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Survey Reveals Factors That Drivers Say Motivate Safe Driving

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Most drivers think they operate their vehicles in a skilled and safe manner. Drivers cite concern about being in an automobile crash as the leading factor influencing safe driving, followed by concern about increased insurance costs arising from claims. These are the major findings of a new Insurance Institute for Highway Safety research report.

Researchers surveyed a national sample of licensed drivers to determine how safely they think they operate vehicles and what factors motivate them to drive safely. A total of 543 interviews were conducted.

Driving Skill and Safety Ratings

Drivers were asked to rate their skill and safety “compared to other drivers on the road.” Twenty percent of the respondents said their driving skill was much better than average, 52 percent said better than average, and 28 percent said they had average skill. Twenty-three percent of the respondents rated their attention to safe driving practices as much better than average, 56 percent said it was better than average, and 20 percent said it was average. None of the drivers surveyed said their driving skills were below average, and only 1 percent rated their attention to safe driving practices as below average.

Drivers were also asked to rate themselves on various skills and safety practices on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being unskilled, or unsafe, and 10 being very skilled, or very safe. Forty-one percent of the respondents rated themselves as very skilled. The average rating on skill at handling a car in normal driving situations was 9.0.

Men were more likely than women to compare themselves favorably with other drivers and to rate themselves highly on driving skill and safety. For example, 26 percent of male respondents rated their driving skill as much better than average, but only 12 percent of female respondents did so.

Motivation for Safe Driving

Drivers cited concern about being in an automobile crash as the leading factor motivating safe driving, followed by concern about increased insurance costs resulting from claims, concern about traffic fines, and concern about loss of license. Education and training were less likely to be seen as contributors to safe driving.

Fifty-one percent of drivers surveyed had been in a motor vehicle crash. Eighty-eight percent of those who had been in crashes said they thought the crash made them more attentive to safe driving. Of the 12 percent of drivers whose insurance costs increased

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because of claims, 74 percent said the higher rates made them focus on driving safely. Sixty-four percent of all drivers surveyed received a good driver discount on their insurance. Of that number, 50 percent said the discounts prompted them to drive safely.

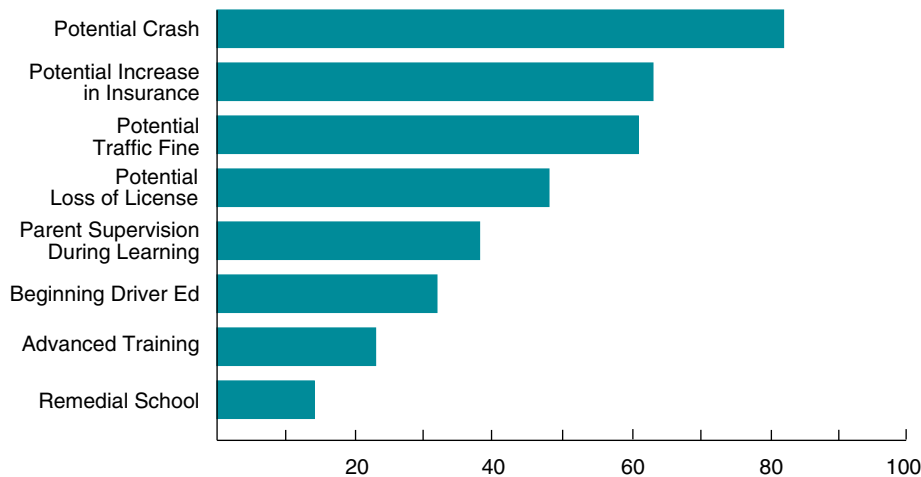
Parents and Their Teenage Children

Parents of licensed teenage drivers reported discussing the dangers of speeding and alcohol-impaired driving most frequently, along with the effect of traffic tickets or crashes on insurance costs and the possibility of losing one's license because of a negative driving record.

Regarding driving skill, only 7 percent of parents thought their child was much better than average compared with other drivers on the road. Thirty-six percent said better than average, 48 percent said average, and 7 percent said their child was below average in skill. Concerning safety, 7 percent of parents thought their child was much better than average, 44 percent said better than average, 43 percent said average, and 5 percent said below average.

For further information, see "Factors that Drivers Say Motivate Safe Driving Practices," by Allan F. Williams, Nancy N. Paek, and Adrian K. Lund. Copies may be obtained from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Percentage of Respondents Saying Various Factors Increase Concern for Safe Driving "A Lot"



Percentage Saying They Became More Attentive To Safe Driving As A Result Of Various Factors

