

## **Alaska 2010 Highway Safety Phone Survey**

- **An Alaskan View of:**
  - Drivers' attitudes,
  - Awareness of enforcement and media and
  - Self-reported driving behavior

Prepared for the Alaska Highway Safety Office  
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### **Executive Summary:**

As reported by Alaskan Drivers:

- **One in four** have driven within two hours of drinking an alcoholic drink in the past 60 days.
- Nearly **70%** believe that **the court system is somewhat to very tough on enforcing drunk driving laws.**
- Almost **half** believe that chances of **getting arrested for drinking and driving** are at least **very likely.**
- **91% always buckle up.**
- **41%** think it is **unlikely** they'll get a **ticket for not wearing a seatbelt.**
- **49% rarely or never** drive over **35mph in a 30 mph** zone.
- **81% rarely or never** drive over **70 mph in a 65 mph** zone.
- **79%** of 4-8 years olds **always use booster seats.**
- **61%** talk on their **cell phone** while driving.
- **86% never text** while driving.
- **72%** usually **use headlights** when driving **in daylight.**

### **Introduction:**

The Alaska Injury Prevention Center (AIPC) designed and implemented a phone survey, in compliance with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration guidelines. A randomly selected representative sample of Alaska licensed drivers was asked a series of questions in the five-minute phone survey. The questions addressed driver attitudes, awareness of highway safety enforcement and communication activities and self-reported driving behavior. The questions addressed the following topics: seatbelt use, drinking and driving, headlight use, talking and texting while driving, speeding and booster seat use.

### **Methodology:**

A five-minute telephone survey, was conducted in August, 2010. The survey included 40 questions, mostly closed-ended, introduction, screener, and demographics questions. Craciun Research Group (CRG) was contracted with to conduct the survey. AIPC provided CRG with questions, conducted analysis and wrote the report of survey findings. CRG reviewed the survey and made suggestions for changes; programmed the approved survey; prepared the four sample frames from CRG's database of Alaska residents, with quotas for age categories; conducted the survey, and provided the data to the client.

Total sample size for the survey was four hundred (n=400) Anchorage, Kenai/Soldotna, Mat-Su and Fairbanks and Juneau residents for a total margin of error of +/-5% with 95% confidence.

### **Analysis:**

The analysis section is broken out into 6 sections. Each section addresses behaviors and potential motivational variables and demographic variables which might affect the behavior choices. Motivational variables include awareness of enforcement efforts and perceived likelihood of getting caught engaging in an illegal and unsafe behavior. Analysis was done utilizing PASW 18 (formerly know as SPSS.) Frequencies and crosstabs were the primary analytical tests used for this preliminary review of the data. Additional analysis will be conducted in the next few months to provide a broader vision of highway issues.

### **Drinking and Driving**

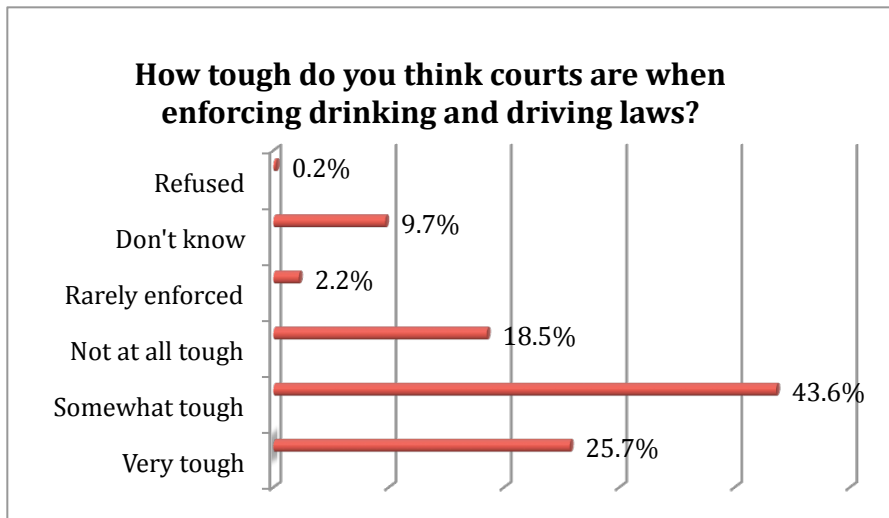
Just over one in four (27%) persons of driving age reported driving a motor vehicle within 2 hours of consuming an alcoholic drink in the past sixty days. These persons are referred to as “drinking- drivers” throughout this report. Thirty-two percent of males and 21% of females reported at least one drinking-driving trip in the past 60 days. Within these groups, 8% of men and 4% of women have taken 4 or more drink-driving trips in the past 60 days.<sup>1</sup>

When examined by education, the percentage of the driving-age public who reported driving a motor vehicle within 2 hours of drinking any alcoholic beverages ranged from 22% - 26% for respondents with a GED to those with a 4-year degree. The percent jumped to 42% for those with a postgraduate degree.

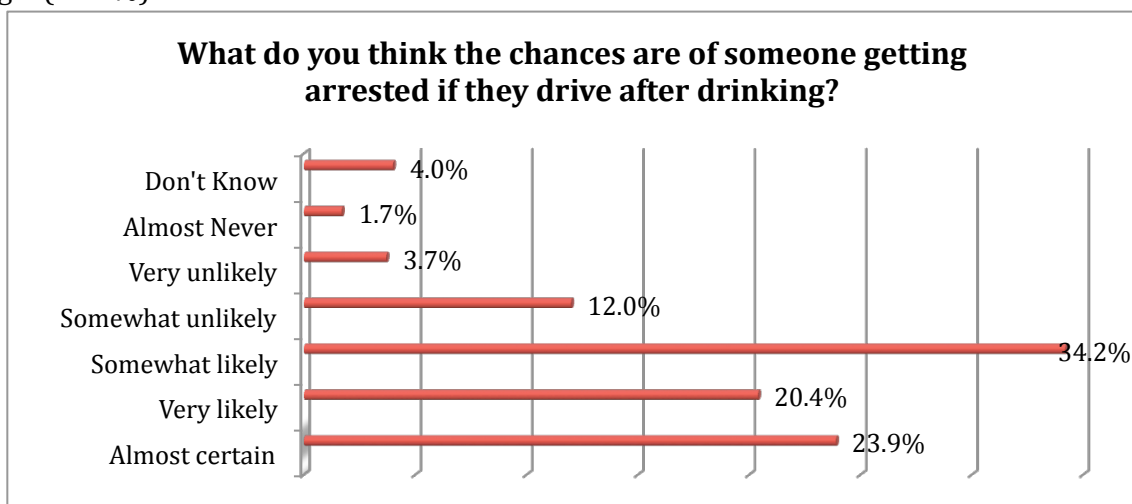
Looking at type of vehicle driven revealed that drivers of cars, SUV’s and trucks all had about a 30% chance of drinking and driving. Only 4% of van drivers reported having made at least one trip after drinking alcohol.

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<sup>1</sup> Q.22 In the past 60 days, how many times have you driven a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking an alcoholic beverage? Never, Once, Two or three times, Four or five times, Many times, Some. I don't know how many, Refused



Participants were also asked how tough they thought courts were in enforcing drinking and driving laws.<sup>2</sup> Most answered that they thought courts were somewhat to very tough. (69.3%)

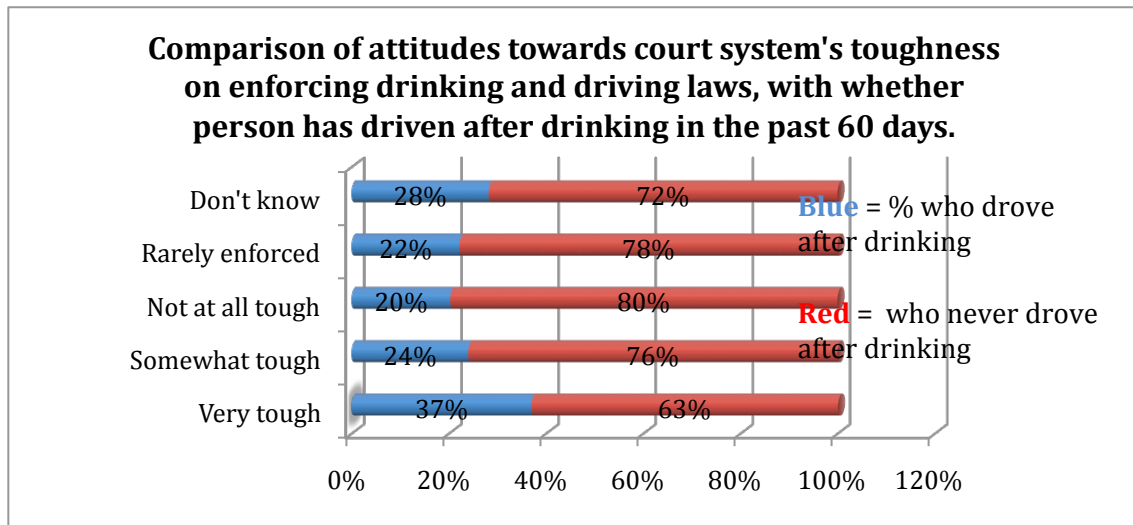


Participants were also asked how tough they thought courts were in enforcing drinking and driving laws.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Q.15 In your opinion, how tough do you think the courts are when enforcing drinking-and-driving laws?  
Very tough, Somewhat tough, Not at all tough, Rarely enforced, Don't know/ Unsure, Refused

<sup>3</sup> Q.15 In your opinion, how tough do you think the courts are when enforcing drinking-and-driving laws?  
Very tough, Somewhat tough, Not at all tough, Rarely enforced, Don't know/ Unsure, Refused

Twenty-three percent of the driving-age public believed that a driver who had too much to drink to drive safely was “almost certain” to be arrested by the police. Seventy-eight percent believe a person’s chances are “Somewhat likely” or more that they will get arrested if they drive after drinking. Twenty-six percent believed that the courts are very tough when enforcing drinking and driving laws. While 70% believe that the courts are somewhat to very tough with enforcing these laws.



Of those who believe that the courts are very tough enforcing drinking and driving laws, 37% had driven after drinking in the last 60 days. Participants were asked whether they had “read, seen or heard anything about drunk-driving enforcement in Alaska.”<sup>4</sup> Sixty-seven percent answered yes. Of those who self reported making many trips after drinking in the last 60 days, 82% were aware of drunk driving enforcement.

### Seatbelt Use

In the 2010 seatbelt observation survey for Alaska, 86.7% of drivers and passengers were observed wearing a seatbelt. When asked: “How often do you use a seatbelt when you drive or ride in your personal vehicle” 91% answered “always” and 5% said “almost always.”<sup>5</sup> Only 1.2% said never. Fifty-five percent said they had read, seen or heard about seatbelt enforcement in the past 60 days.<sup>6</sup> And 29% believed that a person would always or nearly always get a ticket for not using a seatbelt.<sup>7</sup> Forty-two percent answered that the chance was never or seldom.

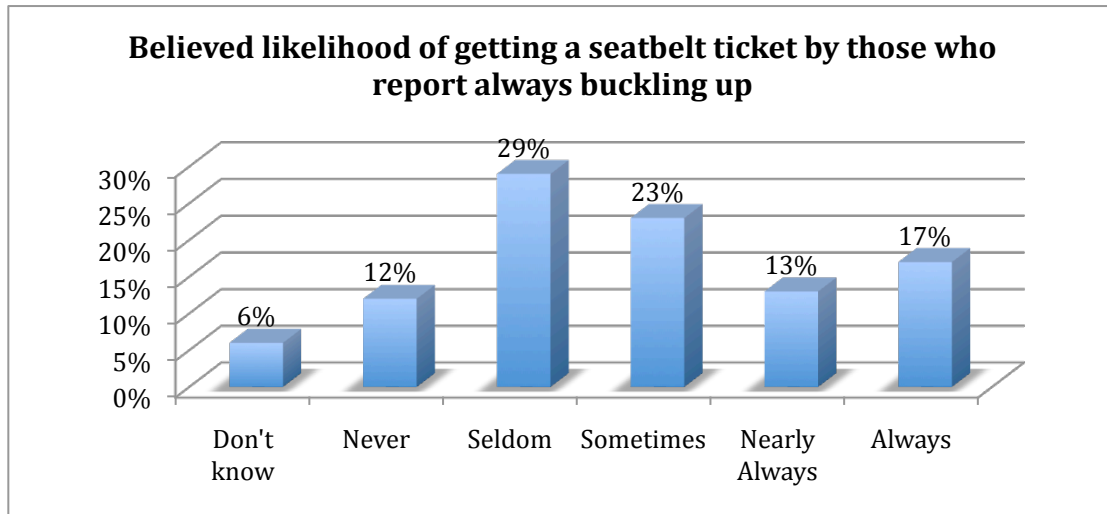
<sup>4</sup> Q.21 In the past 60 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about drunk-driving enforcement in Alaska? Yes, No, Don't know/ Unsure, Refused

<sup>5</sup> Q.11 How often do you use a seatbelt when you drive or ride in your personal vehicle? Always, Nearly always, Sometimes, Seldom, Never, Unsure, Refused

<sup>6</sup> Q.12 In the past 60 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about seat belt enforcement in Alaska? Yes, No, Don't know/ Unsure, Refused

<sup>7</sup> Q.13 What do you think the chance is for you to get a ticket if you do not wear your seat belt? Would you get one: Always, Nearly always, Sometimes, Seldom, Never, Don't know/ Unsure, Refused

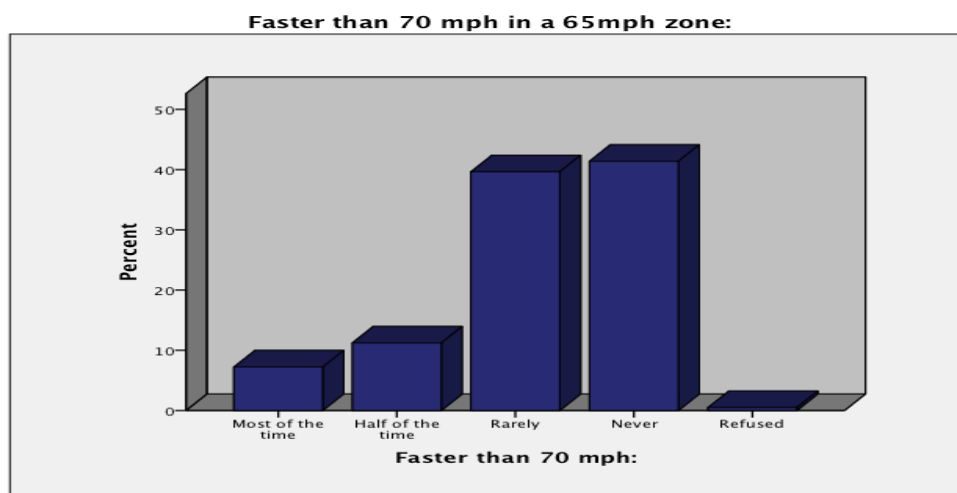
The degree of certainty of which a person would get a seatbelt ticket did not seem to be effected by awareness of seatbelt use enforcement. Sixty-four percent of those who thought they had no chance of getting a seatbelt ticket had heard about seatbelt enforcement in the last 60 days. Sixty percent of those who thought they would always get a ticket had also heard of the enforcement efforts.



For those who always wear a seatbelt, 12% felt that they would never get a ticket for not buckling up and 17 percent felt they would always get a ticket. Forty-one percent thought they would never or seldom get a ticket. While 30% thought they would always or nearly always get a ticket.

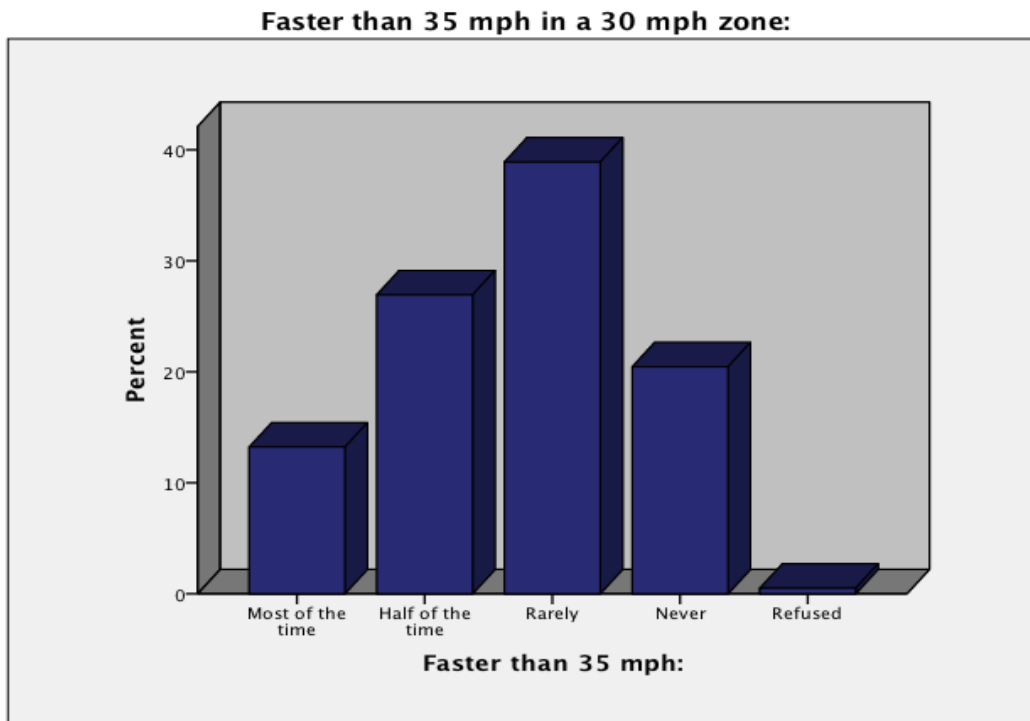
### Speeding

Two scenarios were presented concerning speeding. The first was how often a driver goes more than 70 mph in a 65 mph zone.<sup>8</sup> And the second how often the driver goes



<sup>8</sup> Q.18 On a road with a speed limit of 65 mph, how often do you find yourself driving faster than 70 mph: Most of the time, Half of the time, Rarely, Never, Refused

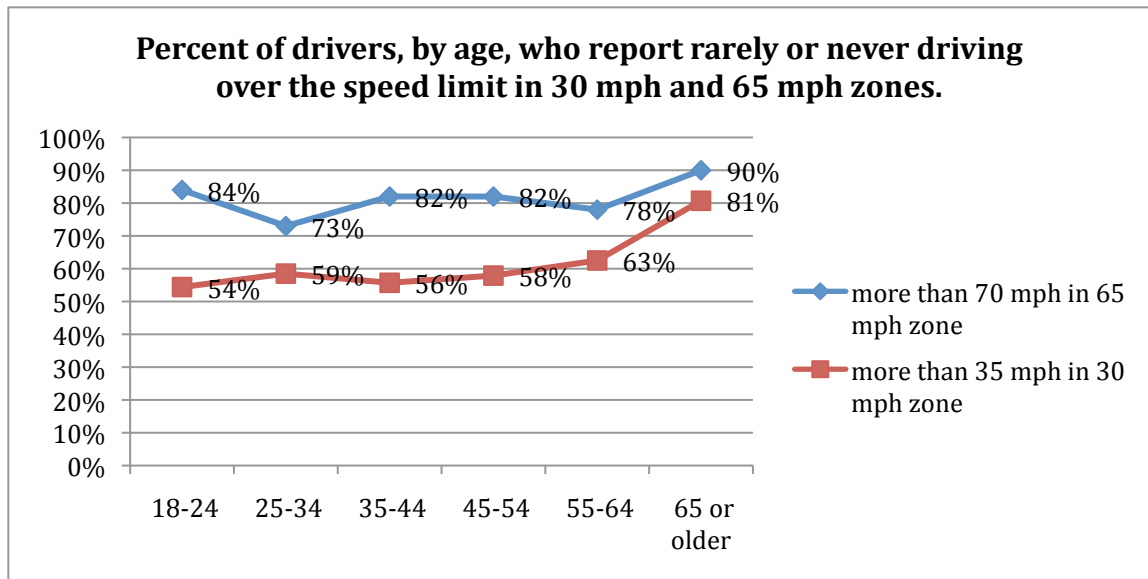
faster than 35 mph in a 30 mph zone.<sup>9</sup> People report being more likely to speed in 30 mph areas than 65 mph areas. Eighty-one percent say they rarely or never go over 70 in a 65 area. However, 59% say they rarely or never drive more than 35 mph in a 30 mph zone.



Considering this further, gender makes a difference. Eighty percent of men and 82% of women report never or rarely driving over 70 in a 65 zone. While Sixty-three percent of men and 56% of women report rarely or never driving faster than 35 in a 30 mph zone.

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<sup>9</sup> Q.17 On a local road with a speed limit of 30 mph, how often do you find yourself driving faster than 35 mph: Most of the time, Half of the time, Rarely, Never, Refused



Looking at the data by age group shows that there is an increase in the percent of drivers who drive close to the speed limit with an increase in age. But this doesn't really show until the 65-year and older group of drivers.

### **Cell Phones:**

Ninety-three percent of respondents said that there is at least one cell phone in their households. Cell phones have become commonplace in and out of cars. This is the first time cell phone use and ownership questions were asked in an Alaska Highway Safety phone survey. The answers here will serve as baseline data.

Multiple questions were asked concerning cell phone use in cars. Questions included how often the driver talks on the phone, reads or sends texts, makes or answers calls, whether these happen more often on city or rural roads, and whether hands-free devices are used while driving.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the 2010 Alaska NOPUS observational surveys collected data about observed cell phone usage rate for drivers. The statewide observed cell phone use rate was 5.1%. The observed usage rates by borough were:

<sup>10</sup> Q.25 How often do you talk on a cell phone while driving your car? Almost every time you drive, Every two or three times, Sometimes, not often, Never, Don't know/ Unsure, Refused

Q.26 How often do you read or send text messages while driving your car? Almost every time you drive, Every two or three times, Sometimes, not often, Never, Don't know/ Unsure, Refused

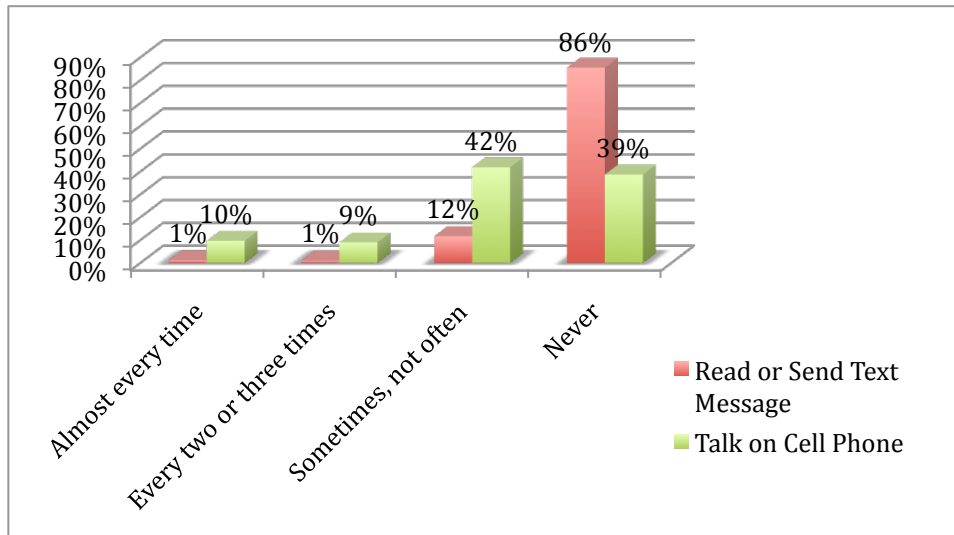
Q.27 Do you make calls from your car, answer them or both? Make calls, Answer them, Both, Refused

Q.28 Do you take or make calls when you are driving in a city or town or only on rural roads? In cities or towns, in rural areas, Both, Neither, Refused

Q.29 Do you have a "hands-free" cell phone arrangement in your vehicles? Yes, No, Not in every car I drive, Refused



MatSu 8.0%, Kenai/Soldotna 6.0%, Anchorage 5.0%, Fairbanks 4.9%, and Juneau 2.0%. These numbers do not include use where a hands-free device was in use.



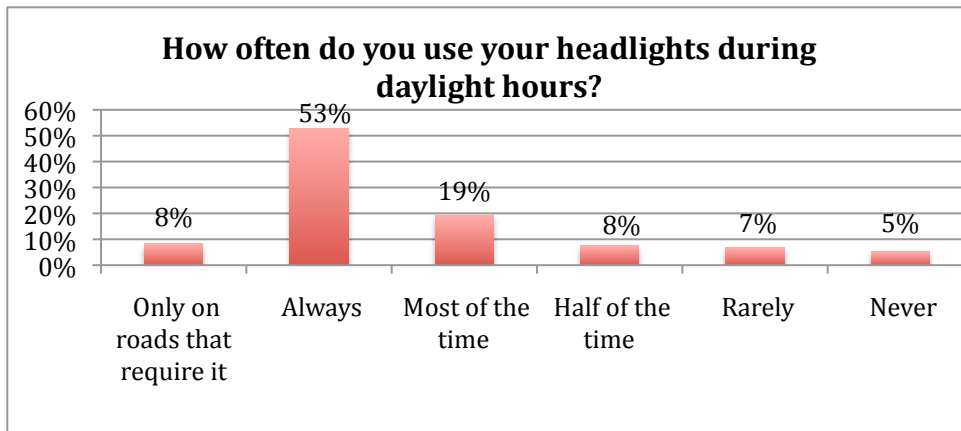
Most people (86%) report that they never read or send texts while driving. Two percent say they text at least every two or three times that they drive. While 19% of drivers talk on their cell phones at least every two or three times that they drive. And 42% say they talk on their phone some times but not often. Thirty-nine percent of drivers say they never talk on a cell phone while driving.

The next three questions were only asked of those who have used a cell phone while driving. Just over a third (36%) of cell phone using drivers have a hands-free device. Seventy-six percent of users have both made and received phone calls. Twenty-one percent have only answered calls. Sixty percent use cell phones in both rural and urban areas. Twelve percent use them only in urban areas, and 9% in only rural areas.

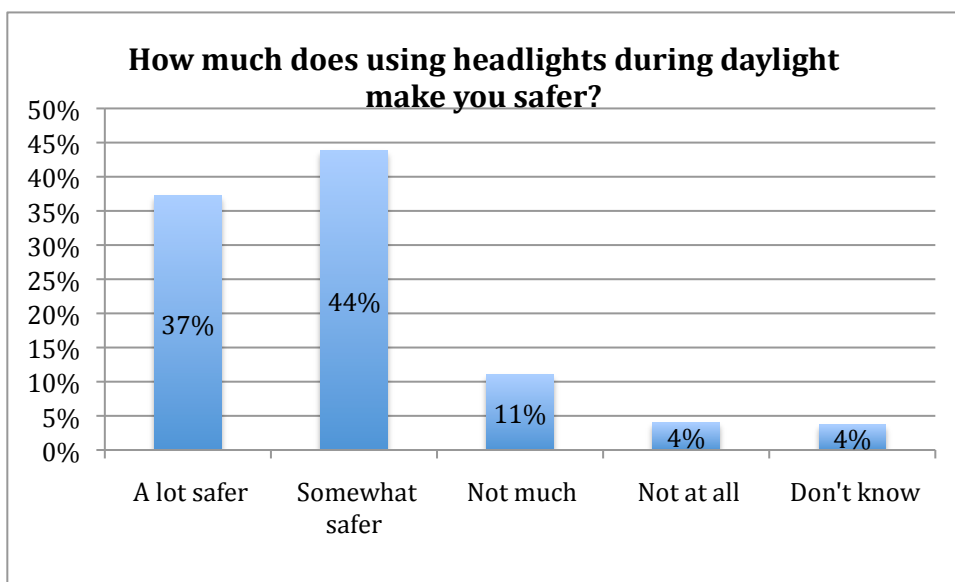
### Headlights:

Headlight use was defined as a crash prevention strategy in the Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The survey asked two questions concerning headlight use in order to determine baseline behavior and attitudes.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Q.23 During daylight hours, would you say you use your headlights: Only on roads that require it, Always, Most of the time, Half of the time, Rarely, Never, Don't know/ Unsure, Refused  
Q.24 Do you think using headlights during daylight makes you a lot safer, somewhat safer, not much safer or not at all? A lot safer, Somewhat safer, Not much, Not at all, Don't know/ Unsure, Refused



Drivers were asked how often they use their headlights during daylight hours, and how much they think doing so makes them safer. Fifty-three percent said they use their lights all of the time and 72% said always or most of the time. This is slightly higher than the NOPUS observations of headlight use, in which observers determined that headlight use was 45.5% in Anchorage, 45.3% in Fairbanks, 22.9% in Juneau, 29.3% in Kenai/Soldotna, and 30.3% in MatSu 30.3%. Statewide, 42.5% of cars observed had their headlights on during daylight hours.



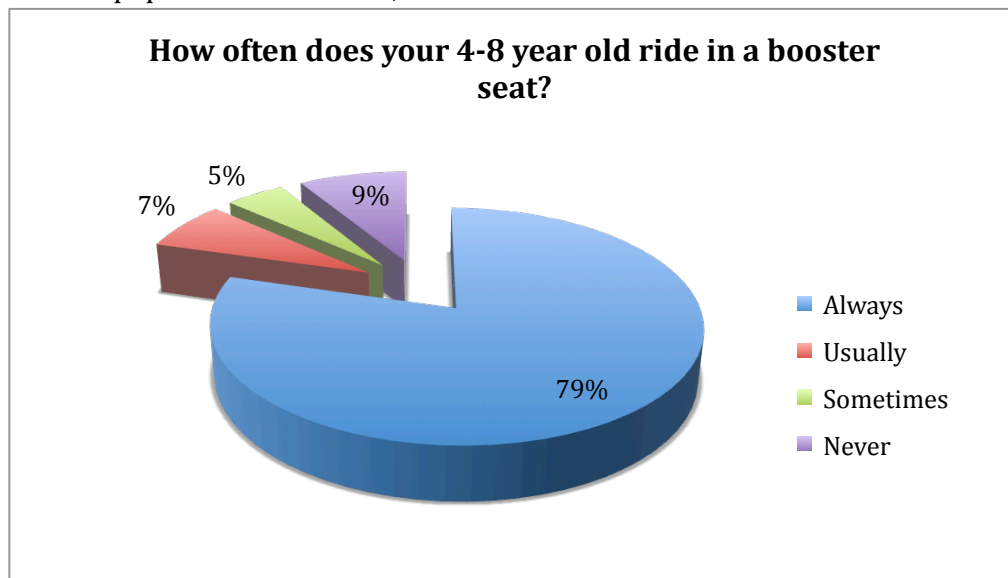
There was a statistically significant correlation between those who felt that using headlights makes a person safer, and people who use headlights.

### **Booster Seats**

The Alaska Injury Prevention Center conducted 3 booster seat use observations studies. The first took place in June 2009, prior to implementation of new booster seat legislation. Fifty-two percent of observed children were using appropriate child passenger safety devices. The second took place in October, 2009 after the legislation,

mandating booster seat use for most children between 4 and 8 years old was signed into law, and a major public awareness campaign was implemented. At that point, 74% of children were using appropriate child passenger safety devices. In July, one-year follow-up observations were made, with a finding that 80% of children were properly restrained.

This phone survey also asked about booster seat use. It first asked whether the driver being interviewed ever drove in a car with a 4-8 year old.<sup>12</sup> If the answer was yes, a follow-up question was asked, how often that child rode in a booster seat.<sup>13</sup>



Drivers' self reported answers mimicked observed use at 79%. This is a dramatic increase from the 52% use observed prior to the media campaign and implementation of the law.

### **Conclusions:**

Results from the 2010 phone survey addressing highway safety issues in Alaska provide useful information for future safety interventions.

- Addressing speeding in low speed limit areas is important, especially since these areas usually involve multiple modes of transportation including bikes and pedestrians.
- Most people wear seatbelts, and at the same time, most people do not think that it is likely that they will get a ticket for being unbuckled. It would be helpful to

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<sup>12</sup> Q.30 Do you ever drive with a child between the ages of four and eight? Yes, No, Refused

<sup>13</sup> Q.31 How often is the child riding in a booster seat? Always, Usually, Sometimes, Never, Refused

- better understand the motivators for wearing seatbelts, and possibly build them into campaigns for other desired behavior changes.
- Only 16% of people report texting while driving. Tracking changes in this statistic will be important for prioritization of highway safety efforts. It is currently a small number of those who say they text and drive, and texting is reportedly not being done very often. The risk created by texting and driving may be minimal.
  - There is a majority belief (70%) that the courts are tough when enforcing drinking and driving laws. Understanding how this perception grew would be helpful for future behavior change and perception creating campaigns.

Conducting phone surveys with Alaskan drivers has created an opportunity to gain insights into behaviors, levels of awareness and motivators for behaviors. This information will be useful to assist with developing future initiatives as well as monitoring success with current one.

## AIPC Telephone Survey

Q.1 District

Q.2 Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm with Craciun Research, an Alaskan company. We are conducting a study on what you think of driving around Alaska as well as your experience with other Alaskan drivers. Your phone number was randomly selected; this interview should take less than 5 minutes of your time. All of your answers will be kept strictly confidential and I can answer any questions you may have at the end of the survey.

(5)

Male	1
Female	2

Q.3 First, may I ask which age group you fit into?

(6)

18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45-54	4
55-64	5
65 or older	6
Refused	7

[IF THE ANSWER IS 2 OR 4-6, THEN SKIP TO QUESTION 6]

Q.4 Are you a licensed driver in the State of Alaska?

(7)

Yes	1
No	2
Don't Know/Refused	3

[IF THE ANSWER IS 1, THEN SKIP TO QUESTION 7]

Q.5 Could I speak to a licensed driver living in your home? [IF NO, ASK TO CALL BACK OR END CALL]

(8)

Yes	1
No	2
Don't Know/Refused	3

Q.6 Unfortunately We've reached our quota for the age group [ANSWER TO Q. 3]. Thank you for your interest in participating in our survey and have a wonderful day.

Q.7 ENTER ZIPCODE FROM SCREEN

\_\_\_\_\_ (9-13)

Q.8 Once again, I want to assure you that this survey is confidential. I do not know who you are and no one will be able to identify you with your answers, it all becomes numbers in the computer. Your telephone number, not your name was selected randomly by the computer.

Q.9 Approximately how many miles do you drive in an average week? [READ LIST IF NEEDED]

(14)

Less than 50	1
51 to 100	2
101 to 150	3
151 to 200	4
More than 200	5
Don't know/ Unsure	6
Refused	7

Q.10 What type of vehicle do you drive most often? [READ LIST IF NEEDED]

(15)

Car	1
SUV	2
Van	3
Pickup	4
Truck	5
Refused	6

Q.11 How often do you use a seatbelt when you drive or ride in your personal vehicle?

(16)

Always	1
Nearly always	2
Sometimes	3
Seldom	4
Never	5
Unsure	6
Refused	7

Q.12 In the past 60 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about seat belt enforcement in Alaska?

(17)

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/ Unsure	3
Refused	4

Q.13 What do you think the chance is for you to get a ticket if you do not wear your seat belt? Would you get one:

(18)

Always	1
Nearly always	2
Sometimes	3
Seldom	4
Never	5
Don't know/ Unsure	6
Refused	7

Q.14 What do you think the chances are of someone getting arrested if they drive after drinking? Are they [READ LIST]

(19)

Almost certain	1
Very likely	2
Somewhat likely	3
Somewhat unlikely	4

Very unlikely	5
Almost Never	6
Don't Know/Not Sure	7
Refused	8

Q.15 In your opinion, how tough do you think the courts are when enforcing drinking-and-driving laws? [READ LIST]

(20)

Very tough	1
Somewhat tough	2
Not at all tough	3
Rarely enforced	4
Don't know/ Unsure	5
Refused	6

Q.16 In Alaska, do you think underage drinking is a

(21)

Serious problem	1
A minor problem	2
Not a problem	3
Don't know/ Unsure	4
Refused	5

Q.17 On a local road with a speed limit of 30 mph, how often do you find yourself driving faster than 35 mph: [READ LIST]

(22)

Most of the time	1
Half of the time	2
Rarely	3
Never	4
Refused	5

Q.18 On a road with a speed limit of 65 mph, how often do you find yourself driving faster than 70 mph: [READ LIST]

(23)

Most of the time	1
Half of the time	2
Rarely	3
Never	4
Refused	5

Q.19 In the past 60 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about speed enforcement by police?

(24)

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/ Unsure	3
Refused	4

Q.20 What do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you drive over the speed limit? Are they:

(25)

Almost certain	1
Very likely	2
Somewhat likely	3
Somewhat unlikely	4

Very unlikely	5
Almost never	6
Don't know/ Unsure	7
Refused	8

Q.21 In the past 60 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about drunk-driving enforcement in Alaska?

(26)

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/ Unsure	3
Refused	4

Q.22 In the past 60 days, how many times have you driven a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking an alcoholic beverage?

(27)

Never	1
Once	2
Two or three times	3
Four or five times	4
Many times	5
Some. I don't know how many	6
Refused	7

Q.23 During daylight hours, would you say you use your headlights:

(28)

Only on roads that require it	1
Always	2
Most of the time	3
Half of the time	4
Rarely	5
Never	6
Don't know/ Unsure	7
Refused	8

Q.24 Do you think using headlights during daylight makes you a lot safer, somewhat safer, not much safer or not at all?

(29)

A lot safer	1
Somewhat safer	2
Not much	3
Not at all	4
Don't know/ Unsure	5
Refused	6

Q.25 How often do you talk on a cell phone while driving your car?

(30)

Almost every time you drive	1
Every two or three times	2
Sometimes, not often	3
Never	4
Don't know/ Unsure	5
Refused	6

Q.26 How often do you read or send text messages while driving your car?



(31)

Almost every time you drive	1
Every two or three times	2
Sometimes, not often	3
Never	4
Don't know/ Unsure	5
Refused	6

[IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 25 IS 4 OR 6, THEN SKIP TO QUESTION 30]

Q.27 Do you make calls from your car, answer them or both?

(32)

Make calls	1
Answer them	2
Both	3
Refused	4

Q.28 Do you take or make calls when you are driving in a city or town or only on rural roads?

(33)

In cities or towns	1
In rural areas	2
Both	3
Neither	4
Refused	5

Q.29 Do you have a "hands-free" cell phone arrangement in your vehicles?

(34)

Yes	1
No	2
Not in every car I drive	3
Refused	4

Q.30 Do you ever drive with a child between the ages of four and eight?

(35)

Yes	1
No	2
Refused	3

[IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 30 IS 2 OR 3, THEN SKIP TO QUESTION 9999]

Q.31 How often is the child riding in a booster seat?

(36)

Always	1
Usually	2
Sometimes	3
Never	4
Refused	5

Q.32 Including yourself, how many people in your household have cell phones? [USE 0 FOR NONE AND 99 FOR NO ANSWER]

\_\_\_\_\_ (37-38)

Q.33 Including yourself, how many drivers are there in your household? [USE 99 FOR NO ANSWER]

\_\_\_\_\_ (39-40)

Q.34 For statistical purposes, How many years of formal education have you had the opportunity to complete?

(41)

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Less than high school or GED     | 1 |
| High School Graduate or GED      | 2 |
| Some college or technical school | 3 |
| Four Year degree                 | 4 |
| Post graduate degree             | 5 |
| No answer/ Refused               | 6 |

Q.35 Is this a cell phone number?

(63)

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Yes     | 1 |
| No      | 2 |
| Refused | 3 |

Q.36 Would you describe yourself as [READ LIST. ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS]

(42-59)

- |                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Hispanic, Latino, Spanish        | 1  |
| White, Caucasian                 | 2  |
| Black, African-American          | 3  |
| Alaska Native                    | 4  |
| American Indian                  | 5  |
| Asian                            | 6  |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 7  |
| Mixed (PROBE)                    | 8  |
| Other (PROBE)                    | 9  |
| Don't Know/Not Sure              | 10 |
| Refused                          | 11 |

Q.37 Specify other heritage

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Q.38 Another way that research can be done is through the use of focus groups. Focus groups are small group discussions of 8-10 people discussing a particular topic. We offer cash incentives and a light meal at the groups. Do you think you would be interested in participating in a focus group in the future?

(60)

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Yes                  | 1 |
| No                   | 2 |
| Don't Know/No Answer | 3 |

Q.39 Great, can I get your name and phone number?

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Q.40 Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this important project. If you would like to ask the client Alaska Injury Prevention Center any more questions please feel free to call them at 907.929.3939. Have a wonderful day.



## Alaska Injury Prevention Center

