

Maine Driver Awareness Survey Report 2024



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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the findings from Maine’s 2024 Driver Awareness Survey. This survey has been conducted annually for a number of years and is intended to measure drivers’ awareness of and adherence to seat belt, speeding, and impaired driving laws and to measure the frequency of talking and texting with a handheld cell phone while driving.

Seat Belts

- Twelve percent (12%) of participants reported that they had seen or heard about extra enforcement of seat belt laws within the last 60 days—the lowest rate in the past ten years.
- Ninety-four percent (94%) of survey participants reported that they *always* or *nearly always* use their seat belts.
- The proportion who reported using a seat belt in 2024 was unchanged from the proportion who reported doing so in 2023.
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of participants reported that they believed they would *always* or *nearly always* get a ticket if they did not wear a seat belt.

Impaired Driving

- Less than a quarter of participants (22%) reported that they had seen or heard about extra enforcement of impaired driving laws within the last 60 days.
- The majority of participants (93%) reported never driving within two hours of drinking over the past 60 days, 4% reported doing so one or two times, and 3% reported doing so three or more times.
- The rates of drinking and driving from 2015 to 2019 remained relatively unchanged, ranging from 12% to 13%. From 2021 to 2024, rates ranged from 11% to 7%.
- Forty-four percent (44%) of participants reported that they believed they would *always* or *nearly always* be arrested if they drank and drove.

Speeding

- Twenty-seven percent (27%) of participants reported that they had seen or heard about extra enforcement of speeding laws within the last 60 days.
- Fifteen percent (15%) of participants reported that they *always* or *nearly always* speed.
- The rates of speeding have fluctuated over the years, ranging from a low of 11% in 2017 to a high of 15% in 2024.
- Twenty-two percent (22%) of participants reported that they believed they would *always* or *nearly always* get a ticket if they drove over the speed limit.

Distracted Driving

- Twenty percent (20%) of participants reported that they had seen or heard about extra enforcement of distracted driving laws within the last 60 days.
- Thirteen percent (13%) of survey participants reported that they *sometimes, nearly always, or always* talk on a handheld cell phone while driving.
- The rate of talking on a handheld device while driving dropped from 28% to 12% in 2021. The rate appears to be inching back up, however. This year's rate of 13% is statistically significantly higher than the rate of 10% obtained in 2022.
- Twenty-six percent (26%) of participants reported that they believed they would *always or nearly always* get a ticket if they talked on a handheld phone while driving.
- Ten percent (10%) of participants reported that they *sometimes, nearly always, or always* text on a handheld cell phone while driving.
- The proportion of those who reported texting on a handheld cell phone while driving in 2015 was 15%. Rates since then have ranged between 9% and 11%.
- Twenty-nine percent (29%) of participants reported that they believed they would *always or nearly always* get a ticket if they texted while driving.

Sources of Awareness of Extra Enforcement

- Seventeen percent (17%) of participants said they saw the message on TV, followed by 12% who reported hearing on the radio. Eleven percent (11%) reported learning through a website, Internet, or social media; 8% reported learning about enforcement through a police checkpoint; 5% reported learning through the newspaper; 3% reported learning through a sign; and 3% reported learning through a poster.

Awareness of Public Services Messages

- Survey participants were provided with the catch phrases associated with a number of public service messages and were asked to indicate which they saw or heard within the last 60 days. At 35%, *Move Over. It's the Law* was seen by the largest proportion of respondents. *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving* and *Buckle Up, No Excuses!* followed, at 31% and 30%, respectively. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents reported seeing or hearing *One Text or Call Could Wreck It All* and *Click It or Ticket*. Rates for remaining messages ranged between 3% and 24%.

Introduction

This report summarizes the findings from Maine's 2024 Driver Awareness Survey. This survey is intended to measure drivers' awareness of and adherence to seat belt, speeding, impaired driving, and distracted driving laws and to gauge drivers' perceptions of law enforcement efforts around each of these issues. With the exception of year 2020, a version of this survey has been conducted annually for a number of years. In 2020, the survey was not conducted due to the COVID pandemic, resulting in a gap in the trend analysis presented here.

The findings from this report are intended to help the Bureau of Highway Safety focus its efforts to achieve greater safety on Maine's roadways. Reducing the risky behaviors that often lead to injury or loss of life requires at least three critical elements. First, it requires laws prohibiting the behavior, such as the aforementioned distracted driving law.

Another critical element is enforcement; laws only work when they are enforced. While law enforcement agencies are committed to upholding traffic laws, many agencies are understaffed and face competing demands for officers' limited time and attention. Recognizing this challenge, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the BHS distribute grant funds to agencies willing to participate in special enforcement details. This funding allows for extra enforcement around the targeted behavior.

A third critical element is awareness. Enforcement works not because all violators are stopped and ticketed but because some are, and the awareness of the possibility acts as a deterrent on others. The BHS has many public safety campaigns designed to heighten awareness not only of the danger of the risky driving behavior but of the likelihood of being stopped by law enforcement and the ensuing consequences as well. The Driver Awareness Survey measures the effectiveness of these campaigns and gathers data on the frequency with which drivers engage in the risky behaviors targeted by the campaigns.

NOTE: *Previous versions of this survey (2011 to 2016) were analyzed and summarized by Preusser Research Group, Inc., and the results of those surveys have been included in a number of tables in this report in order to provide readers with a snapshot of how survey responses have changed over time.*

Methodology & Limitations

This survey was conducted at nine of the thirteen Bureau of Motor Vehicle locations across the state. These nine locations (Augusta, Bangor, Ellsworth, Kennebunk, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Rumford, and Scarborough) were chosen for their representativeness—together they serve urban, suburban, and rural populations.

The survey was conducted with professional interviewers from the Catherine Cutler Institute's Survey Research Center. Interviewers spent two days at each location, approaching individuals in waiting areas and explaining that they were there to help the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety learn more about people's driving habits and attitudes. Once interviewers ascertained that an individual held a valid Maine driver's license, they invited them to participate in the survey. A total of 1,408 completed surveys were collected.

Surveys were conducted from July 1 to August 7, beginning about four weeks after the end of Maine's seat belt awareness campaign, which ran from May 13 through June 2. The survey asked participants whether they saw or heard about extra enforcement of seat belt laws *within the past 60 days*. Thus, the timing of the survey increased the likelihood that participants would have heard about extra enforcement.

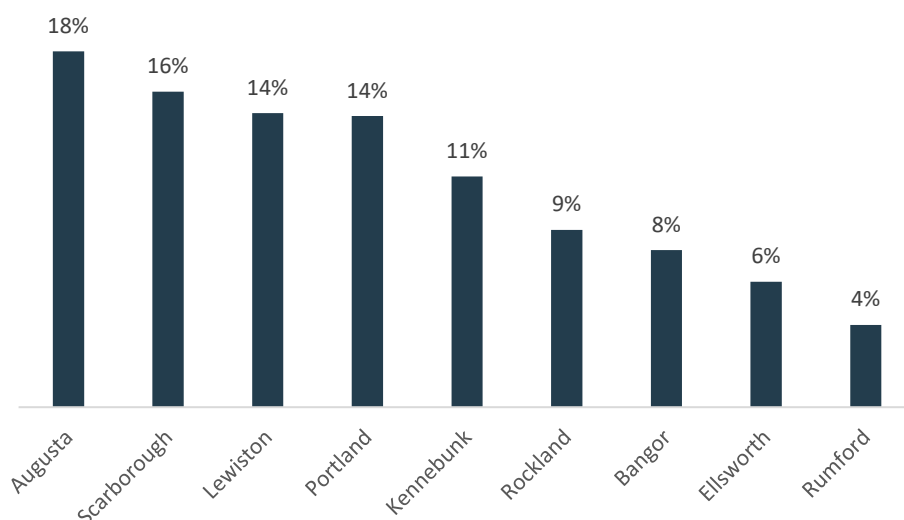
The survey asked participants to provide demographic information and answer questions related to seat belt use, drinking and driving, speeding, and distracted driving. It was a one-page, two-sided survey in length and contained a total of 20 questions. A copy of the current survey can be found in the Appendix of this report.

One of the limitations of this research lies with the challenge of obtaining a representative sample. While nine of the state's thirteen BMV offices were selected for participation, a large portion of Maine is not served by a fixed BMV office, relying instead on scheduled visits from a mobile unit. It was not practical to include the areas served by mobile units in this survey; as a result, the findings may underrepresent those who live in more rural areas of the state. The in-person survey design may also overrepresent those who are not able to conduct their business online or those who are uncomfortable doing so.

The voluntary nature of the survey is another factor that influences its representativeness. While the survey was offered to everyone, not everyone chose to participate. Those who did take part in this voluntary survey—a prosocial behavior—might be more likely to abide by the laws that govern society's roadways. If this is the case, the survey may underrepresent those who do not abide by these laws. While this drawback exists with any voluntary survey, it nevertheless bears mentioning here.

Findings

Surveys were distributed at nine different locations across the state of Maine, including Augusta, Bangor, Ellsworth, Kennebunk, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Rumford, and Scarborough. Of these locations, Augusta accounted for the largest proportion of the total number of surveys at 18%, while Rumford accounted for the smallest at 4%. A total of 1,408 people participated across all locations.

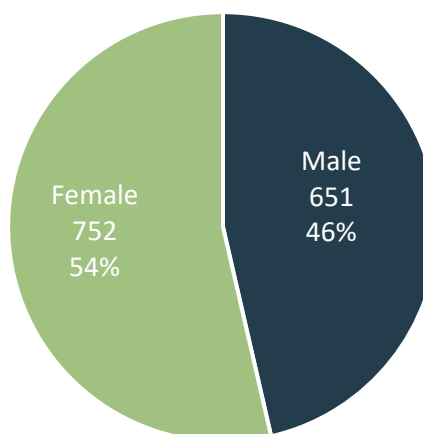


Demographics and Descriptives

Survey participants were asked to identify their sex and age, provide an approximation of how many miles they drove the previous year, and to report the type of vehicle they drove most often.

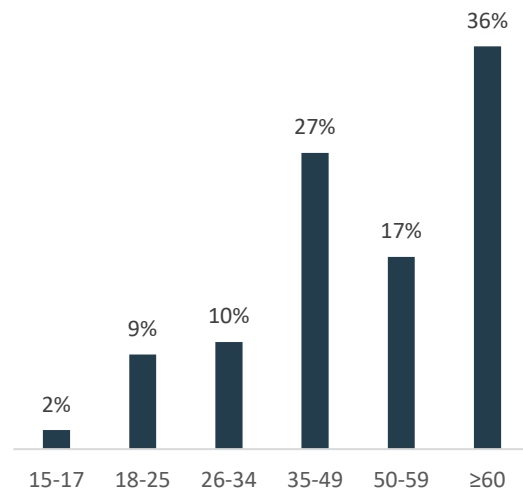
Sex

Almost all survey participants (99.6%) answered this question. Of those who answered, 54% indicated they were female, and 46% indicated they were male.



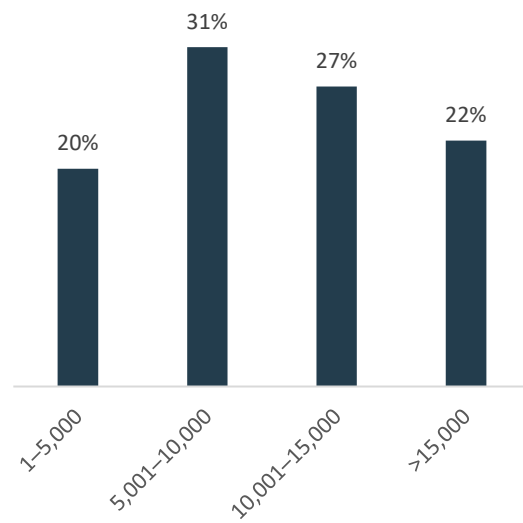
Age

Almost all survey participants (99.4%) provided an answer to this question. Of those who answered, the largest proportion (36%) were 60 years of age or older, followed by those 35 to 49 years of age, at 27%, and those 50 to 59 years of age, at 17%. Those 26 to 34 made up 10% of the survey sample, those 18 to 25 made up 9%, and those younger than 18 years of age made up 2% of the sample.



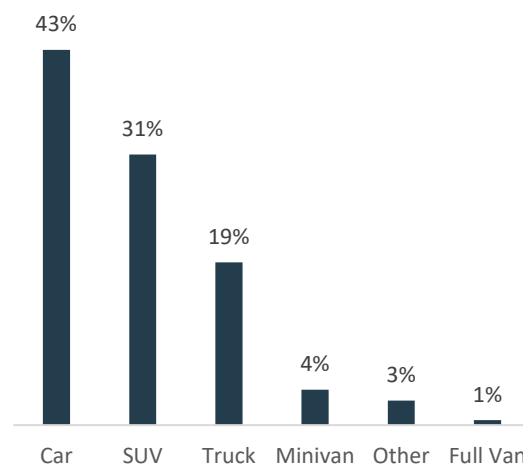
Miles Driven

All survey participants provided information about the number of miles driven the previous year. The largest proportion (31%) reported driving 5,001 to 10,000 miles, followed by those who drove between 10,001 and 15,000 miles, at 27%. A smaller proportion, 22%, reported driving more than 15,000 miles, and 20% reported driving fewer than 5,000 miles.



Type of Vehicle

Most survey participants (98.4%) provided information about the type of vehicle they drove most frequently. Forty-three percent (43%) reported driving *passenger cars*, followed by *sport utility vehicles*, at 31%, and *pickup trucks*, at 19%. Smaller proportions reported driving *minivans*, *other types of vehicles*, and *full vans*, at 4%, 3%, and 1%, respectively.

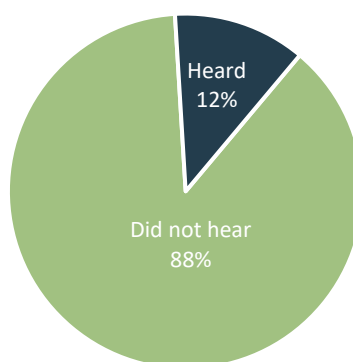


Seat Belts

Survey participants were asked several questions about seat belt use. They were asked whether they saw or heard any messages about police enforcement of seat belt laws. They were asked how frequently they wore their seat belt, and how likely they thought it was that they would get a ticket if they did not wear a seat belt.

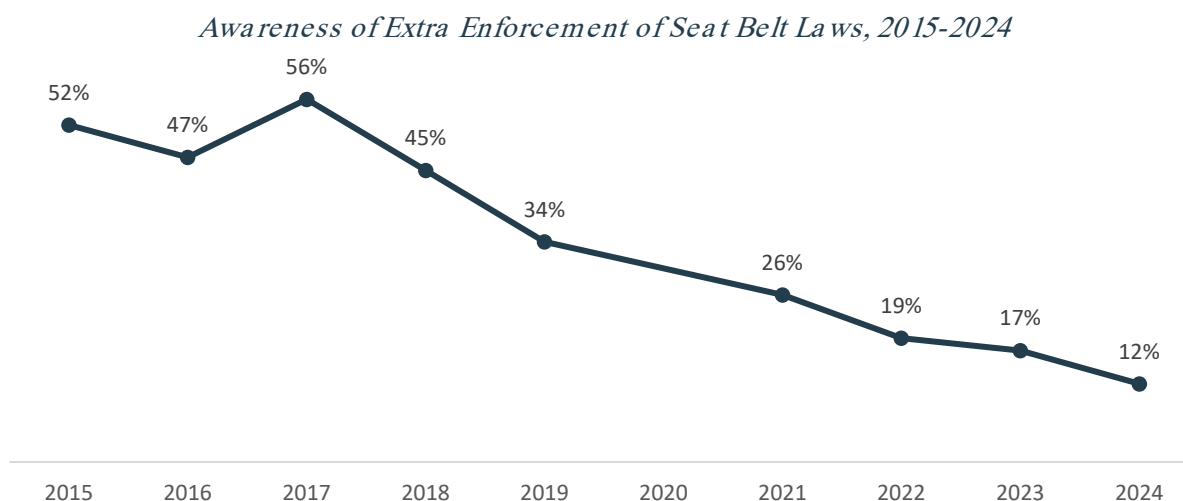
Awareness of Enforcement

The survey asked participants if, within the past 60 days, they had seen or heard about extra enforcement of seat belt laws. The timing of the survey, which began about four and a half weeks after the end of Maine's seat belt awareness campaign, increased the likelihood that participants would have seen or heard something. About 12% of respondents reported having seen or heard about extra police enforcement around seat belt use. This rate did not vary by demographic attribute.



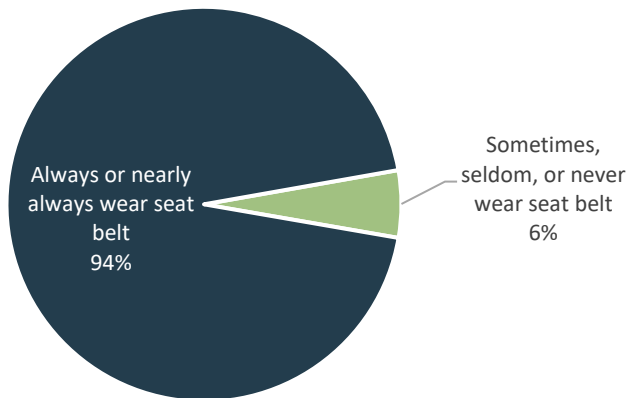
Trend

The proportion of participants who have heard about extra enforcement of seat belt laws has decreased since 2017, when 56% of respondents had heard, to the current year, in which only 12% of respondents heard.



Frequency of Seat Belt Use

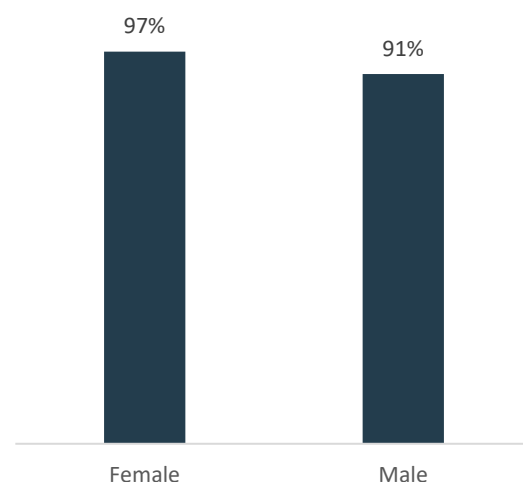
The survey asked participants how often they wore seat belts when driving or riding in a car, sport utility vehicle, or pickup. Participants could choose from the following answers: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, and *never*. Most survey participants answered this question (99.4%), and of those who did, the majority (94%) reported that they *always* or *nearly always* use their seat belts. Those who provided these two answers—*always* and *nearly always*—are counted as seat belt users throughout the remainder of this report.



Seat belt rates varied depending on a number of driver attributes.

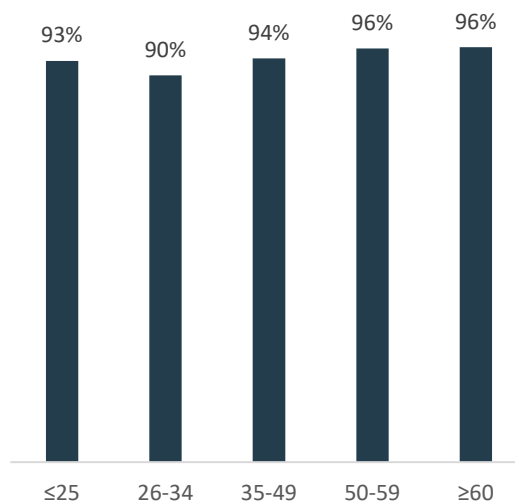
Sex

Females were more likely to buckle up than males. Approximately 97% of females reported buckling up, while 91% of males did.



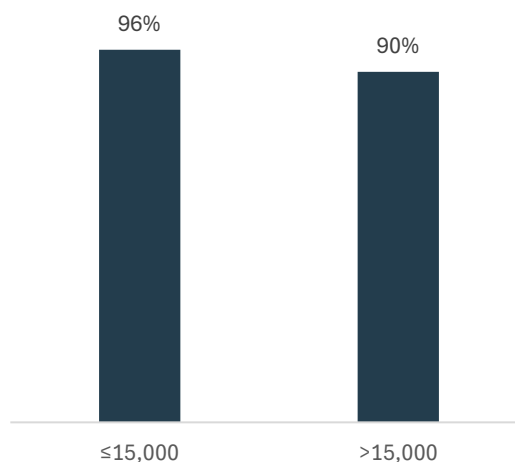
Age

Seat belt use varied by age. Those aged 26 to 34 had the lowest reported rate of seat belt use, at 90%, while those aged 50 and older had the highest rate, at 96%.



Miles Driven

Seat belt use varied by miles driven. Ninety-six percent (96%) of those who drove 15,000 miles or less the previous year reported buckling up, while 90% of those who drove more than 15,000 miles reported doing so.



Type of Vehicle

Seat belt use varied by type of vehicle. Those who primarily drove sport utility vehicles and passenger cars were more likely to buckle up, at 96%, than those who primarily drove other types of vehicles, at 91%, and pickup trucks, at 90%.

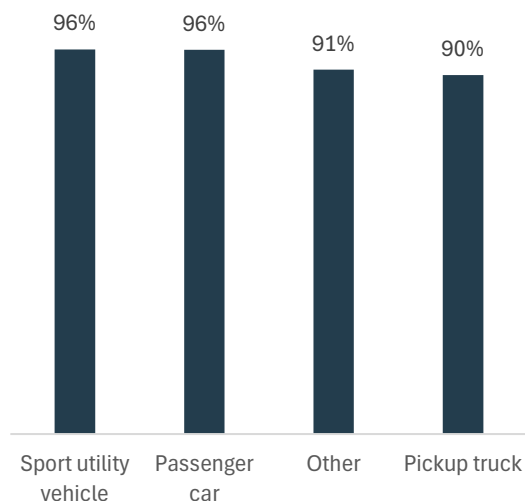
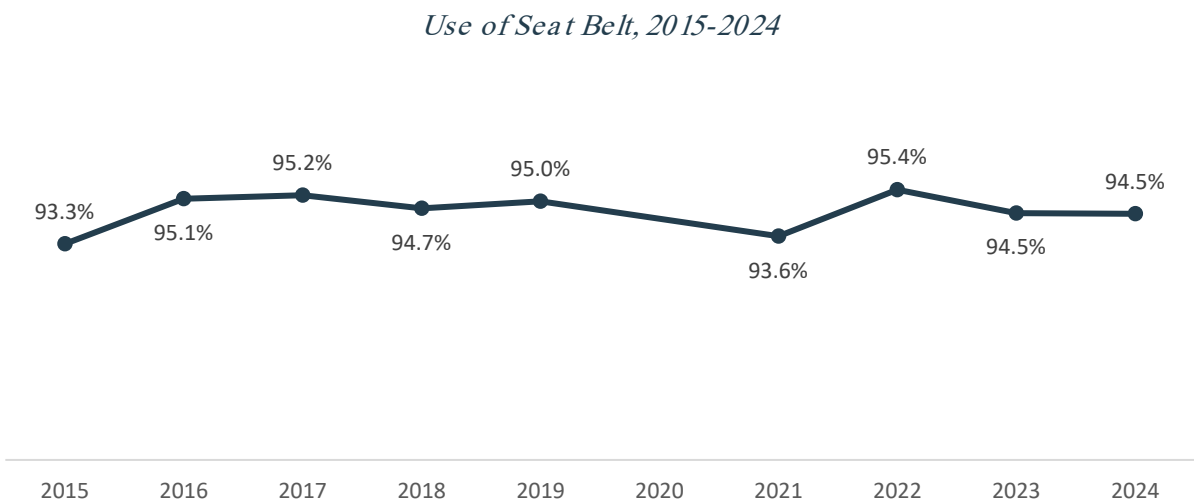


Table 1: Self-Reported Belt Use

	N	Always or Nearly Always	
		Point Estimate	Confidence Interval
Sex (p<.01)			
Male	647	91.5%	89.4% - 93.6%
Female	747	97.1%	95.8% - 98.3%
Age (p=.03)			
≤25	143	93.0%	88.8% - 97.2%
26-34	135	89.6%	84.5% - 94.8%
35-49	372	93.5%	91.1% - 96.0%
50-59	242	95.9%	93.4% - 98.4%
≥60	499	96.2%	94.5% - 97.9%
Miles Driven (p<.01)			
15,000 or less	1,087	95.8%	94.6% - 97.0%
More than 15,000	312	90.1%	86.7% - 93.4%
Vehicle (p<.01)			
SUV	426	96.2%	94.4% - 98.0%
Passenger car	592	96.1%	94.6% - 97.7%
Other type of vehicle	102	91.2%	85.7% - 96.7%
Pickup truck	256	89.8%	86.1% - 93.5%
Chances of Getting Ticket If Unbelted (p=.02)			
Always or nearly always	382	96.9%	95.1% - 98.6%
Sometimes, seldom, or never	1,007	93.6%	92.1% - 95.2%

Seat Belt Trends

At 94.5%, the proportion of those who reported *always* or *nearly always* wearing seat belts remained unchanged from last year’s rate.



Participants were asked to compare their current seat belt use with their use over the last couple of years. Most participants (98.2%) answered this question. While the majority of these participants (69.8%) reported wearing their seat belt *about the same* as they did before, over a quarter (28.0%) reported that they currently wore their seat belts *more often* or *much more often*, and a small percentage (2.2%) reported wearing them *less often* or *much less often*.

Table 3: Seat Belt Use Compared to Last Couple of Years, 2015-2024

	More or Much More Often		About the Same		Less or Much Less Often	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
2015	363	26.0%	1,007	72.0%	28	2.0%
2016	444	25.9%	1,235	72.1%	34	2.0%
2017	467	26.3%	1,270	71.6%	37	2.1%
2018	396	23.3%	1,276	75.1%	27	1.6%
2019	430	24.9%	1,259	73.0%	35	2.0%
2020	—	—	—	—	—	—
2021	525	31.9%	1086	65.9%	36	2.2%
2022	479	28.4%	1179	69.9%	29	1.7%
2023	424	31.2%	920	67.6%	16	1.2%
2024	387	28.0%	966	69.8%	30	2.2%

Perception of the Likelihood of Getting a Ticket

Survey participants were asked to report the likelihood of getting a ticket if they did not wear their seat belt by selecting one of the following answers: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, and *never*. Most participants (99.1%) answered this question, and of those who did, 27.5% reported that they believed they would *always* or *nearly always* get a ticket. Those who provided one of these two answers—*always* and *nearly always*—are counted as believing a ticket is likely throughout the remainder of this report.

Location influenced the perception that a ticket was likely. Those in Portland were the least likely to think a ticket was likely, at 18%, while those in Lewiston were the most likely, at 35%.

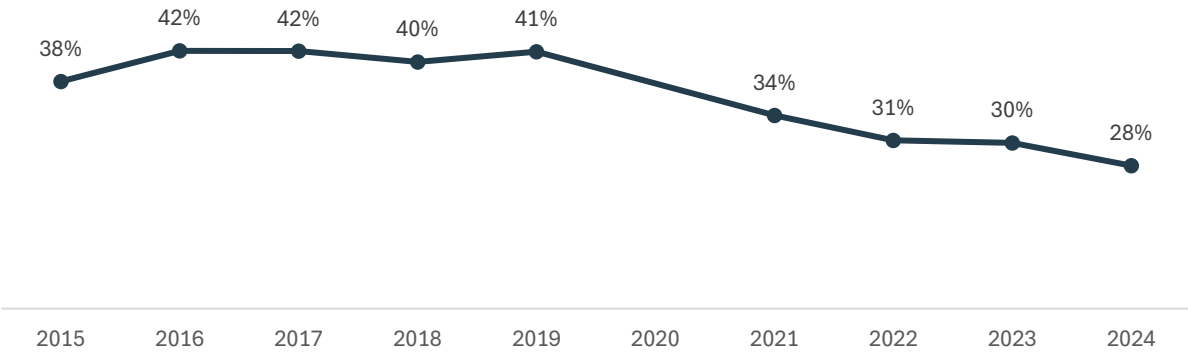
Age also influenced the perception that a ticket was likely. At 31%, those aged 59 and younger were more likely than those aged 60 and older, at 22%, to think that not wearing a seat belt would result in a ticket.

27.5%

of participants believed a ticket was likely if they did not wear a seat belt

The proportion who believed driving unbelted would *always* or *nearly always* result in a ticket decreased since in the last four years, from 41% in 2019 to 28% in 2024.

Believe Driving Unbelted Will Result in Ticket, 2015-2024



Impact of Enforcement Awareness

The desired outcome of seat belt campaigns and enforcement details is, of course, an increase in seat belt use. Responses to the survey, however, show no direct correlation between hearing about enforcement of seat belt laws and actual seat belt use; those who heard and those who did not had the same rate of use. There was, however, a positive correlation between hearing about enforcement and believing that driving unbelted would result in a ticket. Forty-one percent (41%) of those who heard a message within the past 60 days thought a ticket was likely, compared to 26% of those who did not hear a message.

Furthermore, there was a small positive correlation between believing a ticket was likely and wearing a seat belt. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of those who thought a ticket was likely buckled up, compared to 94% of those who thought a ticket was not likely—a small but statistically significant difference. Thus, there is an indirect relationship between hearing about enforcement of seat belt laws and seat belt use: those who hear about enforcement are more likely to think driving unbelted will result in a ticket, and those who believe a ticket is likely are more likely to buckle up.

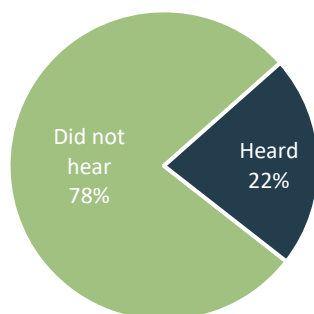


Drinking and Driving

Survey participants were asked several questions about drinking and driving. They were asked whether they saw or heard any messages about police enforcement of drinking and driving laws. They were asked how frequently they drank and drove, and how likely they thought it was that they would get arrested if they did.

Awareness of Enforcement

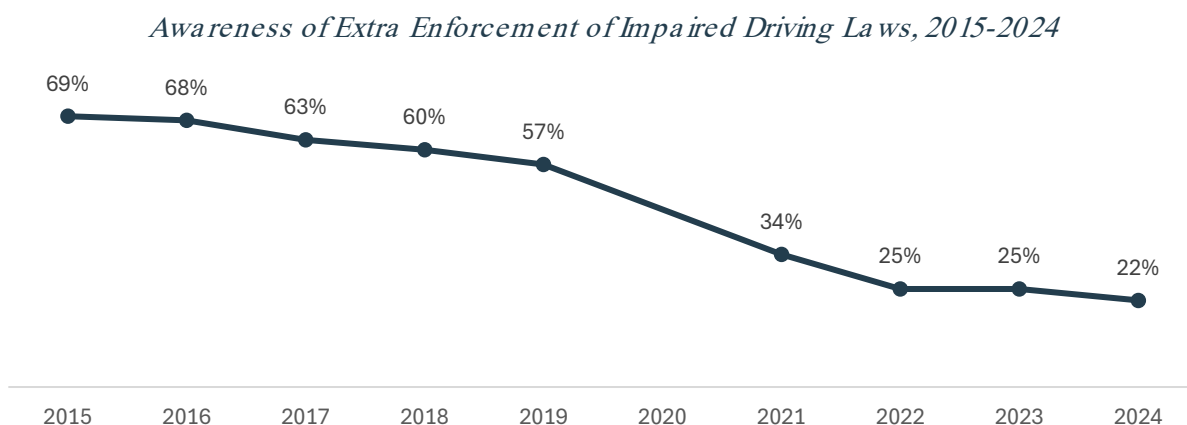
The survey asked participants if, within the past 60 days, they had seen or heard about extra enforcement of impaired driving laws. Less than a quarter (22%) said they had.



This rate varied by participant attribute. Younger participants were more likely to have heard about extra enforcement; 29% of those aged 34 and under were likely to have heard, compared to 20% of those aged 35 and over. Location was likewise a factor. Those in Bangor were the most likely to have heard about extra enforcement, at 30%, while those in Lewiston were the least likely to have heard, at 16%.

Trend

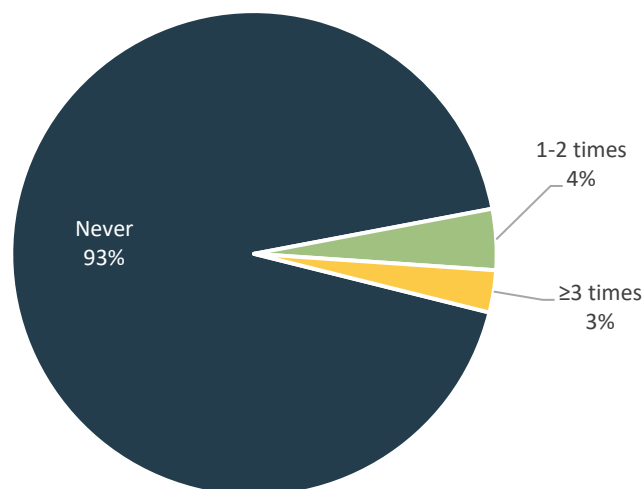
The proportion of participants who have heard about extra enforcement of impaired driving laws has decreased from prior years, from a high of 69% in 2015 to the present low of 22%.



Frequency of Drinking and Driving

The survey asked participants how many times they drove a motor vehicle within two hours of consuming an alcoholic beverage within the past 60 days. While this behavior is not necessarily illegal—legality is determined by blood alcohol concentration—any level of impairment leads to a decrease in public safety. Furthermore, questions about driving drunk are likely to result in inaccurate answers. Determining whether an illegal limit has been reached is difficult, and asking about drunk driving, which is a criminal matter rather than civil, may produce defensiveness and lead to less honest answers. Therefore, the survey focused on *any* drinking and driving; the answers obtained are a measure of the risk of drunk driving.

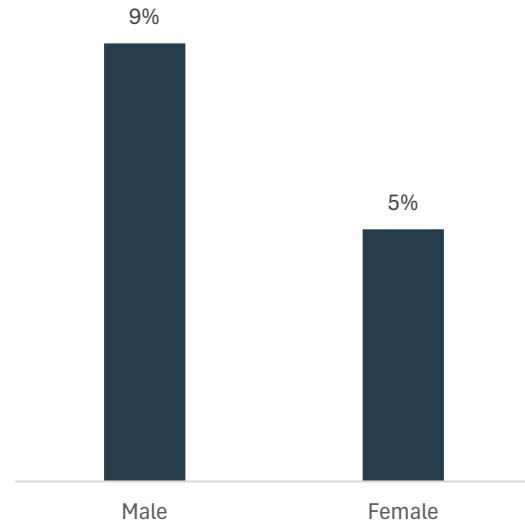
Approximately 96.2% of participants answered this question, with the majority (93%) reporting never driving within two hours of drinking over the past 60 days. Approximately 4% reported drinking and driving one or two times, and 3% reported doing so three or more times.



The frequency of drinking and driving varied depending on a number of driver attributes.

Sex

Males were more likely to drink and drive than females. Approximately 9% of males reported drinking and driving, compared to 5% of females.



Miles Driven

At 3%, those who drove 5,000 miles or less the previous year were the least likely to drink and drive, while those who drove between 10,001 and 15,000 miles were the most likely, at 9%.

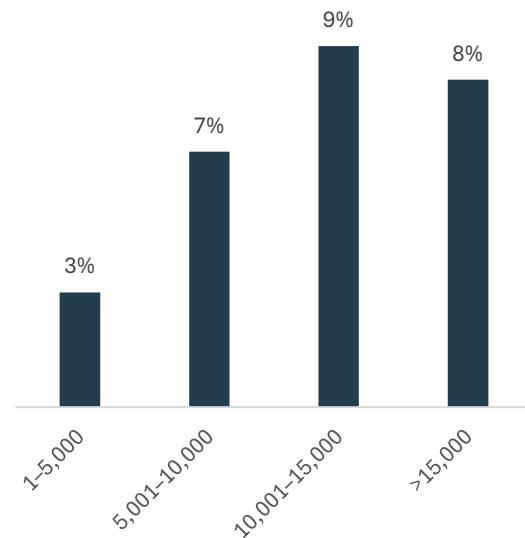


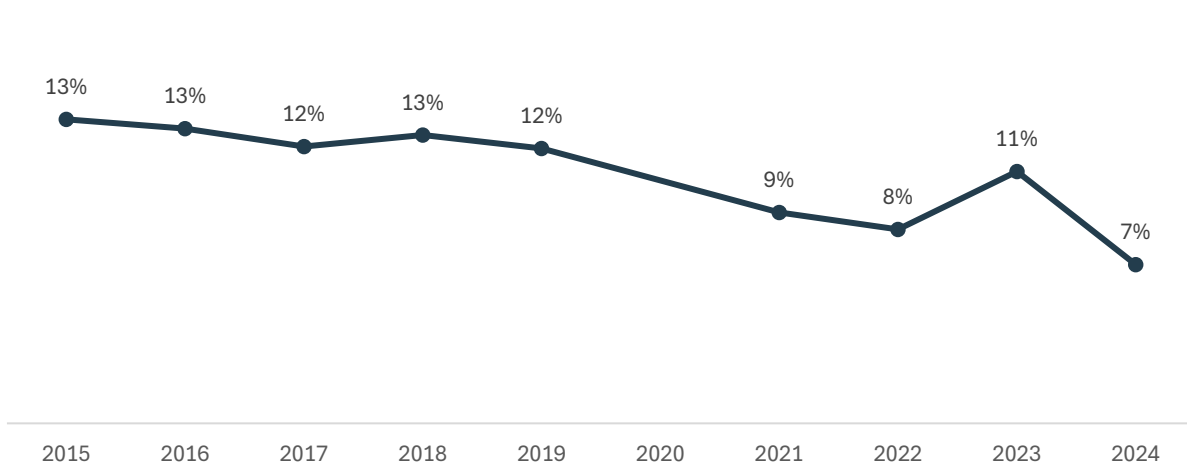
Table 4: Self-Reported Drinking and Driving

	N	Drank and Drove at Least Once Within the Last 60 Days	
		Point Estimate	Confidence Interval
Sex (p<.01)			
Male	620	9.0%	6.8% - 11.3%
Female	731	5.2%	3.6% - 6.8%
Miles Driven Last Year (p=.01)			
5,000 or less	273	2.9%	0.9% - 4.9%
5,001-10,000	414	6.5%	4.1% - 8.9%
10,001-15,000	369	9.2%	6.3% - 12.2%
More than 15,000	299	8.4%	5.2% - 11.5%
Chances of Getting Arrested If Driving After Drinking (p<.01)			
Always or nearly always	592	2.7%	1.4% - 4.0%
Sometimes, seldom, or never	741	10.1%	7.9% - 12.3%

Drinking and Driving Trend

The rates of drinking and driving from 2015 to 2019 remained relatively unchanged, ranging from 12% to 13%. From 2021 to 2024, the rates have ranged from 11% (2023) to 7% (2024).

Drinking and Driving, 2015-2024



Perception of the Likelihood of Being Arrested

Survey participants were asked to report the likelihood of being arrested if they drank and drove by selecting one of the following answers: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, and *never*. Most participants (98.2%) answered this question, and of those who did, 44.2% reported that they believed they would *always* or *nearly always* be arrested. Those who provided one of these two answers—*always* and *nearly always*—are counted as believing arrest is likely throughout the remainder of this report.

At 48%, females were more likely to believe that drinking and driving would result in arrest than males, at 40%.

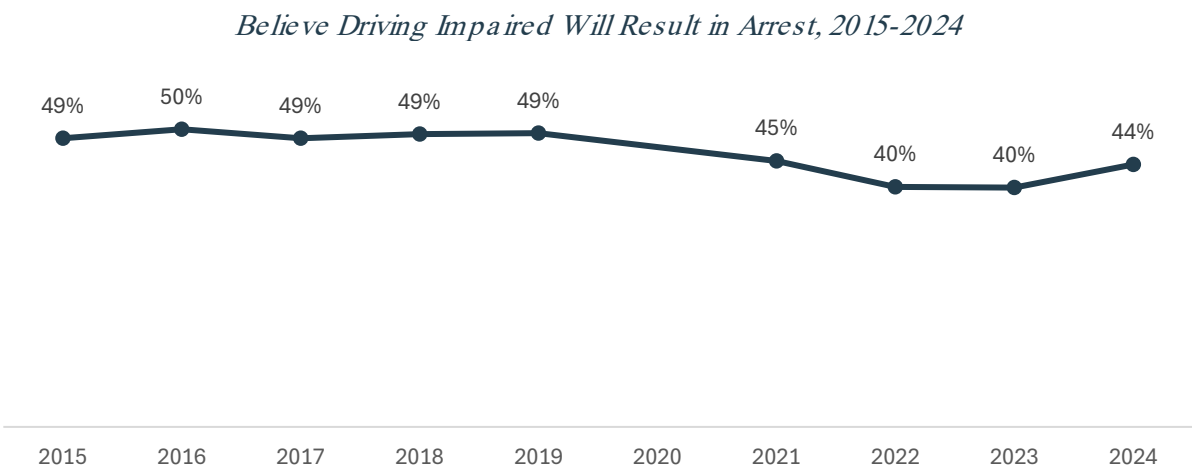
Likewise, older participants, aged 60 and older, were more likely to believe that drinking and driving would result in arrest. Approximately 34% of those 60 and older believed arrest was likely, compared to 50% of those aged 59 and younger.

Number of miles driven the previous year also influenced the perception that arrest was likely for driving while impaired. At 50%, those who drove less than 5,000 miles were more likely to think arrest was likely than those who drove 5,000 miles or more, at 43%.

Lastly, location was associated with the belief that drinking and driving would result in arrest. Respondents from Rumford were the most likely to think arrest was likely, at 68%, and those from Portland were the least likely to think so, at 34%.

The percentage of participants who thought arrest was likely for drinking and driving increased from 40% in 2023 to 44% in 2024.

44.2%
of participants reported that arrest was likely if they drank and drove



Impact of Enforcement Awareness

The purpose of drunk driving campaigns and enforcement details is to decrease the number of drivers who drink and drive in order to ensure public safety. Responses to the survey, however, show no direct correlation between hearing about enforcement of impaired driving laws and driving after drinking. There was, however, a positive correlation between hearing about enforcement and believing that drinking and driving would result in arrest. Forty-two percent (42%) of those who did not hear a message within the past 60 days thought arrest was likely, compared to 50% of those who did hear a message.

3%

of those who thought arrest was likely drank and drove, compared to 10% of those who thought arrest was not likely

Furthermore, there was a negative association between believing arrest was likely and drinking and driving. Three percent (3%) of those who thought arrest was likely drank and drove, compared to 10% of those who thought arrest was not likely. Thus, it appears that hearing about enforcement may have an indirect effect on drinking and driving. Those who hear about enforcement are more likely to think drinking and driving will result in arrest, and those who believe arrest is likely are less likely to drink and drive.

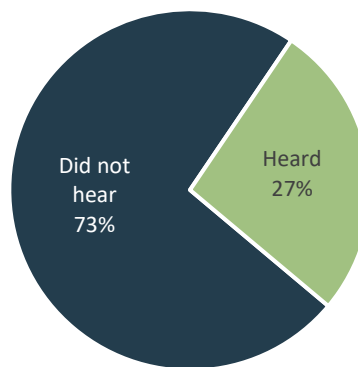


Speeding

Survey participants were asked several questions about speeding. They were asked whether they saw or heard any messages about police enforcement of speed laws. They were asked how frequently they drove over the speed limit, and how likely they thought it was that they would get a ticket if they did.

Awareness of Enforcement

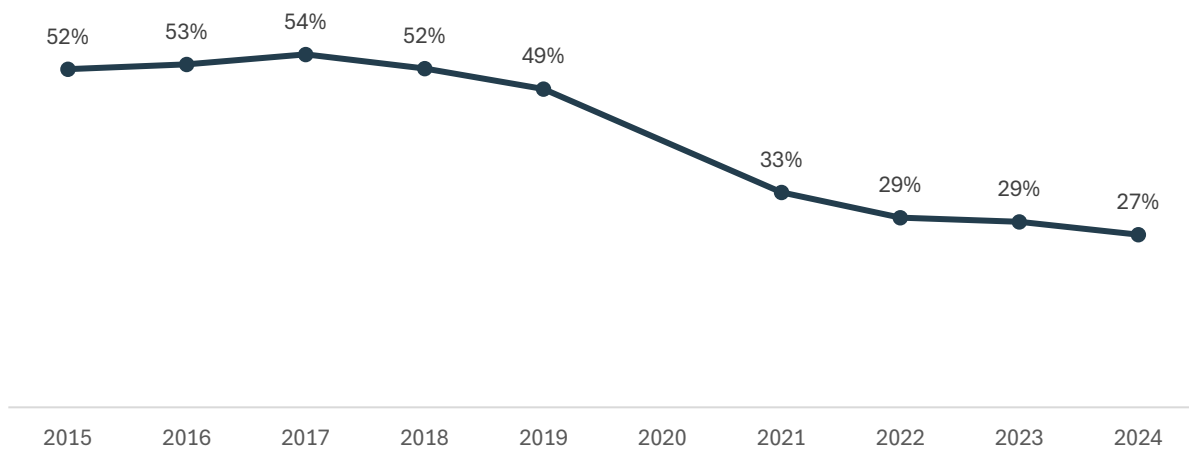
The survey asked participants if, within the past 60 days, they had seen or heard about extra enforcement of speeding laws. Twenty-seven percent of participants (27%) reported having seen or heard something. Younger people were more likely to have heard about enforcement than older people; 40% of those aged 25 and younger reported that they heard, while 25% of those aged 26 and older reported that they did.



Trend

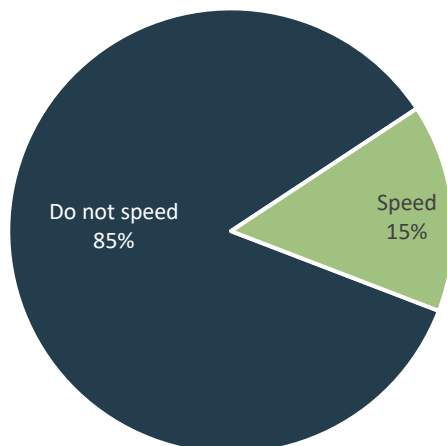
The proportion of participants who heard about extra enforcement of speeding laws decreased sharply in 2021, from 49% to 33%. It decreased further in 2022, to 29%, and now stands at 27%.

Awareness of Extra Enforcement of Speeding Laws, 2015-2024



Frequency of Speeding

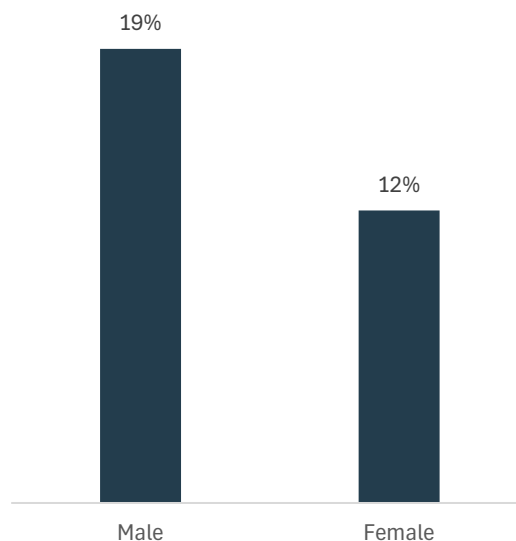
The survey asked participants how often, on a local road with a speed limit of 30 mph, they drove faster than 35 miles per hour. Participants could choose from the following answers: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, and *never*. Most participants (99.1%) answered this question, and 15% of those who did reported that they *always* or *nearly always* speed under those conditions. Those who provided these two answers—*always* and *nearly always*—are counted as speeding throughout the remainder of this report.



Speeding rates varied depending on a number of driver attributes.

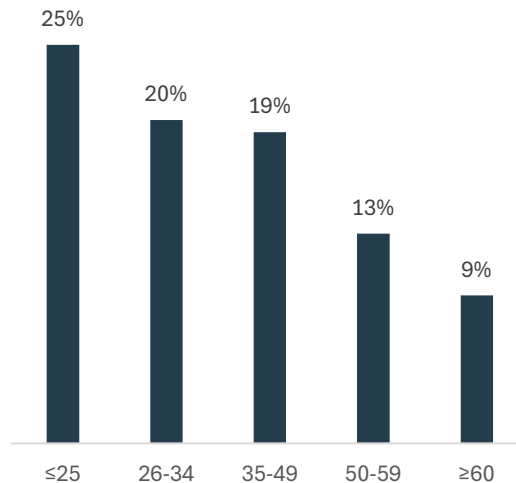
Sex

Males were more likely to speed than females. Approximately 19% of males reported speeding, while 12% of females reported doing so.



Age

Speeding decreased with age. Twenty-five percent (25%) of participants who were aged 25 and younger reported speeding. Between 13% and 20% of those aged 26 to 59 reported speeding, and 9% of those aged 60 and older reported speeding.



Miles Driven

Those who drove more miles the previous year were more likely to report speeding. Seven percent (7%) of those who drove 5,000 miles or less reported speeding, 11% of those who drove 5,001 to 10,000 miles reported speeding, and 21% of those who drove more than 10,000 miles reported doing so.

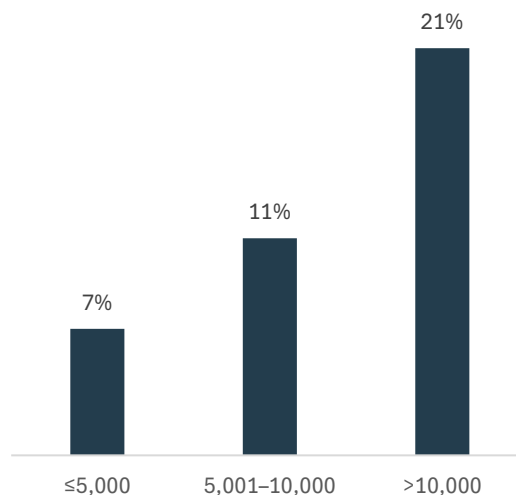


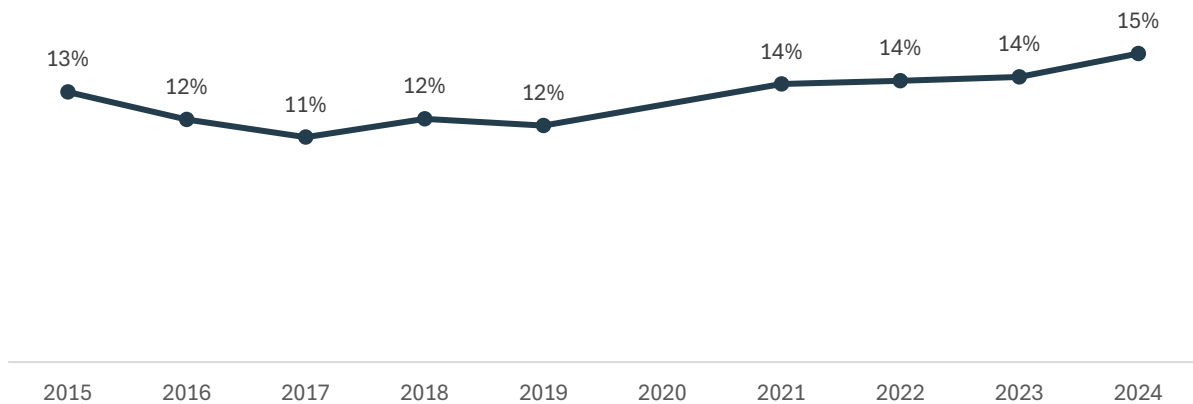
Table 5: Self-Reported Speeding

	N	Always or Nearly Always	
		Point Estimate	Confidence Interval
Sex (p<.01)			
Male	646	18.7%	15.7% - 21.7%
Female	746	12.1%	9.7% - 14.4%
Age (p<.01)			
≤25	142	24.6%	17.6% - 31.7%
26-34	135	20.0%	13.3% - 26.7%
35-49	369	19.2%	15.2% - 23.3%
50-59	239	13.0%	8.7% - 17.2%
≥60	503	9.1%	6.6% - 11.7%
Miles Driven Last Year (p<.01)			
≤5,000	276	6.5%	3.6% - 9.4%
5,001-10,000	429	11.2%	8.2% - 14.2%
>10,000	691	21.0%	17.9% - 24.0%
Chances of Getting a Ticket If Speeding (p<.01)			
Always or nearly always	299	10.0%	6.6% - 13.4%
Sometimes, seldom, or never	1,087	16.3%	14.1% - 18.5%

Speeding Trends

The rates of speeding have fluctuated over the years, ranging from a low of 11% in 2017 to a high of 15% in 2024.

Speeding, 2015-2024



Perception of the Likelihood of Getting a Ticket

Survey participants were asked to report the likelihood of getting a ticket if they drove over the speed limit by selecting one of the following answers: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, and *never*. Most participants answered this question (98.9%), and of those who did, 21.5% reported that they believed they would *always* or *nearly always* get a ticket. Those who provided one of these two answers—*always* and *nearly always*—are counted as believing a ticket is likely throughout the remainder of this report.

Age influenced the perception that speeding would result in a ticket. Nineteen percent (19%) of those aged 50 and older thought speeding would result in a ticket, while 24% of their younger counterparts thought so.

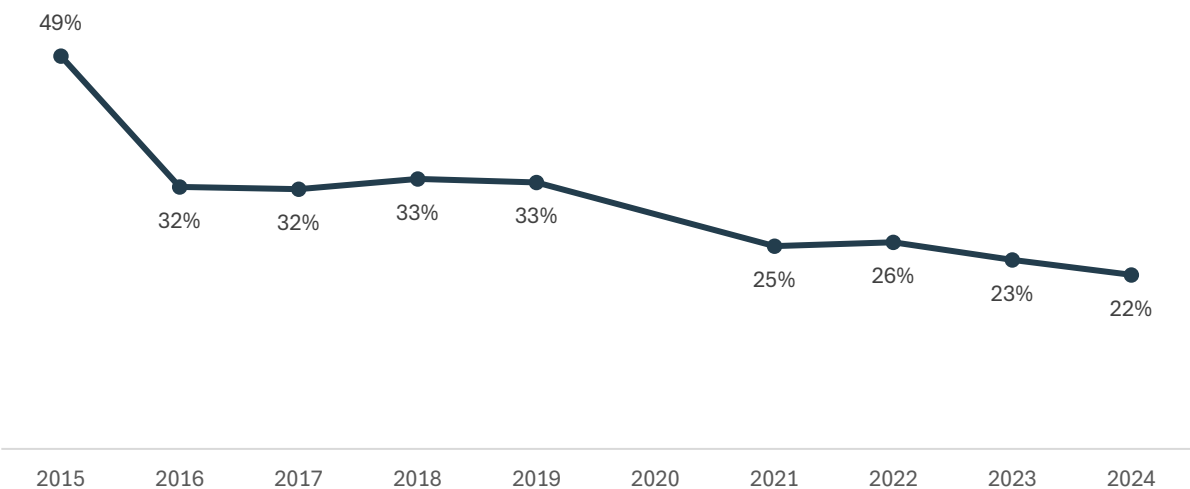
Likewise, miles driven was associated with the perception that a ticket was likely. Thirty percent (30%) of those who drove 5,000 miles or less the previous year thought a ticket was likely, while 19% of those who drove over 5,000 miles a year thought so.

Lastly, location influenced the perception that driving over the speed limit would result in a ticket. Respondents from Rumford were the most likely to think so, at 33%, while respondents from Portland were the least likely to, at 13%.

While about a third of participants thought a ticket was likely for speeding from 2016 to 2019, that proportion dropped in to about a quarter (25%) in 2021 and dropped further, to 22%, this year.

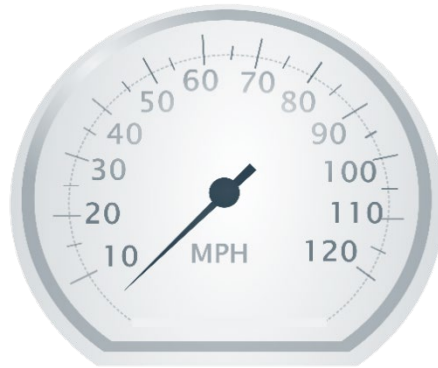
21.5%
of participants reported
that they believed a ticket
was likely if they drove
over the speed limit

Believe Speeding Will Result in a Speeding Ticket, 2015-2024



Impact of Enforcement Awareness

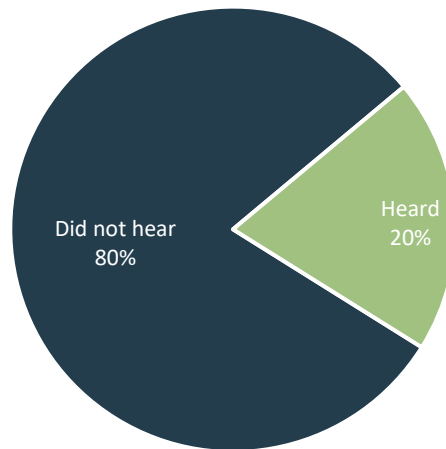
Hearing about enforcement of speeding laws appeared to have no direct effect on speeding. There was, however, an indirect effect. Those who heard about extra enforcement around speeding were more likely to think speeding would result in a ticket. Nineteen percent (19%) of those who did not hear about extra enforcement thought a ticket was likely compared to 29% of those who did hear. Thinking that speeding would result in a ticket, in turn, was associated with less speeding. Ten percent (10%) of those who thought a ticket was likely reported speeding, compared to 16% of those who thought a ticket was not likely.



Distracted Driving

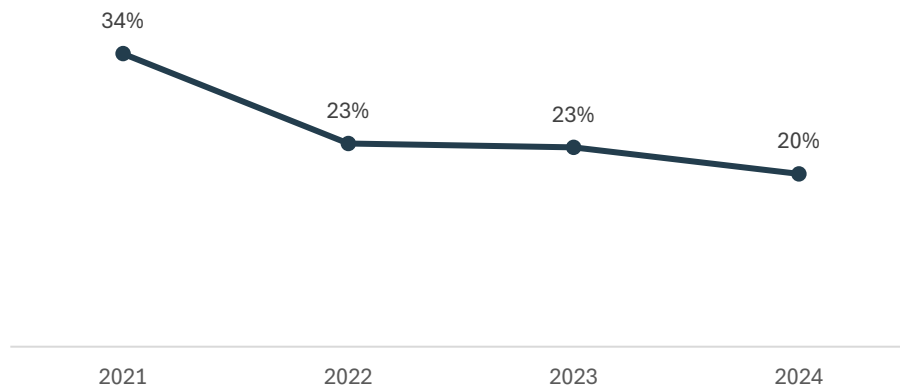
Awareness of Enforcement

The survey asked participants if, within the past 60 days they had seen or heard about extra enforcement of distracted driving laws. Twenty percent (20%) said they had. This rate did not vary by participant attribute.



Trend

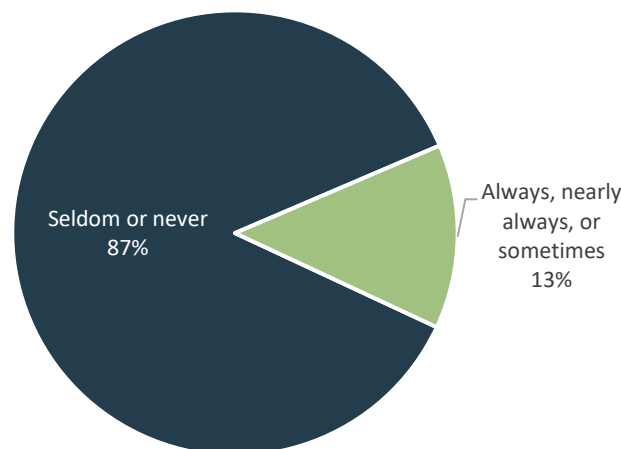
Maine's distracted driving law is relatively new. In 2021, when the law was established, 34% of respondents said they heard about enforcement of the law. That rate dropped to 23% in 2022, remained at that rate in 2023, and dropped further, to 20%, in 2024.



Talking on Handheld Device While Driving

Frequency of Talking on Handheld Device While Driving

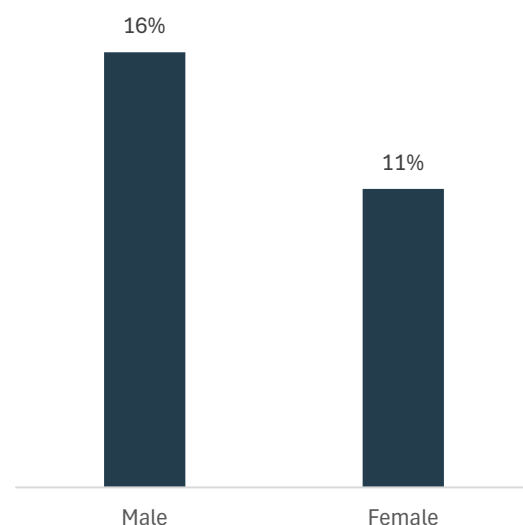
Participants were asked how frequently they talk on a handheld cell phone while driving. Participants could choose from the following answers: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, and *never*. Most participants (99.3%) answered this question, and of those who did, 13% reported that they *sometimes*, *nearly always*, or *always* talk on a handheld cell phone while driving. Those who provided these three answers—*sometimes*, *nearly always*, or *always*—are counted as talking on a handheld cell phone throughout the remainder of this report.



Rates of talking on a handheld cell phone while driving varied depending on a number of driver attributes.

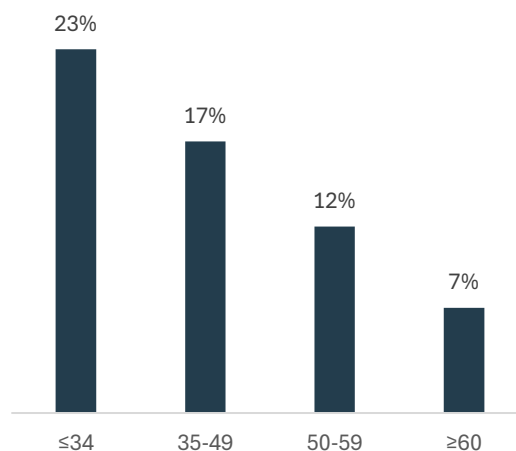
Sex

At 16%, males were more likely to talk on a handheld cell phone while driving than females at 11%.



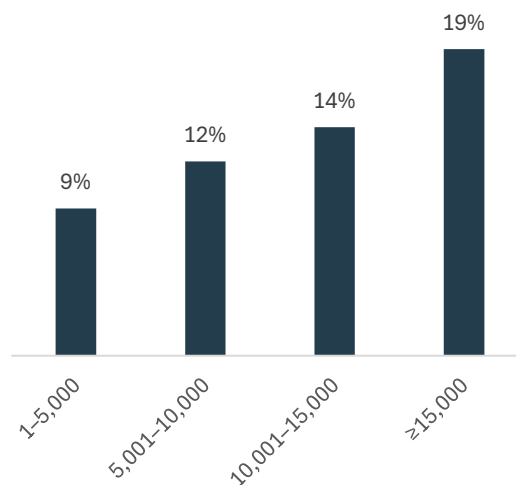
Age

Age was negatively correlated with talking on a cell phone while driving. Those aged 34 and younger had a rate of 23% for this behavior, compared to 17% for those aged 35 to 49, 12% for those aged 50 to 59, and 7% for those aged 60 and older.



Miles Driven

Participants who drove more miles were more likely to talk on a handheld cell phone while driving. Nine percent (9%) of those who drove less than 5,000 miles the previous year reported talking on a handheld phone while driving, compared to 12% of those who drove 5,000 to 10,000 miles, and 14% who drove 10,001 to 15,000 miles. Those who drove more than 15,000 miles the previous year had the highest rate, at 19%.



Location

Participants in Ellsworth were twice as likely to talk on a handheld cell phone while driving, at 26%, compared with participants from all other locations, at 13%.

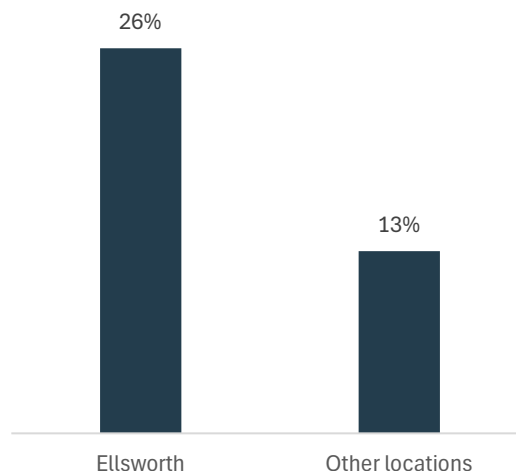


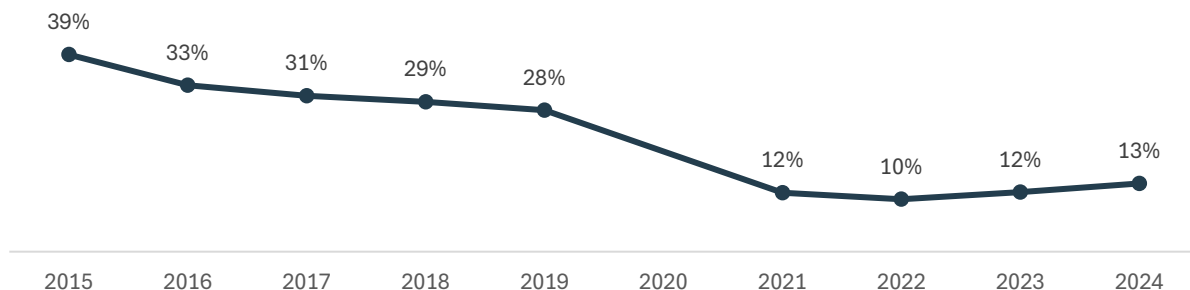
Table 6: Self-Reported Talking on Handheld Cell While Driving

		N	Always, Nearly Always, or Sometimes	
			Point Estimate	Confidence Interval
Sex (p<.01)				
	Male	644	16.1%	13.3% - 19.0%
	Female	749	11.1%	8.8% - 13.3%
Age (p<.01)				
	≤34	277	22.7%	17.8% - 27.7%
	35-49	371	17.0%	13.2% - 20.8%
	50-59	240	11.7%	7.6% - 15.7%
	≥60	502	6.6%	4.4% - 8.7%
Miles Driven Last Year (p<.01)				
	1-5,000	278	9.0%	5.6% - 12.4%
	5,001-10,000	430	11.9%	8.8% - 14.9%
	10,001-15,000	380	13.9%	10.5% - 17.4%
	More than 15000	310	18.7%	14.4% - 23.1%
Location (p<.01)				
	Ellsworth	87	26.4%	17.2% - 35.7%
	Rumford	57	19.3%	9.1% - 29.5%
	Lewiston	203	15.8%	10.8% - 20.8%
	Rockland	122	14.8%	8.5% - 21.0%
	Bangor	108	13.0%	6.6% - 19.3%
	Augusta	244	12.3%	8.2% - 16.4%
	Scarborough	218	11.5%	7.2% - 15.7%
	Portland	201	10.9%	6.6% - 15.3%
	Kennebunk	158	7.6%	3.5% - 11.7%
Chances of Getting a Ticket If Talking (p=.03)				
	Always or nearly always	355	10.1%	7.0% - 13.3%
	Sometimes, seldom, or never	1,032	14.6%	12.5% - 16.8%

Talking on Handheld Device While Driving Trend

The rate of talking on a handheld device while driving dropped from 28% to 12% subsequent to implementation of a law banning the practice. The rate appears to be inching back up, however. This year's rate of 13% is statistically significantly higher than the rate of 10% obtained in 2022.

Talking on Handheld Device While Driving, 2015-2024



Perception of the Likelihood of Getting a Ticket

Survey participants were asked to report the likelihood of getting a ticket if they talked on a handheld device while driving by selecting one of the following answers: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, and *never*. Most participants answered this question (98.9%), and of those who did, a little more than a quarter (25.6%) reported that they believed they would *always* or *nearly always* get a ticket. Those who provided one of these two answers—*always* and *nearly always*—are counted as believing a ticket is likely throughout the remainder of this report.

25.6%

of participants reported that they believed a ticket was likely if they talked on a handheld device while driving

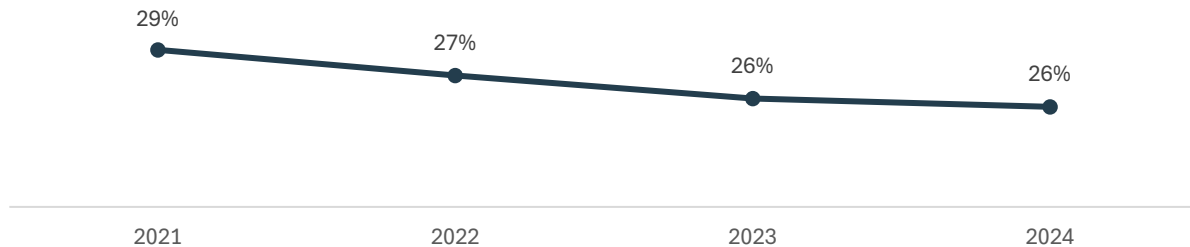
Those under the age of 60 were more likely to believe that talking on a handheld device while driving would result in a ticket. Twenty percent of the older age group reported that they thought it was likely compared to 29% of those aged 59 and younger.

Miles driven also had an impact on the belief that a ticket was likely. Thirty-two percent (32%) of those who drove less than 5,000 miles in the previous year believed that talking on a handheld device while driving would result in a ticket, compared to 24% of those who drove 5,000 miles or more.

Lastly, location was associated with the belief that talking on a handheld device while driving would result in a ticket. Respondents from Portland were the least likely to believe a ticket was likely, at 15%, while those in Lewiston and Scarborough were the most likely, at 32% and 31%, respectively.

The proportion of participants who thought talking on a handheld device while driving would result in a ticket in 2024 was not statistically significantly different from the 2023 rate. It was, however, lower than the 2021 rate of 29%.

Believe Talking on Handheld Device While Driving Will Result in Ticket, 2021-2024



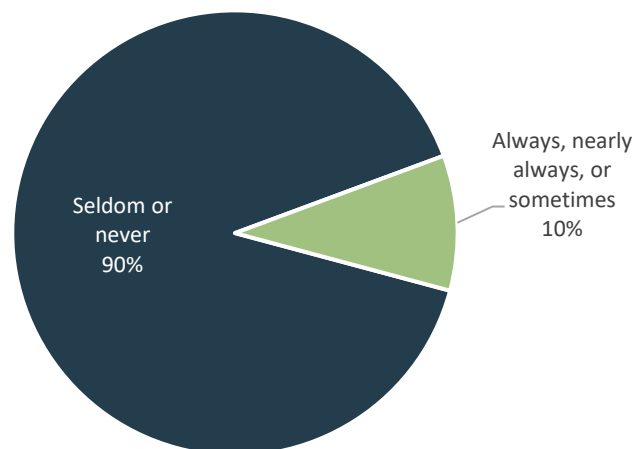
Impact of Enforcement Awareness

Hearing about enforcement of distracted driving laws appears to have no direct effect on talking on a handheld device while driving. There was, however, an indirect effect. Those who heard about extra enforcement of distracted driving laws were more likely to think talking on a handheld device while driving would result in a ticket. Twenty-four percent (24%) of those who did not hear about extra enforcement thought a ticket was likely compared to 34% of those who did hear. Thinking that talking on a handheld device would result in a ticket, in turn, was associated with less of the behavior. Ten percent (10%) of those who thought a ticket was likely reported talking on a handheld device, compared to 15% of those who thought a ticket was not likely.

Texting on Handheld Device While Driving

Frequency of Texting on Handheld Device While Driving

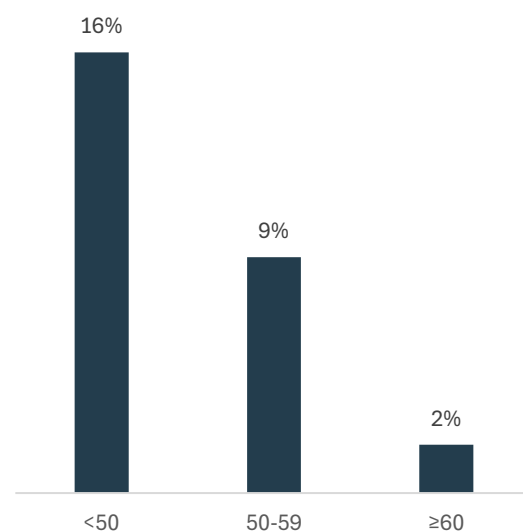
Participants were asked how frequently they text on a handheld cellular phone while driving. Participants could choose from the following answers: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, and *never*. Most participants answered this question (99.1%) and of those who did, 10% reported that they *sometimes*, *nearly always*, or *always* text on a handheld cell phone while driving. Those who provided these three answers—*sometimes*, *nearly always*, or *always*—are counted as texting on a handheld cell phone throughout the remainder of this report.



Rates of texting on a handheld cell phone while driving varied depending on a number of driver attributes.

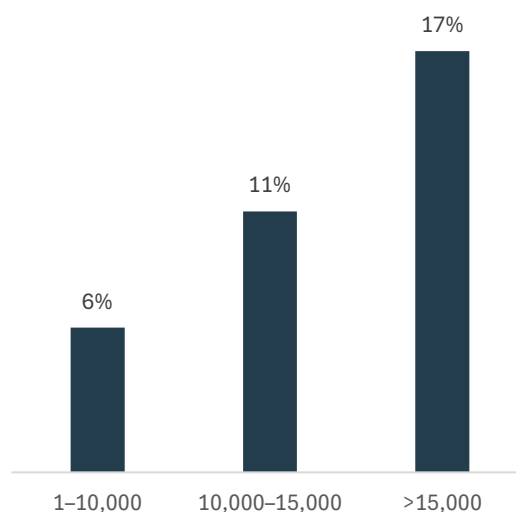
Age

Participants aged 49 and younger were the most likely to text on a handheld phone while driving, at 16%, followed by those aged 50 to 59, at 9%, and those aged 60 and older, at 2%.



Miles Driven

Participants who drove more miles were more likely to text on a handheld cell phone while driving. Six percent (6%) of those who drove 10,000 or less the previous year reported texting and driving, 11% of those who drove 10,000 to 15,000 reported doing so, and 17% of those who drove more than 15,000 miles did so.



Location

At 16%, participants from Ellsworth were more likely to text on a handheld cell phone while driving compared to participants from other locations at 9%.

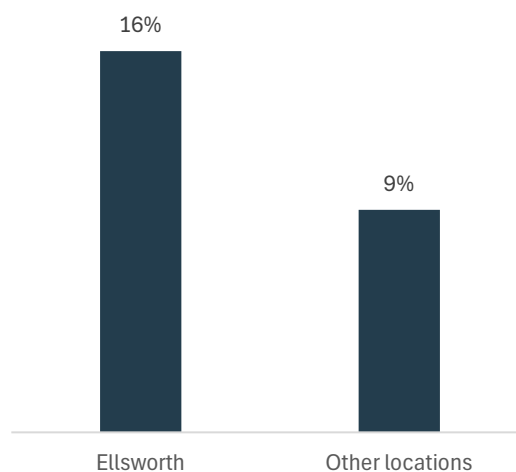
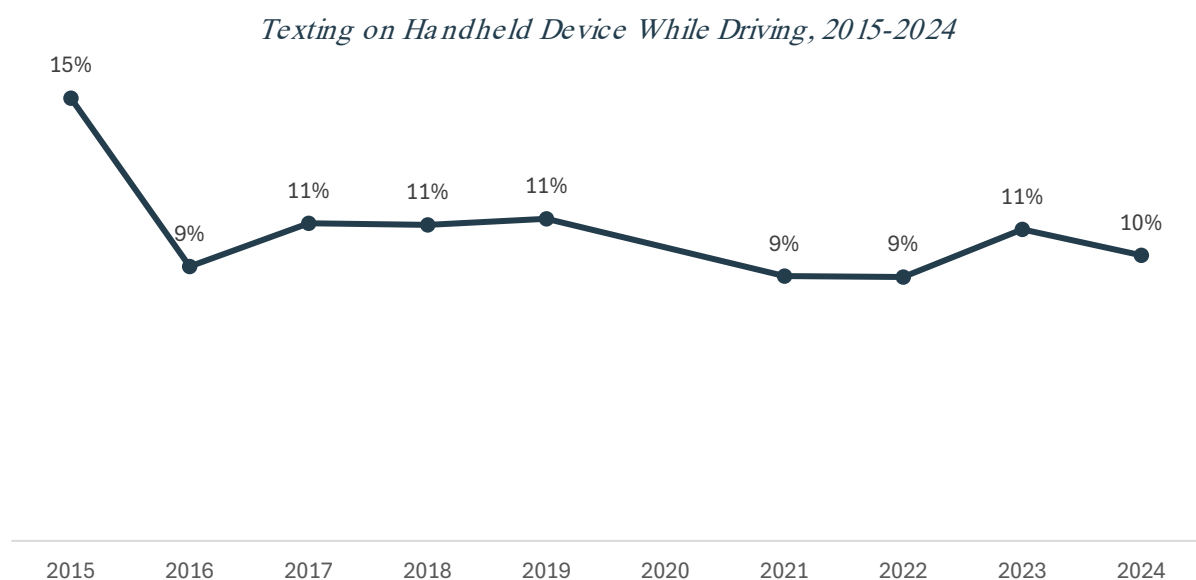


Table 7: Self-Reported Texting on Handheld Cell While Driving

	N	Always, Nearly Always, or Sometimes	
		Point Estimate	Confidence Interval
Age (p<.01)			
<50	648	16.4%	13.5% - 19.2%
50-59	240	8.8%	5.2% - 12.3%
≥60	500	1.8%	0.6% - 3.0%
Miles Driven Last Year (p<.01)			
1 to 10,000	704	6.0%	4.2% - 7.7%
10,001 to 15,000	381	10.8%	7.6% - 13.9%
More than 15,000	311	17.4%	13.2% - 21.6%
Location (p=.02)			
Ellsworth	87	16.1%	8.4% - 23.8%
Portland	199	13.1%	8.4% - 17.7%
Lewiston	202	12.4%	7.8% - 16.9%
Bangor	108	11.1%	5.2% - 17.0%
Scarborough	217	10.1%	6.1% - 14.2%
Kennebunk	158	8.2%	3.9% - 12.5%
Augusta	245	7.3%	4.1% - 10.6%
Rockland	123	4.9%	1.1% - 8.7%
Rumford	57	1.8%	0.0% - 5.2%

Texting on Handheld Device While Driving Trend

The proportion of those who reported texting on a handheld cell phone while driving in 2015 was 15%. Rates since then have ranged between 9% and 11%.



Perception of the Likelihood of Getting a Ticket

Survey participants were asked to report the likelihood of getting a ticket if they texted while driving by selecting one of the following answers: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, and *never*. Most participants answered this question (98.7%), and of those who did, 28.8% reported that they believed they would *always* or *nearly always* get a ticket. Those who provided one of these two answers—*always* and *nearly always*—are counted as believing a ticket is likely throughout the remainder of this report.

Age influenced the perception that texting on a handheld device while driving would result in a ticket, with those aged 25 and younger being the most likely to think it would, at 39%, and those aged 60 and over the least likely to think so, at 22%.

Miles driven the previous year likewise had an effect. Those who drove 5,000 miles or less were the most likely to believe that a ticket was likely if they texted while driving, at 36%, while those who drove more than 15,000 miles the previous year were the least likely to believe a ticket was likely, at 25%.

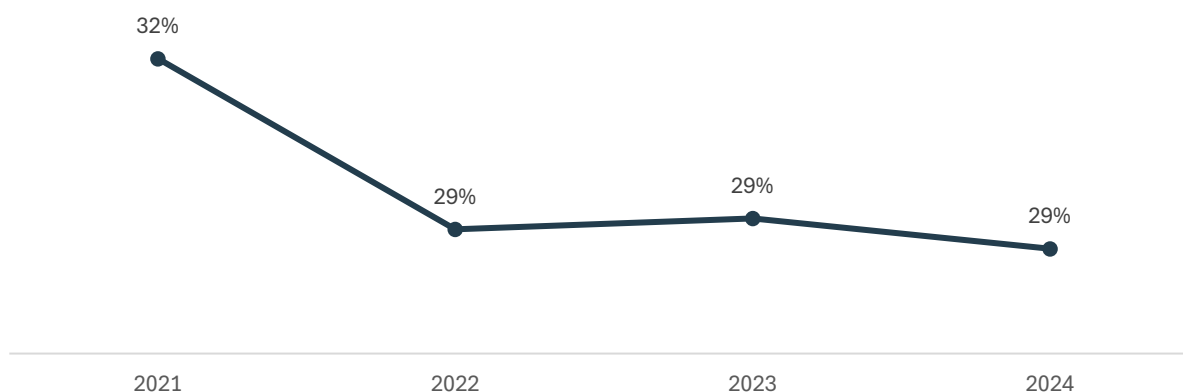
Lastly, location was associated with the perception that texting on a handheld device while driving would result in a ticket. Respondents from Portland were the least likely to think a ticket was likely, at 17%, while respondents from Lewiston were the most likely to think a ticket was likely, at 35%.

The proportion of participants who thought that texting while driving would result in a ticket in 2024 remained unchanged from the 2022 and 2023 rates.

28.8%

participants reported that they believed a ticket was likely if they texted while driving

Believe Texting While Driving Will Result in Ticket, 2021-2024



Impact of Enforcement Awareness

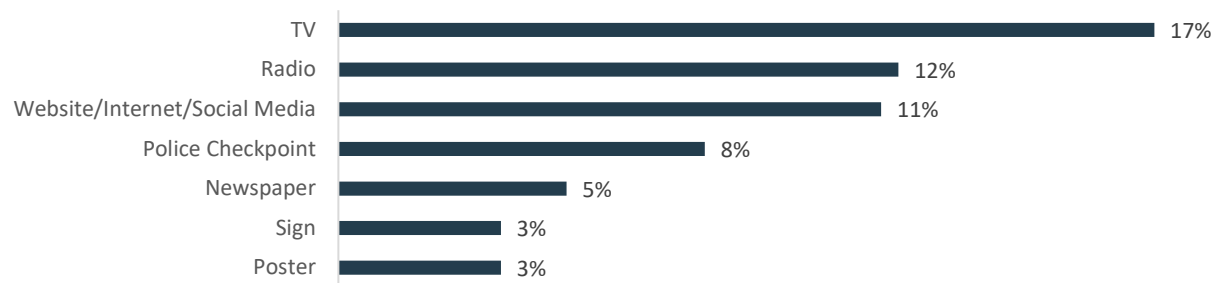
Hearing about enforcement of distracted driving laws appears to have no direct effect on texting while driving. There was, however, an indirect effect. Those who heard about extra enforcement of distracted driving laws were more likely to think texting while driving would result in a ticket. Twenty-six percent (26%) of those who did not hear about extra enforcement thought a ticket was likely compared to 38% of those who did hear. Thinking that texting while driving would result in a ticket, in turn, was associated with slightly less of the behavior. Six percent (6%) of those who thought a ticket was likely reported texting, compared to 11% of those who thought a ticket was not likely.



Sources of Awareness of Extra Enforcement

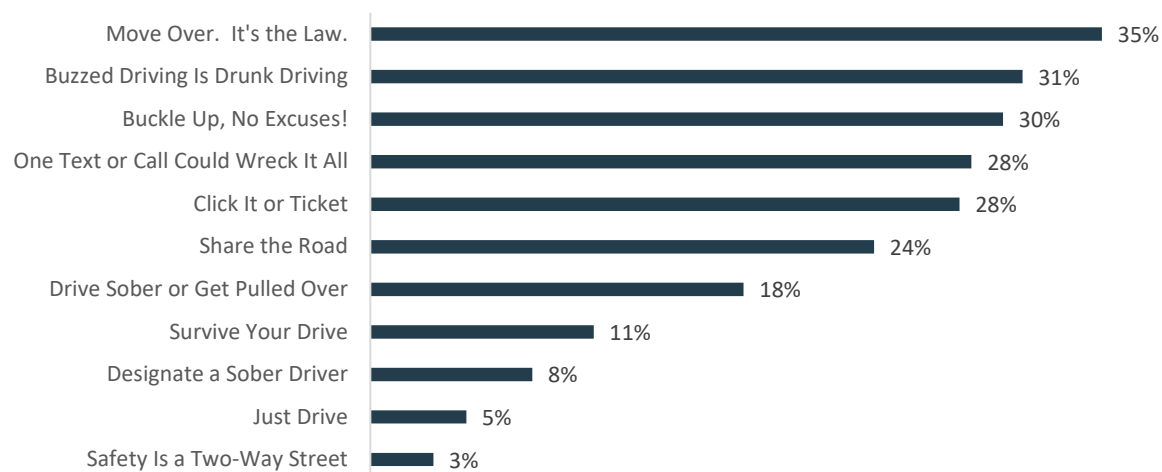
Survey participants who reported seeing or hearing about extra enforcement laws related to seat belt use, speeding, alcohol impaired driving, and distracted driving were asked to report where they saw or heard the message. They were provided with the following choices: *newspaper, radio, TV, poster, website, police checkpoint, and other*. Participants were allowed to check more than one answer.

Seventeen percent (17%) of participants said they saw the message on *TV*, followed by 12% who reported hearing on the *radio*. Eleven percent (11%) reported learning through a *website, Internet, or social media*; 8% reported learning about enforcement through a *police checkpoint*; 5% reported learning through the *newspaper*; 3% reported learning through a *sign*; and 3% reported learning through a *poster*.



Awareness of Public Service Messages

Survey participants were provided with the catch phrases associated with a number of public service messages and were asked to indicate which they saw or heard within the last 60 days. At 35%, *Move Over. It's the Law* was seen by the largest proportion of respondents. *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving* and *Buckle Up, No Excuses!* followed, at 31% and 30%, respectively. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents reported seeing or hearing *One Text or Call Could Wreck It All* and *Click It or Ticket*. Rates for remaining messages ranged between 3% and 24%.



Appendix

Survey appears in its entirety on the following pages.

This motor vehicle office is assisting in a vehicle safety study. Your answers to the following questions are voluntary and anonymous. Please complete the survey and then return it to the survey administrator.

1. Do you have a current Maine driver's license?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Your sex:
☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Your age:
☐ 15-17 ☐ 35-49
☐ 18-25 ☐ 50-59
☐ 26-34 ☐ 60 Plus
4. Your zip code: _____
5. About how many miles did you drive last year?
☐ None ☐ 10,001 to 15,000
☐ 1 to 5,000 ☐ More than 15,000
☐ 5,001 to 10,000
6. What type of vehicle do you drive most often (select one)?
☐ Passenger car ☐ Minivan
☐ Pickup truck ☐ Full van
☐ Sport utility vehicle ☐ Other
7. In the past 60 days, have you seen or heard about **extra police enforcement** around any of the following? (Check as many as apply.)
☐ Seatbelt use ☐ Alcohol impaired driving
☐ Speeding ☐ Distracted driving
8. Please indicate where you've seen or heard about **extra police enforcement** within the past 60 days. (Check as many as apply.)
☐ Newspaper ☐ Poster
☐ Radio ☐ Website
☐ TV ☐ Police checkpoint
☐ Other: _____
9. Which **public service messages** have you seen or heard within the past 60 days? (Check all that apply.)
☐ Buckle Up, No Excuses! ☐ Move Over. It's the Law.
☐ Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving ☐ One Text or Call Could Wreck It All
☐ Click It or Ticket ☐ Safety Is a Two-Way Street
☐ Designate a Sober Driver ☐ Share the Road
☐ Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over ☐ Survive Your Drive
☐ Just Drive ☐ Other: _____
10. In the past 60 days, how many times have you driven a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverages? _____ (number of times)

Turn for next page



	Always	Nearly always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
11. What do you think the chances would be of getting arrested if you did drive after drinking? <i>(Please answer the question even if you didn't.)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. On a local road with a speed limit of 30 mph, how often do you drive faster than 35 mph?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. What do you think the chances would be of getting a ticket if you did drive over the speed limit? <i>(Please answer the question even if you didn't.)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. How often do you talk on a hand-held cellular phone when you drive?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. What do you think the chances would be of getting a ticket if you did talk on a hand-held cell phone while driving? <i>(Please answer the question even if you didn't.)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. How often do you send text messages or emails on a hand-held cellular phone when you drive?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. What do you think the chances would be of getting a ticket if you did text while driving? <i>(Please answer the question even if you didn't.)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. How often do you use seat belts when you drive or ride in a car, van, sport utility vehicle or pickup?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. What do you think the chances would be of getting a ticket if you did not wear your seat belt? <i>(Please answer the question even if you did.)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Much less often	Less often	About the same	More often	Much more often
20. Compared to the last couple of years, would you say you now wear your seat belt:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank you very much for completing the survey!

About the Muskie School of Public Service

The Muskie School of Public Service is Maine's distinguished public policy school, combining an extensive applied research and technical assistance portfolio with rigorous undergraduate and graduate degree programs in geography-anthropology; tourism and hospitality; policy, planning, and management (MPPM); and public health (MPH). The school is nationally recognized for applying innovative knowledge to critical issues in the fields of sustainable development and health and human service policy and management and is home to the Catherine Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy.

About the Catherine Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy

The Catherine Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy at the Muskie School of Public Service is dedicated to developing innovative, evidence-informed, and practical approaches to pressing health and social challenges faced by individuals, families, and communities.

About the Survey Research Center

The Survey Research Center provides technical expertise and assistance to support the generation, processing, and analysis of quantitative data in the social sciences, human services, and public opinion fields. The Center provides a wide range of research and technical assistance services to federal, state, and municipal governments, private nonprofit agencies, businesses, and University faculty and departments. Services include proposal preparation, market research, needs assessments, program evaluation, policy analysis, and information system design.

