

Driven to distraction

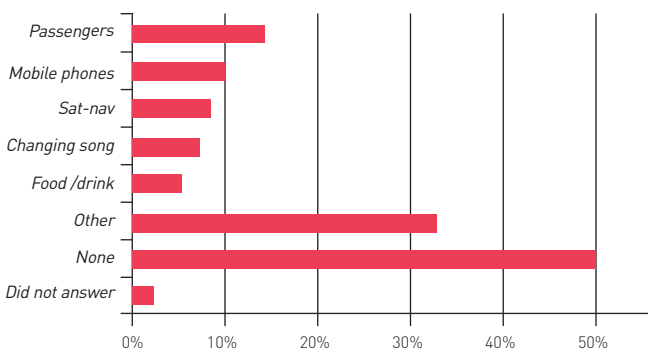
OTHER IN-VEHICLE DISTRACTIONS

Q12: In the past year, have you braked suddenly or swerved because you were slow to notice a hazard when distracted (e.g. because you didn't notice the car ahead stopping to turn right in time)?

Nearly half (48%) of UK drivers admit having to brake suddenly or swerve – a potentially deadly manoeuvre – in the past year because they were distracted at the wheel. The most common source of distraction named by drivers in this situation was passengers, closely followed by use of phones and other technology.

- 14% have braked suddenly or swerved because they were distracted by passengers
- 10% did so when distracted by a mobile phone
- 8% did so when distracted by a sat-nav
- 7% did so when distracted by changing music tracks
- 6% did so when distracted by food or drink
- 33% did so when distracted by something else
- 50% have not braked suddenly or swerved because they were distracted
- 2% did not answer

Figure 7: Distractions that caused drivers to brake suddenly or swerve in the past year



Q13: Do you ever groom yourself when driving (e.g. shaving, combing hair, applying make-up)?

One in 50 drivers are so misguided about the importance of concentrating on their driving they groom themselves in free-flowing traffic.

- 2% said yes, including when in free-flowing traffic
- 14% said yes, but only in stationary traffic
- 83% said no
- 1% did not answer

End Notes

10. Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2009, Department for Transport, 2010
11. A growing problem of driver distraction, World Health Organisation, 2011
12. Scoping study of driver distraction, Transport Research Laboratory, 2008
13. The impact of driver inattention on near-crash/crash risk: an analysis using the 100-car naturalistic driving study data, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2006
14. Assessing the awareness of performance decrements in distracted drivers, Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety, 2007
15. Supertaskers: Profiles in extraordinary multitasking ability, University of Utah, 2010

THE FACTS: DISTRACTIONS AND CRASHES

Distraction was reported as a contributory factor in 5% of fatal crashes in Great Britain in 2009¹⁰. However, difficulty in identifying driver distraction at crash scenes is believed to have led to under-representation of the true extent of the problem^{11, 12}.

A study of in-vehicle video footage of driver behaviour taken from over two million miles of journeys found 22% of crashes could be caused, at least in part, by driver distraction. It also showed that drivers who perform a secondary task at the wheel are two to three times as likely to crash¹³.

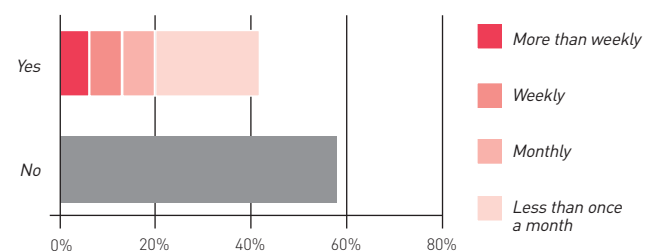
Many drivers take risks by eating, smoking, changing music tracks or using a phone in the belief they are skilled enough to keep control. In fact, research shows drivers are not able to correctly estimate the level of distraction they are suffering¹⁴ and 97.5% of drivers are not able to divide their attention without a significant deterioration in driving performance¹⁵.

Q14: Within the past 12 months, have you driven while not concentrating due to distractions from other passengers in the vehicle?

Passengers are regularly putting themselves and others in danger by diverting drivers' attention from the road. Two in five drivers (42%) say they have lost concentration due to passengers in the past year

- 1% said about once a day or more frequently
- 5% said several times a week
- 7% said about once a week
- 7% said about once a month
- 22% said only once or twice
- 58% said no
- 0% did not answer

Figure 8: Frequency of driver distraction from passengers



Q15: Which of the following would persuade you to take more care on the road?

The most common answer by far was more visible traffic policing: nearly two in three (62%) said this would convince them to take more care.

- 62% said more visible traffic policing
- 30% said more government advertising
- 28% said more enforcement cameras
- 28% said tougher penalties for traffic offences
- 6% did not answer