
2009 Nova Scotia Road Safety Survey

Final Highlights Report

Prepared for:

Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

November 2009



www.cra.ca

1-888-414-1336



Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
District Breakdown	2
Executive Summary	3
Conclusions	4
Detailed Analysis	6
Road Safety Issue Identification	6
Road Safety Issue Behaviour	6
Behaviour Statements.....	8
Winter Driving	10
Distracted Driving	11
Cell Phone Legislation	12
Seatbelt Use	13
Fatigue	13
Speeding.....	14
Impaired Driving	15
Study Methodology	17

Tables and Graphs

Figure 1	Q1 Seriousness of Road Safety Issues.....	Page 6
Figure 2	Q2 Frequency of Activities in the Past Month.....	Page 7
Figure 3	Q3a, d, h Driver's License Behaviour	Page 8
Figure 4	Q3c, e, f Speeding Behaviour.....	Page 9
Figure 5	Q3b, g Drinking and Driving Behaviour.....	Page 10
Figure 6	Q4 Frequency of Activities During Winter Season.....	Page 10
Figure 7	Q7 Distracted Driving Behaviours.....	Page 11
Figure 8	Q8 Had to Brake or Steer to Avoid Being in a Crash Because Distracted ...	Page 12
Figure 9	Q9 Change in Cell Phone Use Since New Legislation Passed	Page 12
Figure 10	Q10-12 Seatbelt Use Behaviours in the Past Month	Page 13
Figure 11	Q13-14 Fatigue Behaviours in the Past Month.....	Page 14
Figure 12	Q17 Speeding Behaviours in the Past Month	Page 14
Figure 13	Q20 Number of Times Driven Within 2 Hours of Drinking	Page 15
Figure 14	Q21 Number of Alcoholic Drinks	Page 16
Figure 15	Q22 Confidence in Maintaining Control of Vehicle	Page 16

Introduction

This report presents the findings from the **2009 Nova Scotia Road Safety Survey** as prepared by Corporate Research Associates Inc. (CRA) on behalf of the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal ('the Department'). Road safety is a priority of the Department, and the information collected in this survey will assist in the implementation and evaluation of road safety initiatives for Nova Scotia.

The Department seeks to obtain baseline data with respect to Nova Scotians' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours regarding road safety, and to measure changes over time. The main objectives of the Nova Scotia Road Safety Survey were:

- To provide baseline information on road safety issues.
- To provide information on knowledge, attitudes and behaviours on road safety issues and to measure changes in specific issues over time.
- To help identify road safety issues of importance to Nova Scotians.
- To provide specific information to help in evaluating the impact of road safety initiatives over time.

In fulfillment of these objectives, a total of 1,445 telephone interviews were conducted with Nova Scotia drivers from June 18 to July 14, 2009. Approximately 360 interviews were conducted in each of the Department's four districts (Eastern, Western, Central and Northern: see map below).

This report presents findings, as well as conclusions drawn from this analysis. An executive summary of the findings is also included.

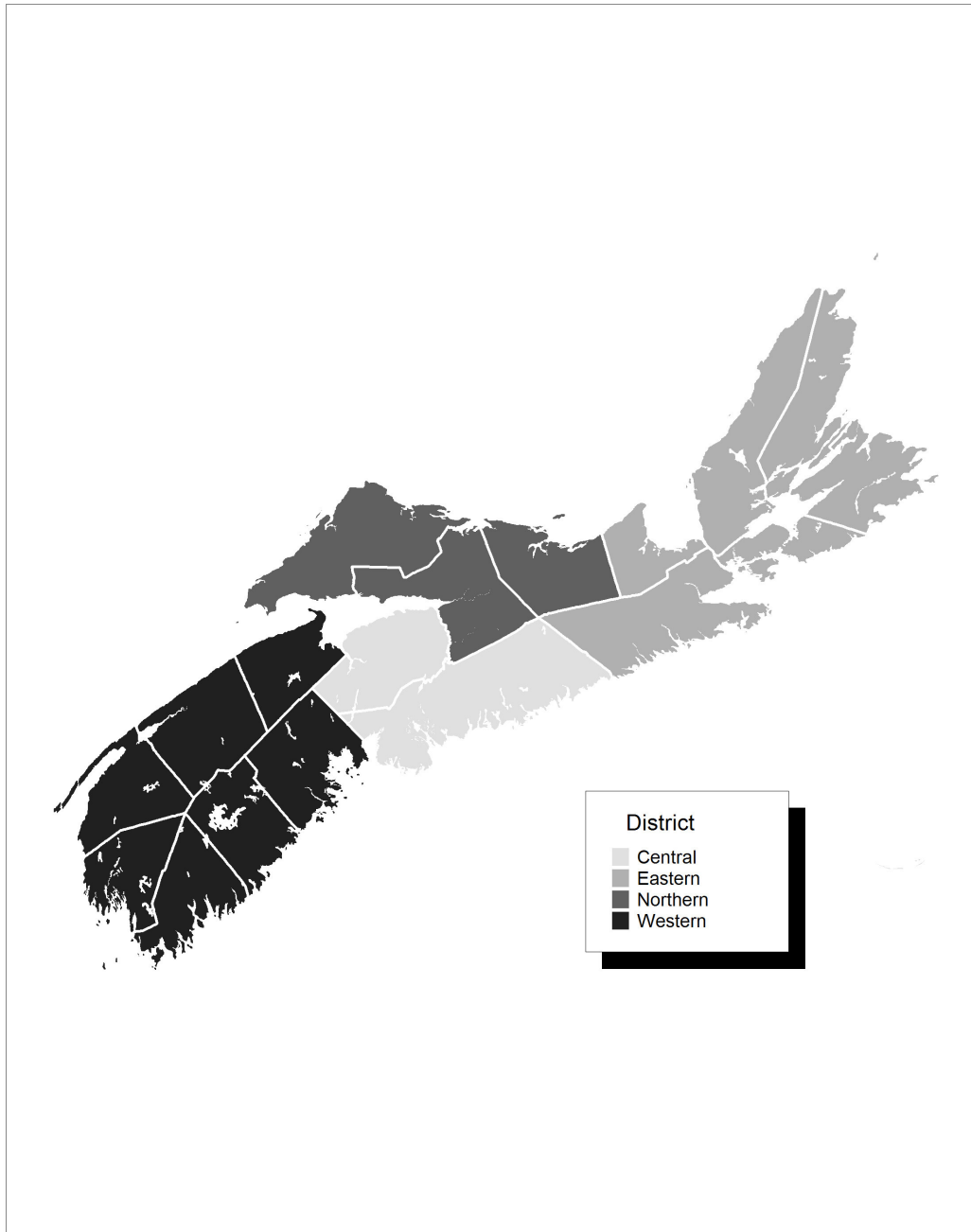
Throughout this report, only statistically significant differences among population subgroups or districts are discussed. In addition, as some subgroup characteristics are composed of many categories (for example, age is broken down into seven categories), and therefore many categories may be statistically significant from other categories, only select subgroups will be discussed in terms of statistical significance. These include:

- Broad age: 16 to 34/35+
- Gender: Male/Female
- District: Eastern/Western/Central/Northern
- Income adequacy: Lowest/Middle/Highest



District Breakdown

The map below indicates the four districts which are referenced throughout this report.



Executive Summary

Results for the **2009 Nova Scotia Road Safety Survey** indicate that speed while driving as well as drinking and driving are deemed extremely serious problems by Nova Scotia drivers. Distracted drivers as well as seatbelt usage also are identified in this survey as important driving issues by the province's driving population.

What could be deemed 'moderate' speeding is a common practice on Nova Scotia roads. That is, the majority of Nova Scotia drivers regularly drive between 1 and 15 km/hour over the speed limit. While excessive speeding is significantly less common, there remains a small subset of drivers who drive between 16 and 30 km/hour over the speed limit, or indeed more than 30 km/hour over the speed limit. Maintaining a valid driver's license is very important to most Nova Scotia drivers, although it is noteworthy that receiving a speeding ticket is not considered an issue among one-third of drivers in the province.

The vast majority of Nova Scotia drivers report that they have not driven after consuming alcohol in the month prior to the survey. When queried concerning alcohol consumption and driving in more detail (e.g., how many times have you driven a motor vehicle within two hours of drinking any amount of alcohol, even if it was a single beer), the incidence of reported drinking and driving increases among survey respondents. This seemingly suggests there may be a belief among many drivers that going behind the wheel less than two hours after having consumed a single drink does not constitute 'driving after consuming alcohol'.

There exist aspects of concern regarding seatbelt usage in the province. Primarily, while the vast majority of Nova Scotia drivers *always* wear a seatbelt, either as a passenger or as a driver, approximately one in ten do not. Furthermore, those drivers who *do not* wear a seatbelt are more likely to either drive above the posted speed limit, or to drink and drive.

Finally, another aspect of the survey results of note to the Department concerns young drivers in the province. Across most measures under consideration in the research, younger drivers (i.e., those who are either 16 to 24 years of age, or, casting a wider net, even those under 35), are more likely to undertake risky behaviour such as driving above the posted speed limit, or drinking and driving. Moreover, younger drivers are also less likely to consider the road safety issues examined in the survey, as being serious problems in the province. There is little difference between the results collected for young males and young females in this regard.



Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the detailed analysis of the study's findings:

Drinking, speeding, distractions, and cell phone usage are considered serious road safety problems in Nova Scotia.

When asked to assess specific road safety issues in regards to whether or not they are serious problems, drinking and driving, speeding, distractions, and using cell phones emerge as the most serious problems. Young drivers are less likely to consider these issues serious problems as compared with older drivers. A number of Nova Scotians drive above the speed limit, engage in distracting behaviour, or use a cell phone while driving, and a small number drive within two hours of consuming alcohol, indicating these issues are valid concerns in the province.

Speeding is the most common 'risky' behaviour among Nova Scotia drivers. Those aged 16 to 34 are more likely to undertake risky behaviour compared with older residents.

When asked to identify how often they engage in a number of different activities, it is found that speeding in general, or speeding up to get through a traffic light before it changes, are the most common. Furthermore, both men and women aged 16 to 34 are more likely to undertake risky behaviour, than are those 35 years of age or older. Indeed, the younger age group is fully twice as likely to undertake on a frequent basis most of the activities under consideration.

The vast majority of drivers consider it important to maintain a valid driver's license. A small number of Nova Scotia drivers do not consider getting a speeding ticket an issue.

While speeding tickets are not considered 'a big deal' by a sizable minority of drivers, a large percentage of drivers in Nova Scotia strongly agree that it is important to maintain a valid driver's license. A small percentage of drivers admit to speeding in places where they know the police do not monitor. Furthermore, more than one in three drivers indicate they would be in trouble with their employer if their license was suspended.

Many Nova Scotians are driving in winter conditions when it is unsafe to do so.

It is evident that Nova Scotia drivers take care during the winter season, with the majority clearing snow off vehicles, and not driving too fast for the conditions. In contrast, a majority admit to driving at least on rare occasions during the past winter season, in conditions that were unsafe to do so.



The majority of Nova Scotia drivers engage in activities that could be distracting when driving.

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they undertake various activities that could be considered distracting while driving. Most frequently, Nova Scotia drivers talk or interact with passengers in the vehicle, adjust climate controls or change radio stations or CDs. Furthermore, a majority of drivers on at least one occasion in the month prior to the survey looked at something outside of the vehicle while driving (such as animals or a crash), or have eaten food or consumed a beverage. Activities such as having a pet unrestrained in the vehicle, making or receiving phone calls, using technical devices, personal grooming, or sending text messages, are less common. The vast majority of Nova Scotia drivers have engaged in at least four of the ten distracted driving behaviours at least once in the month prior to the survey.

Many drivers have switched to hands-free headsets, or no longer talk on their cell phone while driving.

Most drivers who previously used a cell phone while driving have changed their behaviour since new cell phone legislation recently was passed in Nova Scotia, a law which prohibits drivers from using hand-held cell phones while driving. It appears that only a small percentage of drivers continue to talk on their hand-held cellular telephone while driving.

Nova Scotians wear seatbelts while driving or as a passenger.

The vast majority of Nova Scotia drivers *always* wear a seatbelt while driving. Only one percent *never* wear a seatbelt while driving. Similarly, most residents also wear a seatbelt when they are a passenger, or indicate they always secure a child in a car seat or booster seat.

Driver fatigue may be an issue in the province.

While only a very small percentage of Nova Scotia drivers state they often drive when overtired, four percent have fallen asleep or dozed off while at the wheel of a vehicle in the month prior to the survey. This is much more common among those aged 16 to 24 compared with other age groups.

Driving a few kilometres per hour over the speed limit is common in Nova Scotia.

Nearly all Nova Scotia drivers at least occasionally have driven between one and 15 kilometres per hour over the speed limit in the month prior to the survey.

Younger drivers are more likely to drink and drive.

In the month prior to the survey, just over two in ten Nova Scotia drivers have driven a vehicle within two hours of drinking some amount of alcohol. This behaviour is more common among those aged 16 to 34. The majority of those who report driving after drinking have consumed only one drink state that they are very confident that they could maintain control of their vehicle.



Detailed Analysis

Road Safety Issue Identification

Drinking, speeding, distractions, and cell phone usage are considered serious road safety problems in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotians were asked to rate a list of issues on a '1' to '5' scale, where '1' is not a problem at all, and '5' is an extremely serious problem. Of the ten issues under consideration, approximately seven in ten drivers rate drinking drivers, excessive speeding, distracted drivers, and driving while using a cell phone as serious problems (i.e., either a '4' or '5' rating). Furthermore, just under one-half consider street racing and drivers who run red lights as serious problems. (Tables 1a-j)

Figure 1 Seriousness of Road Safety Issues ('4' or '5' on a 5-Point Scale Where '1' is Not a Problem At All and '5' is An Extremely Serious Problem)	
Issue	%
Drinking drivers	69
Excessive speeding	68
Distracted drivers	68
Driving while using cell phones, either hand-held or hands-free	67
Street racing	49
Drivers who run red lights	47
Children who are not properly secured in child safety seats	44
Drowsy drivers	44
Older drivers	29
Young drivers	22

Road Safety Issue Behaviour

Speeding is the most common risky behaviour among Nova Scotia drivers, and those aged 16 to 34 are more likely to undertake risky behaviour compared with older residents.

Drivers also were asked to identify how often they have undertaken certain activities during the month prior to the survey. Very few residents indicate they often undertake the activities under consideration, although one in ten Nova Scotia drivers indicate they have often driven well over the posted speed limit in the month prior to the survey (a rating of '5' or '4' on a 5-point scale, where '5' means very often and '1' means never). Residents are most likely to report they have never taken a risk while driving, or they have never driven after consuming alcohol.



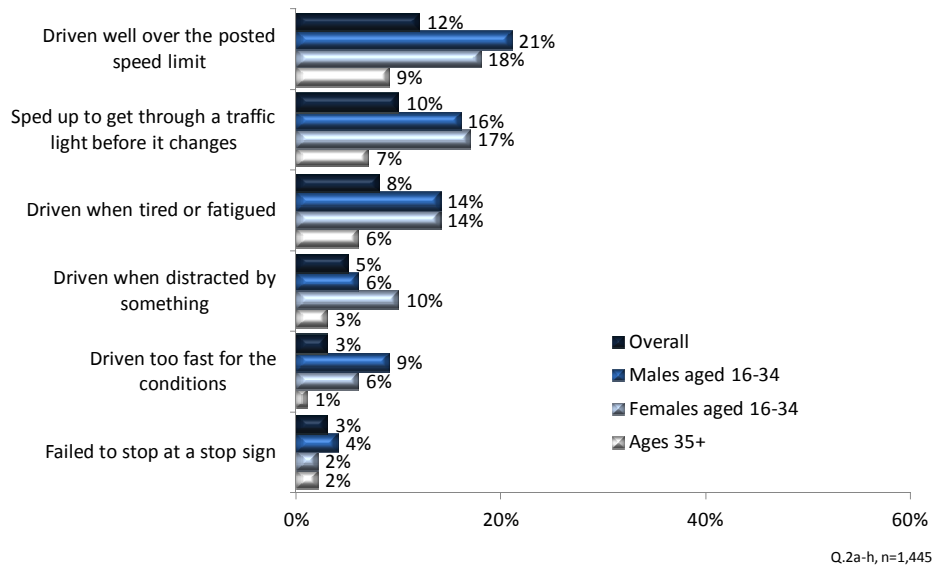
Behaviour Analysis by Age

Males 16 to 34 tend to undertake risky behaviour while driving, as compared with other Nova Scotia drivers. Furthermore, while females 16 to 34 are less likely than their male counterparts to undertake risky behaviour, they are more likely than those 35 years of age and older to do so.

Just under two in ten males 16 to 34 indicate they have sped up to get through a traffic light before it changes, while a similar result is catalogued for females aged 16 to 34. Those under the age of 35 are twice as likely as those 35 years of age or older, to state they have sped up to get through a traffic light in the month prior to the survey.

Furthermore, two in ten Nova Scotians aged 16 to 34 have driven well over the posted speed limit in the month prior to the survey, a finding that is consistent for both males and females of this age. Again, this age group is twice as likely as those 35 years of age or older to indicate they have often undertaken this activity in the month prior to the survey. Additionally, those aged 16 to 34 are more likely to speed up to get through a traffic light, or to drive when tired, as compared with those 35 years of age or older. (Tables 2a-h)

Figure 2
Frequency of Activities in the Past Month
 '4' or '5' on a 5-Point Scale Where '1' is Never and '5' is Very Often

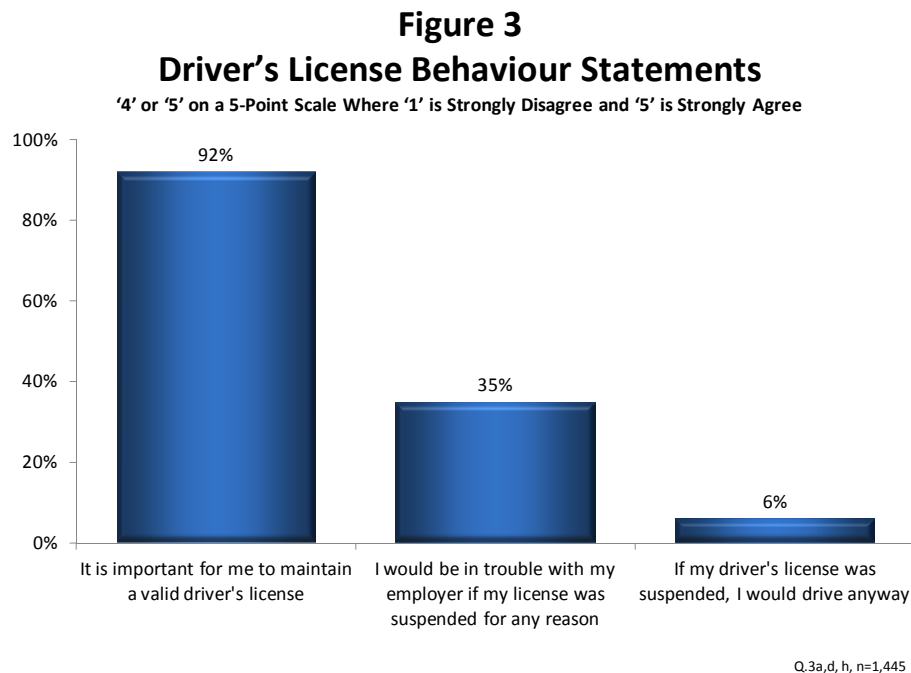


Behaviour Statements

The vast majority of drivers consider it important to maintain a valid driver's license. A small number of Nova Scotia drivers do not consider getting a speeding ticket an issue.

Driver's License

The vast majority of Nova Scotia drivers indicate it is important for them to maintain a valid driver's license. Meanwhile, drivers are divided when assessing the importance of having a driver's license in regards to their employment. Specifically, three in ten strongly agree (rated as a '5' on a 5-point scale) that they would be in trouble with their employer if their license was suspended for any reason, while four in ten strongly disagree (rated as a '1' on a 5-point scale). Fewer than one in ten Nova Scotians indicate they would continue driving if their license were suspended. Those aged 35 or above are more likely to strongly disagree (89%) with this statement compared with younger residents (84%). (Tables 3a, 3d and 3h)



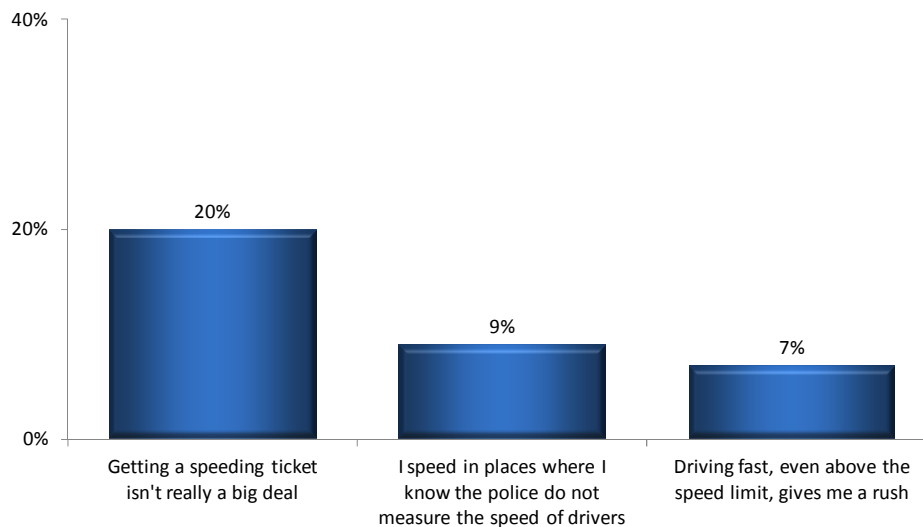
Speeding

A small number of Nova Scotia drivers agree that driving fast, even above the speed limit, gives them a rush. The vast majority strongly disagree with this statement (78%). Those over the age of 35 are more likely to strongly disagree (81%) compared with those 16 to 34 years of age (69%). One in ten drivers admits to speeding in places where police do not measure the speed of drivers, while two-thirds strongly disagree that this is the case. Younger drivers (i.e., those aged 16 to 34) are more likely (12%) than those 35 years of age or older (8%) to agree with this statement. Two in ten Nova Scotia drivers do not believe getting a speeding ticket is a big deal. Older residents are more likely to perceive that a speeding ticket is not an issue, with those 35 years of age and older more likely to strongly agree (16%) than those aged 16 to 34 (8%). (Tables 3c, 3e, and 3f)



Figure 4 Speeding Behaviour Statements

'4' or '5' on a 5-Point Scale Where '1' is Strongly Disagree and '5' is Strongly Agree



Q.3c, e, f, n=1,445

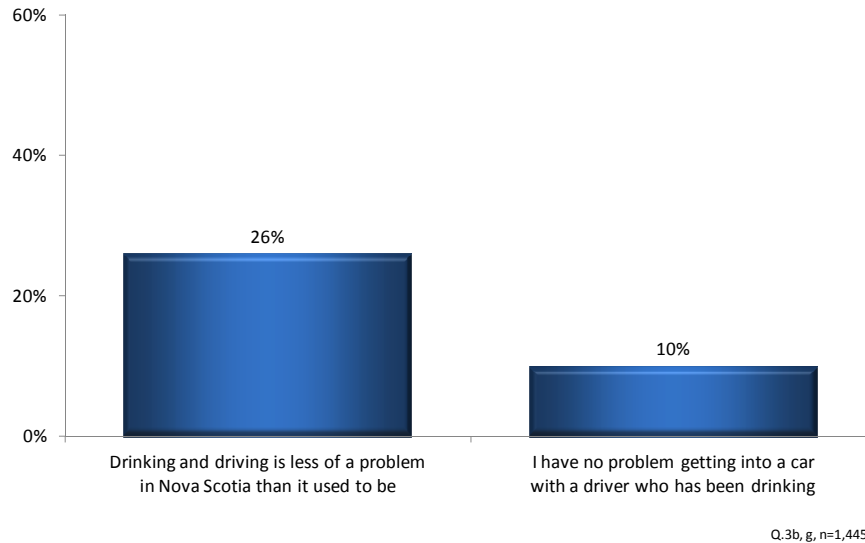
Drinking and Driving

One-quarter of Nova Scotia drivers consider drinking and driving less of a problem in the province than it used to be. Males (17%) are more likely than females (12%) to strongly agree that drinking and driving is less of a problem than it used to be. Additionally, those in the middle income adequacy category (34%) are more likely to strongly disagree with this statement when compared with those in the highest income adequacy category (25%).

Most residents do not want to get into a car with a driver who has been drinking, although one in ten indicate they do not have a problem with this situation. Drivers who are 35 or older are more likely to not have a problem driving with someone who has been drinking (11% strongly agreeing), compared with those 16 to 34 (5% strongly agreeing). Furthermore, women are more likely to strongly disagree (90%) when compared with men (84%). (Tables 3b and 3g)



Figure 5
Drinking and Driving Behaviour Statements
 '4' or '5' on a 5-Point Scale Where '1' is Strongly Disagree and '5' is Strongly Agree

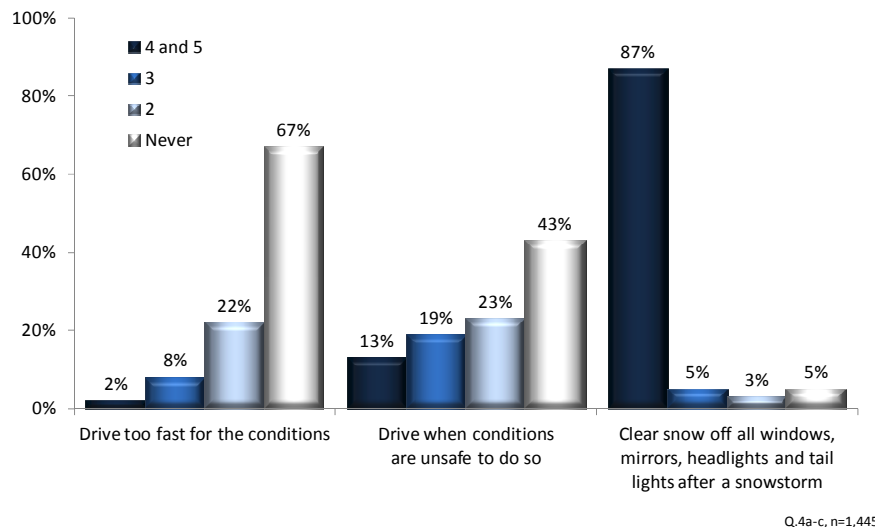


Winter Driving

Many Nova Scotians are driving in winter conditions when it is unsafe to do so.

Most residents do not drive too fast for winter road conditions, although over one-half have driven in conditions that were unsafe to do so, such as during a snowstorm or a blizzard, at least once. Those aged 16 to 34 (17%) are more likely than those 35 years of age or older (12%) to often drive in unsafe conditions (a '5' or a '4' on a 5-point scale). Finally, nearly all Nova Scotia drivers state they clear snow off all windows, mirrors, head lights, and tail lights after a snowstorm. (Tables 4a, 4b and 4c)

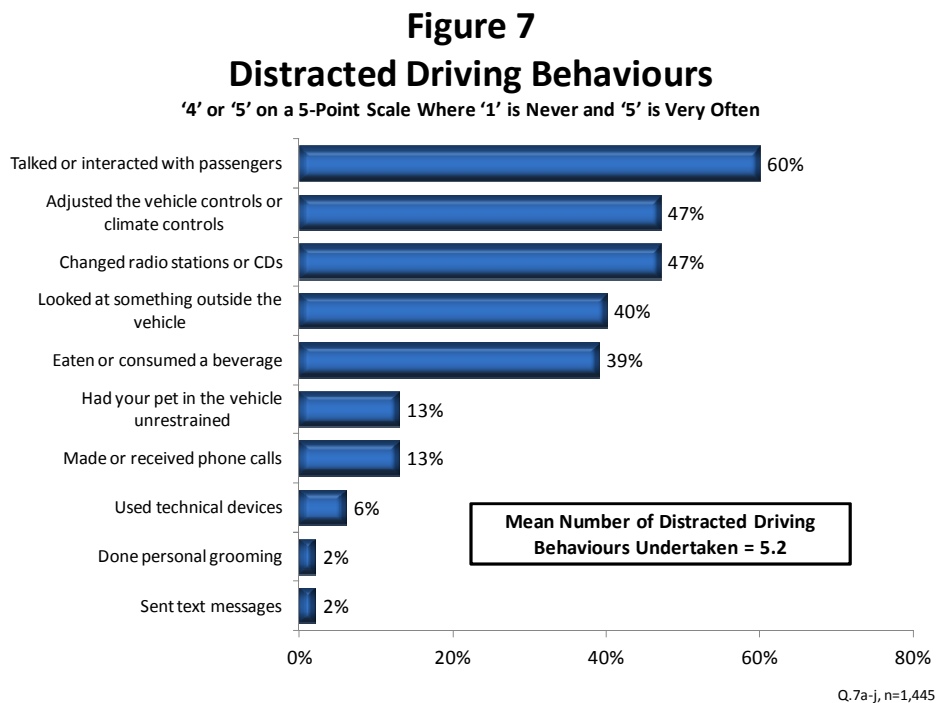
Figure 6
Frequency of Activities During the Past Winter Season
 5-Point Scale Where '1' is Never and '5' is Very Often



Distracted Driving

The majority of Nova Scotia drivers engage in activities that could be distracting when driving.

Drivers admit to engaging in a number of activities that could be distracting, and the vast majority of Nova Scotia drivers have at least once undertaken four or more of these ten activities in the month prior to the survey. Specifically, six in ten talked or interacted with passengers (either adults or children) in the month prior to the survey (rated as a '5' or a '4' on a 5-point scale), while driving. Just under one-half changed radio stations or CDs, or adjusted the vehicle controls or climate controls. Four in ten have eaten or consumed a beverage, while a similar number looked at something outside the vehicle. A smaller number admit to making or receiving phone calls, having a pet in their vehicle that was not restrained, or using devices such as Blackberries, pagers, or iPods. Very few (2%) have sent a text message or have undertaken personal grooming such as applying make-up. (Tables 7a-j)



Avoiding a Crash

In the month prior to the survey, one in ten Nova Scotia drivers have had to either apply the brakes or had to steer to avoid being in a crash because they were distracted by something inside or outside of their vehicle. Those aged 16 to 34 are more likely (16%) to report breaking or steering to avoid being in a crash compared with those 35 years of age and older (12%). Among those who state they have either applied brakes or steered to avoid a crash, six in ten indicate this happened once in the month prior to survey, while four in ten have done this two or more times. (Tables 8a and 8b)



Had to Brake or Steer to Avoid Being in a Crash Because of Being Distracted by Something Inside or Outside the Vehicle

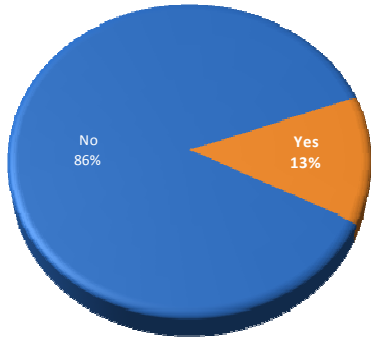
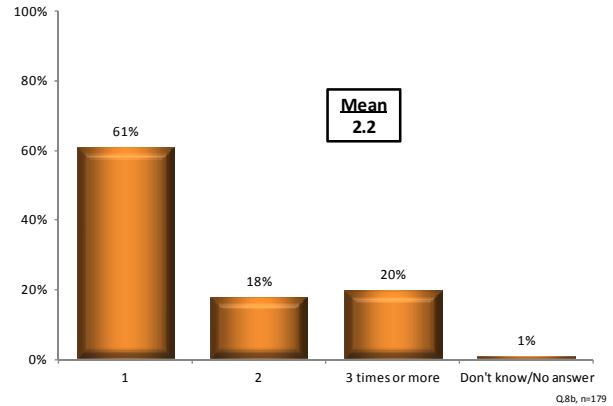


Figure 8

Number of Times This Has Happened in the Past Month
Among Those Who Answered Yes to Q.8a



Cell Phone Legislation

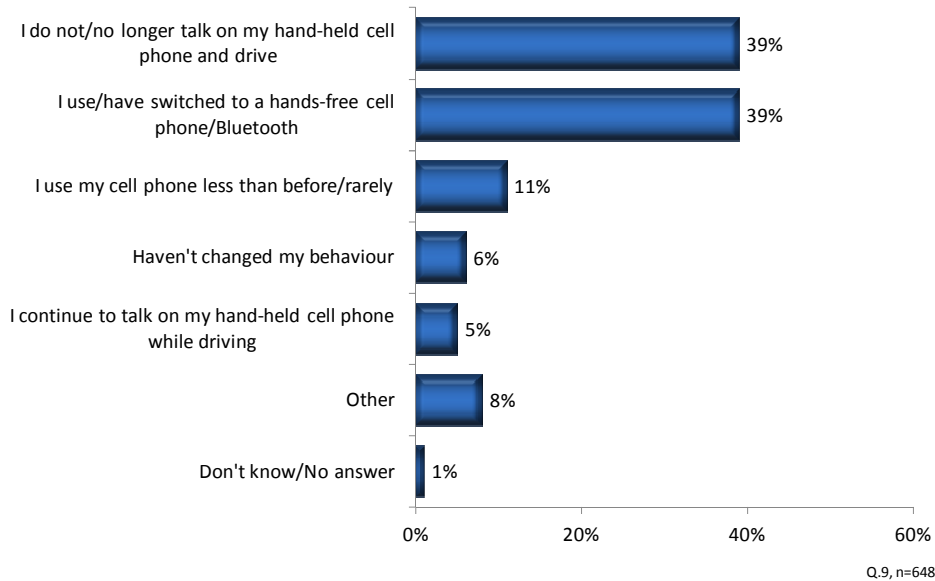
Many drivers have switched to hands-free headsets, or no longer talk on their cell phone while driving.

Most Nova Scotia drivers who previously used their cell phone while driving have changed their behaviour as a result of new legislation banning the use of hand-held cellular telephones while driving. Otherwise, very few residents continue to talk on their hand held cellular telephone or indicate they have not changed their behaviour. (Table 9)

Figure 9

Change in Cell Phone Use Since New Legislation Passed

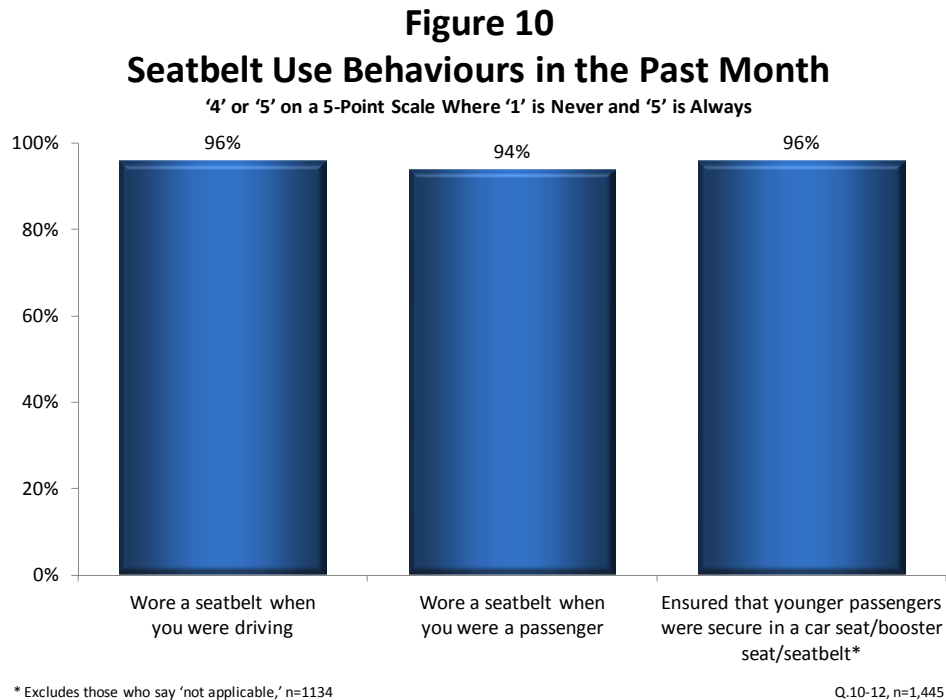
Excluding Those Who Don't Own/Never Use a Cell Phone While Driving, Total Mentions



Seatbelt Use

Nova Scotians wear seatbelts while driving or as a passenger.

The vast majority of Nova Scotia drivers *always* wear a seatbelt while driving. Similarly, most residents also wear a seatbelt when they are a passenger, and indicate they always secure a child in a car seat or booster seat. (Tables 10, 11 and 12)



Fatigue

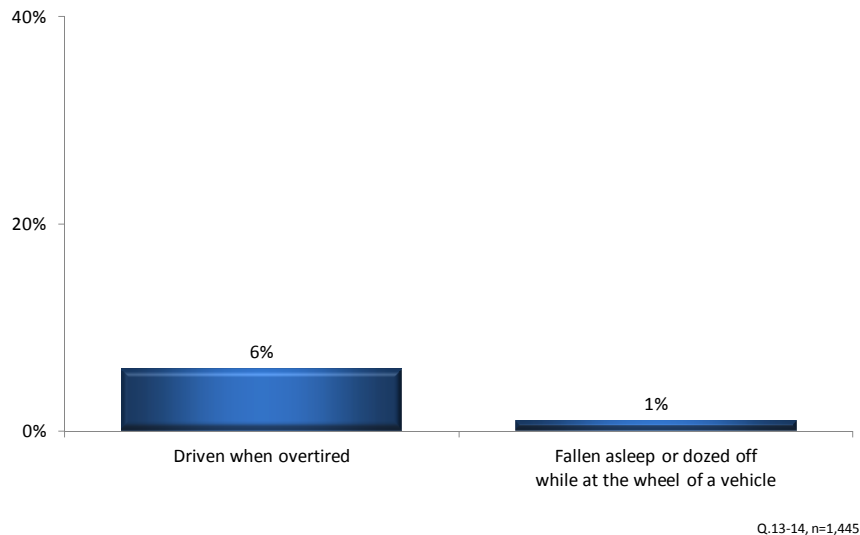
Driver fatigue may be an issue in the province.

Six percent of Nova Scotia drivers state they often drive when overtired (rated as a '5' or '4' on a 5-point scale, where '5' is very often and '1' is never). This is much more common among those 16 to 24 years of age (19%).

In the month prior to the survey, one percent of all drivers have *often* fallen asleep or dozed off while at the wheel of a vehicle (considered a '4' or '5' on a 5-point scale). Additionally, four percent of the driver population offer a rating other than *never* in this regard, suggesting that a small but noteworthy percentage of drivers have fallen asleep or dozed off while at the wheel of a vehicle at least once in the month prior to the survey. (Tables 13 and 14)



Figure 11
Fatigue Behaviours in the Past Month
 '4' or '5' on a 5-Point Scale Where '1' is Never and '5' is Very Often

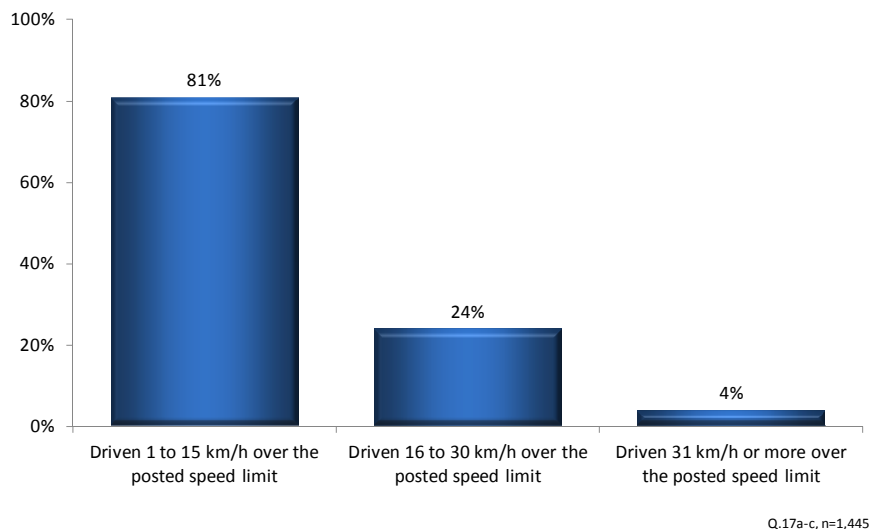


Speeding

Driving a few kilometres per hour over the speed limit is common in Nova Scotia.

While most Nova Scotia drivers have driven between 1 and 15 kilometres per hour over the speed limit in the month prior to the survey, only one-quarter of Nova Scotia drivers have often driven 16 to 30 kilometres per hour over the speed limit in the month prior to the survey. Finally, very few Nova Scotia drivers have driven 31 kilometres per hour or more over the speed limit in the month prior to the survey. (Tables 17a-c)

Figure 12
Speeding Behaviours in the Past Month
 '2', '3', '4' or '5' on a 5-Point Scale Where '1' is Never and '5' is Very Often



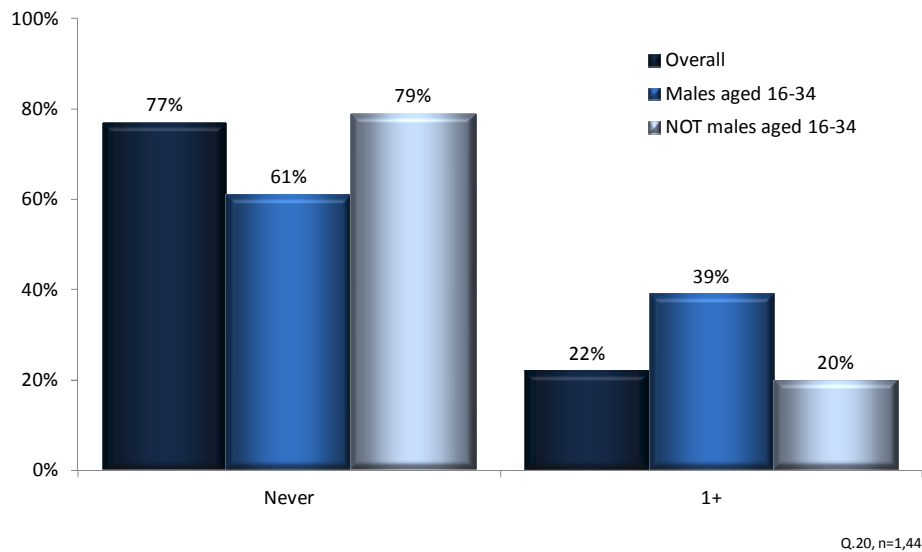
The likelihood of speeding decreases with age, with those aged 16 to 34 more likely to indicate they often drive between 1 and 15 kilometres per hour over the speed limit (45%) compared with those 35 years of age and older (25%). Similarly, the likelihood of driving 16 to 30 km/h over the speed limit is more common among those 16 to 34 (7%) as compared with those 35 years of age and older (2%).

Impaired Driving

Younger drivers are more likely to drink and drive.

Over two in ten Nova Scotia drivers have driven a motor vehicle within two hours after drinking some amount of alcohol in the month prior to the survey. Just under eight in ten report never having driven after drinking in the month prior to the survey. Males 16 to 34 are more likely to drink and drive (39% offering a response other than never), as compared with other drivers (20%). Those in the highest income adequacy category are also more likely to drink and drive within two hours (30%). (Table 20)

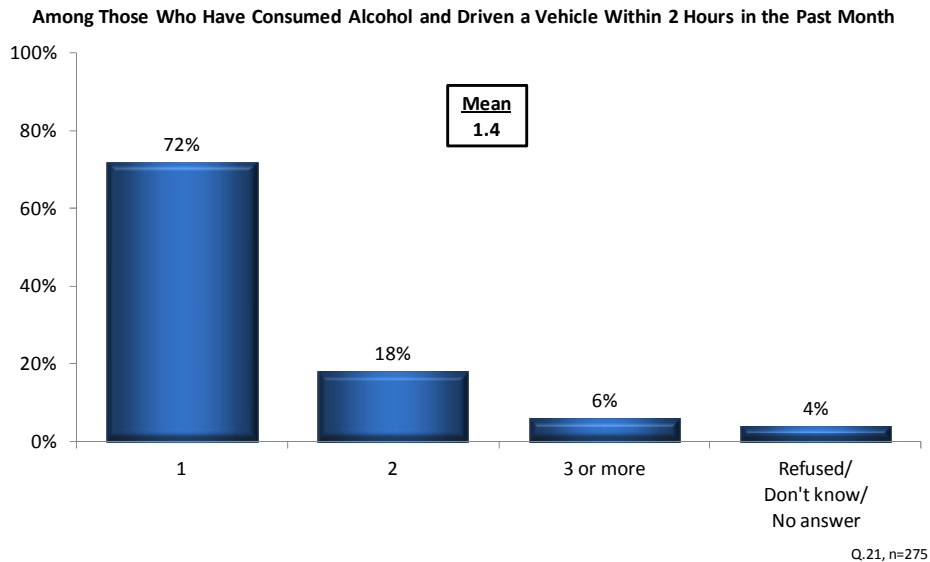
Figure 13
Number of Times Driven Within 2 Hours of Drinking in the Past Month



The majority of those who report driving after drinking had only consumed one drink prior to driving. Only six percent of those who drove within two hours of drinking report having consumed three or more drinks. Those aged 16 to 34 are more likely to have consumed more drinks (mean of 1.6, compared with 1.3 for those aged 35 and above). (Table 21)



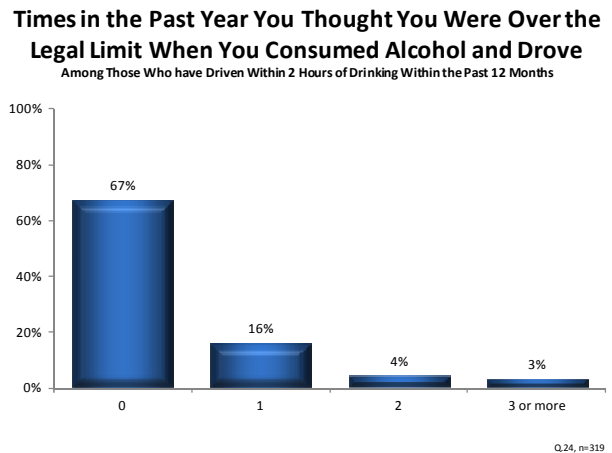
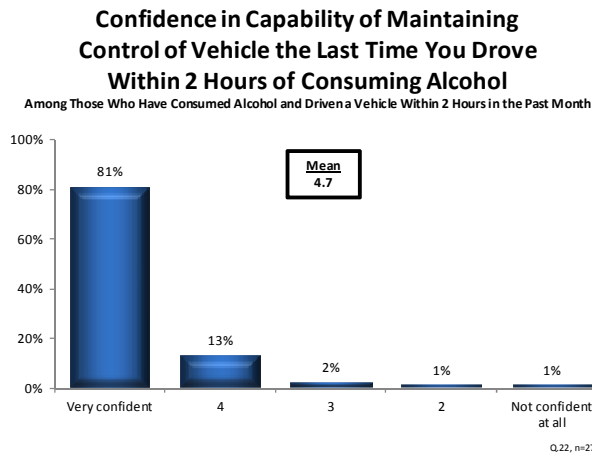
Figure 14
How Many Drinks Did You Have the Last Time You Drove Within 2 Hours of Consuming Alcohol



While the vast majority of drivers who consumed alcohol and drove within 2 hours report they were very confident in maintaining control of their vehicle, a small percentage were less confident. Those 35 years of age and older are more likely to feel confident (96%) compared with those 16 to 34 (89%), as are men (98%) compared with women (84%).

When driving within two hours of drinking in the past year, a small percentage of drivers believe they were over the legal limit at least once. Those aged 35 and above are more likely to think they were never over the legal limit (72%), compared with those aged 16 to 34 (59%). Women (78%) are also more likely than men (62%) to think they were never over the legal limit. (Tables 22 & 24)

Figure 15



Study Methodology

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire for this study was supplied by the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and was modified modestly based on input from Corporate Research Associates personnel.

The survey was also available to be completed in French. No respondent completed the survey in French.

Survey Administration

This survey was conducted by telephone from June 18 to July 14, 2009. Approximately 360 interviews were conducted in each of the four districts (Eastern, Western, Central, and Northern). Trained and fully supervised interviewers conducted the interviewing and 10 percent of all interviews were monitored or verified by a field supervisor through callbacks.

Survey Qualification and Weighting

All individuals who agreed to undertake the survey were asked three screener questions at the outset of the survey: 1) age, 2) gender, and 3) whether or not they have driven a motor vehicle within the past year. This qualifying group (n=1,708) was weighted to be representative of the Nova Scotia population (not the population of drivers) aged 16 or older. The collected data for this study was weighted by age and gender, within each of the four target districts identified.

Only those individuals, who drove a vehicle within the past year, were invited to complete the remainder of the survey.

Completion Results

Among all eligible respondents contacted, the response rate was 10 percent. Response rate is calculated as the number of cooperative contacts (1,708), divided by the total number of eligible telephone numbers called (16,443). Below is the final disposition of all telephone numbers called, modified from the Marketing Research & Intelligence Association (MRIA) (Canada's national association of professional market researchers) *Standard Record of Contact Format*.



COMPLETION RESULTS	
A. Total Numbers Attempted	19,687
Discontinued Number/Not in Service	2,647
Fax/Modem	254
Cell Phone/Pager	4
Non Residential Number	96
Wrong Number/Blocked Number	243
B. Eligible Numbers	16,443
Busy Signal	310
Answering Machine	5,659
No Answer	3,142
Scheduled/Mid Call Back	4,102
Illness, Incapable	31
Language Problem	23
Qualified Not Available	2
C. Total Asked	3,174
Gatekeeper Refusal	0
Mid Terminate	42
Respondent Refusal	749
Never Call List	289
Hang Up	386
D. Co-operative Contacts	1,708
Did Not Qualify (did not drive in last year)	263
Complete	1,445

Sample Size and Tolerances

A sample of 1,445 respondents provides results accurate to within plus or minus 2.6 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples. Sampling tolerances for various sampled populations are presented below.

Size of Sample	Sample Tolerances for Percentage Results by Sample Size				
	10 or 90%	20 or 80%	30 or 70%	40 or 60%	50%
1500 Interviews	1.5	2.0	2.3	2.5	2.5
400 Interviews	3.0	3.9	4.5	4.8	4.9
200 Interviews	4.0	5.4	6.2	6.8	7.0
100 Interviews	5.7	7.5	8.8	9.5	9.9
50 Interviews	8.0	11.0	13.0	13.7	14.2

