



KENTUCKY TRANSPORTATION CENTER

2010 DRIVER ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS SURVEY





OUR MISSION

We provide services to the transportation community
through research, technology transfer and education.

We create and participate in partnerships
to promote safe and effective
transportation systems.

OUR VALUES

Teamwork

Listening and communicating along with
courtesy and respect for others.

Honesty and Ethical Behavior

Delivering the highest quality
products and services.

Continuous Improvement

In all that we do.

**Research Report
KTC-10-15/KSP4-10-1F**

2010 DRIVER ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS SURVEY

by

Kenneth R. Agent
Transportation Research Engineer

Eric R. Green
Transportation Research Engineer

Kentucky Transportation Center
College of Engineering

and

Ronald E. Langley, Ph.D.
Director, Survey Research Center

University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

in cooperation with
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
Commonwealth of Kentucky

The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the University of Kentucky or the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation. The inclusion of manufacturer names or trade names are for identification purposes and are not considered endorsements.

August 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Executive Summary	ii
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Procedure	1
3.0 Results	2
3.1 Safety Belts	3
3.2 Speeding	4
3.3 Alcohol	5
3.4 Distracted Drivers	6
4.0 Conclusions	7

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A basic set of questions were developed that could be used in periodic surveys that track drivers attitudes and awareness concerning impaired driving, seat belt use, and speeding issues. The objective of the survey was to learn the knowledge, views, and behaviors of drivers in these areas. The objective of this report is to document the results of the 2010 baseline survey.

The method used to conduct the survey was a telephone survey. In addition to questions for the three major highway safety areas of impaired driving, seat belt use, and speeding, an additional question was added which dealt with distracted driving. General information about the driver's sex, age, ethnic or racial group, and education was also obtained. A total of 508 interviews were completed.

The survey shows that drivers do not self-report many violations in their driving behavior. Only a few drivers admitted to violating the law in the areas surveyed (safety belt use, speeding, and impaired driving). For example, the percentage of drivers who indicated they used their safety belt "all of the time" was higher than the observed usage rate of safety belts. The survey shows a high level of media and enforcement awareness. The majority of surveyed drivers had heard about enforcement related to drinking and driving and use of safety belts while almost one half were aware of speeding enforcement. Males were more aware of enforcement activities than females. The large majority of drivers felt they were somewhat likely to receive a ticket if they violated the law in these areas. Females felt they would be more likely to receive a ticket if they violated the traffic laws than males.

The most common type of distraction was talking on a cell phone. Slightly over one-half reported using a cell phone while driving. Distracted driving was much more common for the younger drivers and slightly higher for females.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As part of a joint effort to develop Traffic Safety Performance Measures for state and federal agencies, a Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) and National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) working group identified a basic set of questions that could be used in periodic surveys that track drivers attitudes and awareness concerning impaired driving, seat belt use, and speeding issues. The objective of the survey was to learn the knowledge, views, and behaviors of drivers. It was agreed that states would begin to conduct surveys in 2010 to establish baselines.

A core set of survey questions were developed to address self-reported behavior, media awareness, and enforcement awareness for the following three major highway safety areas: impaired driving, seat belt use, and speeding. The survey was also to include basic demographic information such as age and sex of the drivers. Questions to address other safety issues could be added.

The objective of this report is to document the results of the 2010 baseline survey.

2.0 PROCEDURE

The method used to conduct the survey was a telephone survey. The survey was conducted by the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center. Respondents were contacted using a modified, list-assisted Wakesberg-Mitofsky Random-Digit Dialing method (RDD) giving every household telephone line in Kentucky an equal opportunity of being contacted.

Calls were made from July 16 through 27, 2010. Up to 15 attempts were made to each number in the sample. In addition, up to 10 scheduled call-backs were made to those reached at an inconvenient time, and one refusal conversion was attempted. The objective was to obtain data for a total sample size of 500 drivers. The disposition results of the surveys were as follows:

Interviews completed	508
Refused	448
Not Eligible	187
Total	1,143

The margin of error for a sample of this size is plus or minus 4.4 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval.

In addition to questions for the three major highway safety areas of impaired driving, seat belt use, and speeding, an additional question was added which dealt with distracted driving. General information about the driver's sex, age, ethnic or racial group, and education was obtained. The driver had to be at least 18 years old to participate.

The following ten questions (and possible answers) related to seat belt use, speeding and impaired driving were included in the survey.

- How often do you use safety belts when you drive or ride in a car, van, sport utility vehicle or pickup? (all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, rarely, never)
- In the past 60 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about seat belt enforcement by the police? (yes or no)
- What do you think the likelihood is of getting a ticket if you don't wear a safety belt? (somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, very unlikely)
- On a local road with a speed limit of 35 mph, how often do you drive faster than 40 mph? (most of the time, about half the time, rarely, never)
- On a road with a speed limit of 70 mph, how often do you drive faster than 75 mph? (most of the time, about half the time, rarely, never)
- In the past 60 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about speed enforcement by the police? (yes or no)
- What do you think the likelihood is of getting a ticket if you drive over the speed limit? (somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, very unlikely)
- In the past 60 days, on how many days have you driven a motor vehicle within two hours after drinking alcoholic beverages? (list number given)
- In the past 60 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about alcohol impaired or drunk driving enforcement by the police? (yes or no)
- What do you think the likelihood is of someone getting arrested if they drive after drinking? (somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, very unlikely)

One question was added which dealt with distracted driving. A yes or no answer was obtained for the following question.

- In the past 60 days, have you done any of the following while you were driving? (talked on a cell phone, texted someone, read, brushed your hair or applied make-up)

3.0 RESULTS

The telephone survey resulted in information from 508 respondents who indicated they were a driver. The sample contained more females and older drivers compared to the general driving population. The majority of responding drivers were female (62.6 percent). This compares to a percentage of 50.8 percent of all adult licensed drivers who are female. The percentage of survey respondents by age were: 3.8 percent less than 25 years of age (compared to 12.2 percent of all licensed drivers); 42.6 percent between 25 and 54 years of age (compared to 56.0 percent of all licensed drivers); and 53.6 percent 55 years of age or older (compared to 31.8 percent of all licensed drivers).

Other respondent characteristics were: 2.4 percent were Hispanic or Latino; 9.6 percent non-white; 12.0 percent had less than high school education, 33.1 percent had a high school education, 20.0 percent had some college education, and 34.9 percent were a college graduate.

Since the sample obtained from the telephone survey had a larger percentage of females and older drivers, the results were weighted using the percentage of adult licensed drivers in Kentucky (by age and sex). The following analysis was obtained using the weighted analysis in order to obtain results with a sample representative of driver characteristics.

3.1 SAFETY BELTS

As shown in the following summary, the majority of drivers indicated they always wear their safety belt

Frequency of use of safety belts (percent)

- all of the time 81.7
- most of the time 12.2
- some of the time 3.6
- rarely 1.2
- never 1.3

The percentage of reported safety belt use is higher than the observed usage rate. The 2010 observational survey in Kentucky found a usage rate of 80 percent.

The level of media awareness is shown by the result that 61.1 percent indicated that, in the past 60 days, they had read, seen, or heard about seat belt enforcement by the police. A majority (74.7 percent) thought it was somewhat likely that they would receive a ticket if they did not wear their safety belt. The percentage who thought it was somewhat unlikely was 15.6 percent while 9.7 percent felt it was very unlikely.

The reported use of safety belt was compared by age and sex as follows.

Frequency of use of safety belts (percent):	Age (years)				
	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or older
• all of the time	74.0	88.9	76.9	84.2	83.3
• most of the time	17.6	7.1	14.8	10.5	11.4
• some of the time	5.6	1.7	5.1	2.6	3.6
• rarely/never	2.7	1.1	3.2	2.7	1.7

There was a large difference for males and females with the reported usage higher for females. There was no consistent trend for the three age categories.

Media awareness and the chance of receiving a ticket were compared by age and sex as follows. While females were less aware of enforcement than males they felt more likely to receive a ticket if not wearing a safety belt compared to males. Following are the percentages by driver age and sex.

	<u>Age (years)</u>				
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>18 to 34</u>	<u>35 to 54</u>	<u>55 or older</u>
• aware of enforcement	68.4	54.0	60.0	62.9	59.6
• somewhat likely to receive ticket	69.2	79.8	73.6	73.7	75.8

3.2 SPEED

The drivers were asked how often they drove more than five mph over the speed limit on 35 mph local roads and 70 mph interstates. As shown in the following summary, the percentage who indicated they drove more than five mph over the speed limit was higher on local roads.

Frequency drive more than five mph over speed limit (percent):

	<u>35 mph speed limit</u>	<u>70 mph speed limit</u>
• most of the time	15.2	10.5
• about half the time	22.0	15.3
• rarely	44.9	36.0
• never	17.9	38.2

Speed studies indicate that a higher percentage of vehicles would be traveling at least five mph over the speed limit than indicated by these survey respondents.

The level of media awareness is shown by the result that 48.2 percent indicated that, in the past 60 days, they had read, seen, or heard about speeding enforcement by the police. A majority (81.3 percent) thought it was somewhat likely that they would receive a ticket if they drove over the speed limit. The percentage who thought it was somewhat unlikely was 13.1 percent while 5.6 percent felt it was very unlikely.

The reported frequency of speeding was compared by age and sex. The following results were determined.

Frequency of speeding (over 40 mph in 35 mph zone) (percent):

	<u>Age (years)</u>				
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>18 to 34</u>	<u>35 to 54</u>	<u>55 or older</u>
• most of the time	14.9	15.5	16.7	11.9	17.4
• about half of the time	22.6	21.4	25.5	23.9	17.6
• rarely	47.1	42.8	43.9	49.5	40.2
• never	15.3	20.3	13.9	14.6	24.7

Frequency of speeding (over 70 mph in 65 mph zone) (percent):

	<u>Age (years)</u>				
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>18 to 34</u>	<u>35 to 54</u>	<u>55 or older</u>
• most of the time	11.3	9.8	12.1	12.8	6.9
• about half of the time	17.2	13.5	17.6	16.7	11.6
• rarely	36.3	35.7	38.9	38.1	30.9
• never	35.3	41.0	31.5	32.3	50.7

Females reported a less frequency of speeding than males. The largest difference was in the age comparison with the higher percentage of drivers 55 years of age or older who stated they never drove over the speed limit on 70-mph speed limit roadways.

Media awareness and the chance of receiving a ticket were compared with the percentages by age and sex as follows.

	<u>Age (years)</u>				
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>18 to 34</u>	<u>35 to 54</u>	<u>55 or older</u>
• aware of enforcement	48.0	48.3	48.4	48.7	47.0
• somewhat likely to receive ticket	76.2	86.2	81.6	79.1	84.1

Although females and older drivers were not more aware of enforcement, the percentage of those drivers that felt they would be somewhat more likely to receive a ticket if speeding was higher than males and younger drivers.

3.3 ALCOHOL

Drivers were asked how many days in the past 60 days they had driven a motor vehicle within two hours after drinking alcoholic beverages. Slightly more than one-third of the respondents (37.5 percent) stated they do not drink alcoholic beverages. Of the remaining respondents, 89.7 percent stated they had not driven at any time in the past 60 days after drinking an alcoholic beverage.

The level of media awareness is shown by the result that 68.1 percent indicated that, in the past 60 days, they had read, seen, or heard about alcohol impaired or drunk driving enforcement by the police. A large majority (83.0 percent) thought it was somewhat likely that they would receive a ticket if they drove after drinking. The percentage who thought it was somewhat unlikely was 13.5 percent while only 3.5 percent felt it was very unlikely.

A similar percentage of males and females stated they do not drink any alcoholic beverages while this percentage was highest for drivers 55 years of age or older and lowest for those less than 35 years of age.

	<u>Age (years)</u>				
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>18 to 34</u>	<u>35 to 54</u>	<u>55 or older</u>
• do not drink alcohol	39.7	35.5	25.5	38.4	46.1

Of the remaining respondents, the percentage who stated they had not driven at any time in the past 60 days after drinking an alcoholic beverage was higher for females than males. The percentage did not vary by age.

	<u>Age (years)</u>				
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>18 to 34</u>	<u>35 to 54</u>	<u>55 or older</u>
• not driven after drinking	84.5	94.3	88.8	90.0	91.0

Media awareness of alcohol enforcement and the chance of receiving a ticket (if the respondent drove after drinking) were compared by age and sex with the following percentages.

	<u>Age (years)</u>				
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>18 to 34</u>	<u>35 to 54</u>	<u>55 or older</u>
• aware of enforcement	71.0	66.3	65.7	67.5	71.7
• somewhat likely to receive ticket	79.0	86.8	87.8	80.9	81.2

3.4 DISTRACTED DRIVING

The drivers were asked if they had engaged in some activity which could distract their attention while driving. Following is the percentage who indicated they had participated in the various activities while driving.

- talked on a cell phone 59.6
- texted someone 9.0
- read 3.5
- brushed hair, applied makeup 5.0

Following is a summary by age and sex of the percentage who indicated they had participated in these activities.

	<u>Age (years)</u>				
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>18 to 34</u>	<u>35 to 54</u>	<u>55 or older</u>
• talked on a cell phone	59.7	59.6	68.1	71.7	38.7
• texted someone	9.7	8.4	17.1	9.7	1.2
• read	1.3	5.6	7.0	2.6	0.9
• brushed hair, applied makeup	1.3	8.5	9.8	4.0	1.9

The largest difference was the much higher percentage of younger drivers who indicated they participated in the distracted driving activities compared to drivers 55 years of age or older. There was a dramatic difference when comparing drivers under 35 to those over 55 years of age. The percentages for females were generally higher than for males.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The survey shows that drivers do not self-report many violations in their driving behavior. Only a few drivers admitted to violating the law in the areas surveyed (safety belt use, speeding, and impaired driving). For example, almost all drivers (94 percent) said they wear their safety belt all or most of the time (compared to usage found in an observational survey of 80 percent). Most stated they rarely or never drove more than five mph over the speed limit (63 percent for local roads and 74 percent for interstates). About 38 percent indicate they do not drink alcoholic beverages. Only 10 percent of drivers who stated they drink alcohol indicated they had driven after drinking an alcoholic beverage.

The survey shows a high level of media and enforcement awareness. The majority of surveyed drivers had heard about enforcement related to drinking and driving (68 percent) and use of safety belts (61 percent) while almost one half (48 percent) were aware of speeding enforcement. Males were more aware of enforcement activities than females.

The large majority of drivers felt they were somewhat likely to receive a ticket if they violated the law in these areas (81 percent for speeding, 83 percent for drinking and driving with 75 percent for not wearing a safety belt). Females felt they would be more likely to receive a ticket if they violated the traffic laws than males.

The most common type of distraction was talking on a cell phone. About 60 percent reported using a cell phone while driving. Distracted driving was much more common for the younger age category and slightly higher for females.

For more information or a complete publication list, contact us at:

KENTUCKY TRANSPORTATION CENTER

176 Raymond Building
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0281

859.257.4513
859.257.1815 (FAX)
800.432.0719
www.ktc.uky.edu
ktc@engr.uky.edu

The University of Kentucky is an Equal Opportunity Organization