



2012 Traffic Safety Behaviors Survey – Executive Summary

Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety

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INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety retained Corona Insights to conduct a random telephone survey of Minnesotans for the purpose of examining attitudes, opinions and behaviors of Minnesotans with regard to a variety of traffic safety issues, as well as their awareness of various efforts to promote safer driving in the state. The survey was conducted with 939 residents between July 16th and August 3rd, 2012.

In addition to understanding the awareness, attitudes and behaviors of the state's population as a whole, the survey also sought to understand how various groups of subpopulations differed in their responses. Specifically, the study was designed to examine how responses varied by age, gender, and geographic areas (i.e., urban and rural). In addition, the survey specifically examined findings for a key target of the traffic safety campaigns: young unmarried males (defined as males between the ages of 18 and 34 who are not currently married). Complete survey findings, as well as detailed survey approach and methodology are included in the full report submitted by Corona Insights to the Office of Traffic Safety in September, 2012.

Meanwhile, in this Executive Summary, we first provide an overview of how aggregate responses to some of the survey's questions related to aggregate responses to other questions, especially those related to awareness, perceptions and behaviors. Next, we provide key findings related to seat belt, speeding, and impaired driving behaviors and enforcement awareness. Key findings on traffic safety messaging and message sources are also presented. Additional analyses on cell phone use, texting while driving and awareness of the texting while driving law in Minnesota are also included.

For a complete overview of all survey findings please refer to the full survey report posted on the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety website.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – REPORT LAYOUT

This report is divided into a number of major sections, which include the following:

- ➔ **Section 1: Overarching Findings** – This section provides a detailed description of the approach used for this project in terms of goals and methodologies used.
- ➔ **Section 2: Summary of Key Findings** – This section contains a brief overview of the key findings and themes of the research.

SECTION 1: OVERARCHING FINDINGS

A summary of overriding research findings that includes holistic analyses of interrelationships between Minnesota residents' awareness, perceptions and behaviors and key traffic safety issues of seat belt non-usage, speeding, and driving under the influence of alcohol is included in this section.

- ➔ **Some respondents are simply more likely to be aware of messaging and issues in general.** Respondents who are aware of seatbelt law enforcement messaging are more likely than those who are not to be aware of the two other primary types of messaging addressed in the survey (speeding and DUI). Similarly, those who are aware of speeding enforcement messaging are more likely than those who are not to be aware of seatbelt and DUI messaging. Finally, those who are aware of DUI messaging are more likely to be aware of seatbelt messaging as well. Because of this, it is interesting to consider the entire spectrum of awareness rather than a single one of these areas individually.

Awareness	Pct.
ALL	27%
SB/SP	6%
SB/DUI	12%
SP/DUI	15%
SB	6%
SP	5%
DUI	12%
NONE	17%

The table to the right illustrates the percentage of respondents who are aware of all three types of messaging, none of the three, or some combination thereof. A vast majority of respondents (83 percent) had heard of at least some types of messaging, though only roughly one in four (27 percent) were aware of all three types of messaging. Awareness is generally highest for DUI messaging (66 percent in total), while awareness for seatbelt and speeding messaging are similar (51-53 percent).

In addition to simply being more aware of the other types of messaging, respondents who are more aware of more types of messaging are also more likely to be aware of other messaging, such as motorcycle safety, the Minnesota ignition interlock law, and laws against texting and driving.

- ⇒ **There is a very strong correlation between perceptions of the risk of getting a ticket (or arrested) for various behaviors.** Similar to the above, respondents who believe that the risk of them being penalized for not wearing a seatbelt is high tend to also believe that the risk of their being penalized for speeding or driving under the influence is high as well. In other words, the perception of risk for unacceptable driving behaviors tends to be either high or low, but does not seem to vary significantly between the three types of violations.

Perceived Risk	Pct.
ALL	54%
SB/SP	5%
SB/DUI	8%
SP/DUI	14%
SB	2%
SP	2%
DUI	10%
NONE	4%

The table to the right illustrates the percentage of respondents who believe they would be at least “somewhat likely” to be penalized for the three behaviors, none of the three behaviors, or some combination thereof. Roughly half (54 percent) of respondents felt that they would be at least “somewhat likely” to be penalized for all three behaviors, and very few (4 percent) felt that they would be “very unlikely” to be penalized for any of the three behaviors. Similar to the trend seen above for awareness, more feel they would be penalized for DUI (86 percent) compared to speeding (75 percent) or seatbelt offenses (69 percent).

- ⇒ **Those who exhibit one of the three unacceptable behaviors are more likely to also exhibit other unacceptable behaviors.** Again, there is a strong correlation between those who don’t wear their seatbelt and those who tend to speed. Similarly, those who drank and drove are also more likely to talk on a cell phone or text while driving. As was seen previously, some individuals are simply more risky with their behaviors, and that attitude manifests itself across the undesirable behaviors.

Good Behavior	Pct.
ALL	26%
SB/SP	1%
SB/DUI	52%
SP/DUI	2%
SB	12%
SP	0%
DUI	5%
NONE	1%

The table to the right illustrates the percentage of respondents who exhibit each of the three “good” behaviors. That is, people who wear their seat belt “all of the time,” who “never” drive more than 5 mph over the speed limit, and who have not driven after drinking in the past 30 days. Roughly one-fourth of respondents (26 percent) exhibited good behaviors in all three categories, and an additional 52 percent exhibited good behaviors in the two areas aside from speeding. Overall, respondents are the most likely to exhibit good behaviors with regard to seat belt usage (91 percent), followed by DUI (85 percent) and speeding (29 percent).

- ⇒ **Behaviors are much more strongly correlated with perceived risk than with awareness of messaging.** Using the information discussed above for overall awareness, the research team created a “score” for each respondent based on their responses for awareness, perception of risk, and good behavior across all three behavior categories. In other words, this score evaluated how aware a person is overall (A), how they assess risk of enforcement (R), and how well they behaved (B) in general. Using these scores, respondents are classified as having a “high” score if they are in the top one-third (roughly) of all respondents in that category.

High Scores	Pct.
A/R/B	27%
A/R	12%
A/B	11%
R/B	16%
A	10%
R	8%
B	9%
NONE	7%

The table to the right illustrates the results of this analysis, though readers should use caution in interpreting these raw percentages given that the scoring system is somewhat arbitrary in nature. However, this analysis is useful in that it illustrates a trend seen across the survey’s results: those who perceive their risk to be higher are less likely to exhibit bad behaviors. However, the tie between awareness and behaviors is somewhat weaker. In addition, those who exhibited these behaviors were also more likely to believe in the importance of additional traffic safety laws, such as the primary seat belt law.

- ⇒ **There are significant demographic differences between respondents who have high awareness, perception of risk, and good behaviors.** In addition to illustrating the correlation between perceived risk and behavior, this analysis was useful in identifying some key differences between respondents of various types. Not surprisingly, individuals who scored lowly in all three categories are more likely to be young, unmarried, and male. In addition, these individuals are less likely to be non-Hispanic whites (and the opposite was true among those who scored highly in all three categories). However, what is perhaps most intriguing from this analysis is that young unmarried males make up four in five respondents who have a high level of awareness, but low levels of risk perception and behavior. In other words, many young unmarried males are aware of the various types of enforcement messaging, but this messaging does not necessarily correlate with high levels of perceived risk or good behaviors.

SECTION 2: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Readers are encouraged to review the tables in the full report for a full overview of how respondents answered the various questions included in the survey. However, the following is a brief discussion of some of the key findings and implications of the survey.

SEAT BELT BEHAVIORS AND ENFORCEMENT AWARENESS

Narrative: Seat belt non-usage is predominantly a “male,” “young,” and a “young unmarried male” issue. While males overall are more likely than females to have noticed recent seat belt enforcement efforts, this does not necessarily hold true among younger residents, young unmarried males or young males overall. And perceptions of seat belt enforcement lag. In particular, perceptions of likelihood of seat belt enforcement among males, young residents, and young unmarried males are equal to statewide residents’ perceptions at best, but more commonly fall short of these. Overall, it is not necessarily surprising that these young and male populations are also less likely to assign a high importance to the Primary seat belt law in Minnesota.

Several key findings related to seat belt behaviors and enforcement awareness are given below.

1. **Males and various male subpopulations, including young unmarried males, are less likely to wear their seat belts “all of the time.”** Ninety one (91) percent of all statewide respondents self-report wearing their seat belts “all of the time.” This includes 96 percent of females who report this and 87 percent of males, a statistically significant difference.

Otherwise, just 81 percent of young unmarried males report this seat belt usage behavior. This is the lowest rate among top-level subpopulations examined in this current study. Other male subpopulations across the spectrum including urban males, rural males, and males across all ages (i.e. both under 35 and 35 and over) lag their female counterparts in seat belt usage by statistically significant margins.

Differences in usage observed in rural versus urban regions, with lower usage in rural areas, is also driven by males, including high proportions of pickup drivers, who are also much more likely to be males. *Source: Exhibits 1 and 24*

2. **While males are more likely than females, overall, to be aware of recent seat belt enforcement efforts, some key male subpopulations are less likely to be aware.** Males as a group are statistically more likely than females (57 percent versus 45 percent) to be aware of recent seat belt enforcement efforts. However, key male subpopulations such as those under 35 and

young unmarried males across both urban and rural areas are only slightly more likely, if at all, to be more aware versus statewide respondents or their comparable groups (i.e. females or “all other”). *Source: Exhibit 2*

3. **Key male subpopulations are less likely to perceive they will experience seat belt enforcement.** Males overall are only slightly less likely than females (i.e. 33 percent versus 36 percent “very likely”) to perceive a high chance of seat belt enforcement when not wearing a seat belt. However, among all male subpopulations examined, with the exception of one, males are statistically less likely versus females or “all others” to believe they will get a ticket if they do not wear their seatbelt. This includes both young male and young unmarried male subpopulations across both urban and rural areas. *Source: Exhibit 4*
4. **Males are less likely to assign importance to the Primary seat belt law.** While 58 percent of respondents statewide consider the Primary law as “very important,” 47 percent of males assign this same importance level. Contributing to this lower rate is that only 38 percent of young unmarried males have this opinion, as well as 41 percent of males under 35 years old. *Source: Exhibit 5*

SPEEDING BEHAVIORS AND ENFORCEMENT AWARENESS

Narrative: Similar to seat belt usage, speeding is a behavior that is more common among males, young residents, and young unmarried male subpopulations. Among these subpopulations, males are more likely to report noticing recent speed enforcement efforts, and this appears to be driven mostly by older males and urban males. Otherwise, awareness of these efforts among key subpopulations such as young males and young unmarried males is similar to that among statewide respondents. Even with some higher level of awareness of speed enforcement among males as a group, they are still likely to perceive that they can drive somewhat faster than the speed limit versus females, again, driven largely by older males. Young males and young unmarried males are otherwise similar to the general population in terms of perceptions of enforcement.

Several key findings related to speeding while driving are given below.

5. **Young residents and young unmarried males are more likely to speed.** When driving in a 65 mile per hour zone, approximately one-third of young drivers under 35 years of age and approximately one-third young unmarried males indicate that they speed half or most of the time. This compares with a proportion of just 22 percent among the Minnesota statewide population. The higher proportions of both young drivers under 35 and young unmarried males who speed appears to be driven largely by urban drivers who speed. *Source: Exhibit 6*

6. **Males are more aware of speeding enforcement efforts, primarily due to urban males and older age males.** Males are statistically more likely than females (58 percent versus 48 percent) to have noticed speeding enforcement efforts in the past 30 days. Urban males and males 35 and older are male subpopulations driving this higher awareness among males overall, but it is important to note that awareness among key male subpopulations such as young males and young unmarried males are in line with statewide respondent awareness overall. This is also the case with young respondents (under 35) as well. *Source: Exhibit 7*
7. **Perceptions of less likely police enforcement for speeding exist among males, urban and older respondents.** Males, overall, are statistically less likely than females to indicate they are “very likely” to get a ticket for driving over the speed limit. Urban area respondents and older respondents (35 and over) also have similar perceptions to males overall. And these demographics are interrelated. For example, a primary subpopulation of males perceiving less police enforcement for speeding includes males 35 and older. (It is also interesting to note that young males and young unmarried males have similar perceptions to statewide respondents overall.) In urban areas, males and residents over 35 contribute to lower perceived likelihood of enforcement.

In a separate speeding-related enforcement perception question, males are more likely to believe they can drive at slightly higher speeds than females before being stopped by police. The particular subpopulation, males 35 and over, is a primary driver. *Source: Exhibits 8 and 9*

IMPAIRED DRIVING BEHAVIORS AND ENFORCEMENT AWARENESS

Narrative: The most obvious difference in drinking and driving behaviors among subpopulations is between males and females. Males and several male subpopulations (not including young unmarried males) are statistically more likely to indicate driving a vehicle after drinking alcoholic beverages than their female counterparts. Males, however, are also statistically more likely to be aware of enforcement efforts than females, particularly due to urban and older age males’ awareness. In terms of perceptions of being arrested for drinking and driving, males are similar to the general population for the most part, albeit with the exception of a small but statistically significant percentage that perceives they are “not likely” to be arrested after drinking and driving. Again, urban and older males are the subpopulations perceiving they are “not likely” to be arrested.

Otherwise, perception of likely enforcement appears more strongly related to younger age in general. Younger respondents (under 35) across both urban and rural areas are statistically more likely to indicate being “very likely” to be arrested for drinking and driving. Younger respondents are also more likely to have personally driven through or past an area of increased enforcement for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Several key findings related to impaired driving are given below.

8. **The most obvious difference in drinking and driving behavior is between males and females.** Males are statistically more likely than females to indicate driving a vehicle within two hours after drinking alcohol, as well as at higher frequencies in the past 30 days. Statistically significant differences exist across most male subpopulations when examined and compared with their female counterparts, including across geographic location (i.e. urban or rural) and across age groups (i.e. under 35 and 35 and over). It is interesting to note young unmarried males are not statistically different from others. *Source: Exhibit 11*
9. **Young subpopulations are more likely to perceive a likelihood of drinking and driving enforcement.** Respondents under 35 are statistically more likely to believe someone who drives after drinking will be arrested. This is also the perception among young unmarried males. Females are statistically more likely than males to perceive this level of enforcement also. (In a separate question about enforcement likelihood when the amount of alcohol in your body is more than the legal limit, females and all subpopulations of females are statistically more likely than their male counterparts to believe they would be “very likely” to be stopped by police.)

Otherwise, urban males and males 35 and over are statistically more likely than their female counterparts to believe enforcement for someone who drives after drinking is “not likely.” *Source: Exhibit 12*
10. **Males and urban respondents are more aware of impaired driving enforcement efforts.** While 66 percent of statewide respondents overall have recently noticed impaired enforcement efforts, 70 percent of urban respondents and 72 percent of males indicate noticing these. Urban males, and males 35 and over are the primary subpopulations that appear to drive this increased awareness.

In a separate question about personal experience driving through an area of increased police enforcement in the past 30 days, urban respondents are more likely to indicate this, along with younger (under 35) drivers. *Source: Exhibits 15 and 16*

MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Narrative: Familiar slogans including Click It or Ticket and Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk are most likely recalled. The seatbelt-related Click It or Ticket slogan is likely recalled by young and young urban respondents, while the latter impaired driving-related slogan is more likely recalled among rural audiences. This is true with a couple other impaired driving slogans tested, and possibly shows an opportunity for more impaired driving communications in urban areas.

Speaking of, television is a common source identified by urban area respondents and males, in particular. Otherwise, electronic road signs are also more likely to be cited by urban and male respondents. Radio is a common source that is more likely cited by males and rural respondents.

A couple key findings related to messaging and message sources are given below.

11. ***Click It or Ticket* is the slogan with the highest recall in the past 30 days and *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk* is the second-highest.** Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of respondents recall seeing or hearing the Click It or Ticket slogan in the past 30 days, and 63 percent recall Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk. Young respondents (under 35), and especially young urban respondents, are more likely to be familiar with Click It or Ticket. Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk is more recalled by rural audiences, overall, and urban females are more likely to recall this slogan as well.

A couple other drinking and driving slogans are two of the next most recalled (along with a motorcycle-related slogan), each at about 50 percent, and include: Safe and Sober and You Drink and Drive, You Lose. Again, each of these is more recalled by rural and older audiences. *Source: Exhibit 18*

12. **Seat belt enforcement efforts, drinking and driving enforcement efforts, and traffic safety slogans are mostly recalled via TV in unaided responses.** Television is the primary source for recall of traffic safety efforts and slogans. It is most commonly mentioned for recognition of a slogan (62 percent), followed by drinking and driving enforcement efforts (49 percent) and seat belt enforcement efforts (40 percent).

Television is more commonly identified in some cases as a source for awareness by males and younger respondents, depending on the type of message. For slogans, television is mentioned slightly more often by urban, males and young unmarried males. For drinking and driving, more rural audiences including rural young respondents mention TV. In communicating seat belt enforcement efforts, young respondents under 35 recall TV as a source.

Electronic road signs, which are approximately twice as likely to be recalled for either communicating general seat belt enforcement efforts or drinking and driving enforcement efforts as they are for recalling slogans, are much more likely to be recalled by urban respondents and young unmarried males.

Radio is statistically more likely to be cited by rural respondents and rural male respondents than urban respondents for seat belt or enforcement efforts recall, and radio is more likely to be cited by rural male respondents for slogans compared to other groups. *Source: Exhibits 3, 15 and 19*

ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

Narrative: Young respondents and males, including young unmarried males – largely the same audiences of concern for seat belt non-usage and partly speeding and /or impaired driving – are more likely to talk on a cell phone and drive or text while driving. This behavior is accentuated slightly in urban areas. There is reasonably high existing awareness of the law specifically citing texting while driving among these audiences compared with the general population, however, which shows they are not necessarily being deterred.

Several key findings related to additional analyses are given below.

13. **Young, male, and urban residents are more likely to talk on a cell phone while driving, or text while driving.** Many of the same subpopulations of concern (i.e. young, male, young unmarried males) for other traffic safety behaviors such as those discussed earlier are also of concern for behaviors such as using their phone, or using their phone more frequently, while driving. This appears to be especially the case for those living in urban areas versus rural areas (especially including urban young unmarried males) for talking on the phone while driving. Females and older respondents are more likely to say they have not talked on the phone while driving in the past seven days. Texting while driving, in particular, is especially common for young unmarried males, both urban and rural. *Source: Exhibits 21 and 22*
14. **There is reasonably high awareness of the texting while driving law in Minnesota.** Overall, 77 percent of respondents are aware of this law. Young respondents under age 35 are statistically more aware of the law than those 35 and over (84 percent versus 74 percent). All younger subpopulations (across gender and geographic area), including young unmarried males, generally indicate higher awareness of this law than their older counterparts. *Source: Exhibit 23*