a threat to them and their families corresponds to the number of drivers who report that the behavior of another driver in the past year was a personal threat to themselves or their passengers. More than six out of ten drivers (62%) report that the behavior of another driver threatened them or their passengers in the past year.

FIGURE 12-3



Qx: In the past year, have you ever felt that the behavior of another driver was a personal threat to you or your passengers?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=3,000

Drivers were asked how often they felt the behavior of another driver had threatened the safety of themselves or their passengers in the past year. About 3% of these drivers felt threatened on a daily basis, 10% felt threatened at least several times a week, and 23% felt threatened at least several times a month. Based on an estimated total population of 186,988,000 drivers, the survey indicates that 6,171,000 Americans are threatened by the behavior of other drivers on a daily basis, while 18,325,000 are threatened several times a week and 42,633,000 are threatened several times a month.

TABLE 12-1

How Often in the Past Year the Behavior of Another Driver was Personal Threat

Qx: In the past year, have you ever felt that the behavior of another driver was a personal threat to you or your passengers?
Qx: How often in the past year have you felt [another drivers behavior was a threat]?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=3,000

	SURVEY	CUMULATIVE PERCENT	CUMULATIVE POPULATION ESTIMATE
Felt Threatened in Past Year			
Every Day/Nearly Every Day	3.3%	3.3%	6,171,000
Several Times a Week	6.5%	9.8%	18,325,000
Several Times a Month	13.0%	22.8%	42,633,000
Once a Month or Less	38.5%	61.3%	114,624,000
Not sure How Often in Past Year	0.4%	61.7%	115,372,000
Not in Past Year	**37.5%**	**99.2%**	**185,492,000**
Not sure if Past Year	**0.8%**	**100.0%**	**186,988,000**

The national sample of drivers who were asked whether the unsafe driving behavior of another driver as a threat to themselves or their passengers in the past year were asked when the most recent occasion occurred. Four percent reported that another drivers behavior had threatened them on the day of the interview. Another 16% reported being threatened within the past week, and another 16% reported being threatened in the past month. Nearly one in five drivers (19%) reported being threatened by other drivers actions in the past week, while more than one in three (36%) reported being threatened in the past month. Based on an estimated population of 186,988,000 drivers, the survey suggests that 35,902,000 million Americans were threatened by other drivers' behavior within the past week, while 66,755,000 million Americans have been threatened within the past month.

TABLE 12-2

Most Recent Time the Behavior of Another Driver was a Personal Threat

Qx: In the past year, have you ever felt that the behavior of another driver was a personal threat to you or your passengers?
Qx: When was the last time you felt [that another driver's behavior was a personal threat]?
Base: Total population of drivers.
Unweighted N=3,000

	SURVEY	CUMULATIVE PERCENT	CUMULATIVE POPULATION ESTIMATE
Threatened in Past Year			
Today	3.6%	3.6%	67,316,000
Past Week	15.7%	19.2%	35,902,000
Past Month	16.5%	35.7%	66,755,000
More than a Month Ago	24.8%	60.5%	113,128,000
Not sure when in Past Year	1.2%	61.7%	115,372,000
Not in Past Year	**37.5%**	**99.2%**	**185,482,000**
Not sure if Past Year	**0.8%**	**100.0%**	**186,988,000**

The drivers were asked what the other driver had done that made them feel threatened on that most recent occasion in the past year. The most common threatening action was when another driver cut very closely in front of their vehicle (36%). The second most common threatening action was tailgating (19%). The third most common threat from another driver was passing in a dangerous place or manner (15%). Fourth, drivers report other drivers cutting them off at an intersection (13%). Somewhat less commonly, drivers report on the most recent occasion that they felt threatened by another driver's obscene or threatening gesture (5%), speeding (4%), weaving (4%), running a red light (3%), ignoring a stop sign (1%) or driving the wrong way on a one way street (1%). Eleven percent reported some other type of threatening behavior. It is notable that only three percent could not recall what the other driver had done which made them feel threatened.

TABLE 12-3

Threatening Behaviors by Other Drivers by Type of Place

Qx: What did the driver do that made you feel threatened [most recent occasion]?
Base: Felt another driver's behavior was a threat.

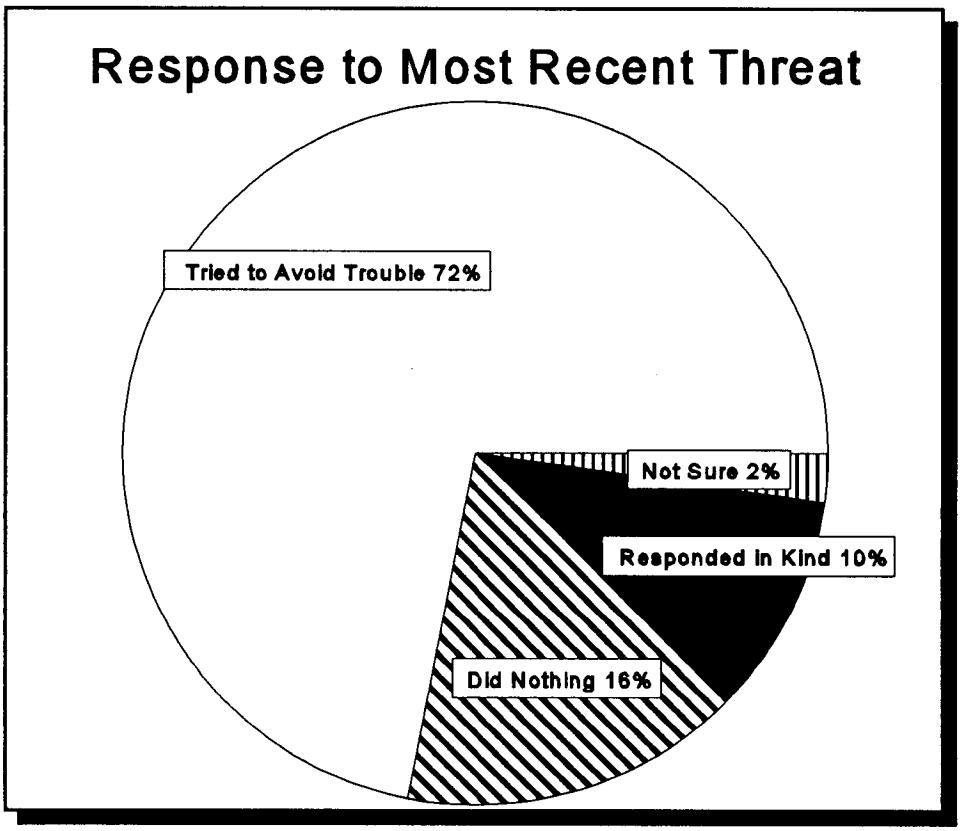
	Total	LOCATION*		
		Urban	Suburban	Rural
Unweighted N	*1,837*	*465*	*902*	*365*
Cut in front of me	**36%**	**38%**	**37%**	**32%**
Drove very closely behind me	**19%**	**19%**	**20%**	**17%**
Passed me in dangerous place/manner	**15%**	**12%**	**15%**	**21%**
Cut me off at intersection	**13%**	**15%**	**12%**	**11%**
Made an obscene or threatening gesture	**5%**	**4%**	**6%**	**2%**
Speeding	**4%**	**3%**	**4%**	**5%**
Weaving	**4%**	**3%**	**5%**	**4%**
Running red light	**3%**	**2%**	**3%**	**4%**
Ignoring a stop sign	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	**2%**
Driving wrong way on one-way street	**1%**	**1%**	*	**3%**
Other	**11%**	**13%**	**11%**	**10%**
Not sure	**3%**	**4%**	**3%**	**1%**

* Unclassified drivers were included in the total.

The drivers who had been threatened by other drivers' behaviors were asked what they did in response. The vast majority (72%) said that they tried to avoid trouble, that is, changed lanes, avoided eye contact, let them pass, etc. Another 16% said that they did not know what to do. But one in 10 of the threatened drivers (10%) said they responded in kind to the threat.

There was no difference in the proportion of men (10%) and women (10%) drivers who reported that they responded in kind to the threatening behavior of another driver. There is no difference between those with (10%) and without (10%) children in the household. There is no difference by education levels, except that college graduates are somewhat less likely (8%) to respond in kind to a threat compared to 11% for those with less than a college degree. The youngest drivers, 16-20 year-olds, were more likely (14%) than older drivers to respond in kind to a threat.

FIGURE 12-4

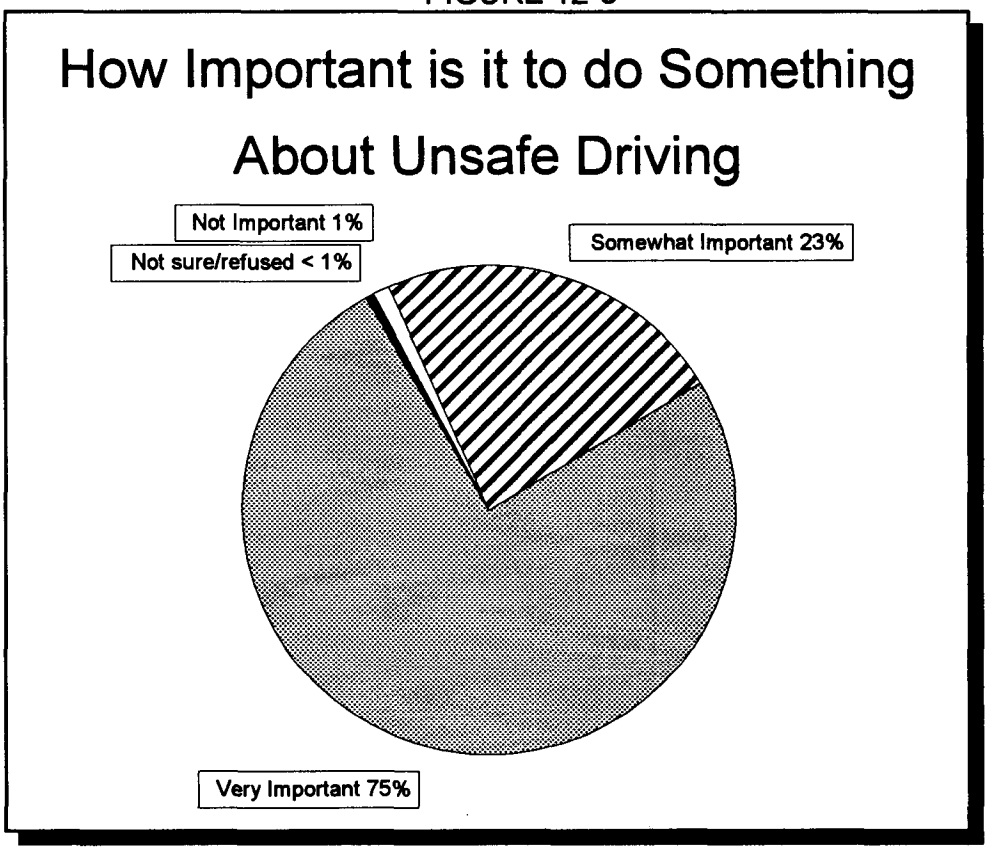


Qx: Thinking about that last the last time you felt that another driver's behavior was a personal threat, what did you do?
Base: Felt another driver's behavior was a threat
Unweighted N=1,837

Since two-thirds of drivers feel that unsafe driving is a major threat, and most of the rest believe that it is at least a minor threat, it is not surprising that most drivers believe that it is important that **something be done to reduce unsafe driving**. Indeed, three-quarters (75%) of American drivers say that it is **very important** that something be done to reduce unsafe driving. Almost all of the rest (23%) say that it is somewhat important to reduce unsafe driving. Only 1% said that it was not important.

The gender difference in the perceived threat of unsafe driving is magnified in attitudes about how important it is to do something about unsafe driving. More than two-thirds of men (68%) feel it is very important to do something about unsafe driving, but 82% of women feel this way. There is virtually no difference by geographic location — urban (74%), suburban (75%), or rural (75%) — in the importance of doing something about unsafe driving. But the importance of doing something about unsafe driving increases with age from 58% of 16-20 year-olds who feel it is very important, to 83% of those aged 65 and older.

FIGURE 12-5



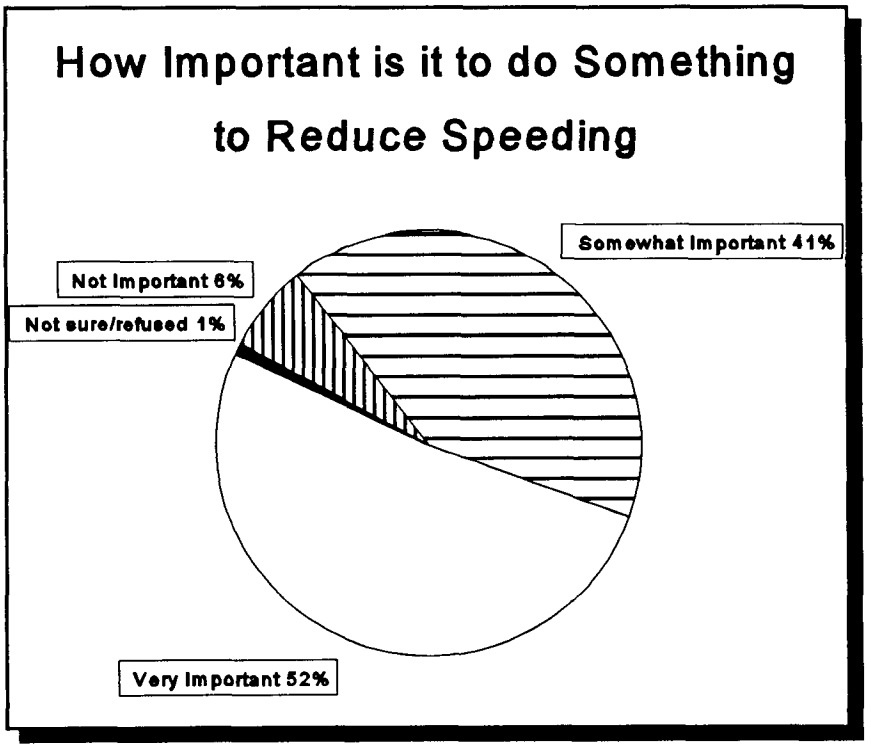
Qx: How important is it that something be done to reduce unsafe driving?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=3,000

A majority of drivers (52%) said that it was very important that **something be done to reduce speeding**. Most of the rest (41%) say that it is somewhat important to reduce speeding. Only 6% said that it was not important to reduce speeding.

The same gender difference in the perceived threat of unsafe driving is found in attitudes about how important it is to do something about reducing speeding. Less than half of men (44%) feel it is very important to reduce speeding, compared to a majority of women (59%) who feel this way. There is little difference by geographic location — urban (53%), suburban (50%), or rural (54%) — in feeling that it is very important to reduce speeding. But the importance of doing something to reduce speeding increases with age from 36-37% of 16-24 year-olds, who feel it is very important, to 65% of those aged 65 and older.

Although half of all drivers feel it is very important to reduce speeding, this is substantially less than the three-quarters of drivers feel that it is very important to do something to reduce unsafe driving. This presumably reflects the lower ratings of speeding as an unsafe driving practice by drivers, as well as, that it is less commonly being seen as a recent threat by other drivers.

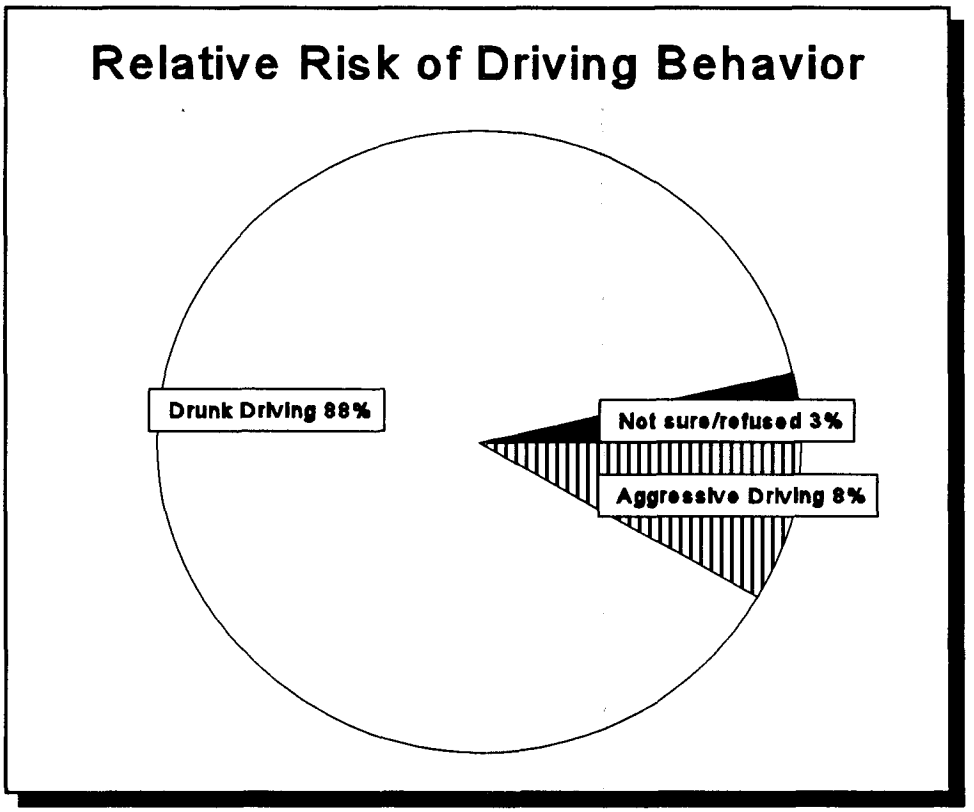
FIGURE 12-6



Qx: How important is it that something be done to reduce speeding?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=3,000

Recent news stories have suggested that aggressive driving may have replaced drunk driving as a primary concern of American motorists. Consequently, this national sample of drivers was asked whether they considered drunk driving or aggressive driving more dangerous. Nearly nine out of 10 drivers (88%) said that drunk driving was more dangerous than aggressive driving. Interestingly, drivers consider drunk driving as being more dangerous despite their observing unsafe or aggressive driving more often. In fact, drunk driving was only cited infrequently (5%, see Table 6-4, page 92) as behavior that made them feel threatened.

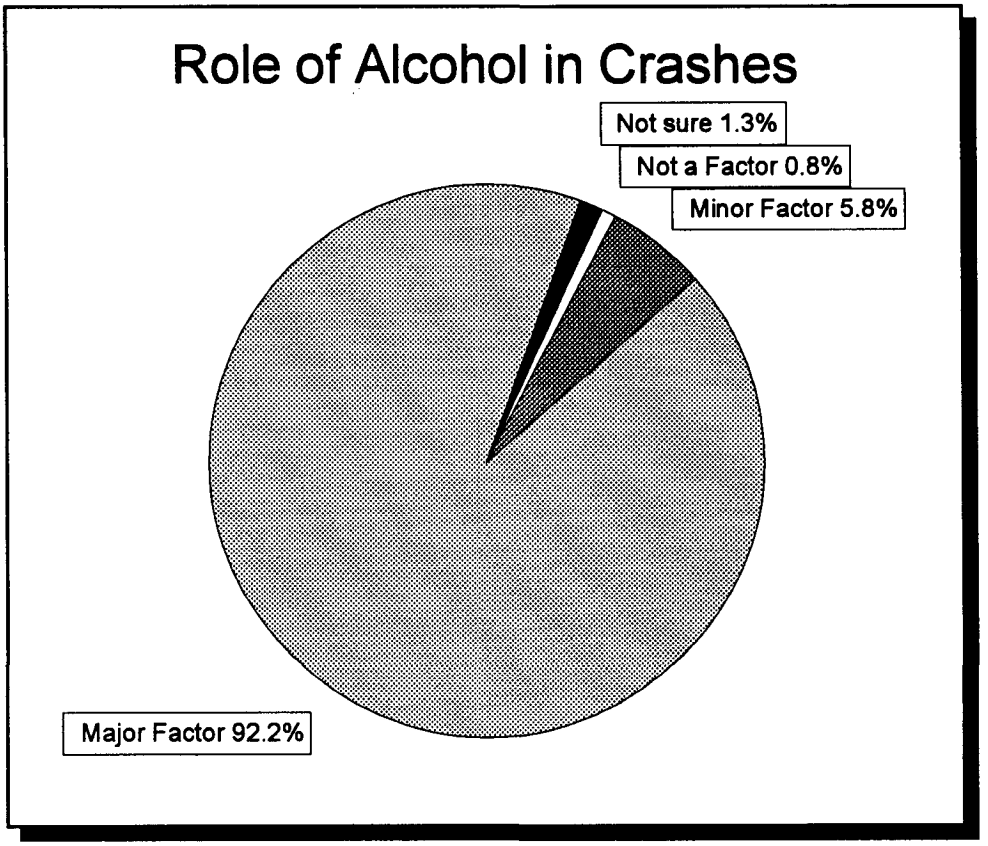
FIGURE 12-7



Qx: Which of these would you say is more dangerous...?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=3,000

One factor in the public concern about drinking and driving is its perceived role in traffic fatalities. The national sample of drivers was asked how much of a factor they considered alcohol in speed-related crashes. Nine out of 10 (92%) drivers said that alcohol was a major factor in speed-related crashes. Only 6% of drivers felt that it was a minor factor, and only 1% felt that it was not a factor, while another 1% were not sure. It seems clear that the public has gotten the message that alcohol is a major factor in fatal crashes.

FIGURE 12-8



Qx: Do you think that alcohol is a factor in speed-related crashes?
Base: Total population of drivers
Unweighted N=3000

SUMMARY

Almost all drivers felt that unsafe driving and speeding by others were major threats to themselves or their passengers. Indeed, three drivers in five said they had felt personally threatened by other drivers within the past year. Most drivers tried to avoid these threats by driving defensively. Only one driver in ten said that they responded to the threat by acting in kind. Half of all drivers felt it is very important to do something about speeding. However, three-quarters felt it is very important to do something about unsafe driving behaviors. The public has gotten the message that alcohol plays an important role in crashes. Nearly 9 in 10 thought that driving after drinking was more dangerous than aggressive driving and that alcohol is a major factor in speed related crashes.

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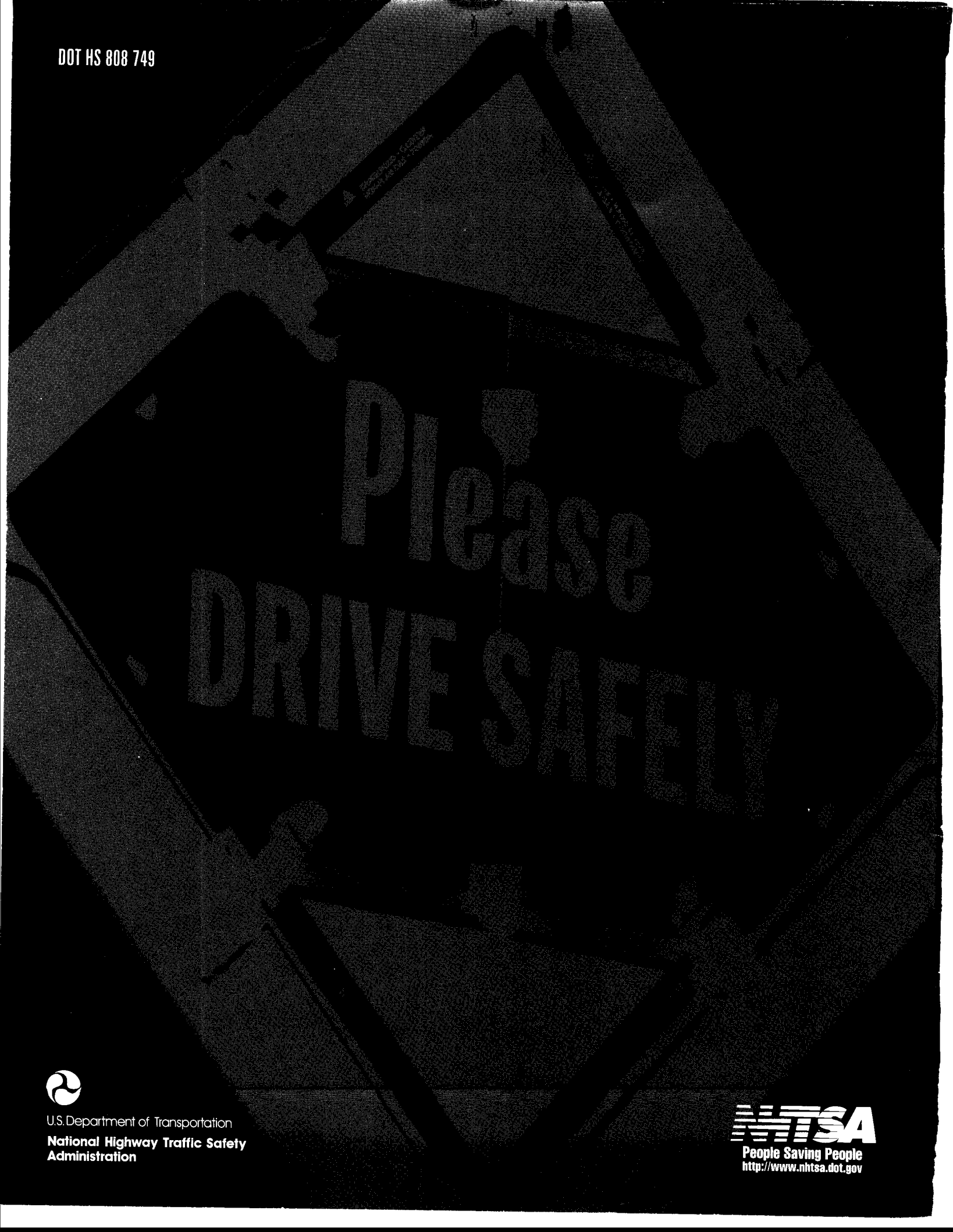

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