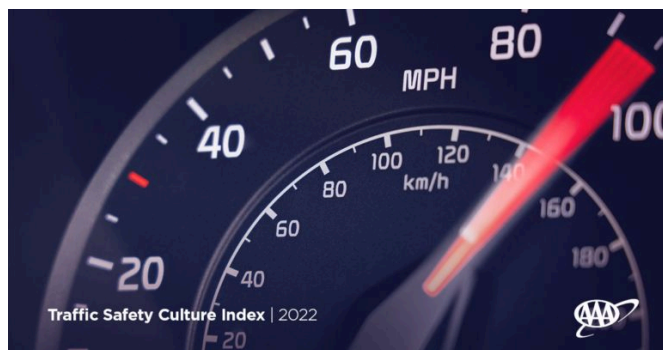


Study shows rise in dangerous driving behaviors

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The proportion of people who reported having engaged in the following unsafe driving behaviors at least once in the past 30 days before the survey

Unsafe Driving Behavior	2018 (%)	2019 (%)	2020 (%)	2021 (%)	Change from 2020 to 2021 (%)
Driven 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway	48.9	48.2	45.1	50.7	+12.4
Driven while holding and talking on a cell phone	52.1	43.2	37.2	37.4	+0.5
Driven while reading a text or email on a cell phone	41.3	38.6	33.9	36.2	+6.8
Driven through a red light	31.4	31.1	25.6	28.2	+10.1
Driven aggressively by switching lanes quickly or very close behind another car	24.8	26.5	21.3	22.9	+7.5
Driven when so tired it was hard to keep eyes open	27.0	23.6	17.3	18.8	+8.7
Driven when you had enough alcohol that you thought you were over the legal limit	10.9	9.8	5.9	7.3	+23.7
Driven within an hour of consuming cannabis	6.6	6.5	4.4	5.0	+13.6



A new report from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety finds dangerous driving behaviors such as speeding, red-light running, drowsy driving, and driving impaired on cannabis or alcohol, rose from 2020 to 2021.

The most alarming increase was among drivers admitting to getting behind the wheel after drinking enough that they felt they were over the legal limit – an increase of nearly 24%.

This is a reversal in the steady declines in these dangerous driving behaviors in the three years from 2018 through 2020.

This survey is done every year by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. For more than a decade, the annual Traffic Safety Culture Index (TSCI) looks at driver behaviors and attitudes.

“The reversal in the frequency of U.S. drivers engaging in risky driving behavior is disturbing,” said Dr. David Yang, Executive Director of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. “We must be aware of the serious consequences of dangerous driving behaviors and change course.”

“This study shows a big disconnect between driver attitudes and behaviors. Drivers know behaviors such as speeding or driving impaired are dangerous and that their loved ones would disapprove. But many drivers

still admit to engaging in risky behaviors in the past 30 days,” AAA Oregon/Idaho AAA public Affairs Director Marie Dodds said.

As in previous years, drivers reported too often engaging in risky behaviors that they know are dangerous and would meet with disapproval from friends or family. For example:

Texting While Driving –

92% think it’s very or extremely dangerous

96% think someone important to them would disapprove

26% admitted to doing it in the last 30 days

Aggressive driving –

88% think it’s very or extremely dangerous

96% think someone important to them would disapprove

23% admitted to doing it in the last 30 days

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, traffic fatalities have risen. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimated that 42,915 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes last year, a 10.5% increase from the 38,824 fatalities in 2020.

According to NHTSA, dangerous driving behaviors such as speeding, alcohol impairment, and non-use of seatbelts account for a considerable proportion of the increased fatalities. Accordingly, AAA urges drivers to keep everyone safe on the roads and avoid dangerous driving habits.

In Oregon, 599 people died in crashes in 2021, according to data from the Oregon Crash Analysis & Reporting Unit, compared to 507 people in 2020. This is an increase of 18% and the largest number since 2003 when 512 people lost their lives in crashes. Find more information at the ODOT Crash Statistics & Reports website.

For 2022, the Oregon year-to-date fatalities as of November 28 are 512 compared to 543 for the same period last year. This is a decrease of 5.7%.

AAA recommends these safe driving tips:

Comply with speed limits. Drivers tend to overestimate the time saved by speeding. You’d have to travel 100 miles to save roughly 5 minutes, moving at 80 mph instead of 75 mph. Speed kills and isn’t worth the cost.

Out of sight, out of mind. Stow your smartphone away, turn it to airplane mode, or activate call/text blocking features such as Apple’s Do Not Disturb.

Only drive sober. If you consume marijuana, alcohol, or use potentially impairing prescription medications, then don’t drive. And if you’re going to drive, then don’t consume these substances.

Stay alert. Stop driving if you become sleepy because you could fall asleep at any time. Fatigue impacts reaction time, judgment, and vision, causing people who are very tired to behave in similar ways to those who are drunk.

Buckle up on every ride. A properly worn seatbelt is the most effective way to survive a traffic crash.

The annual TSCI identifies attitudes and behaviors related to traffic safety. The survey data are from a sample of more than 2,657 licensed drivers ages 16 or older who completed the online survey and reported driving in the 30 days before the survey.

Data from the 2021 TSCI were collected between July 26 and August 30, 2021, using a probability-based sampling panel representative of the U.S. population. The AAA Foundation issued its first TSCI in 2008, and the latest report is online at AAAFoundation.org