

Northern Ireland Road Safety Monitor Bulletin 2004

Introduction

The Northern Ireland Road Safety Monitor 2004 is the latest in a series of research on attitudes, behaviour and awareness of road safety issues in Northern Ireland which has been carried out since 1995. In 2002, the survey was revised and updated to reflect changing driving habits and to allow new topics to be explored. Whilst some of the original questions from 1995 remain, many have been removed and there has been a substantial introduction of new material.

This bulletin highlights the main findings arising out of the 2004 survey. The Northern Ireland Road Safety Monitor is a sample survey, the results of which are subject to both sampling and non-sampling errors.

Key Points

Speeding

- Almost one fifth of drivers (18%) stated that they never exceed the speed limit, however one quarter of drivers admitted that they had exceeded the speed limit on every type of road, compared to 27% in 2003.
- Females are a little more likely to speed than males in built up areas (36% of females compared to 32% of males). However, males are almost twice as likely to speed on all road types (33% compared to 17%).
- More than one in five respondents (22%) admitted that they regularly exceeded the speed limit on motorways by 11 mph or more.
- Almost three quarters of respondents (72%) felt that it is fair that the police should issue speeding tickets with penalty points for drivers who exceed the speed limit by up to 10 mph.
- In 2004, 55% of respondents thought it was likely that they would be stopped by the police for speeding, 62% thought it likely that they would be caught by a mobile camera, and 55% thought it likely that they would be caught on a fixed camera.

- Over 65 year olds are more than twice as likely as 25 – 34 year olds to agree that it is always dangerous to exceed the speed limit by less than 5mph on nearly every type of road.
- The majority of respondents consider it to be dangerous to exceed the speed limit by 6-10mph, regardless of the speed limit. As the speed limit increases, the number of respondents agreeing that it is always dangerous to exceed the speed limit by less than 5 mph decreases.
- Approximately 5% of respondents overestimated the maximum speed at which a car or motorcycle is allowed to travel along each road type, except for roads with street lighting where over one quarter of respondents overestimated the speed limit.

Drinking and Driving

- In 2004, 69% of motorists who drink stated that they would be unlikely to drive after one drink. This increased to 88% after two drinks and 93% after three or more drinks. The figures for 2003 were 66%, 81% and 93% respectively.
- The majority of respondents (73%) stated that they would be unlikely to drive the next morning if they thought that they were still over the legal limit. However, 61% stated they would be likely to drive the morning after an evening drinking, with 36% stating that they were unlikely to consider the amount of alcohol they had drank the previous evening.
- Two thirds of respondents would be unlikely to travel in a car in which the driver has had a single drink. This increased with the number of drinks consumed by the driver to 91% unlikely to travel as a passenger in a car after the driver has had three or more drinks.
- 90% of respondents agreed that the police should be able to stop people at random and breathalyse them, however just over two fifths of respondents (42%) felt it was unlikely that they would be stopped by the police for drinking and driving.
- Nearly half (45%) of respondents felt that motorists should not be allowed to drive if they had consumed any alcohol. Over half of respondents (52%) think that the penalties for drinking and driving are not very severe.
- Two fifths of respondents underestimated the number of units contained in a pint of beer, while 45% underestimated the number of units contained in a bottle of beer and a glass of wine. Around one third underestimated a pint of cider (37%) and a can of beer (34%) and almost one in four underestimated the number of units contained in a measure of spirits (23%).

- With regard to the drinking and driving campaign 'Shame', 93% of respondents were able to correctly identify the campaign after seeing still pictures from the TV advertisement. 95% of respondents were aware of the campaign, and 78% admitted that it had influenced their behaviour in relation to drink driving.

Pedestrian Safety

- 78% of pedestrians would use a pedestrian crossing if they are at or near one when crossing the road.
- A high number of respondents (70%) were aware of what 'amber light flashing' meant when you are driving and approaching a pedestrian crossing, however less than one in five respondents (19%) were aware of what 'Green man flashing' meant when at a pedestrian crossing.
- Almost one quarter (24%) of respondents think it is dangerous to walk along / across a public road after one or two alcoholic drinks.
- The majority of those surveyed (82%) recognized still pictures from the TV advertisements relating to pedestrian safety called Texting and Home. 88% stated that they were aware of and had been influenced by the campaign.
- 95% of respondents agreed that it is the responsibility of both drivers and pedestrians to ensure pedestrian safety on the road.

Fatigue

- Over half (54%) of motorists stated that there have been occasions when they have felt drowsy when driving (63% male and 46% female).
- Almost three quarters (71%) stated that this happened on roads outside a built up area (compared with 90% in 2003), and almost one half (47%) stated this happened on motorways (compared with 63% in 2003).
- The most common time when motorists felt tired while driving was 4pm (27% male and 15% female).

Additional Information

Electronic and hard copies of this bulletin and the full Northern Ireland Road Safety Monitor Report (2004) are available from:

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