



News Release

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Drivers believe distracted driving is a danger, but not for them

FLORHAM PARK, N.J., June 15, 2010 — In their bi-annual survey of New Jersey motorists, the AAA Clubs of New Jersey found that New Jersey's drivers recognize the dangers of distracted driving but have not yet changed their own driving habits.

These findings were part of the AAA Clubs of New Jersey 2010 Report to the Legislature, which was released today. The report highlights the opinions of motorists across New Jersey on a range of issues from traffic safety to commuting trends.

According to the survey, nine out of 10 motorists believe that other drivers are distracted while driving and talking on their cell phones, while only 52% of drivers admit to being distracted themselves while using a cell phone. This figure is up from 41% in 2007.

"It's encouraging to see that more people believe that cell phone use while driving is distracting, but people need to acknowledge the distraction and put the phone down," said Fred Gruel, AAA New Jersey Automobile Club CEO and Chairman of the New Jersey Council of AAA Clubs.

When asked to rank the top driving distractions, cell phone use was fourth:

- 1) Reading While Driving
- 2) Texting or Emailing while Driving
- 3) Hair Brushing, Shaving or Putting on Makeup
- 4) Talking on a Cell Phone While Driving
- 5) Eating or Drinking While Driving

Distracted driving presents a serious danger to drivers in New Jersey and across the nation. In 2008, 5,870 people lost their lives and 515,000 people were injured in police reported crashes in which at least one form of driver distraction was reported, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

While motorists continue to talk on their cell phones while driving, 43% of drivers believe the statewide ban on hand-held phone use has made New Jersey's roads safer. In three years that number has grown from 38% in AAA's last survey.

"This is just another indication that education is key to changing habits -- with time, education and enforcement drivers habits and opinions have changed," Gruel said. "That's why AAA is committed to increasing awareness of the dangers of distracted driving."

While only 8 percent of drivers surveyed admitted to texting or using a hand held device while driving, young drivers overwhelmingly use hand held devices while driving. The survey found that 37% of drivers between the ages of 18 and 29 admit to texting or using a hand held device and are 39% more likely to use cell phones while driving than drivers over 30

“Avoiding distracting behavior while driving is the best way to stay safe on the roadways,” Gruel said.

AAA is committed to educating the public about the dangers of distracted, impaired and aggressive driving.

Visit **AAA.com** to download the full report.

The AAA Clubs of New Jersey—AAA North Jersey, AAA New Jersey Automobile Club, AAA Mid-Atlantic and AAA South Jersey—provide automotive, travel, insurance and financial services to over 2 million members through 26 offices across the state. The AAA Clubs of New Jersey are affiliated with AAA, the not-for-profit, fully tax paying federation of automobile clubs, which serves as an advocate for motorists and travelers.

Locally, the AAA New Jersey Automobile Club, headquartered in Florham Park, provides automotive, travel, insurance, financial and educational services to residents of Essex, Morris and Union Counties. Visit AAA online at **AAA.com**.