

The Road Safety Authority

Driver Attitude & Behaviour Survey 2021

Prepared by John O Mahony

J. 213173





Driver Attitudes & Behaviour Survey 2021









Travel Patterns



Learner driver



Seatbelts



Fatigue



Speeding



Mobile behaviour



Alcohol



Summary & Conclusions



Driver Attitudes & Behaviour Survey 2021



Survey Methodology



- The National Survey of Driver Attitudes & Behaviour is a cornerstone of the Road Safety Authority research programme. It establishes the incidence of errant driving behaviour and habits among Irish motorists and determines their attitudes to a series of road safety measures; and analyses the extent to which these attitudes and behaviours are consistent both across demographic criteria and over time.
- The 2021 research builds off the findings from previous research.

- Nationally representative sample of 1,200 motorists aged 17+:
 - Quota controlled in terms of gender, age, region and area.
 - Fieldwork was conducted in November 2021.

As in 2020, the survey used an online approach in light of Covid 19 related public health restrictions. To support comparisons with the research series to date (pre 2020 conducted via face to face interviews) the national sample of interviews was increased to 1,200.

Driver Attitudes and Behaviour Survey 2021 Sample Profile



Base: All Motorists n − 1,220

		%
Gender	Male	51
Gender	Female	49
	-24 years	7
	25-34 years	20
Age	35-49 years	34
	50-64 years	24
	65+ years	15
Social Class	ABC1F	53
	C2DE	47

		%
	Dublin	27
Pagion	Leinster	29
Region	Munster	25
	Conn/Ulster	19
Area	Urban	60
	Rural	40

Driver Attitudes and Behaviour Survey 2021 Sample Profile



Base: All Motorists n − 1,220

		%
	Motorcycle	4
	Car	99
Vehiele Time	Van	5
Vehicle Type	P.S.V. (minibus)	0*
	P.S.V. (bus)	0*
	Truck	0*
	Learner licence	7
Licence Type	Full licence – Irish issued	87
	Full licence – other country issued	5

		%
	Under 2 years	7
	2-5 years	10
Length of Time	6-10 years	10
Driving	11-20 years	27
	21-30 years	17
	31+ years	27
Drive for work**	Yes	24
	No	76

^{*=}less than 0.5%

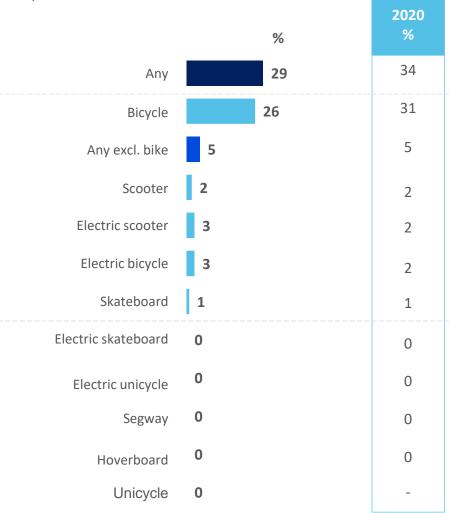
^{** 33%} of all employed motorists



Use of the roads by means other than a car: Past 12 months



Base: All motorists N - 1,220



Any X Age	%
Total	29
-24 years	38
25-34 years	42
35-49 years	33
50 years +	19

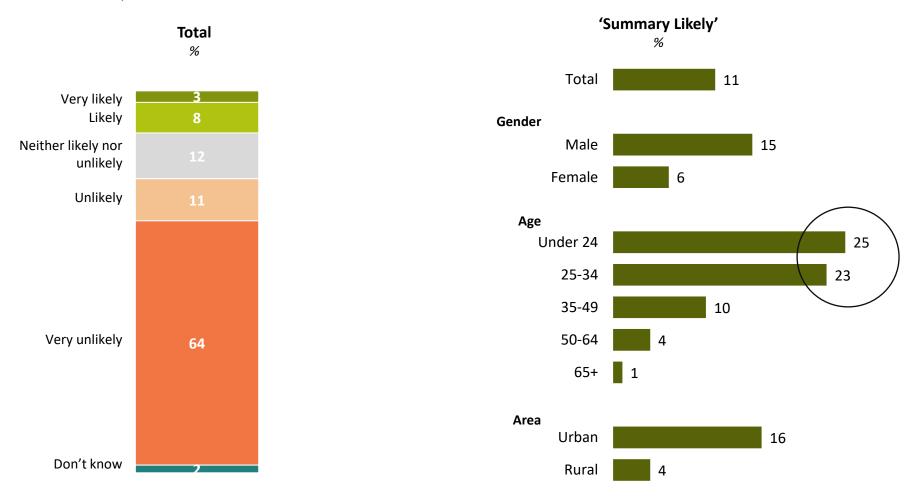
Road use by means other than car is as expected highly correlated to age.



Q. In the past twelve months, have you used any of the following on a public road, footpath or cycle lane in Ireland?

Likely to rent/buy an e-scooter for own use next 12 months **BAA**

Base: All Motorists n − 1,220



Interest in use of E-Scooters is now at C. 1 in 4 motorists under the age of 35 years.

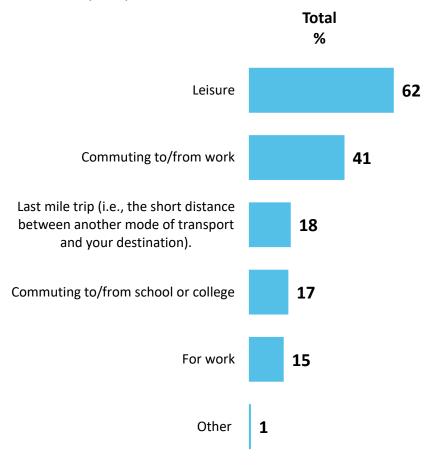


Q.14a The government will soon be introducing legislation for the use of e-scooters/ electric scooters on Irish roads. In the next twelve months, how likely is it that you will rent/buy an e-scooter for your own use?

E-scooter use: type of trip



Base: use/likely to use E-Scooter N – 141 (11%)



Among current/ likely users, 41% expect to use commuting to work; and 17% commuting to school/college.



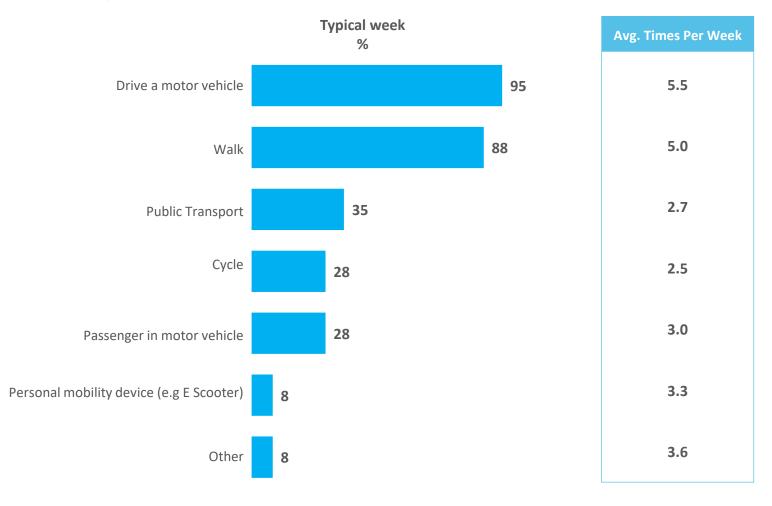
Q.14b What kind of trip will you/ do you use an e-scooter for?

Travel Patterns since Covid 19:



Base: All motorists N - 1,220





Use of public transport, cycling & passenger in motor vehicle all have similar usage frequency levels among motorists.

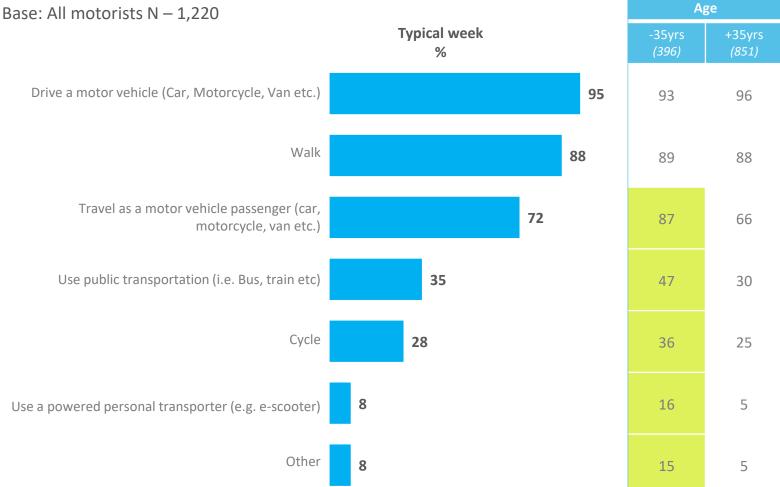


Given current circumstances, in a typical week how often do you..?

Travel Patterns since Covid 19:



Frequency of use (Weekly+)



Travel patterns vary considerably by age & region.



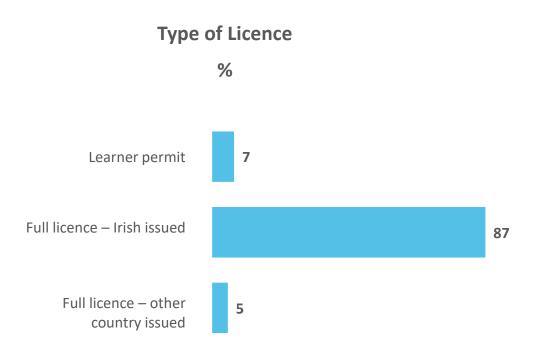
Given current circumstances, in a typical week how often do you..?



Motorists Profile



Base: All motorists N − 1,220



Length of time driving

	%
Under 2 years	7
2 – 5 years	10
6 – 10 years	10
11 – 20 years	27
21 – 30 years	17
31+ years	27

27% of motorists have been driving for ten years or less.

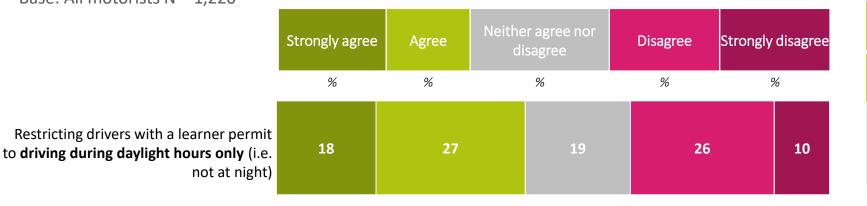


Q.2a Do you have a driving licence/permit of any type? Q.2b Is it a learner permit, or a full licence issued in Ireland or in another country?

Attitudes to Learner Drivers Restrictions



Base: All motorists N - 1,220



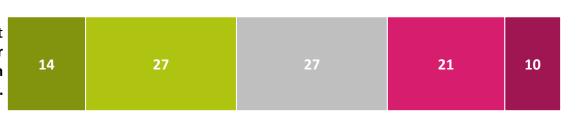


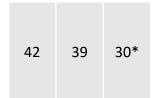
Restricting drivers with a learner permit to carry no other passengers other than the accompanying driver





Restricting drivers with a learner permit to carrying no more than one other passenger who must be aged over 25 in addition to the accompanying driver.





Adding restrictions to Learner Drivers receives a divided response with support not exceeding 50% of motorists on the 3 criteria; however support is growing.



Q.12 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following additional restrictions? ...

Wording amended in 2020 survey.

Attitudes to Learner Driver Restrictions



Base: All motorists N – 1,220

Summary Agree	Total	Time Driving							
		Under 2 years	2-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	21-30 years	31+ years		
	1220	88	118	121	328	227	321		
	%	%	%	%	%	%			
Restricting drivers with a learner permit to driving during daylight hours only (i.e. not at night)	45	29	38	35	43	50	53		
Restricting drivers with a learner permit to carrying no passengers other than the accompanying driver	50	40	31	41	49	53	64		
Restricting drivers with a learner permit to carrying no more than one other passenger who must be aged over 25 in addition to the accompanying driver	42	28	30	38	43	45	47		

Support for restrictions is highly correlated to driving experience (years driving); support for any of the restrictions exceeds 50% only among those with over 20 years driving experience.



Q.12 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following additional restrictions? ...



Frequency of Seatbelt Usage 2021



Base: All Motorists N - 1,220

	Seat Belt Wearing when							
	Driver	Rear passenger						
	%	%	%					
Always	96	95	83					
Often	2	2	6					
Sometimes	1	2	6					
Rarely	1	1	3					
Never	0	0	1					
Not applicable	0	0	1					

Circa 16% of motorists do not 'always' wear a seatbelt when a rear passenger.

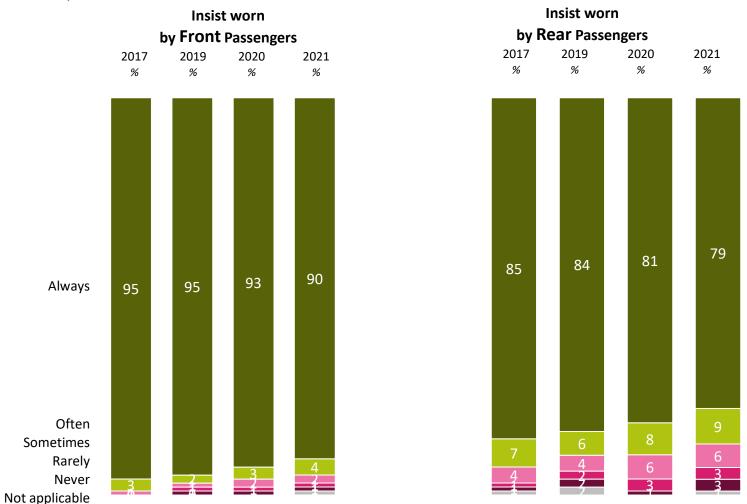


Q. How often do you use seat belts when you are a....

Frequency of Insisting that Seat Belts are Worn by Front and Rear Passengers/ driver



Base: All Motorists n - 1,220



Those insisting seat belts are worn are declining: 79% of motorists always insist seatbelts are worn by rear passengers (declines to 70% of those driving for 5 years or less).



Q. How often do you insist that seat belts are worn by those sitting in the **front** seat of your car? Q. How often do you insist that seat belts are worn by those sitting in the **back** seats of your car?

Frequency of Insisting that Seat Belts are Worn by Those Sitting in Back Seat of Car





79% of motorists always insist seatbelts are worn by rear passengers – declines to 70% of those driving for 5 years or less.

Q.8a How often do you insist that seat belts are worn by those sitting in the back seat of your car?

Never

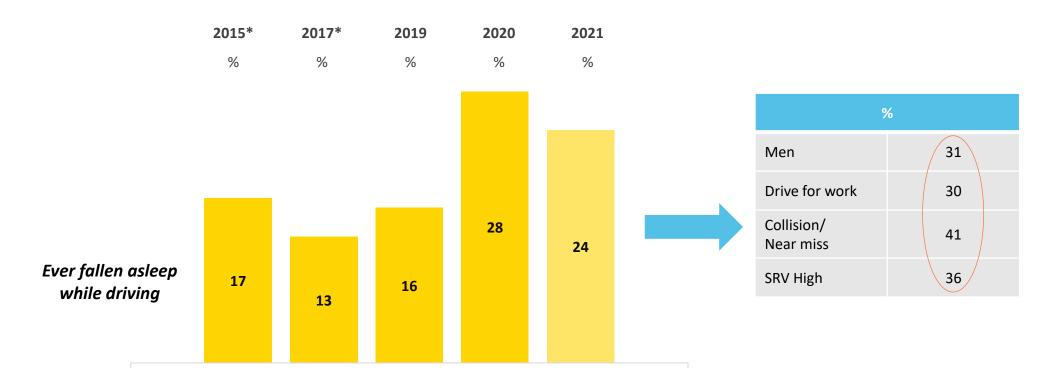
^(?)



Driving Fatigue

Base: All Motorists N-1,220



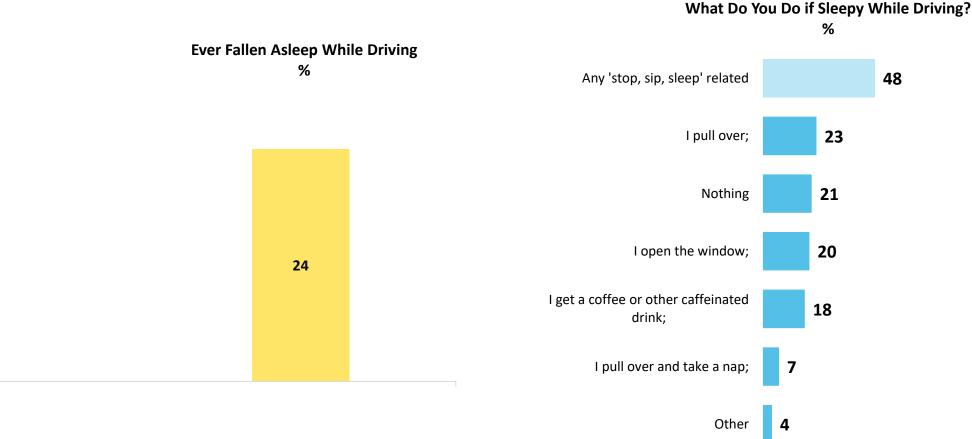


24% of motorists now indicate they have fallen asleep or nodded off ('even if only for a brief moment') when driving; this incidence is again well above the research series average.

Driving Fatigue



Base: All Motorists n − 1,220



24% of motorists have fallen asleep at the wheel; just under half of the corrective actions relate to 'Stop, Sip, Sleep'.



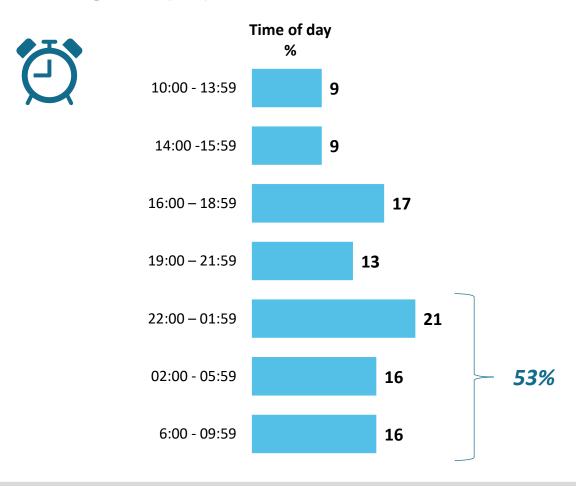
Q. Have you ever fallen asleep or nodded off (even if for only a brief moment) while driving?

Q. Thinking about the last time you felt sleepy while driving, what (if anything) did you do?

Time of day - 'last time you fell asleep or nodded off while driving'



Base: ever fallen asleep while driving n - 282 (24%)



The instances of falling asleep while driving appear reasonably evenly distributed during the day; 53% occurred between 10pm & 10am.



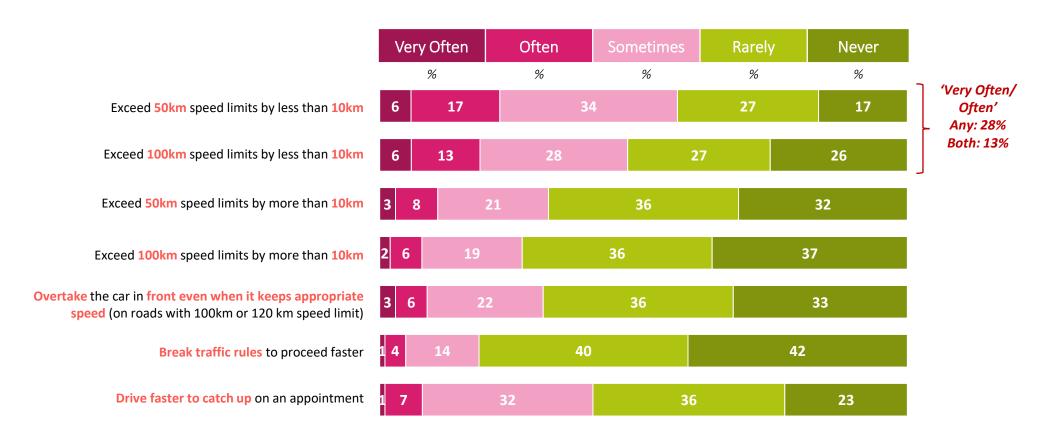
Q.4b Thinking about the last time you fell asleep or nodded off (even if for only a brief moment) while driving, what time of day was this?



Speeding & Rule Violation 2021



Base: All Motorists n − 1,220



28% of motorists regularly (very often/often) engage in low level speeding.

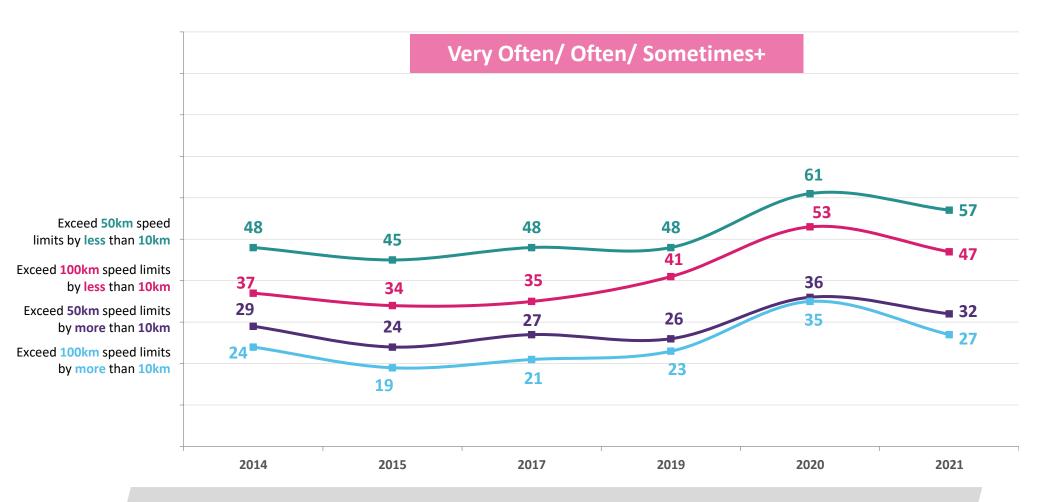


Q.5a How often do you do each of the following activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Very often' and 5 is 'Never'?

Speeding & Rule Violation: 2014-2021



Base: All Motorists N- 1,220



The claimed incidence of speeding has declined year on year while continuing to be well above the research series average.

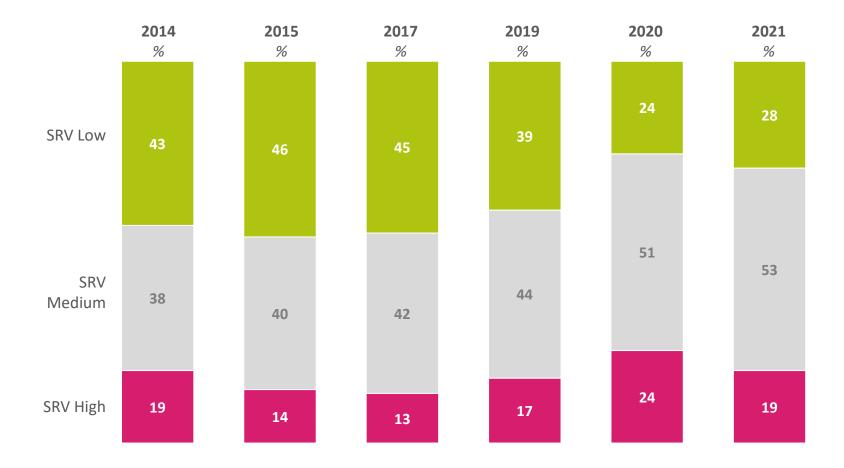


Q.5a How often do you...

Speeding & Rule Violation: Composite Score (Low/Medium/High)



Base: All Motorists



While the incidence of the SRV High group has returned to more recognisable levels, the SRV medium group remains much larger than the historic pattern.



Speeding & Rule Violation 2021: Composite Score



Base: All Motorists N-1,220

	Total	Ger	nder		A	ge		Social	Class	Reg	gion	Drive fo	or work
		Male	Female	-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	Ex Dublin	Yes	No
Base:	1220	591	629	322	420	302	176	671	549	299	921	292	928
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
SRV Low	28	22	34	28	21	32	34	25	31	31	26	21	30
SRV Medium	53	55	51	44	55	57	59	52	54	50	54	48	55
SRV High	19	23	15	28	24	11	7	23	16	19	19	31	16

The SRV High Group significantly peaks among those under 35 years and those who 'drive for work'.



What Level of Speeding is Acceptable 2021?



Base: All Motorists N-1,220



Only 16% of motorists consider low level speeding in 50km zones as 'totally unacceptable'.

The SRV high group consistently considers speeding more 'acceptable'.



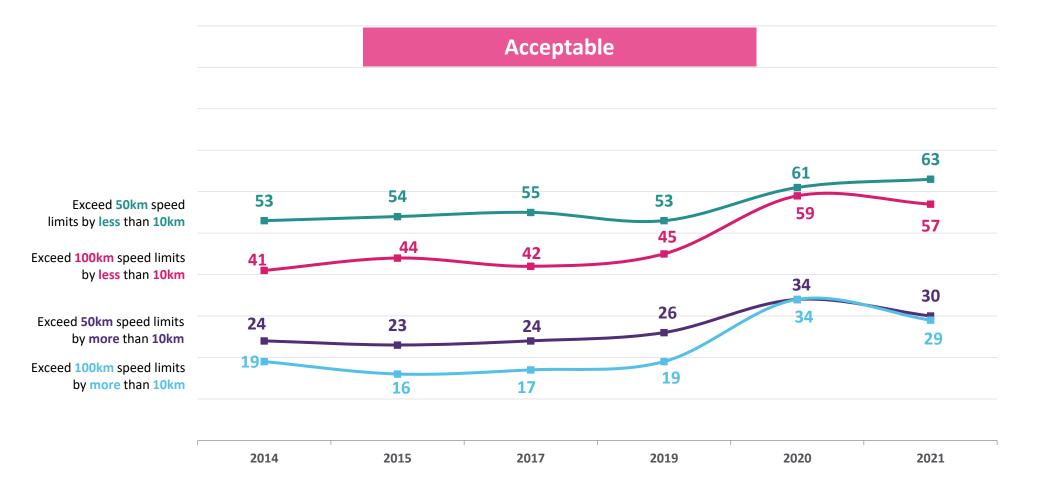
Q.5b I would like you to tell me how acceptable or unacceptable you think it is for drivers to ...

(SRV high group)

What Level of Speeding is Acceptable?

Base: All Motorists N-1,241





The high levels of perceived acceptability of speeding seen in 2020 are largely been maintained this year. Note the closing gap between acceptability of low- and highlevel speeding.

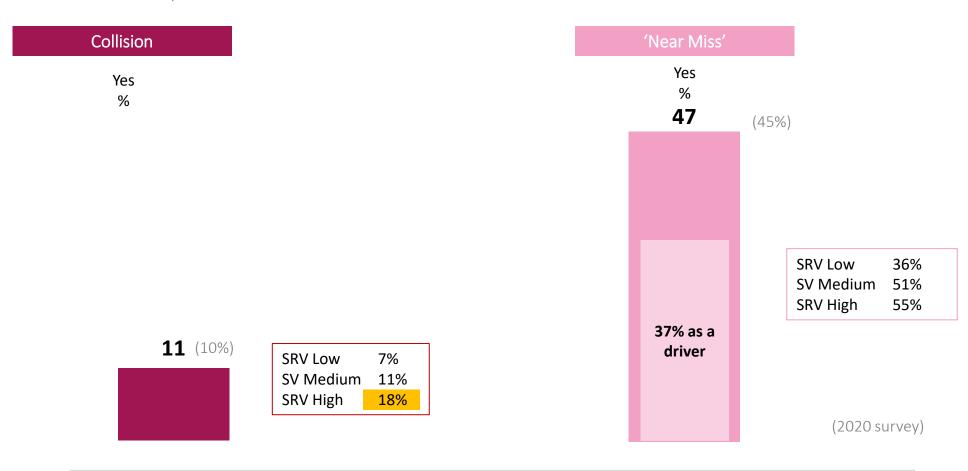


Q.5b I would like you to tell me how acceptable or unacceptable you think it is for drivers to ...

Collisions & Near Accidents (Past 5 Years)



Base: All Motorists N-1,220



11% of motorists have had a collision in the past 5 years and 47% a 'near miss'.

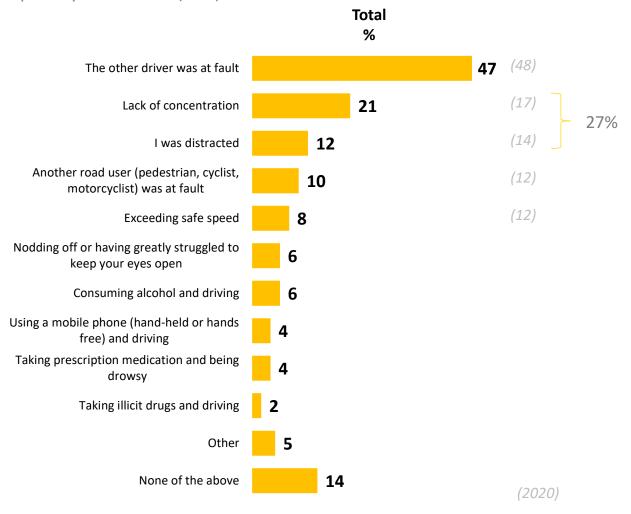
(2 in 3 of those who have had a collision have also been involved in a 'near miss'.

Q. In the last five years have you been involved in a collision while driving a motor vehicle in which there was damage to your vehicle or another vehicle?
Q. In the last five years have you ever been involved in a 'near miss' i.e. you narrowly escaped a collision
with another road user while in a car, on bicycle, or as a motorcyclist or pedestrian?

Reasons for Collision



Base: involved in a collision past 5 years N - 129 (11%)



Key reasons for collision include 'lack of concentration' + '.. Distraction' (either = 27%)

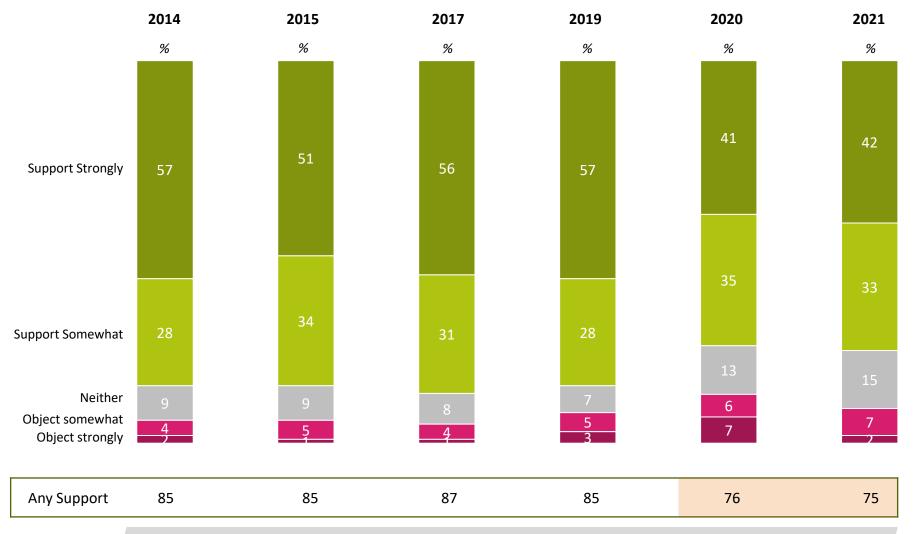


Q.6c Were any of these collisions the result of you doing any of these things?

Support for Safety Cameras

Base: All Motorists N-1,220





Comparatively low national support for Safety Cameras is again apparent with the decline especially evident in relation to 'Support Strongly'.



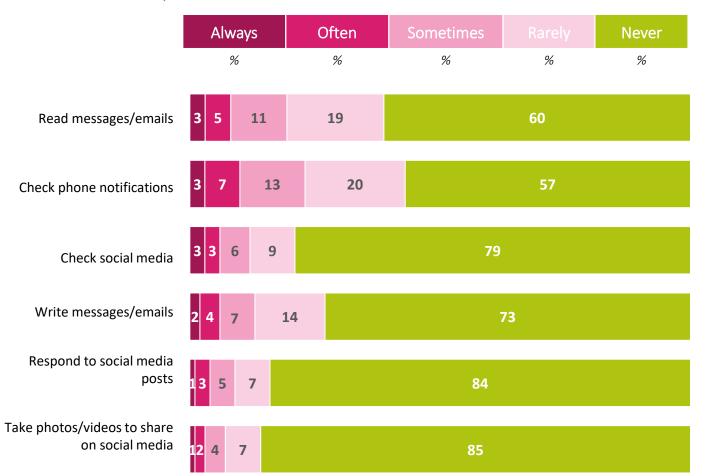
Q.7a To what extent do you support or object to the use of safety cameras on the roads?



Mobile Phone Behaviour in Car 2021: Actions

BIA

Base: All Motorists n − 1,220





In car mobile behaviour peaks for reading messages & checking notifications.



Q.11a How often do you use your mobile phone while driving to do the following?

Mobile Phone Behaviour in Car 2021: Actions



Base: All Motorists n − 1,220

		Gender		Age					Social Class		Region		Drive for work	
Often/ Always	Total Male Female -24 25-34 35-49		50-64	65+	ABC1F C2DE		Dublin Excl Dub		Yes	No				
	1220	591	629	90	232	420	302	176	671	549	299	921	292	928
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Check phone notifications	10	11	9	25	13	11	5	3	13	7	11	10	17	8
Read messages/emails	9	10	7	21	11	10	5	3	10	7	10	9	16	6
Write messages/emails	6	7	5	18	9	6	3	3	8	4	7	6	11	5
Check social media	5	5	5	18	7	5	2	2	6	5	6	5	9	4
Respond to social media posts	4	5	4	16	8	4	1	1	5	3	5	4	10	3
Take photos/videos to share on social media	4	4	3	14	6	3	2	1	5	2	4	3	9	2
Danger Group	14	16	12	33	18	16	7	5	17	10	14	14	25	10

In car mobile behaviour is directly related to age, with all behaviours peaking significantly among younger motorists; behaviours also consistently peak among those who drive for work.

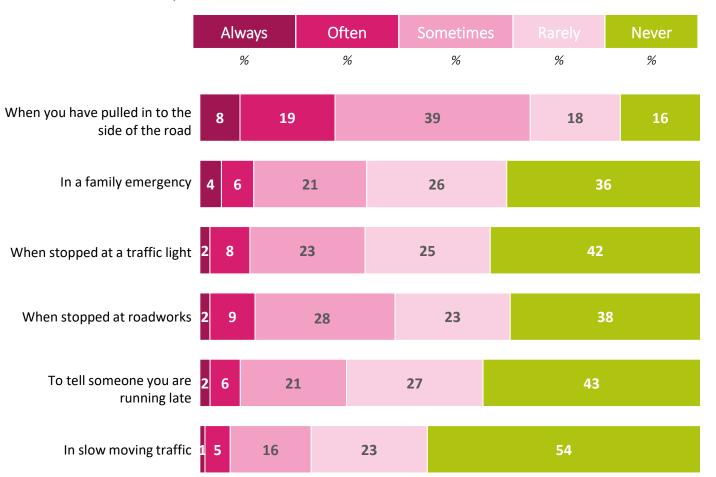


Q.11a How often do you use your mobile phone while driving to do the following?

Mobile Phone Behaviour in Car 2021: Circumstances



Base: All Motorists n − 1,220



Any (Often/ Always) All	Danger group						
2021	2021						
%	%						
27	48						
10	33						
10	36						
11	36						
8	32						
6	27						

c. 1 in 10 of all motorists frequently use their mobiles when stopped at lights or roadworks.

The behavioural pattern among the Mobile Danger Group is markedly different.

Q.11b How often do you use your mobile phone while driving in the following circumstances? ...

Mobile Phone Behaviour in Car 2021: Circumstances



Base: All Motorists n − 1,220

Often/ Always	Total	Ger	nder	Age					Social Class		Region		Area	
Often/ Always	Total	Male	Female	-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	Excl Dub	Urban	Rural
	1220	591	629	90	232	420	302	176	671	549	299	921	785	435
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
When stopped at a traffic light	10	11	9	10	18	12	4	3	13	7	11	9	11	9
When stopped at roadworks	11	12	9	15	19	12	6	4	13	8	11	11	11	10
In slow moving traffic	6	8	5	13	10	9	2	1	8	5	8	6	7	5
In a family emergency	10	10	9	15	15	10	7	3	12	8	12	9	11	8
To tell someone you are running late	8	8	7	15	11	9	4	2	11	4	7	8	8	8
When you have pulled in to the side of the road	27	29	24	34	33	27	24	18	26	27	21	28	25	29

Incidence of using mobile while stopped in traffic or roadworks rises to c. 1 in 5 of motorists between the age 25-34 years.

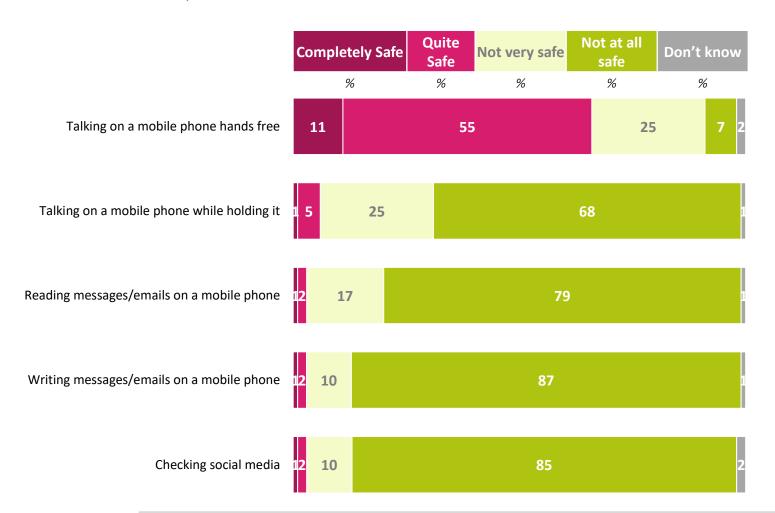


Q.11b How often do you use your mobile phone while driving in the following circumstances? ...

Safety of Mobile Phone in Car Behaviour



Base: All Motorists n − 1,220



Summary 'Safe' All	Danger Group
%	%
66	69
6	20
3	15
3	14
3	13

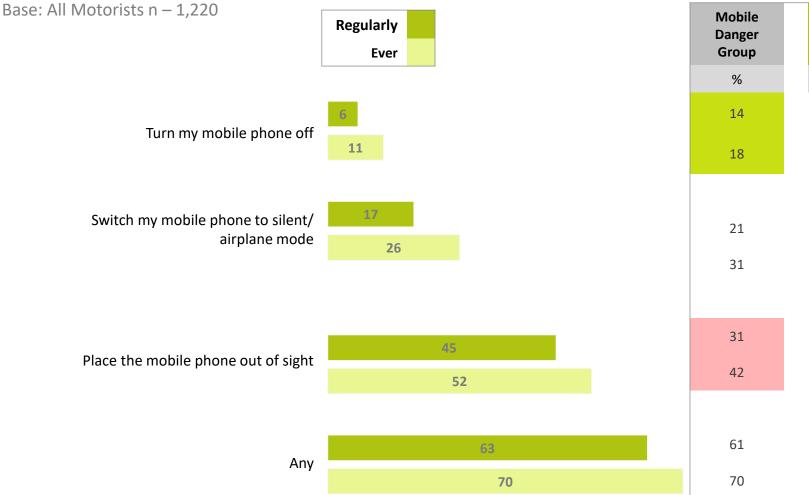
Despite the level of activity, motorists clearly perceive in car mobile use as unsafe; this extends to the mobile danger group (despite sentiment being weaker).

Q.11c How safe or not would you ... while driving?

Mobile Phone Safe Behaviour:



Actions before setting off to drive



Mobile Danger Group	2020	2019		
%	%	%		
14	5	7		
18	8	10		
21	13	8		
31	21	11		
31	41	26		
42	49	29		
61	56	40		
70	63	43		

The incidence of motorists taking preventative safety measures with their phones has again increased this year. The mobile danger group is relatively more likely to turn their phones off.

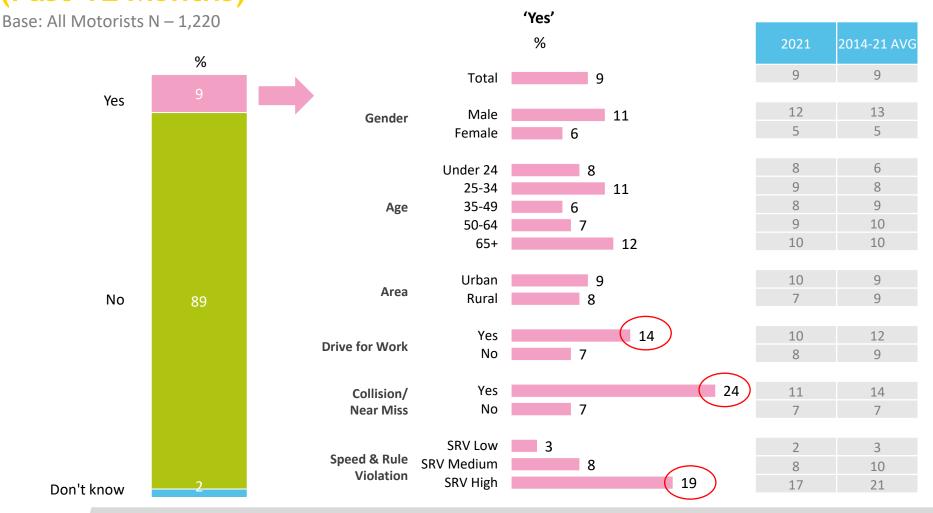


Q.11d Which, if any, of the following have you ever done with your mobile phone before setting off to drive?



Driven a Motor Vehicle After Consuming Any Alcohol (Past 12 Months)





Driving after consuming alcohol again shows a spike among the SRV High group, 19% of whom drove after consuming alcohol in the past 12 months; incidence is also higher among those who 'drive for work' and those with a history of collisions/ near misses.



Q. In the last 12 months have you driven a motor vehicle after consuming any alcoholic drink?

Driven a Motor Vehicle After Consuming Any Alcohol (Past 12 Months)



2014-21 Avg.

%

15

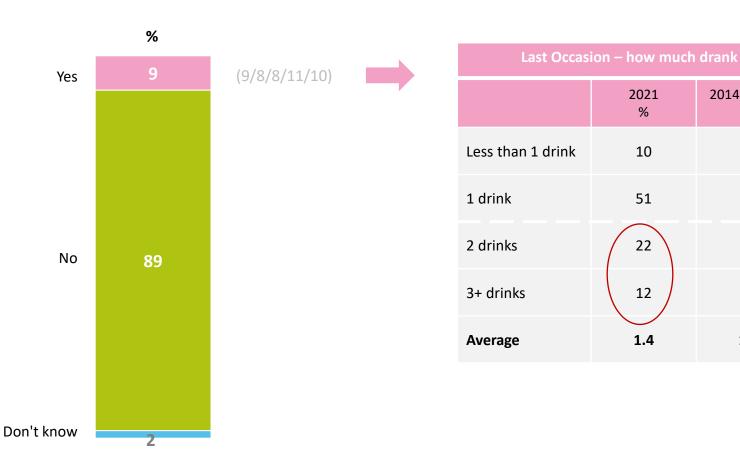
46

27

11

1.5

Base: All Motorists N - 1,220



9% of motorists consumed alcohol before driving in past 12 months – largely on a par with previous years

34% of this group had 2 or more drinks before doing so.



(2021/2019/17/15/14 Research)

Consuming Alcohol and Driving: Summary





(Base: Drink + Driving P12M N - 100)

1.4 Drinks Avg.

DAB AVG 1.5

How much consume and safe to drive?

(Base: all)

No Alcohol 58%

DAB AVG 62%

1.3 Drinks
Avg.

DAB AVG 1.2

How much consumed and be under legal limit?

(Base: all)

No Alcohol 47%

DAB AVG 49%

1.0 Drinks

Avg.

DAB AVG 1.0



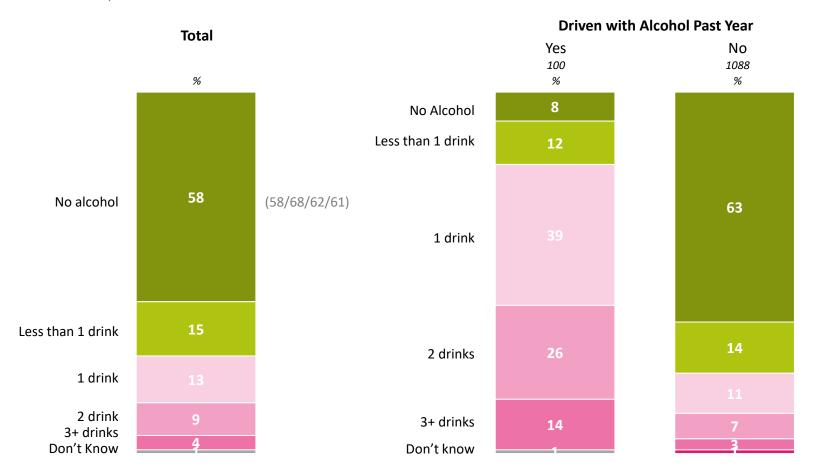
Q.10a In the last 12 months have you driven a motor vehicle after consuming any alcoholic drink? Q.10b On the last occasion how much alcohol did you drink?

Q.10c Thinking about yourself, how much alcohol do you feel you can consume and be safe to drive?

How Much Alcohol Can You Consume and Be Safe to Drive?



Base: All Motorists N – 1,220



58% of Irish motorists claim to have a 'no alcohol limit' before driving – this is below the research series average. Those who consumed alcohol before driving in the past year have an entirely separate perspective with only 8% having a no alcohol policy – strongly indicating at a habitual behaviour.



Q.10c Thinking about yourself, how much alcohol do you feel you can consume and be safe to drive?

(2019/17/15 research)

How Much Alcohol Can You Consume and Remain Under the Legal Limit



Base: All Motorists N − 1,220



47% of all motorists now believe 'no alcohol' can be consumed to remain under legal limit. The same strong divergence in attitudes between those who did/did not drink & drive in past 12 months is again evident.



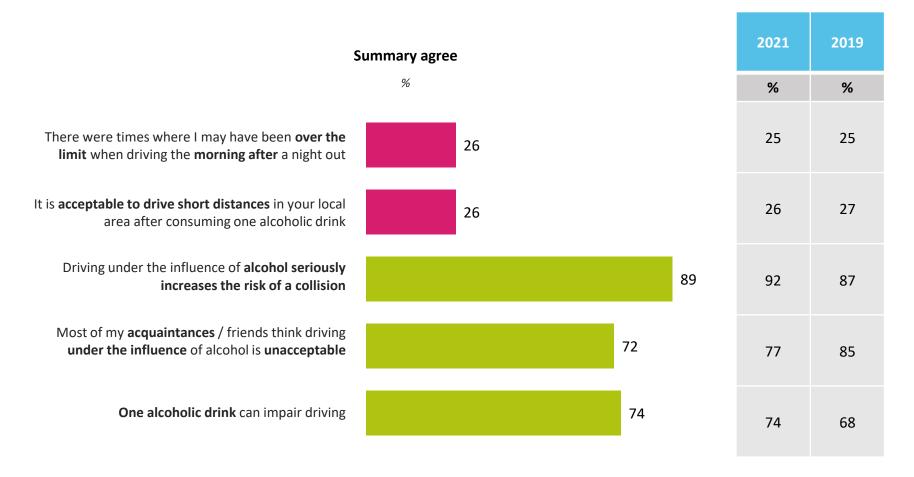
Q.10d In your opinion, how much alcohol can you drink before driving and still remain under the legal limit?

(2019/17/15 research)

Alcohol and Driving Attitudes 2021



Base: All motorists N - 1,220



While attitudes to alcohol remain largely consistent year on year, perceived social norms are weakening only 72% of motorists now agree 'most of my acquaintances' think drink driving is unacceptable.



Q. To what extent do you agree ...

Alcohol and Driving Attitudes 2021



Base: All motorists N - 1,200

		Ger	nder		A	ge		Social	Class	Reg	ion	Alcoh	ol Use
	Total	Male	Female	-34yrs	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	Excl Dub	Yes	No
	1220	591	629	322	420	302	176	671	549	299	921	100	1088
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
There were times where I may have been over the limit when driving the morning after a night out	26	32	20	29	31	20	20	29	23	22	28	51	24
It is acceptable to drive short distances in your local area (e.g. to a local shop, or home from a local pub) after consuming one alcoholic drink.	26	30	22	31	26	22	24	29	22	23	27	66	22
Driving under the influence of alcohol seriously increases the risk of a collision	89	86	92	86	90	90	94	89	90	88	90	81	91
Most of my acquaintances / friends think driving under the influence of alcohol is unacceptable	72	71	73	74	71	69	75	74	69	78	70	76	72
One alcoholic drink can impair driving	74	70	79	76	76	70	73	75	73	78	73	37	78

The divergence in both attitudes and behaviours among those who did/ did not drink and drive in the past 12 months is confirmed in responses to statements relating to 'morning after', 'short distances' and 'one alcoholic drink'.



Q. To what extent do you agree ...

Summary: Alcohol and Driving 2021



Base: All motorists N - 1,220

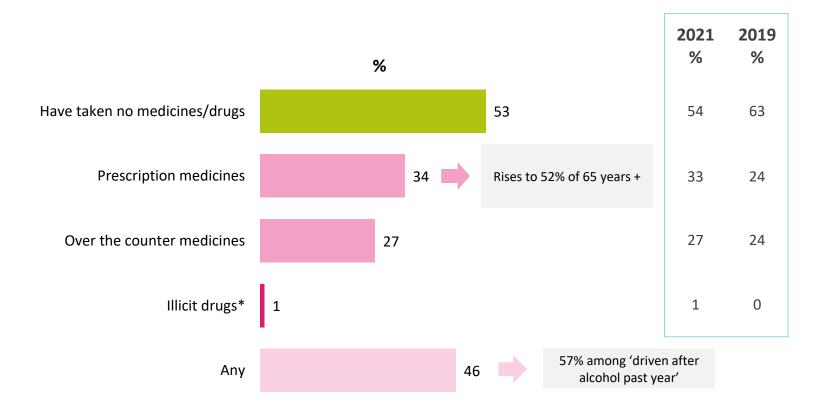
	All Motorists	Driven after consuming alcohol (past 12 months)
National Profile	100%	9%
No alcohol limit (don't feel safe to drive if consumed any alcohol)	58%	8%
Legal limit is no alcohol/ less than 1 drink	75%	35%
It is acceptable to drive short distances in your local area after consuming one alcoholic drink	26%	66%
There were times where I may have been over the limit when driving the morning after a night out	26%	51%

The summary highlights the distinct profile of those who drove after consuming alcohol in the past 12 months.

Driving and Medication 2021



Base: All Motorists N-1,220



46% of motorists have taken 'any' medication before driving in the past 12 months; rising to 57% of those who consumed alcohol before driving.



Q.9a In the last 12 months have you taken any of the following and then driven a motor vehicle?
Q.9b Thinking about the most recent occasion where you consumed illicit drugs and drove a motor vehicle, had you also consumed alcohol prior to the occasion?

*100% of this group had also consumed alcohol Caution very low base (n-9) reference only

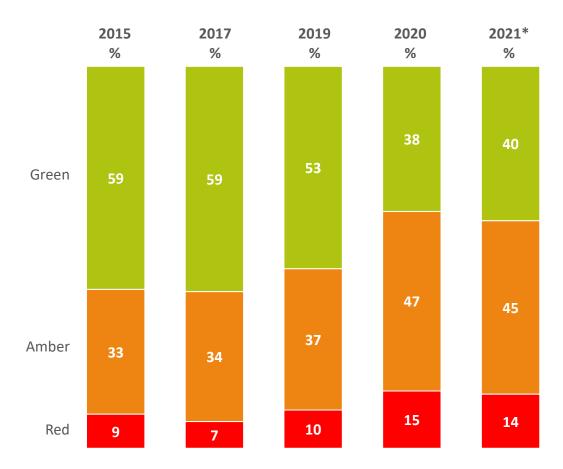


RSA Motorists Segmentation Analysis



Segments size and scale 2015-2021

Base: All motorists



The 2021 motorist segmentation indicates a similar pattern to last year.

^{*} Adjusted based on amended questions; incidence comparisons reference only

Driver Attitudes & Behaviour Survey 2021 Key Learnings



1.

The 2021 survey results confirm the rise in errant road sentiments over the period of the Covid 19 pandemic; albeit some of the starker rises in negative attitudes and behaviors have retracted somewhat in the past 12 months.

2.

28% of motorists regularly (very often/often) engage in low level speeding; and only 16% of motorists consider low level speeding in 50km zones as 'totally unacceptable'.

3.

Overall, 19% of motorists can be classified as High Speeding & Rule violators.
Comparatively low national support for Safety Cameras is again apparent.



4.

14% of motorists qualify for a 'mobile danger group' (do at least one of the handheld mobile phone behaviours in car). This danger group has a consistently different approach to in car mobile behaviour: both in relation to usage circumstances and perceptions of safety.

5.

Just under 1 in 10 motorists drove after drinking alcohol last year. Again, this groups is notable for how clearly their attitudes separate from the national average in relation to drink driving; strongly indicating at habitual drink driving behaviour.

6.

Across each of the errant groupings of motorists - speeding, mobile and alcohol - those who *drive for work* are disproportionately likely to be included.



Thank you.



RESEARCH & INSIGHT

Milltown House Mount Saint Annes Milltown, Dublin 6 - D06 Y822 +353 1 205 7500 | www.banda.ie

Delve deeper