

## 2022 Statewide Traffic Safety Survey

Prepared by Jill Cooper, UC Berkeley SafeTREC  
Summer 2022

2022 marked the thirteenth year of the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) California's Annual Traffic Safety Study. The study is intended to create a better understanding of trends in traffic safety behaviors and help focus traffic safety programs, which include enforcement efforts along with public education campaigns to ensure they are effective in targeting areas with disproportionate traffic safety injuries. The survey is sponsored by the OTS while being administered by Ewald and Wasserman Research Consultants along with University of California Berkeley Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC).

The 2022 wave of data collection for the statewide traffic safety survey was conducted with an online panel of California drivers instead of an intercept interview, as were previous waves of data collection. This decision was made due to the COVID-19 pandemic as alternative data was collected to avoid in-person contact between field interviewers and respondents. The survey questions and data analysis of survey items presented in this report are largely similar to previous waves of the survey, including survey items on traffic safety opinions and knowledge on traffic safety campaigns, distracted driving and perceptions about pedestrian and bicycle traffic interactions. However, the 2022 survey underwent a revision with new survey items added to gain understanding of opinions about the [Safe System approach](#), which was introduced by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The participants for the online survey panel were obtained through Qualtrics, a commercial panel vendor utilizing multiple subcontractors, to provide a representative cross-section of pre-screened and qualified respondents. SafeTREC paid attention to matching age and gender distributions with previous years.

Below are the results from the 2022 California Traffic Safety Public Opinion Study. Overall, 2,768 eligible panelists completed the online survey in 2022. Panelists consisted of California drivers who were forwarded to an online survey portal. The criteria for eligibility included a valid California driver's license and being at least 18 years of age. Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding error. The survey instrument appears at the end of this report summary.

To review the full report, please click [here](#).

**Q1. In your opinion, what are the biggest safety problems on California roadways?**

Reply	2022
Speeding/Aggressive Driving	19.6%
Distracted Driving because of TEXTING	18.7%
Drunk Driving	17.6%
Bad Road Surfaces	11.8%
Drugged Driving	11.0%
Distracted Driving because of TALKING	8.3%
All other responses combined	13.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, 19.6% of respondents cited “Speeding/Aggressive Driving” as the biggest safety problem on California roadways, followed by “Distracted Driving because of texting” (18.7%) and “Drunk Driving” (17.6%).

**Q2. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, what is the biggest change in behaviors you have noticed from drivers?**

Reply	2022
Aggressive Driving/Road Rage	34.7%
Have Not Noticed any Changes	23.3%
Speeding	18.5%
Distracted Driving because of Talking and/or Texting	15.5%
Impaired Driving	4.2%
Not Wearing Seatbelts	2.1%
Other	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Respondents were asked to identify the biggest change they have noticed in driver behavior.

“Aggressive Driving/Road Rage” was the most frequently given response as the biggest behavioral change noticed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to 2021, “Aggressive Driving/Road Rage” had a significant increase in responses from 26.5% to 34.7%.

**Q3. In your opinion, what is the most serious distraction for drivers?**

<b>Reply</b>	<b>2022</b>
Texting or Checking Phone While Driving	71.9%
Talking on Phone While Driving	14.4%
Car Crashes causing Rubbernecking	6.3%
Eating While Driving	1.9%
Dashboard/Navigation Systems	1.8%
Passengers in Car	1.7%
Roadside Billboards	0.7%
All other responses combined	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Responses in 2022 were similar to those in previous waves of this survey.

“Texting While Driving” has been the most frequently given response for this measure since 2013.

Consistent with prior data collection waves, “Texting or Checking Phone While Driving” was reported as the most serious distraction overall by 71.9% of all respondents.

**Q4. How often in the past 30 days have you used an electronic wireless device in a non-hands-free manner, like a cell phone when driving?**

<b>Reply</b>	<b>2022</b>
Regularly	12.4%
Sometimes	17.5%
Rarely	27.2%
Never	42.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, 27.2% said they “Rarely” used a cell phone in a non-hands-free manner. 42.9% reported “Never” doing so, while 29.9% said they “Regularly” or “Sometimes” did.

**Q5. Have you ever made a driving mistake while talking on a cell phone?**

Reply	2022
Yes	40.6%
No	59.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The majority (59.4%) of respondents reported having never made a driving mistake while using a cell phone with no significant change compared to 2021.

**Q6. Have you ever been hit or nearly hit by a driver who was using a cell phone?**

Reply	2022
Yes	50.2%
No	49.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

A little more than half (50.2%) of drivers in 2022 indicate that they have been hit or nearly hit by a driver who was talking or texting on a cell phone, which is similar to the 2021 data.

**Q7. What do you think is the likelihood of being ticketed for hand-held cell phone use or texting?\***

Reply	2022
Very likely	21.6%
Somewhat likely	28.3%
Neither likely or unlikely	13.9%
Somewhat unlikely	16.4%
Very unlikely	19.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, almost half (49.9%) of drivers said that it is “Very Likely” or “Somewhat Likely” to be ticketed for hand-held cell phone use.

**Q8a. In the past six months, do you recall hearing or seeing “Go Safely California”**

Reply	2022
Yes	28.5%
No	71.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, 71.5% of respondents reported they did not recall hearing or seeing “Go Safely California”.

**Q8b. In the past six months, do you recall hearing or seeing “Slow the Fast Down”?**

Reply	2022
Yes	17.5%
No	82.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, 82.5% of respondents reported they did not recall hearing or seeing “Slow the Fast Down”.

**Q8c. In the past six months, do you recall hearing or seeing “Don’t Let Drunk or ‘High’ Drive”?**

Reply	2022
Yes	44.5%
No	55.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Over half (55.5%) of respondents reported they did not recall hearing or seeing “Don’t Let Drunk or ‘High’ Drive”.

**Q9. In the past six months, did you drive when you thought you had too much alcohol to drive safely?**

Reply	2022
Yes	7.2%
No	69.0%
I do not drink at all	23.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, 69.0% of respondents said “No” to having driven when they thought they had too much alcohol to drive safely.

**Q10. In the past six months, how often have you used a taxi or other ride service when drinking with others or alone?**

Reply	2022
Always	25.6%
Sometimes	17.7%
Rarely	13.3%
Never	43.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

A total of 43.3% of respondents “Always” or “Sometimes” used transportation while drinking with others or alone, compared to 35.6% respondents in 2021.

**Q11. In the past six months, have you seen or heard anything about police setting up sobriety/DUI checkpoints to catch drunk drivers?**

Reply	2022
Yes	52.1%
No	47.9 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

More than half (52.1%) of respondents have seen or heard about police sobriety or DUI checkpoints in the past six months, similar to the 2021 wave.

**Q12. Did you know that you can get a DUI if you drive under the influence of legal or illegal drugs?**

Reply	2022
Yes	89.9%
No	10.1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

A large majority (89.9%) of respondents said they know it is possible to get a DUI by driving under the influence of legal or illegal drugs.

**Q13. How likely is it for someone to get arrested if they drive impaired?**

Reply	2022
Very Likely	37.2%
Somewhat Likely	40.9%
Somewhat Unlikely	16.9%
Very Unlikely	4.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Overall, 78.1% of California drivers believed it to be “Very Likely” or “Somewhat Likely” to be arrested for driving impaired.

**Q14. Do you think marijuana can impair driving related functions, such as reaction time, distance perception, lane tracking, coordination and balance?**

Reply	2022
Yes	76.3%
No	8.5%
It depends	15.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, 76.3% of respondents believed marijuana can impair driving functions, similar to 2021 data.

**Q15. How serious of a problem is driving under the influence of drugs, including marijuana, prescription or illegal?**

Reply	2022
Very big problem	50.0%
Somewhat of a problem	37.8%
A small problem	10.7%
Not a problem at all	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Half of respondents in 2022 replied that they thought driving under the influence of drugs, including marijuana, prescription or illegal is a serious problem. Another 37.8 said they think is is “Somewhat of a problem”.

**Q16. Do you think it’s safe to drive 10 miles over the speed limit on freeways?**

Reply	2022
Yes	33.3%
No	26.1%
It depends	40.6 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, 33.3% said they think it is safe to drive 10 miles over the speed limit on freeways. 40.6% says that “It depends”.

**Q17. Do you think it’s safe to drive over the speed limit on residential streets?**

Reply	2022
Yes	9.4%
No	73.9%
It depends	16.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The majority (73.9%) respondents believe it is unsafe to drive over the speed limit on residential streets, with a significant increase from 51.7% compared in 2021.

**Q18. What do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you drive over the speed limit on residential streets?**

<b>Reply</b>	<b>2022</b>
Very likely	23.6%
Somewhat likely	40.1%
Somewhat unlikely	24.4%
Very unlikely	12.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, 63.7% of respondents thought the chance of getting a ticket for driving over the speed limit on residential streets was “Very likely” or “Somewhat likely”, compared to 67.4% in 2021.

**Q19. In a typical week, what is your main form of transportation?**

<b>Reply</b>	<b>2022</b>
Mostly Drive	82.3%
Mostly Walk	7.6%
Mostly Ride a Bike	2.9%
Mostly Ride a Motorcycle/ Scooter	1.6%
Mostly take Public Transit	3.5%
Mostly use Ride Share Services/Taxis/Ride as a passenger	2.0%
Other	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In a typical week, 82.3% respondents said their main form of transportation was driving. 7.6% said walking was their main mode.

**Q20. Do you think it is legal for bicyclists to ride on roadways when there is no bike lane?**

Reply	2022
Yes	68.2%
No	31.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

A majority of respondents (68.2%) said they think it is legal for bicyclists to ride on roadways when there is no bike lane.

**Q21. When driving how comfortable are you with sharing the road with bicyclists when there IS a designated bike lane?**

Reply	2022
Very comfortable	29.8%
Somewhat comfortable	35.4%
Somewhat uncomfortable	22.4%
Very uncomfortable	12.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Combined, 65.3% of respondents were “Very comfortable” or “Somewhat comfortable” sharing the road with bicyclists when there is a bike lane, compared to 72% in 2021.

**Q22. In what situation would you feel most comfortable sharing the road with bicyclists while driving?**

<b>Reply</b>	<b>2022</b>
When there is a protected bike lane divider	56.4%
Where there is a bike lane with painted dividers	31.4%
Where there is no bike lane at all	5.0%
Other	0.7%
I don't feel comfortable sharing the road with bicyclists under any circumstances	6.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2022, we added the question “In what situation would you feel most comfortable sharing the road with bicyclists when driving” and listed a multiple choice list of options. Most respondents (56.4%) said, “When there is a protected bike lane divider,” 31.4% said “When there is a bike lane with painted dividers,” and 5% said “When there is no bike lane at all.”

**Q23. Think of the times you have been a pedestrian or bicyclist in the last six months. What safety problems did you experience, if any?**

<b>Reply</b>	<b>2022</b>
Cars going too fast	21.7%
Cars not stopping	20.3%
Distracted drivers (cell phones)	15.3%
Lots of traffic	10.3%
Lack of sidewalks/ bikelanes	9.7%
Almost getting hit by a car or bike	9.6%
Bicyclists not stopping	8.4%
None of the above	2.4%
Have not been a pedestrian or bicyclist in the past 6 mo.	2.0%
All othe responses combined	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The most reported safety problems experienced as by respondents when they have been pedestrians or bicyclists in the last 6 months are “Cars going too fast” (21.7%), followed by “Cars not stopping” (20.3%) and “Distracted drivers” (15.3%).

**Q24. Think of the times you have been a driver around pedestrian and bicyclists in the last six months. What safety problems did you experience, if any?**

Reply	2022
Pedestrians not using crosswalks	17.9%
Pedestrians stepping off curb without looking	15.4%
Cyclists not stopping at stop signs or traffic lights	14.9%
Pedestrians/cyclists distracted behavior (phones, ear pods, headsets)	12.8%
Cyclists being in the road or blocking traffic	12.4%
Pedestrians/cyclists not being visible enough	11.9%
Lack of sidewalks or clear crosswalks	10.8%
None	3.4%
Other responses combined	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The three most frequent responses to the question about safety problems experienced by driving near pedestrians or bicyclists in the last 6 months included “Pedestrians not using crosswalks” (17.9%), “Pedestrians stepping off the curb without looking” (15.4%) and “Cyclists not stopping at stop signs or traffic lights” (14.9%).

*This report was prepared in cooperation with the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of OTS.*

*Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*