

NEWS BRIEF

Provided by: Atlas Insurance Agency, Inc.

AAA Says Bad Driving Worsened Last Year

Drivers increasingly engaged in dangerous behaviors last year. According to new survey data from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, this put the brakes on a three-year decline in speeding, driving under the influence, and texting while driving.

The foundation found widespread increases in bad driving habits in 2021, but “most alarming” was a nearly 24% year-over-year uptick in the number of people who admitted to getting behind the wheel after drinking too much. A total of 7.3% of those surveyed admitted to driving under the influence of alcohol.

Those admitting to excessively speeding increased by 12.4% to nearly 51%, and those who said they drove within an hour of consuming cannabis rose by 13.6% to 5% of all people surveyed.

“The reversal in the frequency of U.S. drivers engaging in risky driving behavior is disturbing,” David Yang, the foundation’s executive director, said in a statement. “While drivers acknowledge that certain activities behind the wheel – like speeding and driving impaired, are not safe, many still engage in these activities anyway. We must be aware of the serious consequences of dangerous driving behaviors and change course.”

More than a quarter of those surveyed admitted to texting while driving in the past 30 days, even though 92% acknowledged doing so is dangerous. And while 88% of people agreed that aggressive driving behaviors, such as quickly changing lanes, is hazardous, nearly 23% admitted to driving aggressively within the past 30 days.

Insurance industry observers have noted the especially poor performance of personal auto lines of late is partly due to unsafe driving. Driving behavior worsened with the onset of the pandemic, coinciding with a decrease in overall miles traveled, and has not improved as traffic volumes normalized. Other factors cutting into personal auto profitability include supply chain disruptions, increasing costs of vehicles and replacement parts, and a shortage of skilled mechanics.

