

## ICBC Driving Habits

*Methodology: Results are based on an online study conducted from February 20 to February 28, 2017, among 1,126 drivers in British Columbia aged 21 and over. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region in British Columbia. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is +/- 2.9 percentage points for each sample, nineteen times out of twenty.*

### DRIVING HABITS AND BEHAVIOURS

Almost half of drivers (46%) say driving is now harder than it was five years ago, including 57% in the Lower Mainland, 50% of those aged 35-54 and 49% of those aged 55 and over.

Almost three-in-five (58%) say drivers are worse than they were five years ago.

Most drivers consider themselves to be above average (55%) or excellent (17%). Fraser Valley drivers have a higher opinion of themselves than those in other parts of the province (23% claim to be “excellent”).

Drivers give themselves high marks for Safety (82%), Attentiveness (79%), Knowledge (78%), Courteousness (76%), Confidence (71%), Skill (also 71%), but low marks on Aggressiveness (18%).

When asked to rate themselves against other drivers, most said they are higher on Safety (76%), Attentiveness (75%), Courteousness (74%), Knowledge (63%) and Skill (60%), while fewer felt the same way about Confidence (50%) and Aggressiveness (15%).

On the statements related to driving behaviours, there are two issues where large majorities of drivers found agreement:

- 1) “As drivers, we all have a role to play in keeping our roads safe” – Agree 96%.
- 2) “I am always fully in control of my driving” – Agree 85%.

However, more than half also agreed with a statement that could potentially lead to problematic driving conditions:

- 1) "I often get frustrated with how others are driving" – Agree 69%.
- 2) "Sometimes I have other things on my mind and forget how I got from one place to another" – Agree 21%.

On the bright side, half of drivers (50%) agreed with the statement: "Most other drivers acknowledge when I make a considerate or friendly action or gesture." The level of agreement is highest in Northern BC (66%) and the Fraser Valley (65%), and lowest in Metro Vancouver (45%).

The two statements related to changing existing habits yielded different results.

- 1) "Over the past few months **I've made a conscious effort** to be a more considerate and careful driver" – Agree 48%, with 56% in the Fraser Valley.
- 2) "Over the past few months **I've thought about changing** some of my driving habits so that I'm a more considerate and careful driver" – Agree 27%.

The discrepancy might have something to do with the nature of the question, as some drivers may not have felt the need to "change" (as described in the second statement) but may have made a "conscious effort" (as described in the first statement).

Fewer than half (47%) agreed with the statement: "Driving is generally a safe activity", and only two-in-five (41%) consider that "technological advances have made driving a safer activity than in the past."

The last four statements relate directly to safety, and see some staggering generational divides:

- 1) "I drive safer when others are in the car with me" – Agree 43%, but significantly higher at 54% for drivers aged 21-34. Conversely, the proportion is 43% for drivers aged 35-54 and 38% for drivers aged 55+.
- 2) "I will try to make up time while driving if I'm behind schedule or late for an appointment" – Agree 37%, but lowest among drivers aged 55+ (29%).

- 3) "Sometimes it's ok to bend the rules if there are no other drivers around" – Agree 32%, but we see another severe drop with age: 40% for 21-34, 34% for 35-54, and 27% for 55+.
- 4) "I do whatever I need to, to get ahead in traffic" – Agree 8%, but the proportion almost doubles among drivers aged 18-34 (15%).

More than nine-in-ten drivers have ever felt impatient (96%), rushed (94%), tired (92%) or stressed (91%), while large majorities have also felt pre-occupied (88%), anxious (84%), angry (86%) and fearful (77%).

Most drivers are aware of the negative impacts of driving while being tired (81%), being pre-occupied (79%), being rushed (76%), being impatient (75%), being angry (74%), being stressed (68%), being anxious (62%) and being fearful (56%).

The biggest "sin" (committed by more than half of drivers) is "passing someone who they thought was driving too slow" (56%). However, more than one-in-five have "gone well over the speed limit" (26%) or were "the second or third car in an intersection at a yellow light" (22%).

The other reported bad behaviours are:

- "Not letting someone into your lane" – 18%
- "Reading a text message" – 17%
- "Honking, screaming, or gesturing at another driver" – 16%
- "Turning or changing lanes without signaling" – 16%
- "Not stopping for a pedestrian at a crosswalk" -12%
- "Not shoulder checking" -12%
- "Talking or texting on a hand-held cell phone" – 12%
- "Not following road signs, signals, or road markings (e.g. left hand turn, U-turn, double solid yellow)" – 10%
- "Driving into an intersection and blocking either oncoming traffic or a Pedestrian crosswalk" – 7%
- "Cutting someone off" – 5%
- "Nearly hitting a cyclist or pedestrian" – 5%
- "Reversing without checking mirrors" – 3%
- "Taking a photo or video of something" – 3%
- "Watching a video" – Less than 0%

Almost one-in-five drivers (18%) claim to have not done any of these over the past few months.

The second question (whether drivers personally witnessed any of the previous behaviours) is remarkably different. More than four-in-five drivers saw someone “going well over the speed limit” (92%), “turning or changing lanes without signaling” (87%), “talking or texting on a hand-held cell phone” (84%) and “passing someone who was driving too slow” (82%).

More than three-in-five drivers saw someone:

- “Cutting someone off” – 79%
- “Not letting someone into your lane” – 76%
- “Being the second or third car in an intersection at a yellow light” – 73%.
- “Not stopping for a pedestrian at a crosswalk” – 71%
- “Not following road signs, signals, or road markings (e.g. left hand turn, U-turn, double solid yellow)” – 68%
- “Driving into an intersection and blocking either oncoming traffic or a Pedestrian crosswalk” – 68%
- “Honking, screaming, or gesturing at another driver” – 66%
- “Reading a text message” – 63%

The other bad behaviours observed by drivers are:

- “Not shoulder checking” – 42%
- “Nearly hitting a cyclist or pedestrian” – 43%
- “Reversing without checking mirrors” – 28%
- “Taking a photo or video of something” – 19%
- “Watching a video” – 9%

The “good behaviour” question was slightly more nuanced in its differences between personal actions and the actions of others on the road.

Nine-in-ten drivers have “slowed down to let someone merge into your lane when there was traffic” (94%) and “waved at, or acknowledged another driver for something helpful or friendly they did for you” (93%). In addition, four-in-five (79%) have “stopped or slowed down to allow someone to turn.”

Three-in-four drivers say someone “slowed down to let them merge into their lane when there was traffic” (75%) and “waved at, or acknowledged them for something helpful or friendly they did” (94%). In addition, more than half (57%) say someone “stopped or slowed down to allow them to turn.”

Two-in-five drivers (43%) say someone else was responsible for the last “near miss” they experienced, while 25% blamed both parties and 18%

acknowledged personal responsibility. Drivers aged 35-54 are more likely to say someone else is to blame for their last “near miss” (49%) than their younger (42%) and older (37%) counterparts.

It is important to note that 14% of drivers claim to have never had a “near miss” (a proportion that rises to 18% in Vancouver Island).

Half of drivers who had a “near miss” (54%) claim to have adjusted how they drive to avoid similar situations in the future, but one-in-five (26%) say the “near miss” had no impact on how they drive.

Nine-in-ten drivers (91%) are “very confident” or “somewhat confident” that they would pass the written test (answering questions about rules of the road). A higher proportion (95%) are “very confident” or “somewhat confident” that they would pass the road test (driving with an ICBC Driver Examiner in the car and following his/her directions).

At least 85% of drivers felt confident in their ability to do all the things described in the question:

- Understand the meaning of the road signs and markings – 98%
- Comply with emergency vehicles – 98%
- Navigate intersections – 98%
- Navigate lanes (i.e., changing lanes, merging) – 97%
- Control your vehicle (e.g. steering, around curves, etc.) – 97%
- Maintain a safe vehicle distance – 97%
- Make a left-hand turn safely – 97%
- Drive on highways – 96%
- Correct your driving when faced with hazards (e.g. potholes, poorly loaded pick-ups, large truck blocking vision, skateboarders darting around, etc.) – 95%
- Overcome negative influences that may impact your driving – 93%
- Communicate with other drivers around you – 92%
- Make a U-turn safely – 90%
- Drive at times of the day when you wouldn't typically drive (i.e., dusk, at night if you typically drive in the day) – 87%
- Drive in challenging weather conditions (i.e., blowing snow, heavy rain, fog, etc.) – 85%

On the follow-up question, at least 89% of drivers felt confident in their information or knowledge related to all the things described in this question:

Comply with emergency vehicles – 99%  
Maintain a safe vehicle distance – 99%  
Navigate intersections – 98%  
Control your vehicle (e.g. steering, around curves, etc.) – 98%  
Make a left-hand turn safely – 98%  
Understand the meaning of the road signs and markings – 97%  
Navigate lanes (i.e., changing lanes, merging) – 97%  
Drive on highways – 97%  
Overcome negative influences that may impact your driving – 96%  
Correct your driving when faced with hazards (e.g. potholes, poorly loaded pick-ups, large truck blocking vision, skateboarders darting around, etc) – 95%  
Communicate with other drivers around you – 94%  
Make a U-turn safely – 92%  
Drive at times of the day when you wouldn't typically drive (i.e., dusk, at night if you typically drive in the day) – 92%  
Drive in challenging weather conditions (i.e., blowing snow, heavy rain, fog, etc.) – 89%

### **DRIVING KNOWLEDGE – TEST**

Three-in-ten drivers (30%) felt “very confident” in their answers after taking the test, while 64% felt “somewhat confident.”

The responses to the Driving Knowledge Test have been assembled below in four categories:

- a) Very good – At least 90% of correct responses
- b) Good – From 50% to 89% of correct responses
- c) Bad – From 21% to 49% of correct responses
- d) Very bad – Fewer than 20% of correct responses

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