

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road with yellow and white lane markings, curving through a landscape of trees with vibrant yellow and orange autumn foliage. Several cars are visible driving along the road. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is centered over the middle of the image, containing the title and subtitle text.

2026 DRIVING BEHAVIOR SURVEY

A REPORT TO THE
COLORADO DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION



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Section 1

Executive Summary

Welcome

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) conducts a yearly survey of Colorado residents to inform operations, assess trends, and better understand the attitudes and behaviors of the state's drivers.

In 2026, CDOT retained Corona Insights to conduct this research. This report presents the results of the 2026 survey. The survey instrument largely replicated previous years', with some minor edits. This report highlights statistically significant changes between 2025 and 2026 when they are present.

Surveys were collected from April 12th to May 26th, 2026, a similar time frame to previous years. The 2025 survey was fielded from April 17th to May 31st.

More details about the methodology can be found in the [Appendix](#).

Sampling Methodology

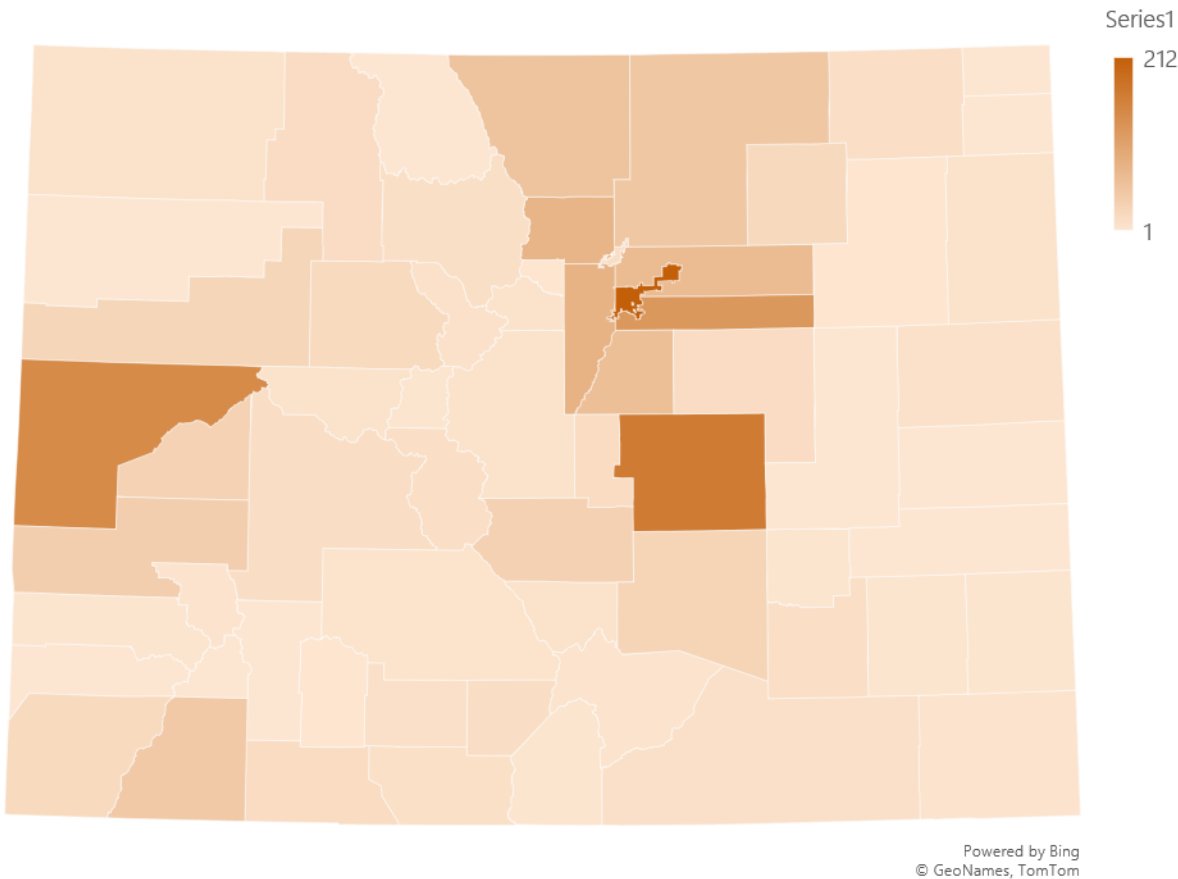
Corona Insights replicated sampling methods from the 2025 survey (and previous years') in order to collect a representative sample of Colorado's drivers and to more effectively compare responses over time. This included:

- A mail packet survey (in English and Spanish) sent to 10,000 randomly selected residential addresses with an oversample of non-Front Range counties (this is double what was sent in previous years to allow for more demographic comparisons by increasing sample size). Respondents could participate online or mail back the paper copy of the survey. A follow-up reminder postcard with the online web address and QR code was also sent to all addresses
- An online panel was used to supplement mail responses. This panel targeted demographics that traditionally have lower response rates to surveys (young residents and People of Color).
- 1,615 Colorado residents completed the survey: 784 by mail, 311 online invited by mail, and 520 via the panel. The margin of error was $\pm 3.2\%$ *. 1,695 surveys were completed in 2025.

* By supplementing with panel respondents, the data reflected in this report are not a true random sample and the margin of error is approximate. This margin of error accounts for the design effect of weighting the survey data to be more representative of adult Colorado residents.

Executive Summary: Respondent Locations

Responses by County



The map on the left presents the number of responses received for the 2025 survey by county. In 2026, responses were collected from each of Colorado’s 64 counties; 212 responses were collected from Denver County.

Addresses from outside the Front Range were oversampled to hear from enough rural residents to understand their unique attitudes and behaviors. As described on the previous slide, the survey’s results were statistically weighted to still be representative of Colorado’s adult population with this oversample.

Executive Summary: Respondent Profile

CORONAINSIGHTS

Below we summarize key demographics of the population represented by these results. This summary provides overall context for interpreting results herein. These figures (and all others in this report) have been weighted by region, age, gender, and race to more effectively represent the adult population of Colorado based on data from the US Census’ American Community Survey.

Gender	Total	Educational Attainment	Total	Region	Total	Languages Spoken Other Than English	Total
Male	49%	11th grade or less	1%	Denver Metro	53%	Yes	19%
Female	50%	12th grade/HS diploma/GED	11%	Front Range, Non-Denver Metro	29%	No	81%
Gender(s) not listed here	1%	Some college/trade/vocational school	21%	Outside of Front Range	18%		
		College graduate	40%				
		Post graduate work or degree	27%				
Household Income	Total	Race	Total	Age	Total	Primary Vehicle Type	Total
Less than \$35,000	10%	American Indian or Alaska Native	3%	18-24	5%	Car, station wagon, or hatchback	42%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10%	Asian or Asian American	6%	25-34	19%	Sport utility vehicle (SUV)	38%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17%	Black or African American	10%	35-44	23%	Pickup truck	15%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	13%	Hispanic or Latino/Latina	16%	45-54	11%	Van or minivan	3%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	14%	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	55-64	19%	Motorcycle	1%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	10%	White	70%	65-74	12%	Other/None	2%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	9%	Other race or combination of races	3%	75 or over	11%		
\$200,000 or more	18%						

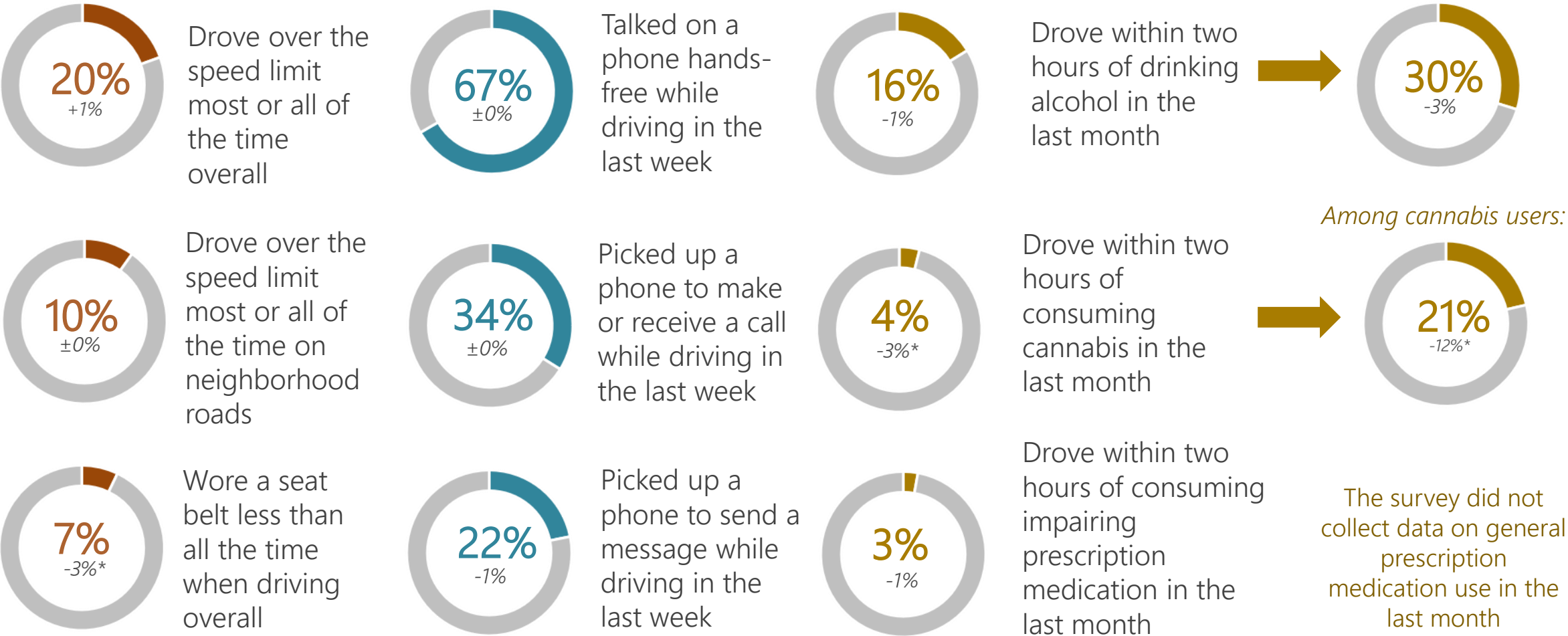
Executive Summary: 2026 Colorado Driving Behavior Dashboard

CORONAINSIGHTS

Safety

Distractions

Under the Influence



The smaller percentages in gray italics indicate the change from 2025 to 2026.
* Indicates that this change was statistically significant.

Executive Summary: Total Unsafe Driving Behaviors in 2026

Rate of Unsafe Driving Behaviors: (Proportion of drivers who do each behavior)



75% (+4%* from 2025)
said they sometimes use
their phone while driving



19% (-2% from 2025) said they
drove within two hours of
consuming alcohol, cannabis,
or impairing prescription
drugs in the last 30 days

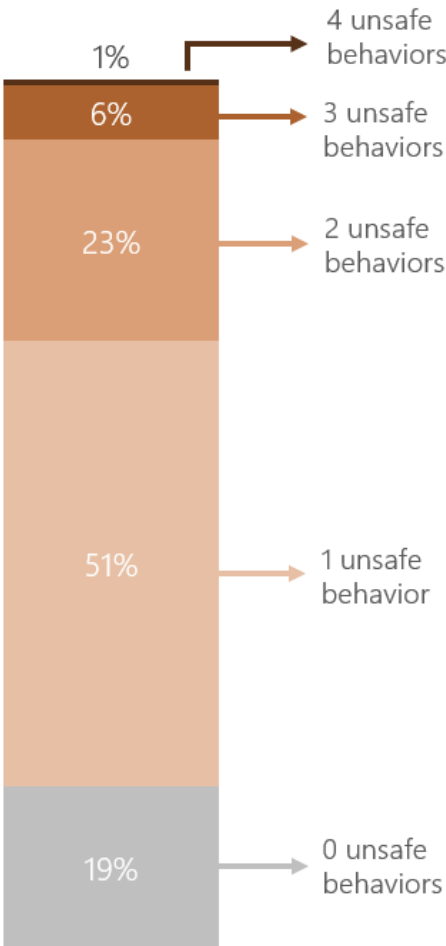


20% (+1% from 2025) said
they drove over the speed limit
most or all the time overall



7% (-3%* from 2025) said they
wear their seat belt less than all
the time when driving overall

Total Unsafe Driving Behaviors (Proportion of drivers who do this number of unsafe behaviors)



- > On average, Colorado drivers said they engaged in 1.19 of the four behaviors listed here. This average has been trending downward over the last three years, from 1.35 in 2023, 1.27 in 2024, and 1.19 in 2025. The difference between 2023 and 2025/26 was statistically significant.
- > About one out of five (19%) said they did none of these behaviors and about half (51%) said they did just one of these types of unsafe driving behaviors in 2026.
- > In 2026, the following demographics engaged in a marginally higher average number of unsafe driving behaviors (average shown in parentheses):
 - Drivers aged 25–44 (1.34)
 - Male drivers (1.31)
 - Denver Metro drivers (1.26)
 - Drivers who drove five or more days in a week (1.26)
 - Drivers with college degrees (1.24)

* Indicates that this change was statistically significant.

Key Finding 1: Seat Belt Usage

More than nine out of ten Colorado Drivers (93%) said they wear their seat belt all the time when driving overall.

Trend

While previously holding steady from 2022–2025, the share of drivers that said they wear their seat belt all the time when driving increased by 3 percentage points from 2025–2026.

Demographic Differences

The following Colorado drivers were less likely to say they wear their seatbelt all the time when driving:

- Drivers aged 18–24 (85%)
- People of Color (86%)
- Drivers without a college degree (87%)
- Male drivers (91%)

Related Attitudes

Top items that would get drivers to buckle up more:

1. Car reminders (39%)
2. Expected ticket (29%)
3. More comfortable seat belts (28%)

Key Finding 2: Speeding

More than one out of three (37%) Colorado drivers said they drove over the speed limit most or all the time on highways/interstates.

Trend

This rate has held steady over the last five years.

Demographic Differences

The following Colorado drivers were more likely to say they sped most or all the time on highways/interstates:

- Drivers aged 18–45 (44%)
- Drivers with a college degree (42%)

Related Attitudes

Only 13% of Colorado drivers said they would be very likely to get a ticket if they consistently drove 5–10 mph over the speed limit for the next six months on roads where the speed limit is 65 mph.

Key Finding 3: Phone Usage

Nearly half of Colorado drivers (47%) picked up their phone to make/receive calls and/or text while driving in the last week.

Trend

The share of drivers who did this in the last week decreased significantly from 2024 (53%) to 2025 (46%) with the introduction of Colorado's hands-free law. This improvement was maintained in 2026, with 47% of drivers doing this in the last week.

Demographic Differences

The following Colorado drivers were more likely to use their phone by hand while driving in the last week:

- Drivers aged 18–54 (59%)
- Hispanic or Latino/Latina drivers (56%)
- Drivers who typically drive 5+ days a week (53%)

Related Attitudes

Top items that would stop phone use while driving:

1. Hands-free car features (44%)
2. If phone blocked calls/messages (23%)
3. Expected ticket (23%)

Key Finding 4: Food & Drink

The most common distraction was eating food/drinking a beverage. This was done by 74% of Colorado drivers at least once in the last week.

Trend

The share of drivers who said they ate food or drank a beverage was consistent over the last few years.

Demographic Differences

The following Colorado drivers were more likely to eat food or drink a beverage while driving in the last seven days:

- Drivers who typically drive 5+ days a week (79%)
- Drivers aged 18–65 (77%)
- White drivers (77%)
- Drivers with household incomes of \$50k+ (75%)

Related Attitudes

When asked what distraction they did most often (the above describes what drivers did at all over the last week), Colorado drivers were equally likely to say eating food/drinking a beverage (31%) and talking on a hands-free phone (31%) was their most frequent distraction.

Key Finding 5: Driving After Consuming Substances

About one out of five Colorado drivers (19%) said they drove within two hours of consuming alcohol, cannabis, or impairing prescription drugs in the last 30 days.

Trend

The share of Colorado drivers that said they drove within two hours of consuming one of these substances has been trending downward over the last four years. From a high point of 28% in 2023, this rate has marginally decreased each year to a low of 19% in 2026.

Demographic Differences

The following Colorado drivers were more likely to say they drove within two hours of consuming alcohol, cannabis, or impairing prescription drugs:

- Drivers aged 25–64 (21%)
- Drivers with college degrees (21%)
- Male drivers (26%)

Related Attitudes

Top items that would get drivers to stop driving after substance use:

1. Thought they were a danger to others (49%)
2. Thought they couldn't drive safely (49%)
3. Thought they would get a DUI (42%)

Key Finding 6: DUI Enforcement

A greater share of Colorado drivers thought a DUI was likely (somewhat or very) for someone consuming alcohol above the legal limit (59%) than cannabis (48%) or prescription medications (39%).

Trend

The share of drivers who thought a DUI was likely for consuming alcohol above the legal limit decreased from 66% in 2024 to 59% in 2026. This was the lowest share in the last five years and a 10-year low when excluding those who said they did not know how likely this would be.

One third (33%) of Colorado drivers thought a DUI was somewhat or very unlikely if someone drove after consuming alcohol above the legal limit. The following drivers said this at a higher rate than others:

- Those who drank within two hours of driving in the last 30 days (45%)
- White drivers (37%)
- Drivers with a college degree (36%)

Share of Colorado drivers who said it was likely (somewhat or very) that a police officer could accurately tell if someone recently consumed:

- Alcohol (77%)
- Cannabis (64%)
- Prescription medication (40%)

Demographic Differences

Related Attitudes

Key Finding 7: DUI Safety Perceptions

Very few Colorado drivers agreed (somewhat or strongly) that they could drive safely under the influence of alcohol (9%), cannabis (10%), or prescription medications (10%).

Trend

The share of Colorado drivers who believed they could drive safely under the influence of these substances has been consistently low over the last five years.

Demographic Differences

The following Colorado drivers were more likely to agree they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis:

- Drivers who used cannabis (37%)
- Black or African American drivers (27%)
- Hispanic or Latino/Latina drivers (18%)
- Drivers aged 18–34 (17%)
- Drivers without a college degree (15%)

Related Attitudes

Most Colorado drivers (74%) said they would feel comfortable having one or zero alcoholic drinks within a two-hour period and still feel safe to drive a vehicle. This share has been similar over the last five years.

Key Finding 8: Law Awareness

Strong majorities of Colorado drivers were aware of state laws requiring drivers to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk (98%), prohibiting manual phone use (91%), requiring three feet of space for cyclists (89%), allowing motorcycle lane filtering (82%), and requiring breath/blood samples upon DUI arrest (73%).

Trend

These questions were asked for the first time in 2025, and responses were similar in 2026.

Demographic Differences

Awareness was similar across demographics for most laws. However, the following groups were less aware that motorcycle lane filtering was a state law:

- Drivers outside the Front Range (74%)
- People of Color (75%)
- Drivers aged 18–44 (77%)

Related Attitudes

Drivers said they did the following more often to use their phone hands-free in the last six months:

1. Used car's built-in speaker system (32%)
2. Used Apple CarPlay or Android Auto (28%)
3. Used a dashboard/phone mount (22%)

Key Finding 9: CDOT's Performance

Most Colorado drivers (58%) said CDOT did a good or excellent job maintaining interstates, U.S. highways, and state highways.

Trend

CDOT's performance rating was largely similar over the past few years with most drivers saying the Department did a good or excellent job between 2022 and 2026.

Demographic Differences

The following groups gave slightly higher average (quantitative score) ratings of CDOT's performance:

- Drivers aged 18–44
- Drivers who drove 1–2 days in a typical week
- People of Color

Related Attitudes

These ratings were consistent across other attitudes and behaviors.

Key Finding 10: Motorcycle Riders

About four out of five motorcycle riders (76%) said they wear a helmet most or all the time when riding.

Trend

Helmet use among motorcycle riders has largely been similar over the last five years. However, a greater share of riders said they never wear a helmet in 2025 (13%) and 2026 (14%) when compared to the low observed in 2023 (4%).

Demographic Differences

In general, helmet use was similar across demographics in 2026.

Related Attitudes

Three out of four (75%) motorcycle riders said their license had an endorsement to ride in 2025 (similar to previous years). The share of riders who said they engaged in lane filtering increased from 29% in 2025 (when the Colorado law was introduced) to 44% in 2026.

The table on the right summarizes some key differences between young (aged 18–24) and older Colorado drivers (aged 25 and older).

Young drivers were much more likely to say they picked up their phone to make/receive calls while driving.

Young drivers were more than twice as likely to believe that they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis than older drivers and three times more likely to have driven within two hours of using cannabis in the last 30 days. They were also much more likely to have driven within two hours of using alcohol and another drug together in the last 30 days.

	Drivers aged 18–24	Drivers aged 25+
Picked up phone to make or receive a call while driving in the last seven days	36%	21%
Wears seatbelt <u>less than</u> “all of the time”	15%	7%
Drove within two hours of using cannabis	12%	4%
Drove within two hours of using alcohol and another drug together	7%	1%
Agreed that they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis	19%	9%

Executive Summary: Spotlight on Cannabis-Using Drivers

The table on the right summarizes some key differences between drivers who used cannabis in the last 30 days and those who did not.

One fifth of cannabis-using drivers said they drove within two hours of using cannabis in the last 30 days. These drivers were also more likely to say they drove within two hours of using alcohol than drivers who did not use cannabis.

More than one third of cannabis-using drivers thought they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis, and more than one out of ten said as much for alcohol and cannabis together.

A greater share of cannabis users thought it was unlikely that a police officer could accurately tell if someone recently used cannabis.

	Used cannabis	Did not use
Drove within two hours of using cannabis in the last 30 days	22%	0%
Drove within two hours of using alcohol in the last 30 days	24%	14%
Agreed that they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis	37%	4%
Agreed that they could drive safely under the influence of alcohol and cannabis together	14%	2%
Thought it was unlikely that a police officer could accurately tell if someone recently used cannabis	37%	23%

Executive Summary: Spotlight on Those Who Drink and Drive

The table on the right summarizes some key differences between those who drove within two hours of drinking alcoholic beverages and those who did not.

Nearly one third of these drivers thought they could drive safely under the influence of alcohol.

Two out of five drivers who did this said they would stop driving under the influence if they knew exactly what their blood alcohol content was.

A smaller share of those who drink and drive thought a person who was driving above the legal blood alcohol limit would be very likely to get a DUI.

These drivers were much more likely to have ridden as a passenger with someone under the influence in the last month.

Not shown: Most of these drivers said they would stop doing this if they thought they were a danger to others or if they thought they couldn't safely drive their vehicle.

	Drove after drinking	Did not
Agreed that they can drive safely under the influence of alcohol	30%	5%
Said they would feel comfortable having 3+ drinks within a 2-hour period and still feel safe to drive a vehicle	19%	4%
Said they would stop driving under the influence if they knew exactly what their blood alcohol content was	39%	18%
Thought it was very likely that a person who drove with blood alcohol above the legal limit would get a DUI	18%	33%
Rode in a vehicle when they thought or knew the driver had consumed alcohol or cannabis in the past 2 hours	42%	11%

Executive Summary: Spotlight on Hand-Held Phone Users

The table on the right summarizes some key differences between those who used their phone with their hands in the last seven days and those who did not.

Drivers who used their phone by hand in the last seven days were less likely to know that there was Colorado law that prohibited this. Nonetheless, nearly nine out ten of these drivers were aware of this state law.

Most of these drivers took at least one action to use their phone hands-free more frequently in the last six months.

More than one third of these drivers said they would stop using their phone if their car had hands-free features and about one quarter if their phone blocked messages or if they thought they could get a ticket for doing so.

	Used phone by hand	Did not
Was aware of the Colorado law that stipulates drivers cannot use a phone with their hands	88%	9%
Said they took at least one action to use their phone hands-free more frequently in the last six months	58%	28%
Said they would stop using their phone while driving if their car had hands-free features to use it	39%	25%
Said they would stop using their phone while driving if their phone blocked messages while driving	26%	8%
Said they would stop using their phone while driving if they thought they could get a ticket for doing so	25%	8%

The following sections include exhibits summarizing each question from the survey. For clarity and ease of reading, exhibits typically only show results for the driving population overall.

Notable differences by segment (e.g., age), while not shown in the exhibit, are noted in text.

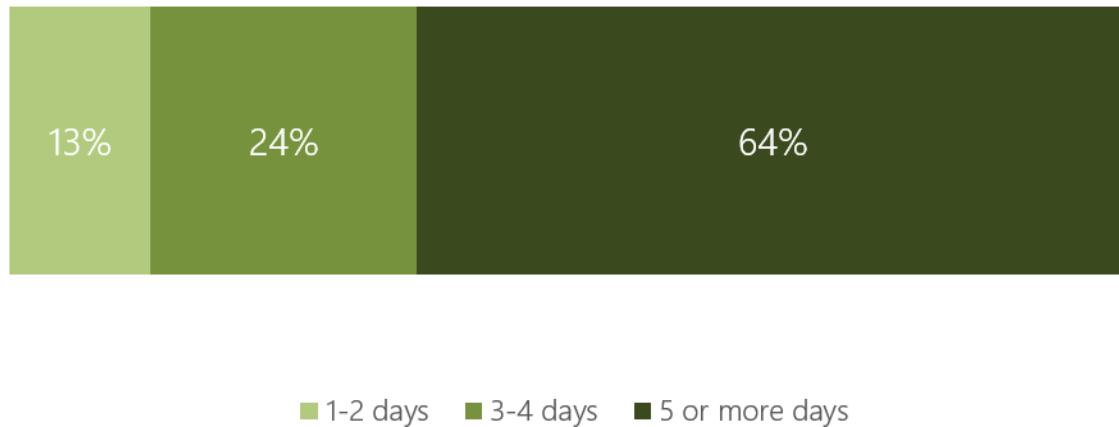
Some labels on exhibits have also been removed for clarity. These represent proportions of 3% or less.

Section 2

Seat Belt Usage

Most Colorado drivers said they drive five or more days in a typical week

Days Driven in a Typical Week (n=1,604)

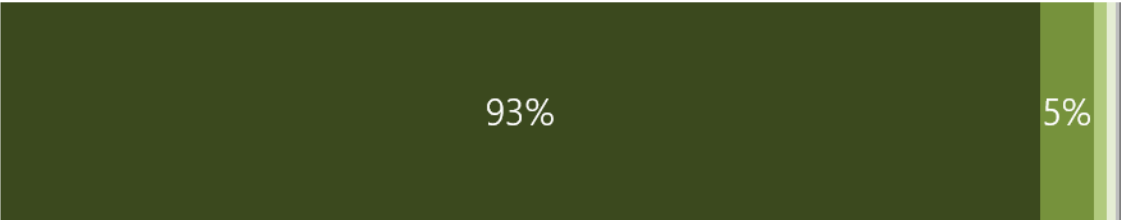


- > When asked how many days they drive in a typical week, most Colorado drivers (64%) said they drove five or more days.
- > Drivers aged 18–64 were more likely (69%) to say they drove five or more days a week than drivers aged 65 and older (43%).
- > Female drivers were more likely to say they drove just one or two days in a typical week (17%) than male drivers (9%).
- > Drivers with household incomes below \$35,000 a year were more likely to say they drove just one or two days in a typical week (28%) than those with higher incomes (11%).

Residents who said they do not drive at all were asked to not complete the survey. Residents who failed to follow this direction were excluded from analysis.

Less than one out of ten Colorado drivers said they wear their seat belt less than all the time

Frequency of Wearing Seat Belt When Driving (n=1,603)



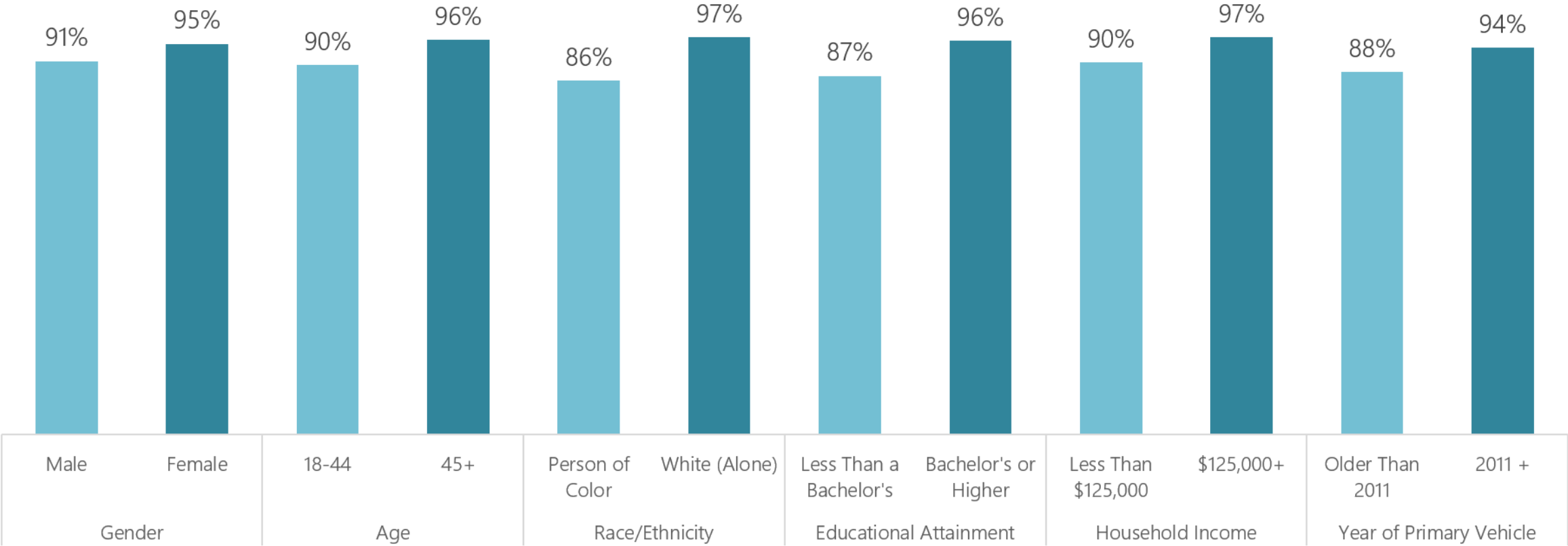
■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Some of the time ■ Rarely ■ Never ■ Don't know

- > More than nine out of ten Colorado drivers (93%) said they wear their seat belt all of the time when driving overall. An additional 5% said they do so most of the time and only 2% said they do this just some of the time or less frequently.
- > People of Color were less likely to have said they wear their seat belt all the time overall (86%) than those identifying as White alone (97%). Black or African American drivers (81%) were less likely to say they did this all the time than other drivers (94%).
- > Male drivers were less likely to have said they wear their seat belt all the time overall (91%) than female drivers (95%).
- > In general, the reported rates of seat belt usage increased with educational attainment.

Key demographic differences in overall seat belt usage are presented in a graph on the next slide.

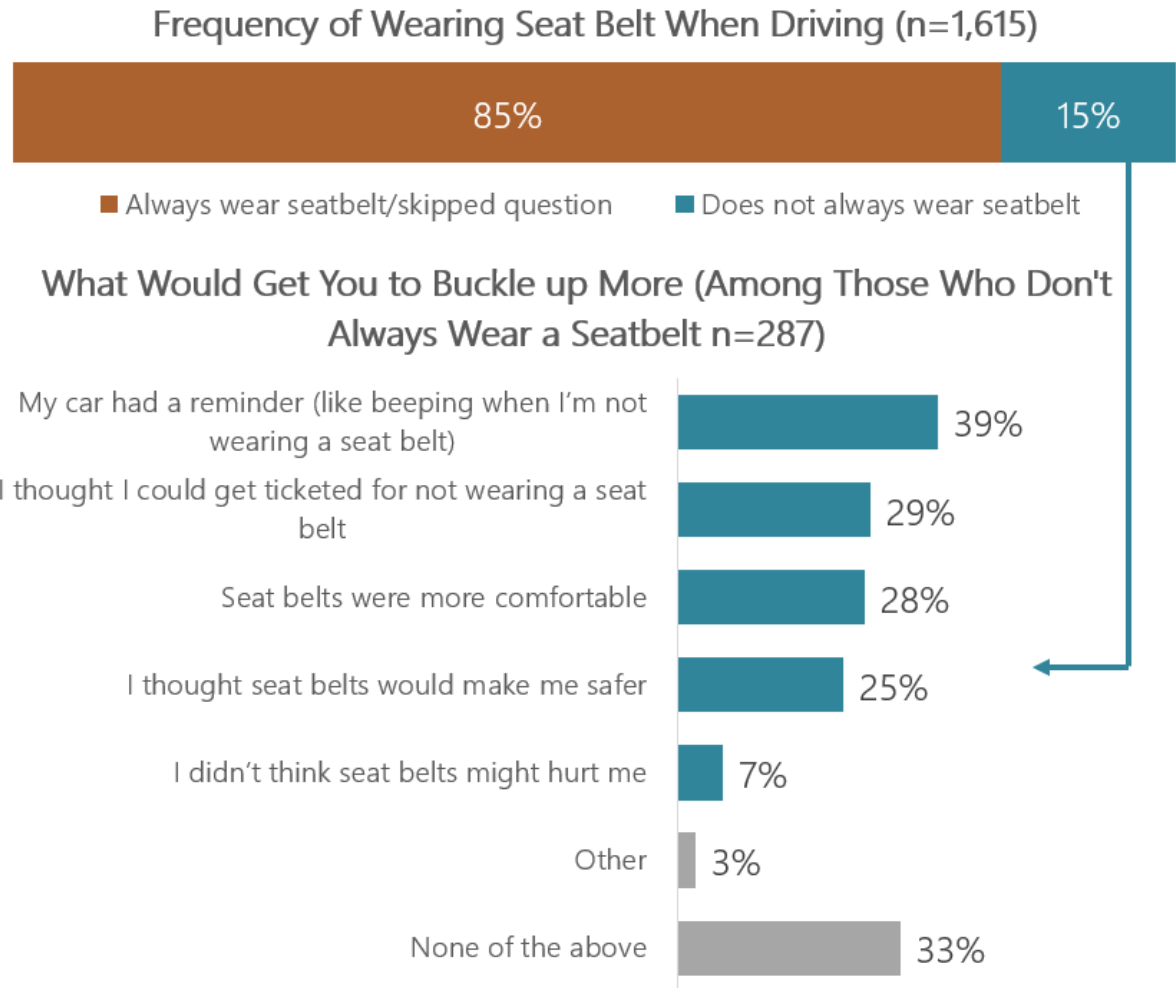
Seat belt usage varied by demographics

Percentage Wearing a Seatbelt All The Time, Overall



Q2. When DRIVING, how often do you wear your seat belt?
All segments in this graph had statistically significant differences.

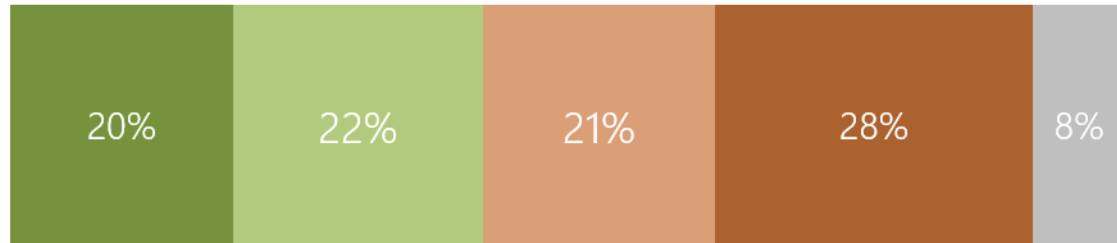
Colorado drivers who did not always wear their seat belts most frequently said vehicle reminders would get them to buckle up more



- Respondents were asked to identify up to three reasons that might get them to buckle up if they did not always wear their seat belt.
- > Among the 15% of drivers who said they did not always wear their seat belt, 39% said they would buckle up more if their car had a reminder. (Note: All personal vehicles reported were new enough to have a seat belt warning.)
 - > A bit more than one quarter of those who did not always wear their seat belt said they would do so more often if they thought they could get ticketed (29%) or if they thought seat belts would make them safer (25%).
 - > Drivers with less than a college degree were more likely to say a car reminder would get them to buckle up more (53%) than those with college degrees (29%).
 - > Drivers that identified as White alone were more likely to select none of the above (65%) than People of Color (14%), indicating less willingness to change their behavior.

About half of Colorado drivers thought it was unlikely they would get a ticket if they did not wear their seat belt in the next six months

Likelihood of Getting a Ticket if Not Wearing a Seat Belt at All Over the Next 6 Months (n=1,432)

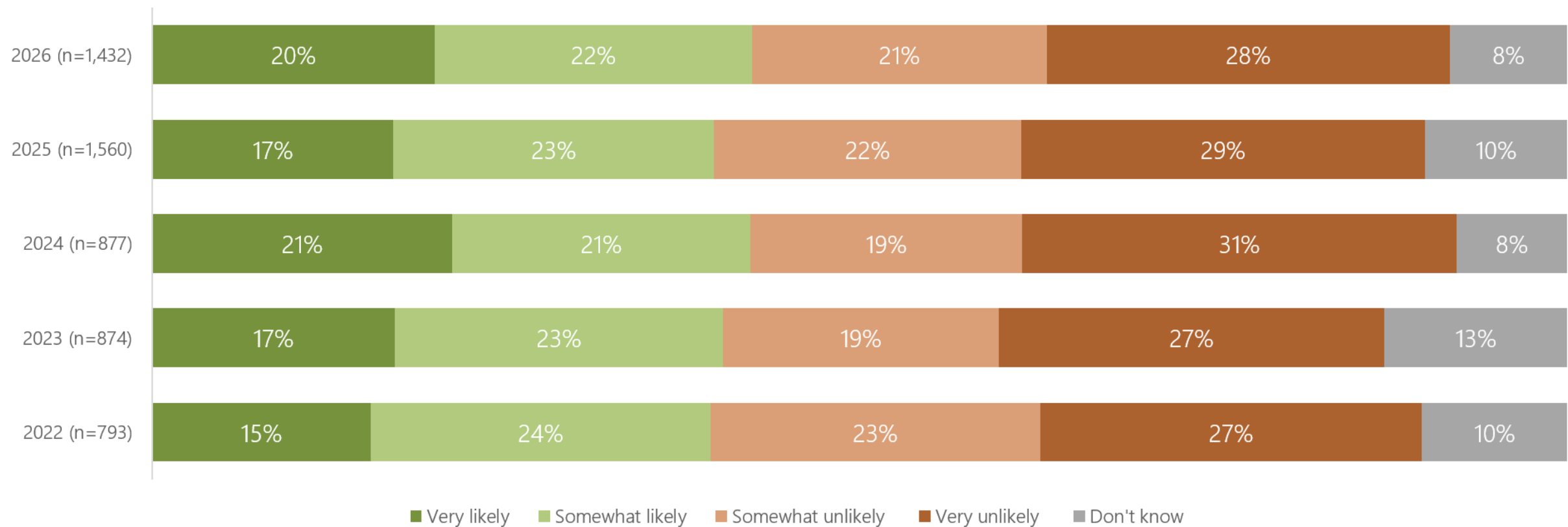


■ Very likely ■ Somewhat likely ■ Somewhat unlikely ■ Very unlikely ■ Don't know

- > A minority (44%) of Colorado drivers thought they would be likely to get a ticket if they didn't buckle up at all in the next six months.
- > Perhaps counterintuitively, drivers who thought they would get a ticket for not wearing their seatbelt were less likely to buckle up in 2026. Drivers that said they always wear their seatbelt on the previous question said a ticket was likely in this scenario at a lower rate (40%) than those who didn't always wear their seat belt (55%). This could be the result of those who don't always buckle up viewing this as a more tangible scenario. This result suggests the threat of a ticket was not an effective motivation to buckle up in 2026.
- > Those without college degrees said a ticket was likely in this scenario at higher rates (53%) than those with college degrees (37%).
- > People of Color were more than twice as likely (64%) to say a ticket was likely in this scenario than those who identified as White alone (30%).

Perceptions of the likelihood of getting a ticket for not wearing a seat belt largely remained steady over the last four years

Likelihood of Getting a Ticket if Not Wearing a Seat Belt at All Over the Next 6 Months



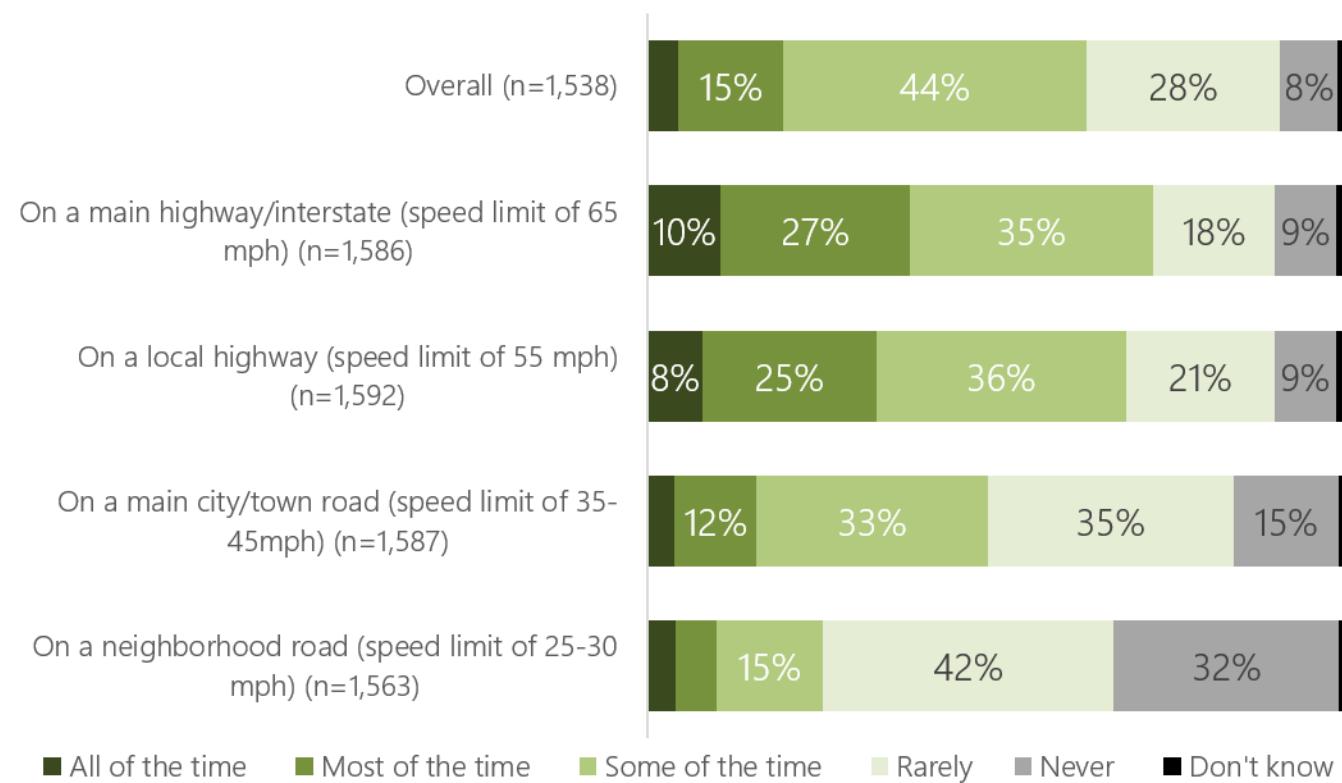
Q4. Assume that you do NOT use your seat belt AT ALL while driving over the next six months. How likely or unlikely do you think it is that you would get a ticket for not wearing a seat belt? Please check one.

Section 3

Driving Over the Speed Limit

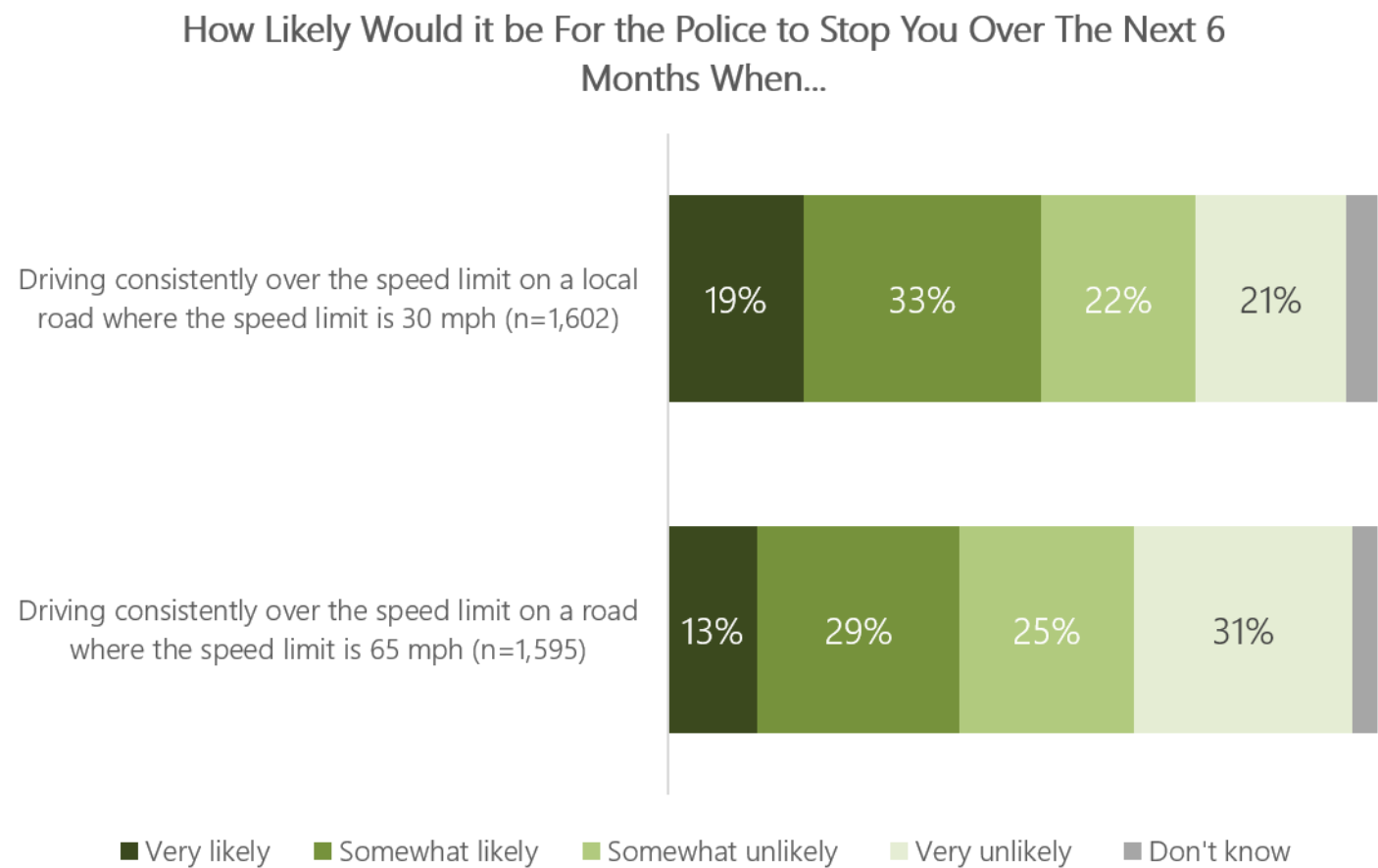
Colorado drivers were more likely to have sped when driving on roads with higher speed limits

How Often Are Respondents Driving Over The Speed Limit



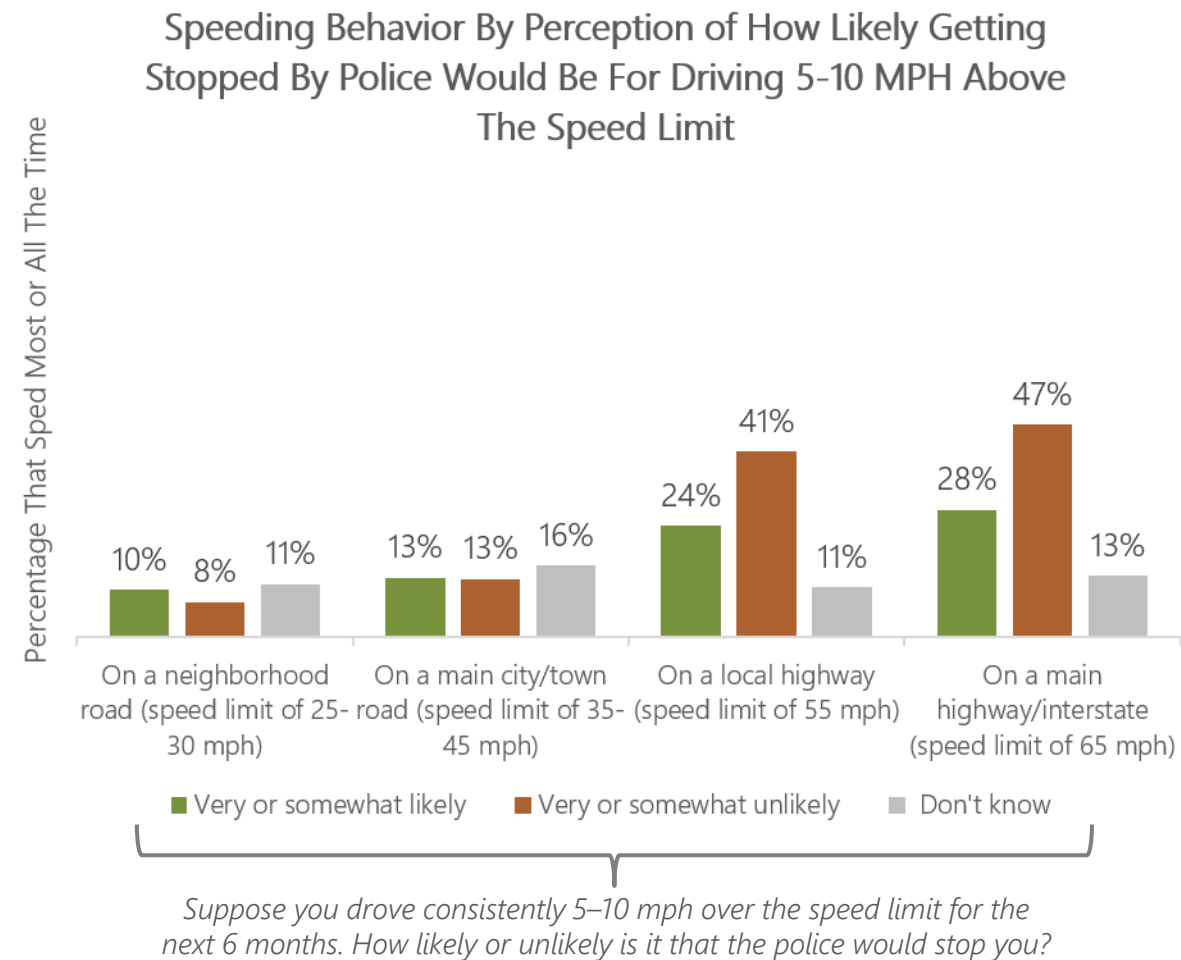
- > The frequency of driving over the speed limit varied by context. Most Colorado drivers said they drove over the speed limit on main highways (73%) and local highways (69%) at least some of the time. However, this dropped to about half (49%) of drivers when considering main city/town roads and one quarter (25%) when considering neighborhood roads.
- > Drivers from the Denver Metro area were more likely to say they sped all or most of the time overall (23%) than those who lived outside of the Front Range (11%).
- > Male drivers were more likely (23%) to say they sped all or most of the time overall than female drivers (16%).
- > Drivers with household incomes of \$50,000 and above were more likely to say they sped all or most the time overall (21%) than those with smaller incomes (13%).

Colorado drivers were more likely to expect a ticket if they consistently sped on local roads than those with higher speed limits



- > About half (53%) said they would be at least somewhat likely to be stopped by police over the next 6 months if they consistently drove over the speed limit on a local road where the speed limit is 30 mph.
- > Alternatively, 41% said it was at least somewhat likely to happen when driving consistently over the speed limit on a road where the speed limit is 65 mph.
- > Drivers from outside the Front Range were more likely (61%) to say a ticket was at least somewhat likely when consistently speeding on local road (61%) than those from the Denver Metro (47%).
- > A greater share of People of Color said a ticket was at least somewhat likely in both of these scenarios (61% on a local road and 55% on a 65-mph road) than drivers identifying as White alone (48% and 34% respectively).

Drivers who thought they would be likely to be stopped by police for consistently driving over the speed limit were less likely to have said they frequently speed on highways



The graph on the left presents the percentage of drivers who speed all or most of the time in a variety of scenarios. The green bars present the percentage among those who said it would be very or somewhat likely that they would get stopped by police if they consistently sped over the next six months. The rust bars present the percentage among those who said it would be somewhat or very unlikely they would get a stopped, and the grey bars present those who did not know how likely getting stopped would be.

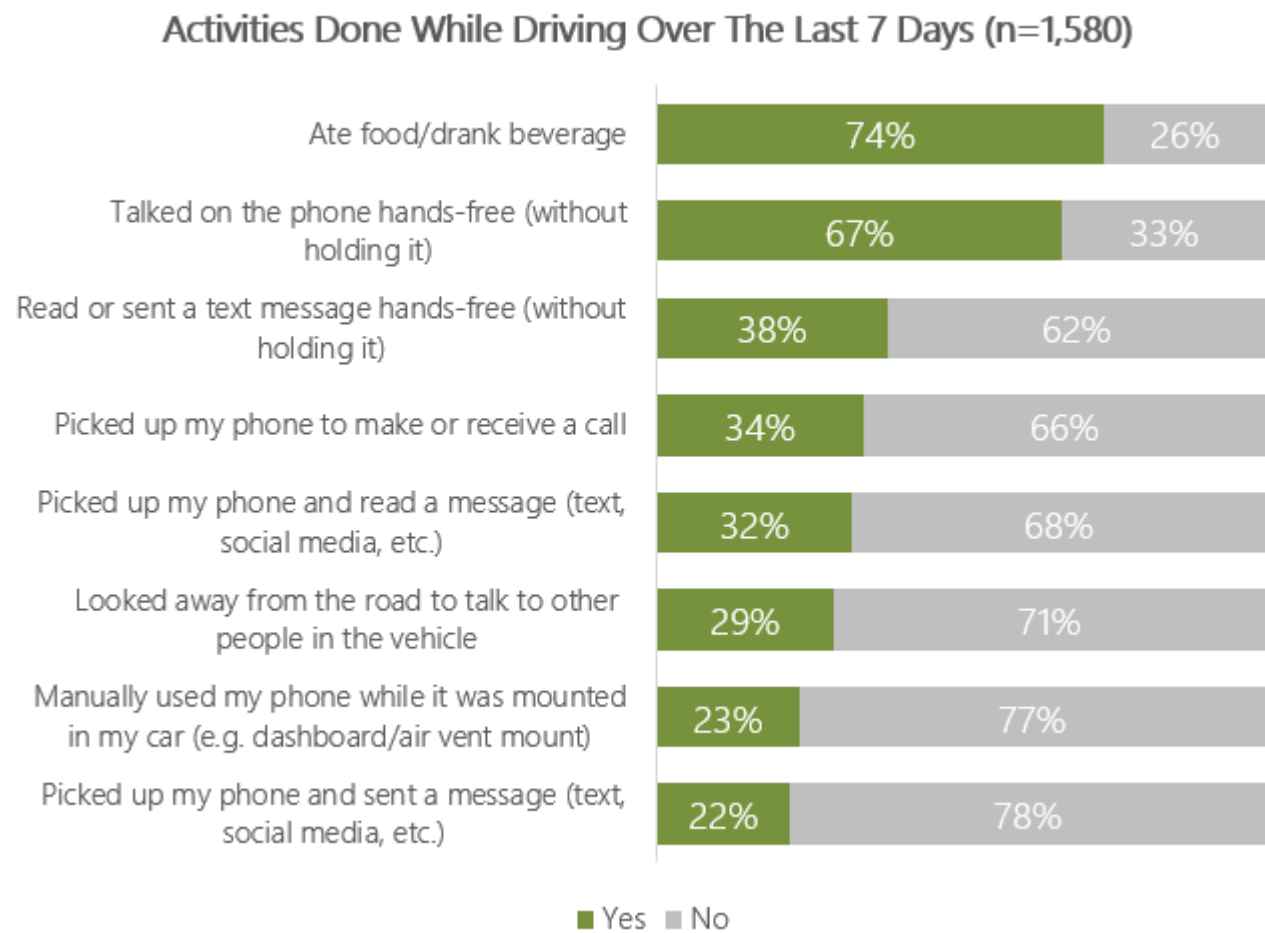
- > If the threat of getting stopped encouraged Coloradans to drive the speed limit, those who thought getting stopped was likely would speed at a lower rate than those who thought getting stopped was unlikely. As can be seen in the graph, this was the case on local highways and main highways/interstates.

Q5. How often, if ever, do you drive over the speed limit? The likelihood of getting stopped for the first two scenarios was asked about consistently speeding with a 30-mph speed limit. The second two scenarios asked about consistently speeding with a 65-mph limit.

Section 4

Distracted Driving

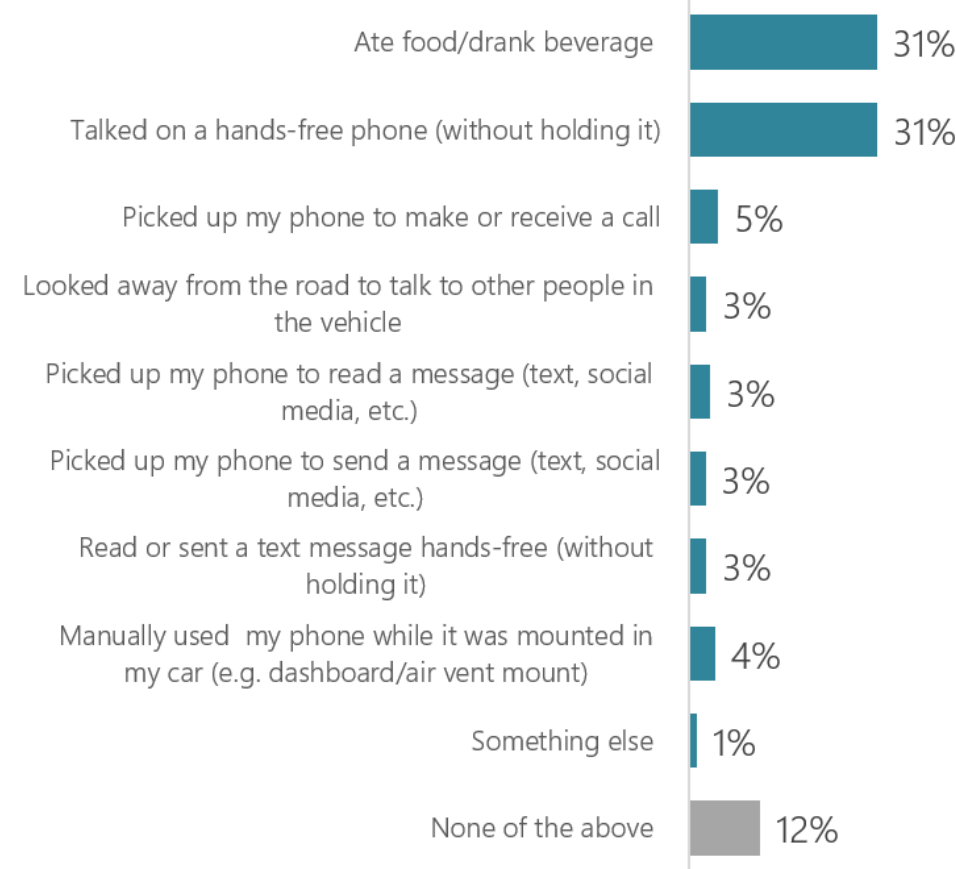
Most Colorado drivers ate food/drank a beverage and talked on a hands-free phone while driving in the last week



- > About three out of four Colorado drivers (74%) said they ate food/drank a beverage while driving in the last seven days.
- > Two out of three (67%) said they had talked on a hands-free phone in the last seven days while driving.
- > Drivers aged 18–44 were much more likely than drivers aged 45 and older to pick up their phone while driving in the last seven days for a few reasons:
 - To make/receive a call (44% vs 25%)
 - To read a message (41% to 24%)
 - To send a message (31% to 14%)
- > Drivers in the Denver Metro were more likely to have picked up their phone to send a message in the last seven days (26%) than those who lived in other areas of the state (17%). This may be caused in part by demographics since Dener Metro drivers were slightly younger than others on average.

Colorado drivers said talking on a hands-free phone and eating/drinking were their most frequent distractions

Activity Done Most Often While Driving in The Last 7 Days
(n=1,518)

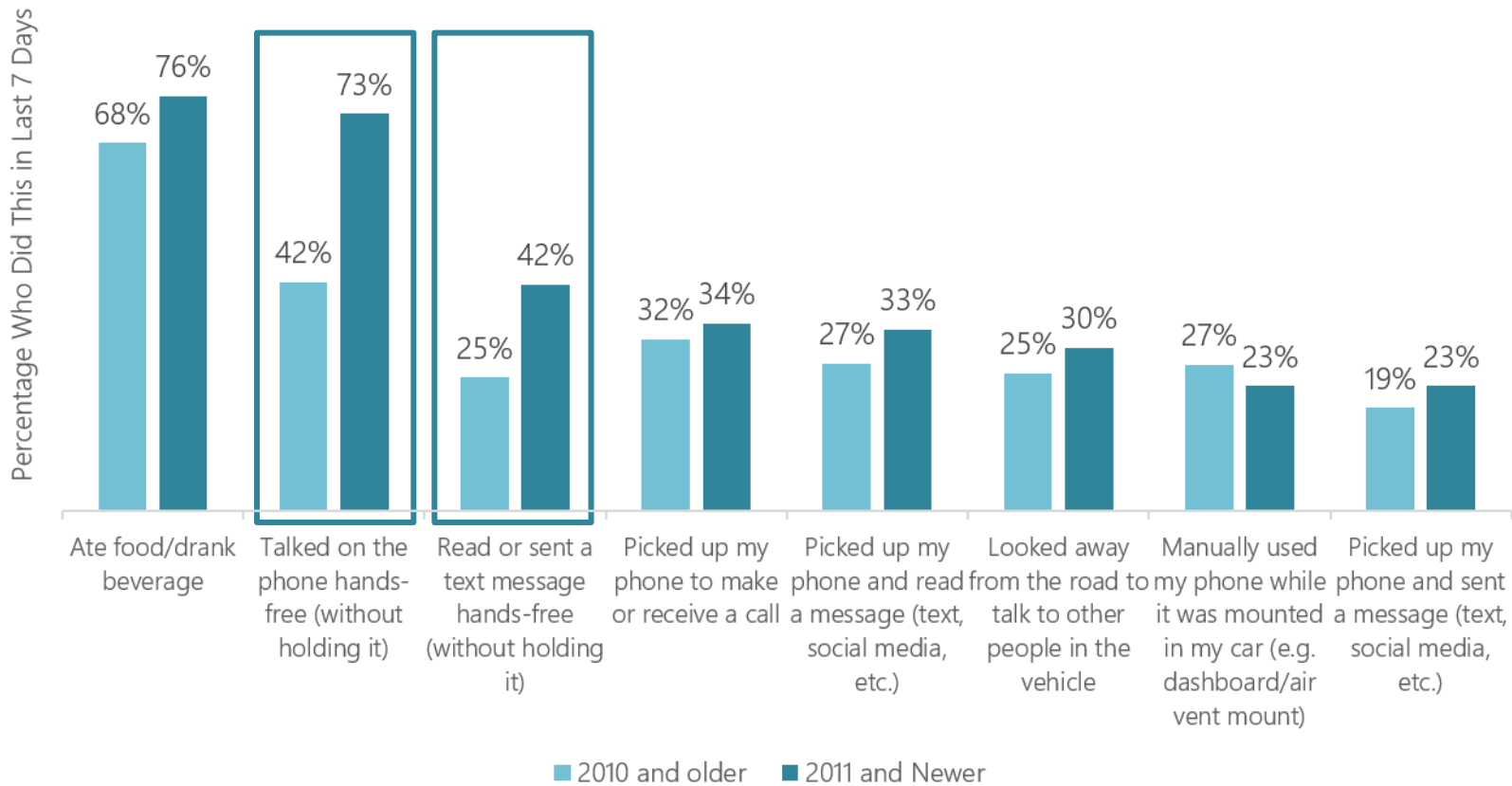


Respondents were asked to identify the activity that they did most often while driving over the last 7 days.

- > Nearly one third of drivers (31%) said their most frequent distraction while driving was talking on a hands-free phone or eating food/drinking a beverage.
- > Drivers aged 45 and above were more likely to say their most frequent distraction was eating food/drinking a beverage (36%) than younger drivers (26%). Alternatively, drivers aged 18–44 were more likely to say picking up their phone to make/receive a call (9%), read a message (6%), or send a message (5%), was their most common distraction than older drivers (1%, 1%, and 0% respectively).
- > Drivers with household incomes of \$50,000 and above were more likely to say talking on a hands-free phone was their most common distraction (33%) than those with lower incomes (23%).

Drivers with newer car models were more likely to talk and read/send text messages hands-free

Distractions by Year of Vehicle Driven

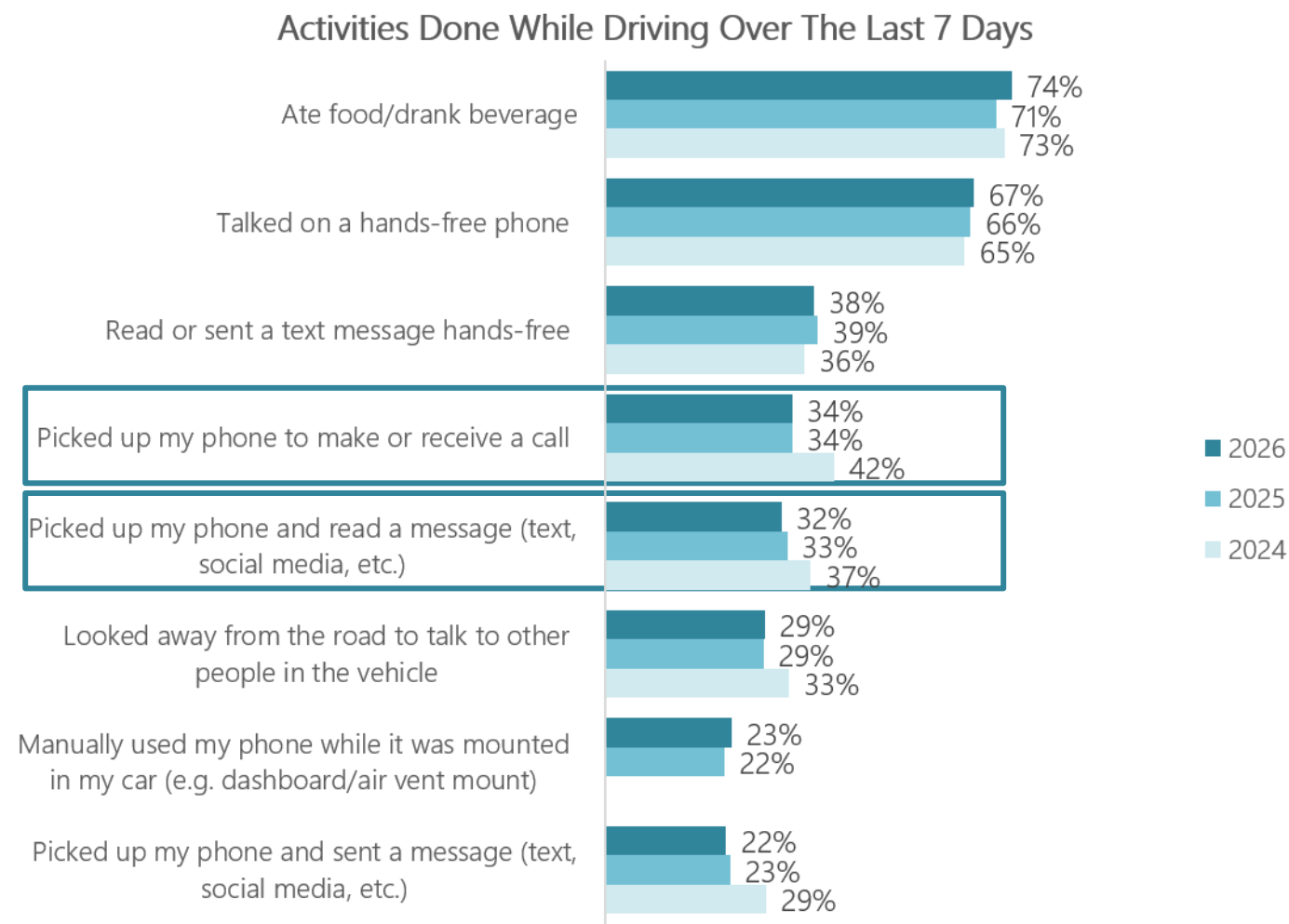


The graph on the left presents the percentage of drivers who said they did each of the following distracting behaviors while driving over the last seven days. The light blue bars represent drivers who primarily drive a vehicle that is a 2010 model or older and the dark blue bars represent those who drive a vehicle that is a 2011 model or newer.

- > Those who drive a 2011 or newer model were much more likely to talk hands-free on a phone (73%) or read/send a text message hands-free (42%) than those with older models (42% and 25% respectively).

Decreases in handheld phone usage from 2024 to 2025 held steady in 2026

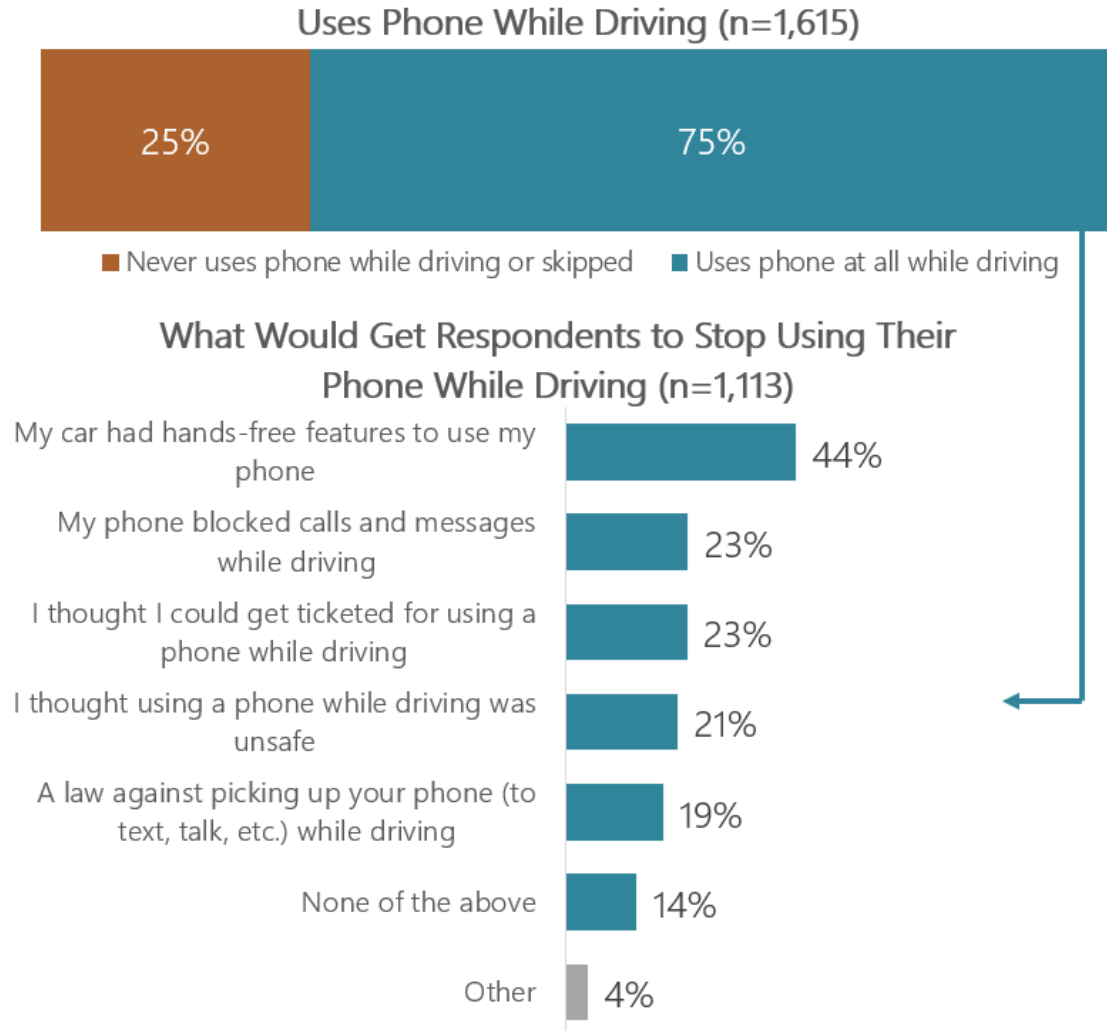
CORONAINSIGHTS



- Colorado’s new hands-free law in 2025 appeared to have influenced driver behavior.
- > The share of Colorado drivers that said they picked up their phone to make or receive a call in the last seven days decreased from 42% in 2024 to 34% in 2025. This held steady in 2026 at 34%.
 - > Additionally, the share of drivers who said they picked up their phone and sent a message decreased from 29% in 2024 to 23% in 2025, also held steady at 22% in 2026.
 - > While the share of drivers that said they picked up their phone to read a message decreased from 37% in 2024 to 33% in 2025, this decrease was not statistically significant. In 2026, a similar share of drivers (32%) said they did this in the last week.

The option of “Manually used my phone while it was mounted in my car (e.g. dashboard/air vent mount)” was included for the first time in 2025.

Those who used their phone while driving were most likely to say hands-free features in their car would get them to stop



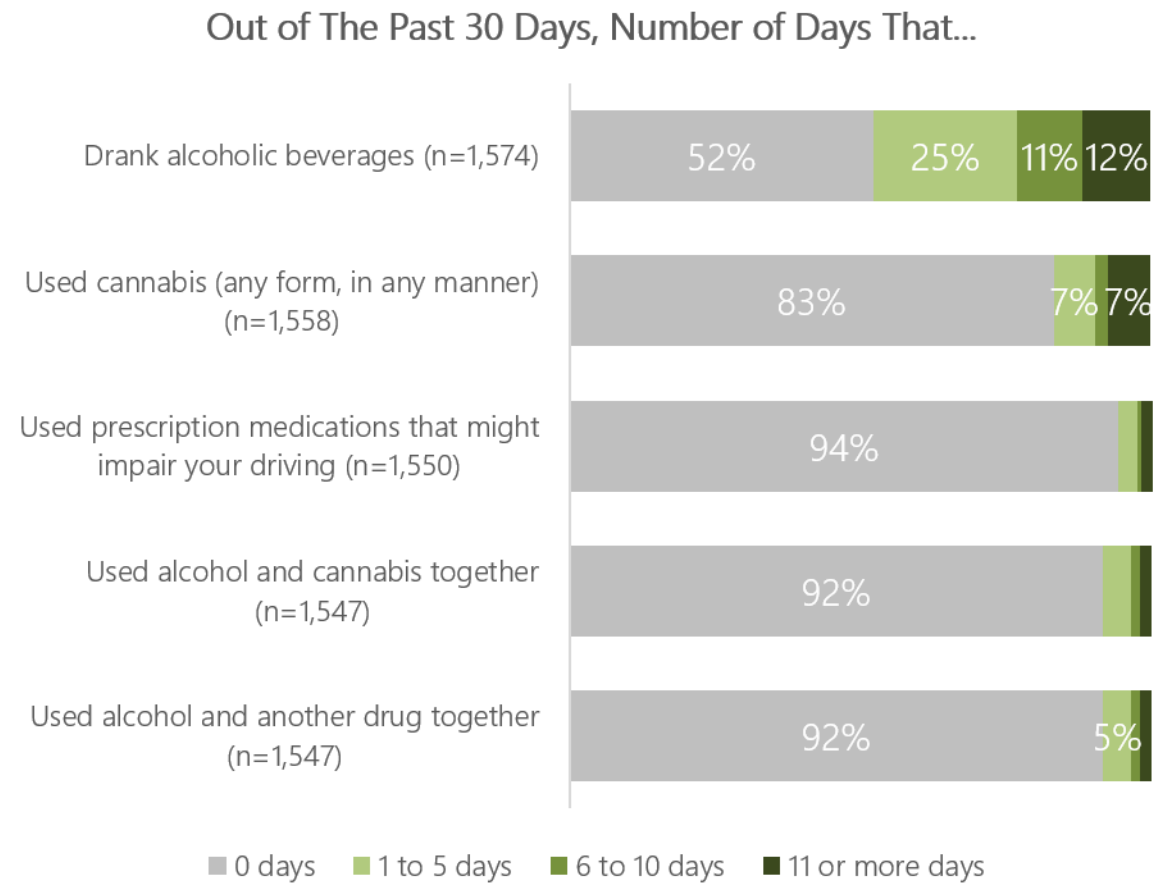
- > Three out of four (75%) indicated that they use their phone while driving in 2026.
- > Drivers most commonly said they would stop using their phone if their car had hands-free features (44%).
- > Nearly one quarter of those who used their phone while driving (23%) said they would stop using the phone if it blocked calls and messages while driving or if they thought they could get ticketed for using it.
- > Drivers aged 18–44 were more likely to say they would stop using their phone than older drivers if they thought they could get a ticket (39% vs. 18%) or of they thought it was unsafe (26% vs. 16%).
- > People of Color were more likely to say they would stop using their phone if they thought it was unsafe (29%) than drivers who identified as White alone (17%).

Section 5

Driving Under the Influence

Colorado drivers were much more likely to have consumed alcohol than cannabis in the last 30 days

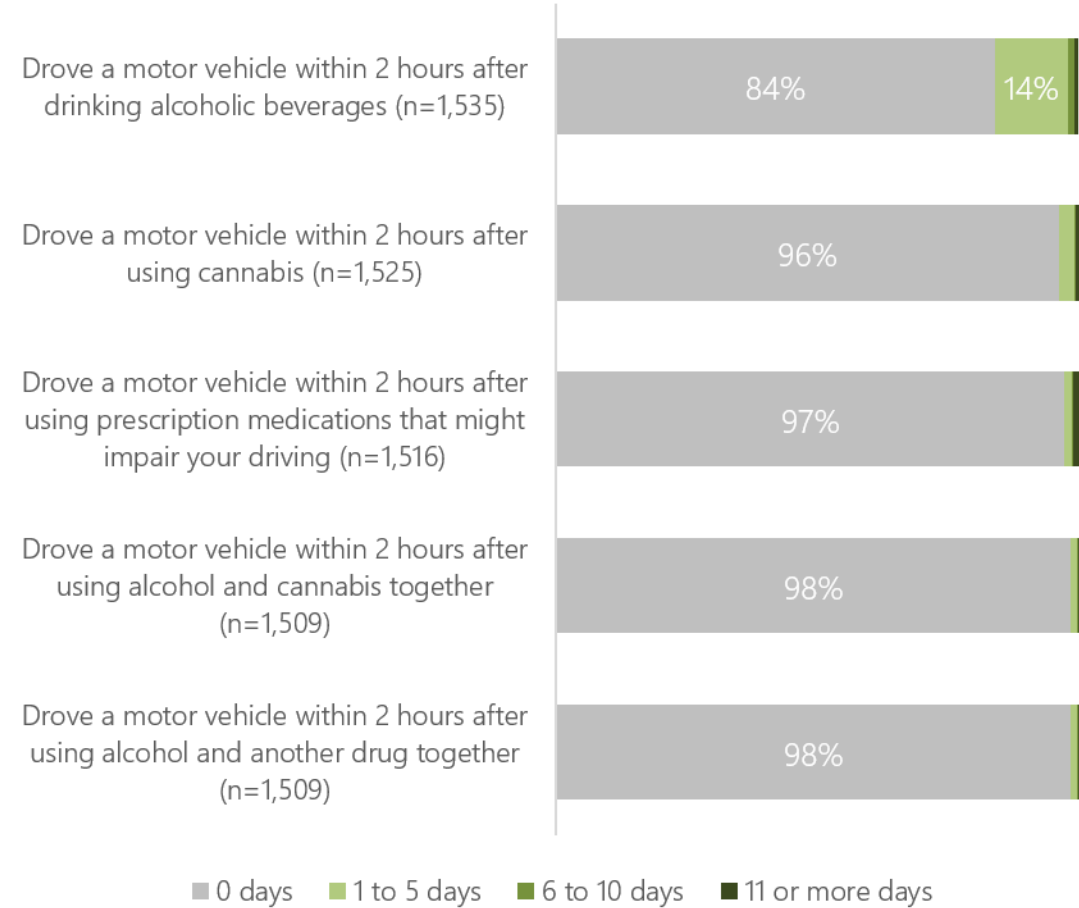
CORONAINSIGHTS



- > About half (48%) of Colorado drivers said they drank alcohol at least one day out of the last 30 and 12% said they drank alcohol 11 days or more in that timeframe.
- > Nearly one out of five (17%) Colorado drivers said they used cannabis in the past 30 days.
- > Less than one out of ten Colorado drivers said they used alcohol and cannabis (8%) or alcohol and another drug (8%) together in the last 30 days.
- > Drivers aged 18–44 were more likely (27%) to have used cannabis in the last 30 days than drivers 45 and older (8%). Drivers aged 18–44 were also more likely to have drank alcohol in the last 30 days (53%) than older drivers (43%).
- > People of Color were more likely to have used cannabis in the last 30 days (26%) than drivers identifying as White alone (12%). Alternatively, White alone drivers were more likely to have drank alcohol in the last 30 days (52%) than drivers identifying as People of Color (41%).

Colorado drivers were much more likely to have driven after recently drinking alcohol than consuming cannabis

Out of The Past 30 Days, Number of Days That...

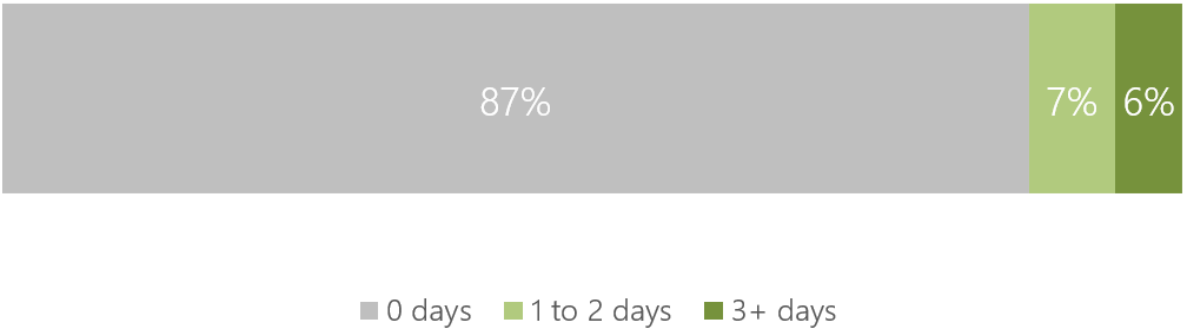


- > More than one out of ten (16%) of drivers said that they drove a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverages at least one day in the past 30 days. However, only 2% said they did this 6 or more days in the past 30.
- > Alternatively, 4% of drivers said they drove a motor vehicle within 2 hours after using cannabis in the past 30 days.
- > A small share (3%) of drivers said they drove within 2 hours of using prescription medications that might impair their driving or within 2 hours of using alcohol and cannabis together (2%). Similarly, only 2% drove within 2 hours of consuming alcohol and another drug together.
- > Drivers aged 18–44 were more likely to have driven within 2 hours of using cannabis (7%) than older drivers (1%). However, despite being more likely to have drank alcohol in the last month, those aged 18–44 were no more likely (17%) to have driven within 2 hours of drinking alcohol than older drivers (16%).
- > Drivers with a college degree were twice as likely to have driven within 2 hours of drinking alcohol in the last 30 days (20%) than those without (9%).

Q10. Out of the past 30 days, on about how many days did you do the following? For each item, please write a number between 0 and 30 days; if you did not do it in the past 30 days put "0". Your answer cannot exceed 30 days.

Respondents were unlikely to have ridden with someone who consumed alcohol or cannabis within two hours

Out of The Past 30 days, Number of Days Ridden With Someone Who Consumed Alcohol or Cannabis Within Two Hours (n=1,593)



- > Most (87%) did not ride with someone who had consumed alcohol or cannabis within two hours in the past 30 days.
- > White riders were more likely to not have done this in the last 30 days (89%) than Black or African American (80%) and Hispanic or Latino/Latina (81%) riders.
- > Those who drove within two hours of drinking were more likely to also have ridden with another who consumed substances within two hours at least one time (25%) than those who did not previously drive within two hours of drinking (4%).
- > Those who drove within two hours of using cannabis were more likely to also have ridden with another driver who consumed substances within two hours at least one time (20%) than those who did not previously drive within two hours of drinking (7%).

Q11. Out of the past 30 days, on about how many days did you ride in a vehicle when you thought or knew the driver had consumed alcohol or cannabis in the past 2 hours? Please write a number between 0 and 30. Enter "0" if none.

Those who drove under the influence were most likely to say they would stop if they believed their driving was dangerous or unsafe

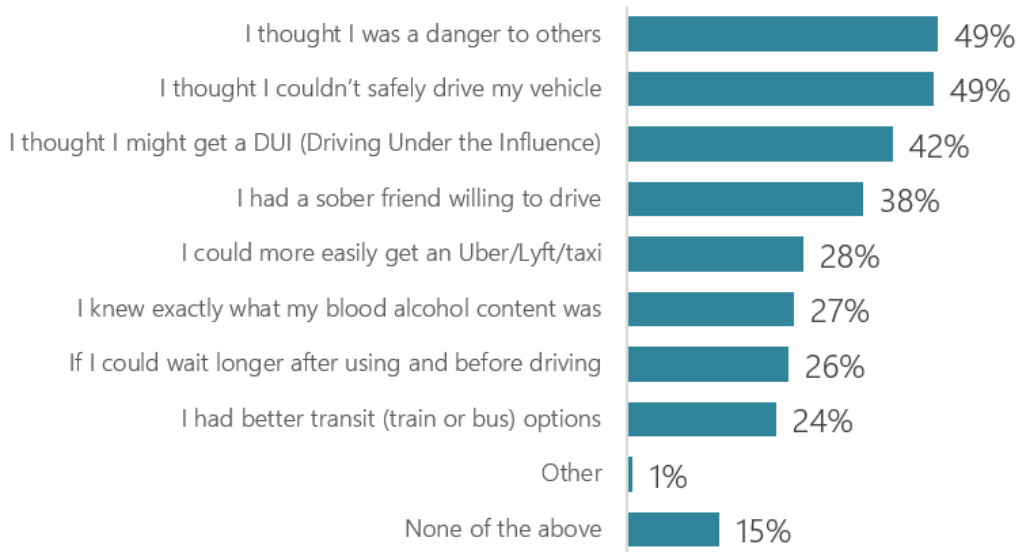
Drives Under the Influence (n=1,615)



■ Never drives under the influence

■ Drives after using alcohol, cannabis, or prescription drugs

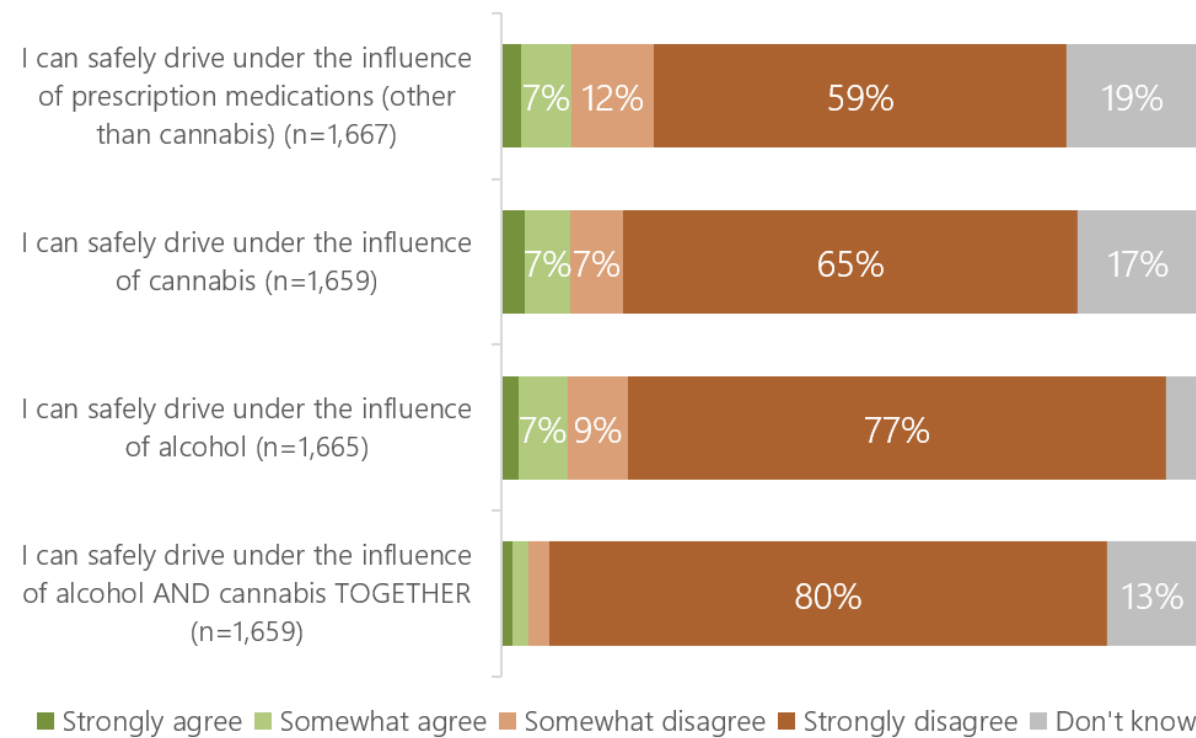
What Would Get Respondents to Stop Driving Under the Influence (n=578)



- > Most Colorado drivers (62%) said they never drive after using alcohol, cannabis, or prescription drugs.
- > Among those who said they engaged in this behavior, about half (49%) said they would stop if they thought they were a danger to others or that they couldn't safely drive their vehicle.
- > There was an increase from 2025 to 2026 of drivers who would stop engaging in this behavior if they thought they might get a DUI (34% to 42%).
- > Drivers in the Denver Metro area were more likely (46%) to stop driving under the influence if they had a sober friend willing to drive than those in other Front Range areas (24%).
- > Older drivers, aged 65 or above, were more likely to say none of the above (32%) than those younger than them (11%).
- > Drivers with a college education (58%) were more likely than those with a high school diploma/GED (20%) to stop engaging in the behavior if they thought they were a danger to others.

About one out of ten Colorado drivers thought they could drive safely under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, and prescription medications

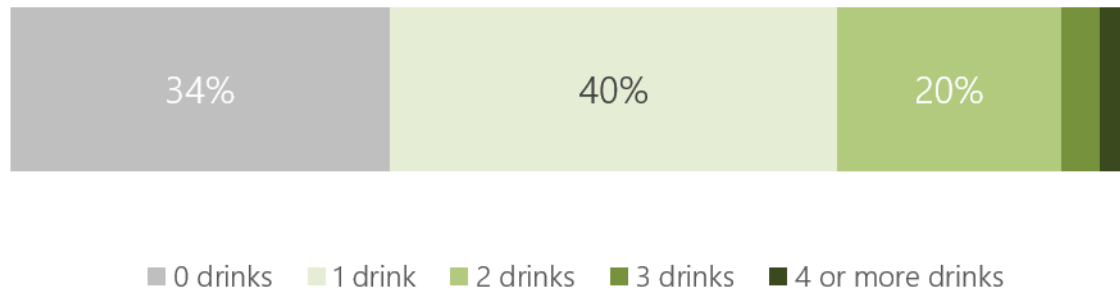
Agreement With Statements



- > A small share of Colorado drivers agreed (somewhat or strongly) that they could drive safely under the influence of prescription medication (10%), cannabis (10%), or alcohol (9%).
 - Drivers who drank alcohol were more likely to agree that they could safely drive under the influence of alcohol (13%) than those who did not (5%).
 - More than one third of drivers who had used cannabis in the last 30 days agreed they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis (37%) compared to fewer than one out of twenty (4%) of those who hadn't.
- > Drivers aged 18–44 were more likely (15%) to agree they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis than older drivers (6%).
- > People of Color were more likely to agree they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis (19%) and alcohol (14%) than White drivers (5% and 7% respectively).

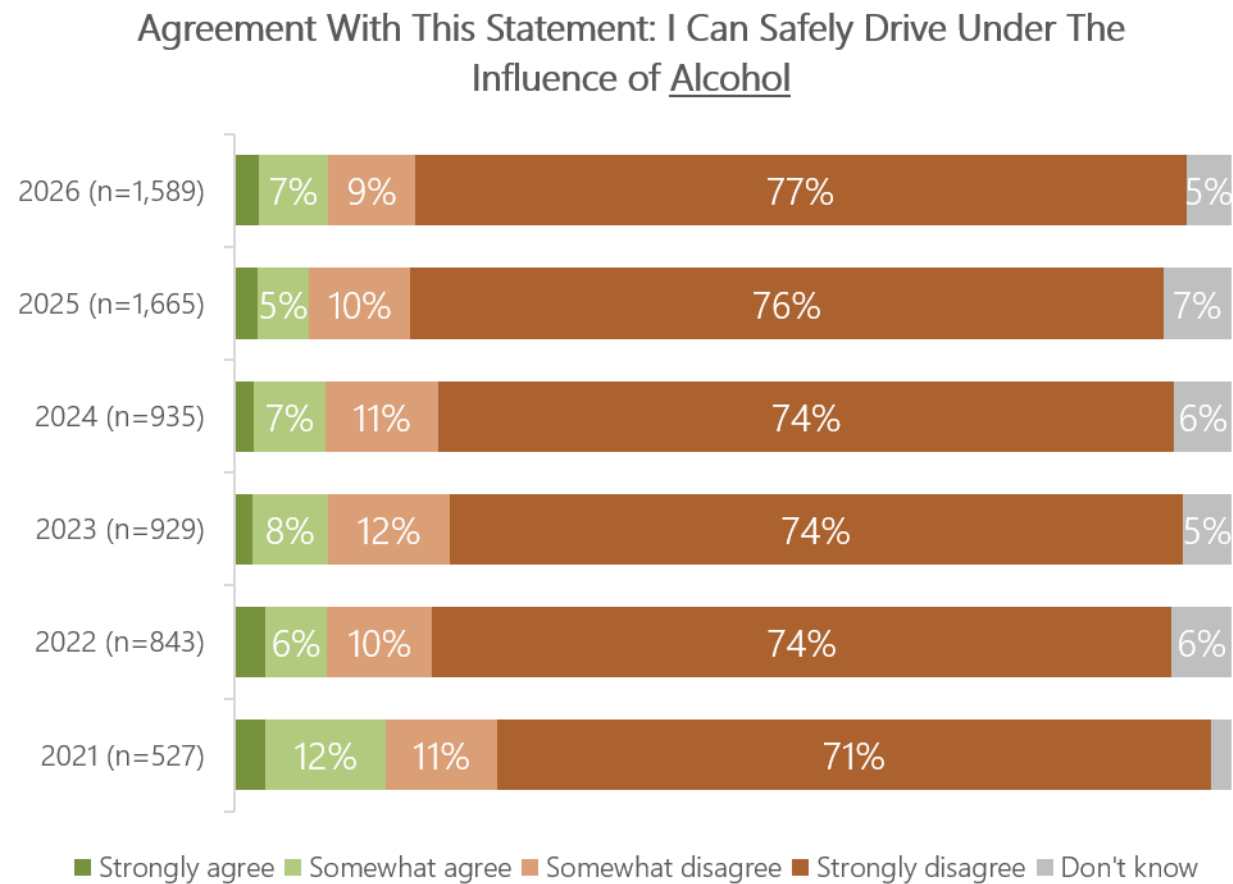
Most Colorado drivers said they would feel comfortable driving after having either one or two drinks within a two-hour time period

Number of Drinks Within a 2-Hour Period And Still Feel Safe Driving (n=1,581)



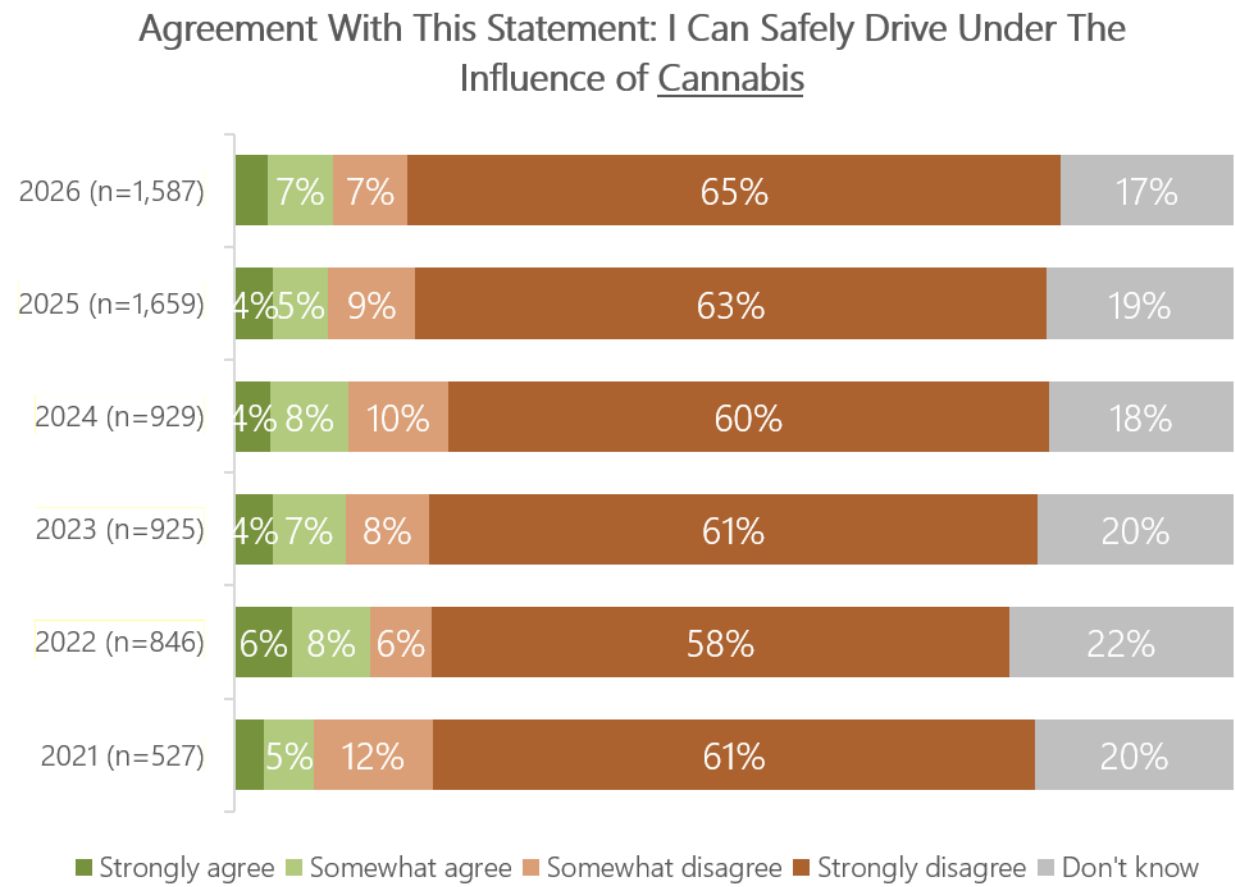
- > About one out of three drivers (34%) said they would only feel safe having zero drinks within two hours of driving. An additional four out of ten (40%) said they would feel safe having a single drink within a two-hour period before driving.
- > Few drivers (4%) said they would feel safe having three or more drinks.
- > Male drivers were more likely (36%) to say they felt safe having two or more drinks than female drivers (17%).
- > Drivers aged 25–44 were more likely (33%) to say they felt safe having two or more drinks than older drivers (22%). The youngest drivers (aged 18–24) were less likely than all others (14%) to say they felt safe in this scenario.
- > Drivers from the outside the Front Range were more likely (81%) to say they felt comfortable having zero or one drinks within two hours of driving than those from the Denver Metro area (70%).

The share of drivers who agreed they could drive safely under the influence of alcohol stayed consistent between 2023 and 2026



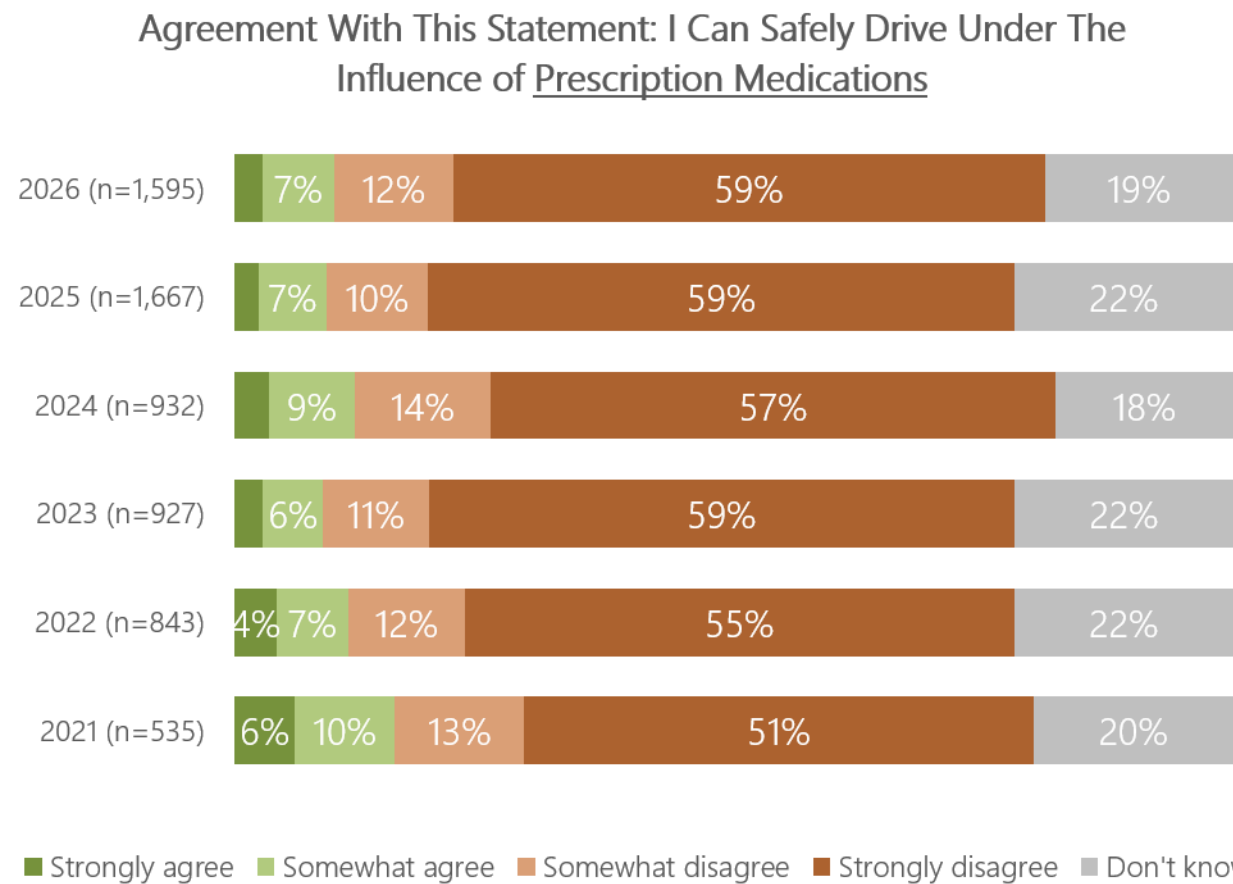
> Over the last past five years, most Colorado drivers strongly disagreed with this statement, with about three of four drivers strongly disagreeing.

Most Colorado drivers consistently said they strongly disagreed that they could safely drive under the influence of cannabis over the last five years



- > Overall, the share of Colorado drivers who agreed that they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis stayed largely the same between 2023 and 2026.
- > Most Colorado drivers consistently strongly disagreed that they could drive safely under the influence of cannabis over the last five years.
- > Around one out of five drivers said they did not know if they could safely drive under the influence of cannabis over the last five years.

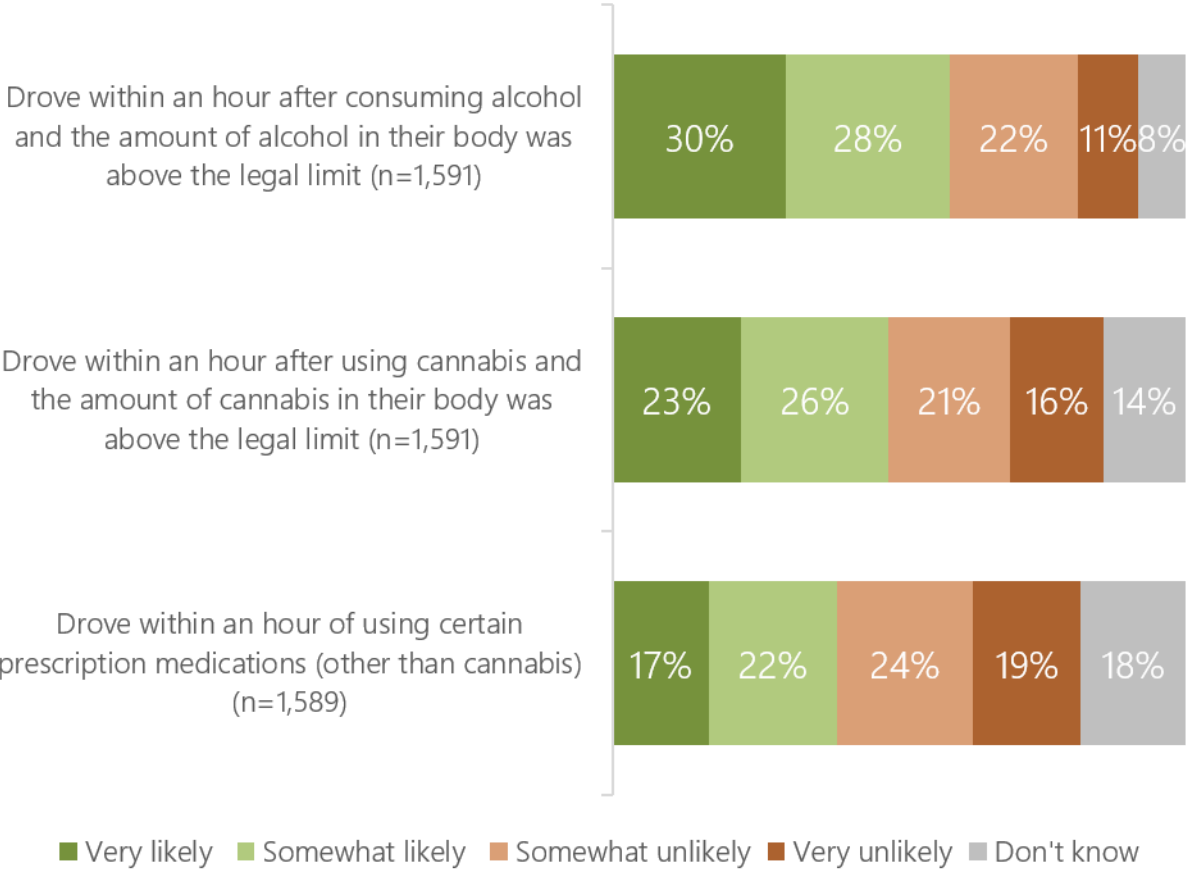
Most Colorado drivers strongly disagreed that they could drive safely under the influence of prescription medications



> Comparing responses over time, a similar share of Colorado drivers agreed (strongly or somewhat) that they could drive safely under the influence of prescription medications.

Most Colorado drivers thought it was likely for a person to get a DUI if they drove after consuming alcohol above the legal limit

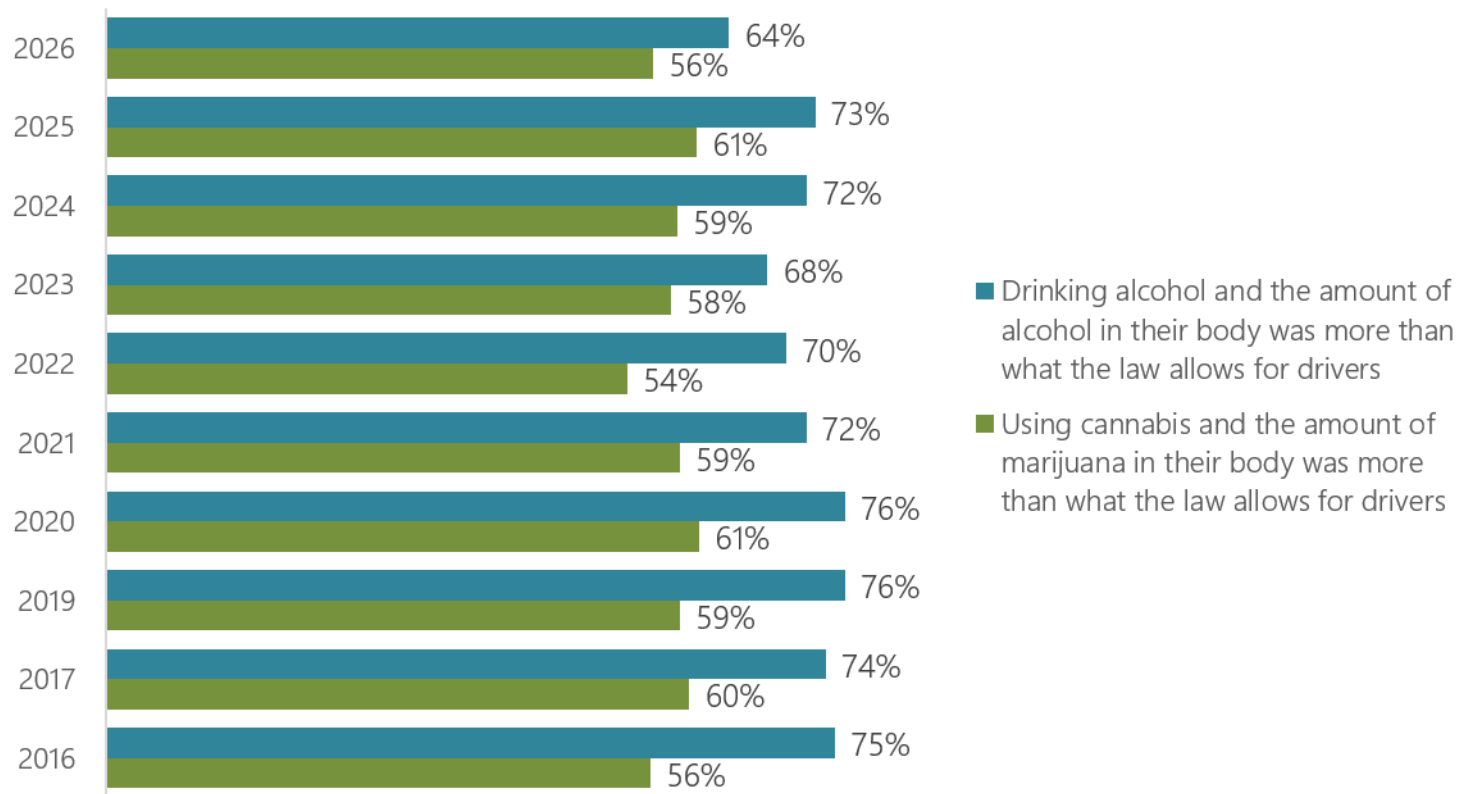
Likelihood of Getting a DUI When...



- > While 59% of drivers thought it was at least somewhat likely that a person would get a DUI if they drove within an hour after consuming alcohol and the amount of alcohol in their body was above the legal limit, a smaller share believed the same for cannabis (48%) and certain prescription medications (39%).
- > The share of drivers who thought this was likely for alcohol decreased from 66% in 2025 to 59% in 2026.
- > Larger shares of People of Color said a DUI in these scenarios was at least somewhat likely for alcohol (69%), cannabis (61%) and prescription medications (54%) than drivers who identified as White alone (54%, 41%, and 31% respectively).
- > Larger shares of drivers aged 18–44 said a DUI in these scenarios was at least somewhat likely for alcohol (64%), cannabis (52%), and prescription medications (44%) than older drivers (54%, 44%, and 35% respectively).

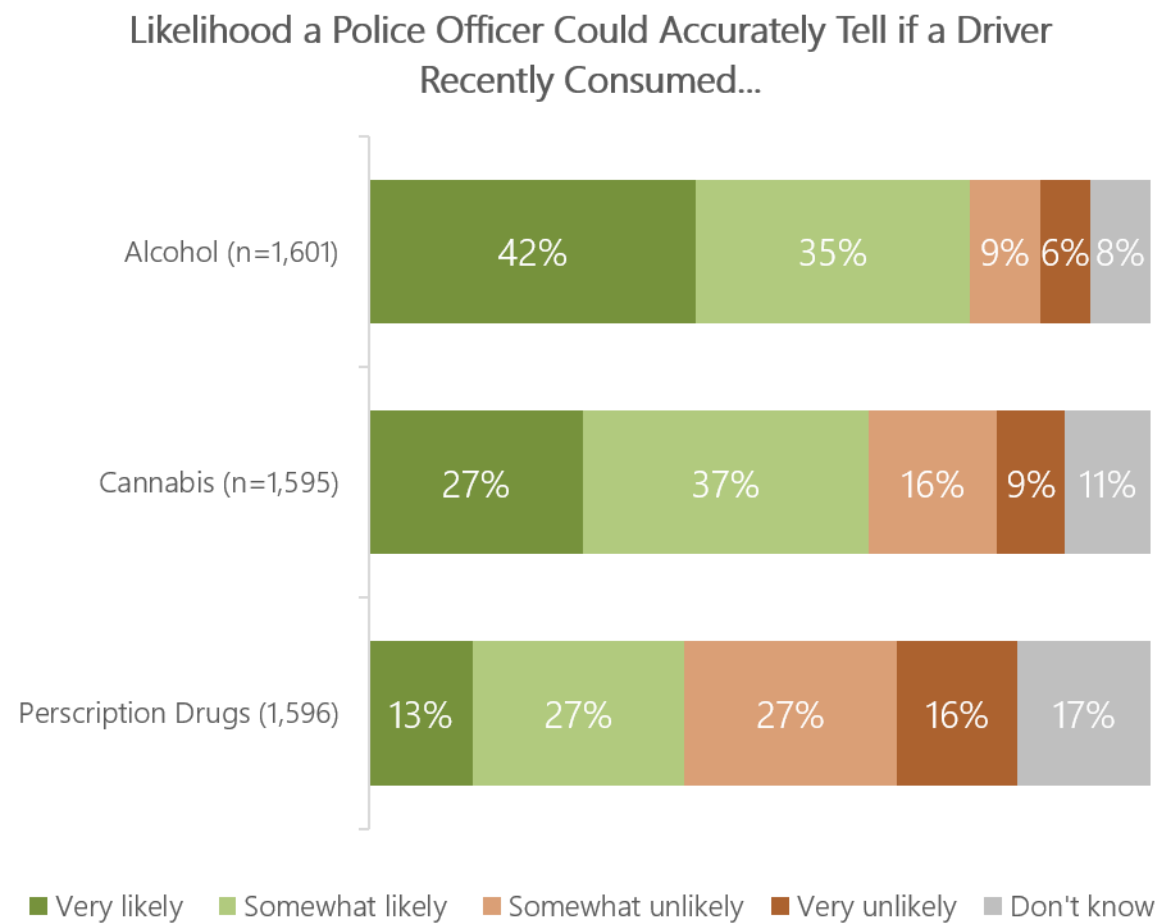
The share of drivers who thought it was likely that a person would get a DUI if they drank more than the legal limit decreased to a 10-year low in 2026

Percentage of Respondents Who Think it is Likely or Very Likely That a Person Would Get a DUI if They ... (Excludes Don't Know):



- > The share of drivers that thought it would be likely that a person would get a DUI if they consumed alcohol above the legal limit decreased significantly from 2025 (73%) to 2026 (64%).
- > While there was a decrease in the share that believed a person who drove above the legal limit for cannabis would get a DUI from 2025 (61%) to 2026 (56%), this decrease was not statistically significant.
- > Across all years, a lower share of Colorado drivers thought using cannabis above the legal limit would result in a DUI than those who thought drinking alcohol would result in a DUI.

Colorado drivers thought it was more likely that a police officer could accurately tell if a driver recently consumed alcohol than cannabis or prescription drugs

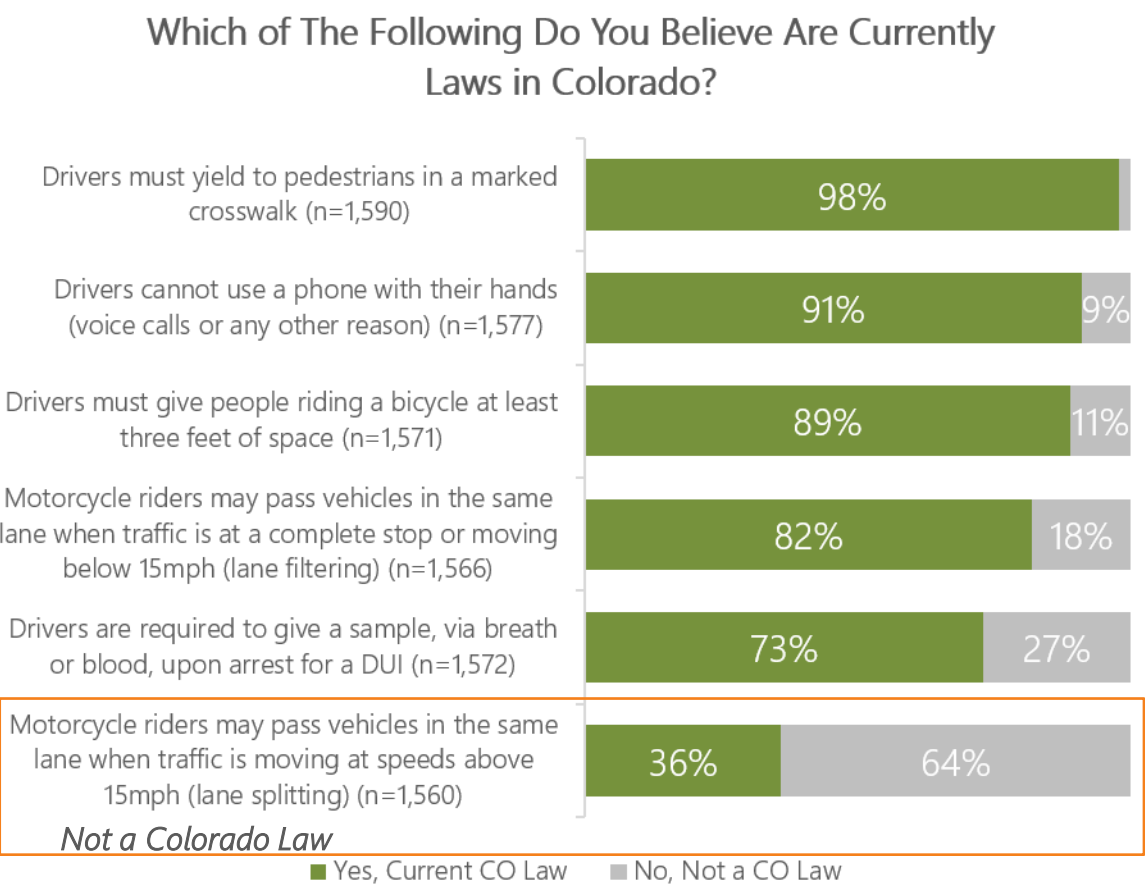


- > Three out of four Colorado drivers (77%) said it was at least somewhat likely that a police officer could accurately tell if a driver had recently consumed alcohol, and a more than two out of five (42%) said this would be very likely.
- > While most drivers (64%) said it was at least somewhat likely that a police officer could tell if a driver had recently consumed cannabis, only about one quarter (27%) said this was very likely.
- > Those who used cannabis in the last 30 days said an officer accurately telling if someone recently used cannabis was unlikely (somewhat or very) at a higher rate (37%) than those who had not (23%).

Section 6

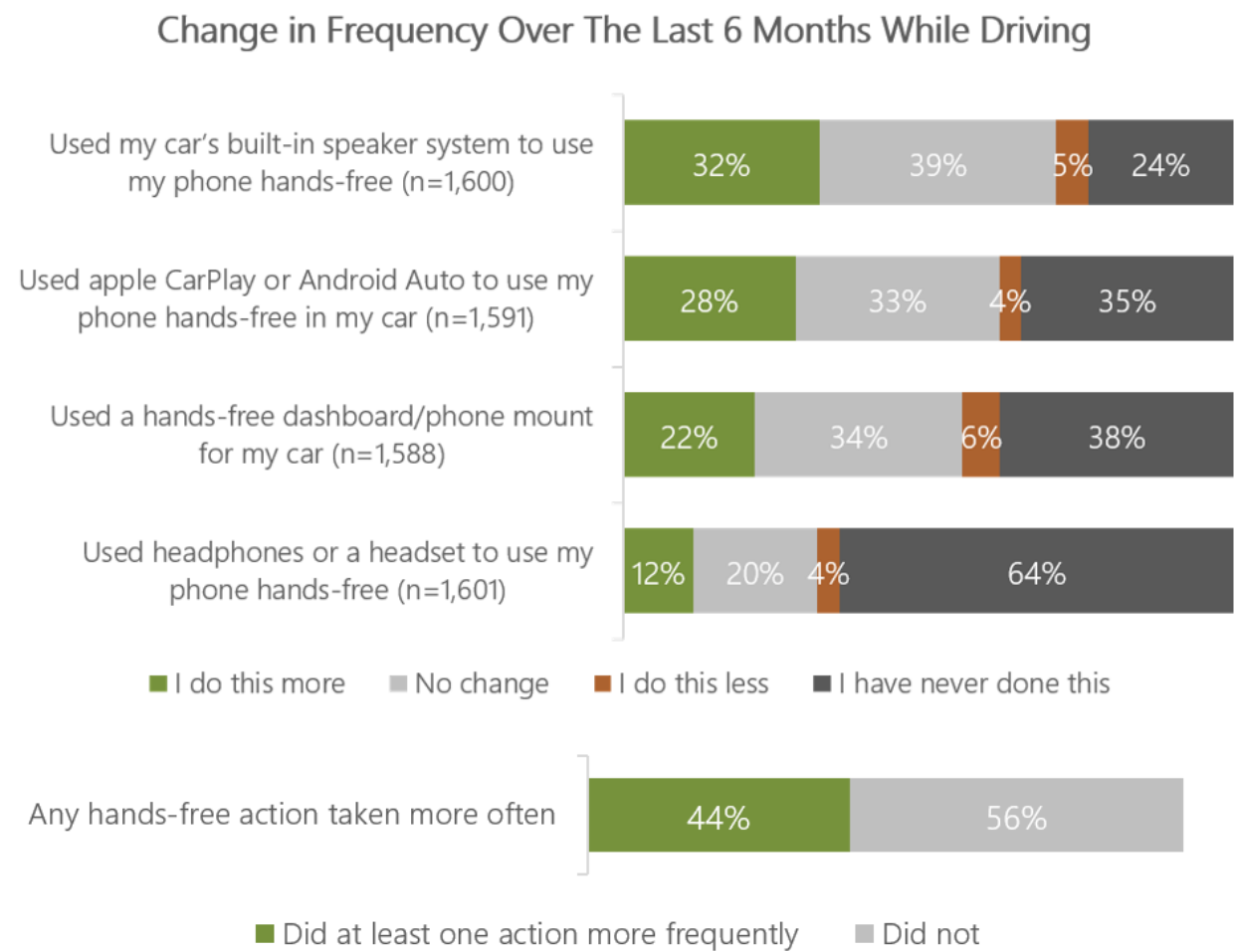
Awareness of Colorado Laws & Motorcycle Behavior

Strong majorities of Colorado drivers were aware of traffic laws



- > Almost all (98%) of Colorado drivers believed that drivers must yield to pedestrians in marked crosswalks.
- > About nine out of ten Colorado drivers believed that drivers could not use a phone with their hands (91%) and that drivers were required to give cyclists at least three feet of space (89%).
- > About four out of five drivers (82%) believed that lane filtering was a current state law.
- > Almost three quarters (73%) of drivers believed it is required to give a breath or blood sample upon DUI arrest.
- > 36% of drivers believed than lane splitting (not a Colorado law) was a current law in the state.
- > Drivers from outside the Front Range were less likely to believe that lane filtering was a current law (74%) than Front Range drivers (88%), not including the Denver Metro area.
- > Drivers who drive within two hours of using cannabis were less likely (86%) than those who did not (98%) to believe drivers must yield to pedestrians in marked crosswalks.

Nearly half of Colorado drivers said they did at least one action more frequently to use their phone hands-free in the last six months

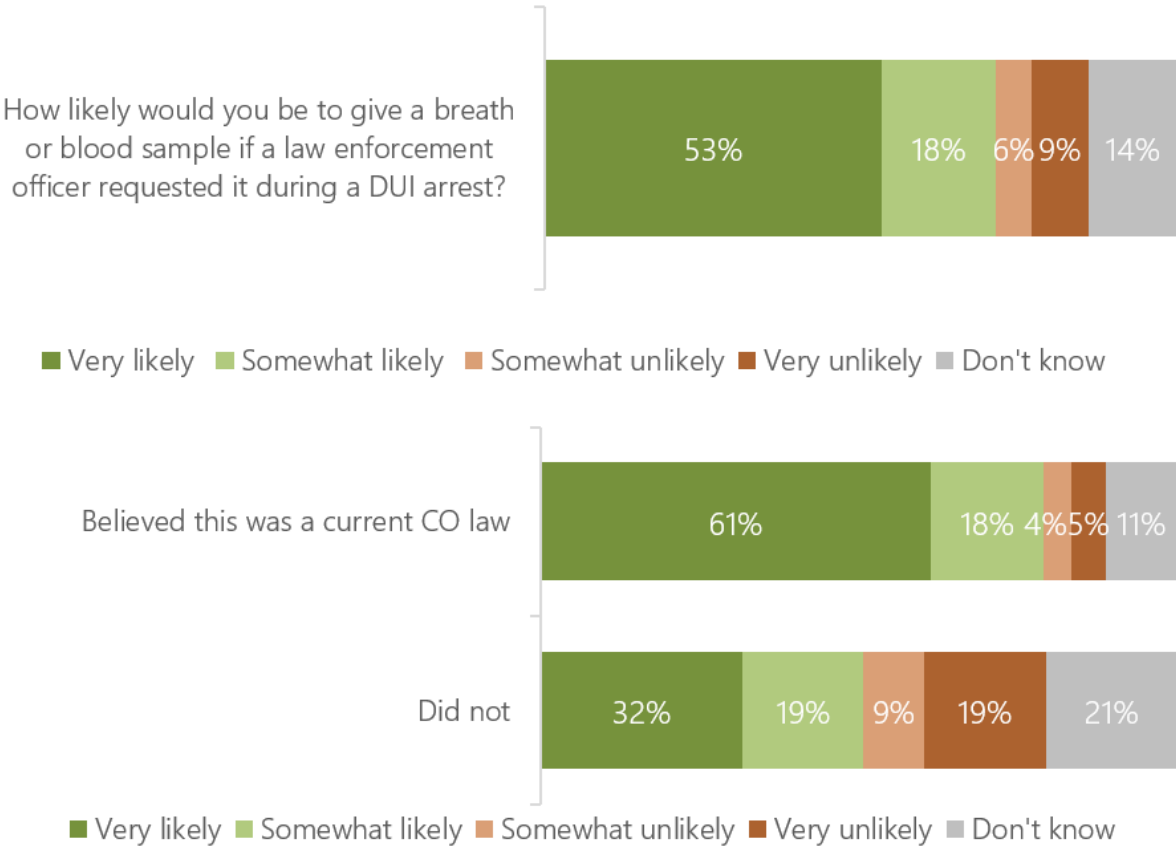


- > The top actions to facilitate hands-free phone use in the last six months were using car's built-in speaker system (done more frequently by 32% of drivers) and using Apple CarPlay/Android Auto (done more frequently by 28% of drivers).
- > It was rare (4%–6%) for drivers to say they did any of these actions less frequently in the last six months.
- > Drivers with primary vehicles that were from 2021 or newer were much more likely to use Apple CarPlay or Android Auto (43%) or use their car's built in speaker system to use their phone hands-free (43%) than those with older primary vehicles (21% and 27% respectively).
- > Drivers aged 18–44 were more likely to say they did each of these actions more frequently than older drivers.
- > Nearly half (44%) said they did at least one of these actions more frequently in the past six months.
- > Despite Colorado's hands-free law coming into effect in 2025, responses to this question were generally similar in 2025 and 2026.

Q18. Thinking about the last six months, have you changed how often you do any of the following while driving?

More than two out of three drivers said they would be likely to give a breath or blood sample if requested after a DUI arrest

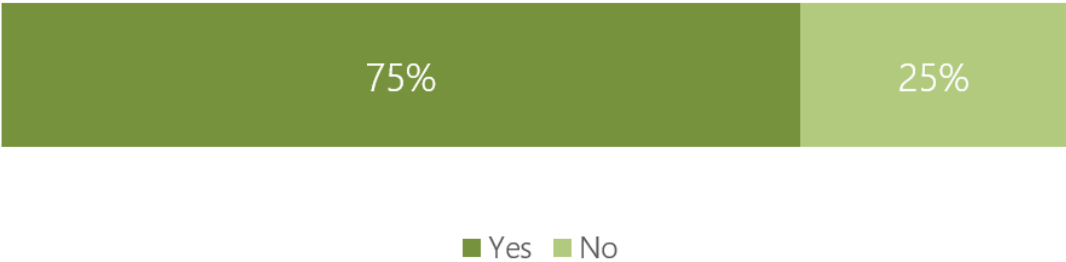
Likelihood of Giving Sample During a DUI Arrest (n=1,584)



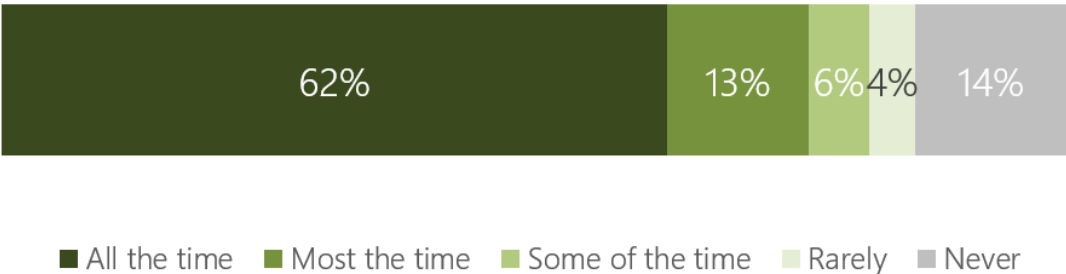
- > Drivers who thought this was a current law said they would be very likely to give a breath or blood sample at a much higher rate (61%, seen in the middle bar) than those who did not believe this was a current law (32%, seen in the lowest bar).
- > While not shown here, the share of drivers who said they would be very or somewhat likely to give a sample in this scenario stayed consistent from 2025 (53% and 17%) to 2026 (53% and 18%).
- > Drivers aged 45 and older said they would be very likely to do this at a higher rate (62%) than drivers aged 18–44 (43%).
- > Drivers who used cannabis in the last 30 days said they would be very likely to do this at a lower rate (43%) than those who did not (56%).
- > Denver Metro area drivers said they would be very likely to do this at a lower rate (47%) than others (59%).

Three out of four motorcycle riders said their license includes an endorsement and most said they wear a helmet all the time

Respondent Has a Motorcycle Endorsement on Driver's License (n=283)



How Often Motorcycle Riders Wear Helmets (n=296)



- > Among Colorado drivers who ride motorcycles, 75% said their license includes an endorsement to ride motorcycles.
- > Among the drivers who said they ride a motorcycle, most (62%) said they wear a helmet all the time they ride. Few (14%) said they never wear a helmet.
- > Helmet use stayed fairly consistent between 2025 and 2026, with the share of riders who said they do this most or all the time holding steady at 78% and 75% across these years.

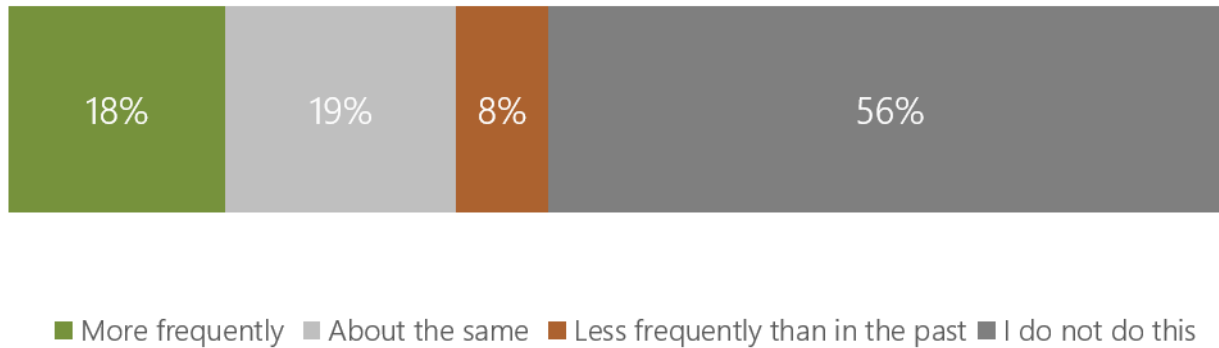
Q25. If you ride a motorcycle, does your license include an endorsement to ride?

Q23. If you ride a motorcycle, how often do you wear a helmet?

Motorcycle rider status is determined by Q24 among respondents who did not select "I don't ride a motorcycle."

Nearly half of motorcycle riders engaged in lane filtering

Change in Motorcycle Riders Lane Filtering Behavior in Last 6 Months (n=289)

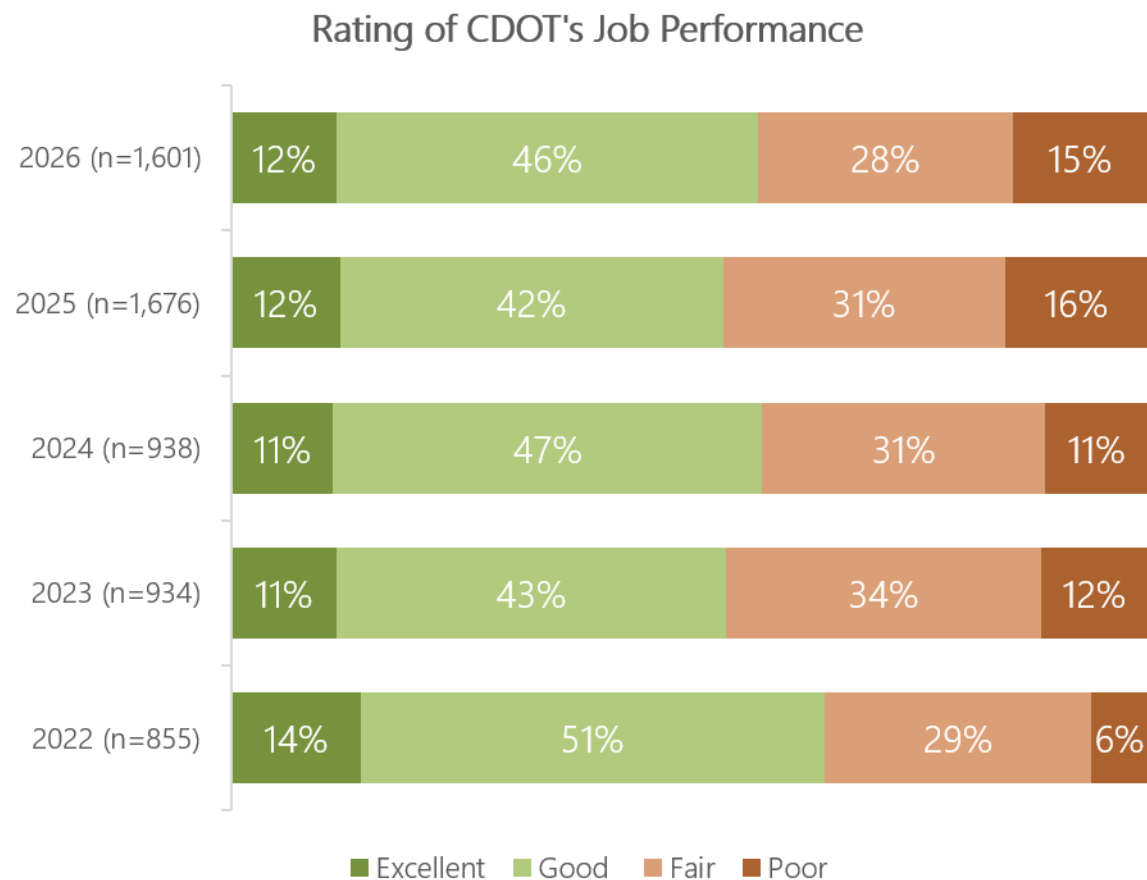


- > The share of motorcycle riders who said they did some kind of lane filtering increased significantly from 29% in 2025 to 44% in 2026. This suggests more riders are adopting the practice after the introduction of Colorado's 2025 lane filtering law.
- > There was also a slight increase in riders who engaged in this behavior more frequently in the past six months from 2025 (13%) to 2026 (18%).
- > Nearly nine out of ten motorcycle riders (85%) knew that lane filtering was allowed by Colorado Law. While this was slightly higher than non-riders (81%), that difference was not statistically significant.

Section 7

Relationship with CDOT

Ratings of CDOT's job performance remained steady from 2025 to 2026



- > While there was a 4% increase of Colorado drivers who said CDOT was doing a “good” job (42% in 2025 to 46% in 2026), this difference was not statistically significant. Those saying CDOT was doing an excellent job remained the same across both years (12%).
- > Male drivers were more likely (15%) to think CDOT is doing an excellent job than female drivers (9%) in 2026.

Section 8

Appendix

Research mode

Survey with online and mail-back response options.

Survey instrument

Corona Insights worked in collaboration with CDOT to update this survey instrument from previous iterations of the Driver Behavior Survey.

Sample

A mail packet survey (in English and Spanish) sent to 10,000 randomly selected residential addresses with an oversample of non-Front Range counties. Residents were asked to have the adult in the household who most recently had a birthday complete the survey in order to hear from a diverse set of residents. Residents were informed that they could complete the survey on paper or at a provided link online. Addresses that did not initially reply were sent a follow-up postcard reminder. Once accounting for undeliverable responses, the mailed sample of the survey received a 11.5% response rate. Non-drivers were excluded from analysis.

Simultaneously, Corona Insights collected responses from an online research panel provided by Dynata. Respondents were screened to ensure that they met the survey's age and location criteria. Through this panel, Corona oversampled hard-to-reach populations like younger residents and People of Color. Additional quality control checks were used to identify and delete poor quality responses.

Time frame

Surveys were collected April 12th to May 26th, 2026.

Total completes

1,615 Colorado residents completed the survey: 784 by mail, 311 online invited by mail, and 520 via the panel. The margin of error for the combined data was $\pm 3.2\%$. By supplementing with panel respondents, the data reflected in this report are not a true random sample and the margin of error is approximate. However, readers can generally assume that findings for the total in this report are very strong, while findings for individual segments are more moderate in their reliability. This margin of error accounts for the design effect of weighting the survey data to adult Colorado residents.

Incentives

No financial incentive was offered to mail respondents. The panel provided a small incentive in the panel's currency to their respondents.

Analysis

Statistical weighting of survey data is often employed to make survey responses more representative of the wider population. Data in this report were weighted to reflect the adult population of Colorado in terms of region, age, gender, and race/ethnicity based on the most recent data available from the US Census' American Community Survey.

