TEENS AND DISTRACTED DRIVING

*In August 2015, the State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company (State Farm®) Strategic Resources Department conducted an online survey to explore teenage drivers' attitudes and behaviors related to distracted driving. Nearly all of the teens (96%) responding to this survey reported owning a cellphone, and almost all of those teens (94%) said they owned a smartphone and typically drove five hours per week.**

**Reflects median hours driven.*

Summary

Teenage drivers generally realize how distracting cellphone- and/or smartphone-related behaviors can be while driving. However, the prevalence of some of these behaviors, especially among older teens, reinforces the need to continue to educate young drivers about the dangers of distracted driving.

Phones may not be the only distraction that teen drivers must contend with when driving. Many teens reported searching for music, interacting with a navigation system/GPS or talking with passengers while behind the wheel – all activities which could potentially divert a young driver's attention away from the road.

A teen's driving environment may also be an important factor in terms of distracted driving perceptions and behavior. For instance, some teens reported being more likely to use their cellphone when stopped at a red light.

Teens appear supportive of laws aimed at curtailing distracted driving with regards to cellphone usage. Since some teens who were recently involved in auto crashes reported performing distracted driving behaviors at the time of their crash, legislative measures focused on minimizing distractions may help to reduce the incidence of motor vehicle crashes among teens.

In sum, the findings within this report demonstrate the need for continued research to understand young drivers' behaviors, attitudes and perceptions of factors that influence distracted driving behavior, as well as the need for continued educational, technological and legislative efforts to mitigate these types of behaviors among teens.

Teen drivers perceive many behaviors as distracting, yet they still do them.

Respondents tended to perceive the most distracting behaviors to involve activities that would take their eyes off the road and hands off the wheel. These activities included text messaging, watching/recording video, accessing social media networks or the Internet in general, taking pictures, programming a navigation system or searching for music. For all of these activities, more than eight in 10 indicated that the activities were at least somewhat distracting.

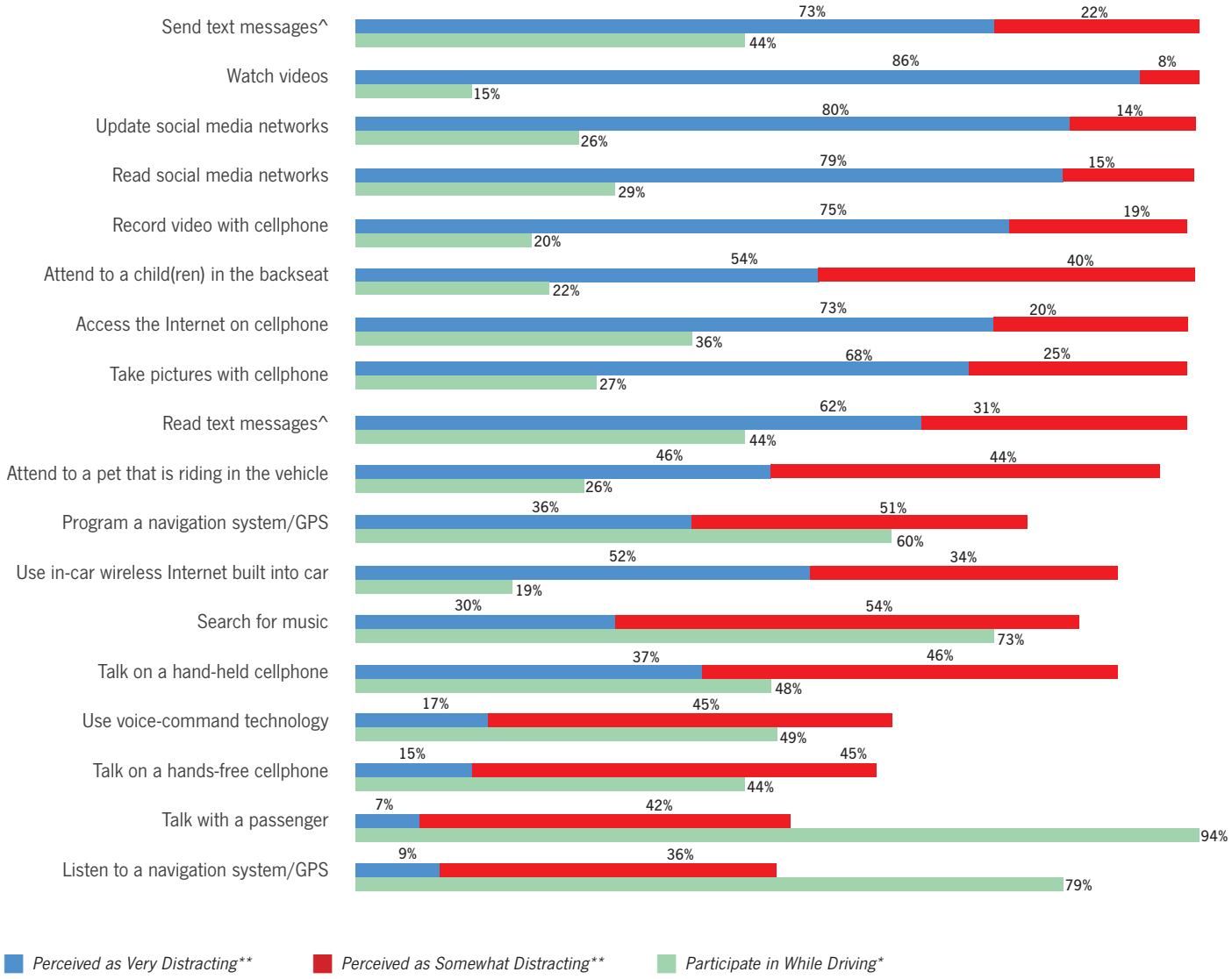
Despite these perceptions, a substantial percentage of teens indicated that they participate in these behaviors. Some of the more notable discrepancies include:

- Text messaging: Over 90 percent indicated that sending and/or receiving text messages was at least somewhat distracting, yet 44 percent reported conducting these activities.
- Searching for music: Nearly three-quarters of teens reported searching for music while driving despite 84 percent reporting that the behavior was at least somewhat distracting.
- Programming a navigation system: Eighty-seven percent indicated it was at least somewhat distracting, yet six in 10 reported doing it. (It should also be noted that while *listening* to a navigation system was perceived as less distracting than programming one, nearly eight in 10 teens reported *listening* to a navigation system while driving – an activity which could potentially distract a young driver.)

People and pets can also be potentially distracting.

Nearly all teens (94%) reported talking with a passenger while driving. In addition, over one-quarter reported attending to pets, and over two in 10 reported attending to children while driving.

Percentage of Drivers Who Perceive Activities as Distracting and Who Participate In Them



Of the total respondents, these are respondents who had a valid driver's license, owned a cellphone, and drove between one and 80 hours per week. *Driving was defined as any time the car was en route to a destination, including being stopped in traffic or at a stoplight. n = 858*

***For the survey item asking how distracting these activities are, other response options included "Not at all distracting" and "Don't know." For each activity, those who chose "Don't know" were excluded from the analysis for that particular activity. n ranges from 670 to 846*

^For the survey item asking respondents if they participated in the activity, the item did not distinguish between reading text messages and sending text messages. Thus, the percentage that participated in "text messaging" is shown for both activities.

Most distracted driving behaviors are common among older teens.

Aside from talking on a hands-free cellphone, using voice-command technology, talking with passengers or searching for music, teens age 18-19 were more likely than those age 16-17 to report participating in each of the activities presented in this study.

Distracted driving behaviors seem to become more prevalent after about five months of license ownership.

For many of the activities examined in this study, the newest drivers (those reporting to have had a driver's license for less than six months) were *less* likely to say they participated in the activities while driving compared to teens who reported having a license for six months or longer.

Activities Teen Drivers Participate in While Driving

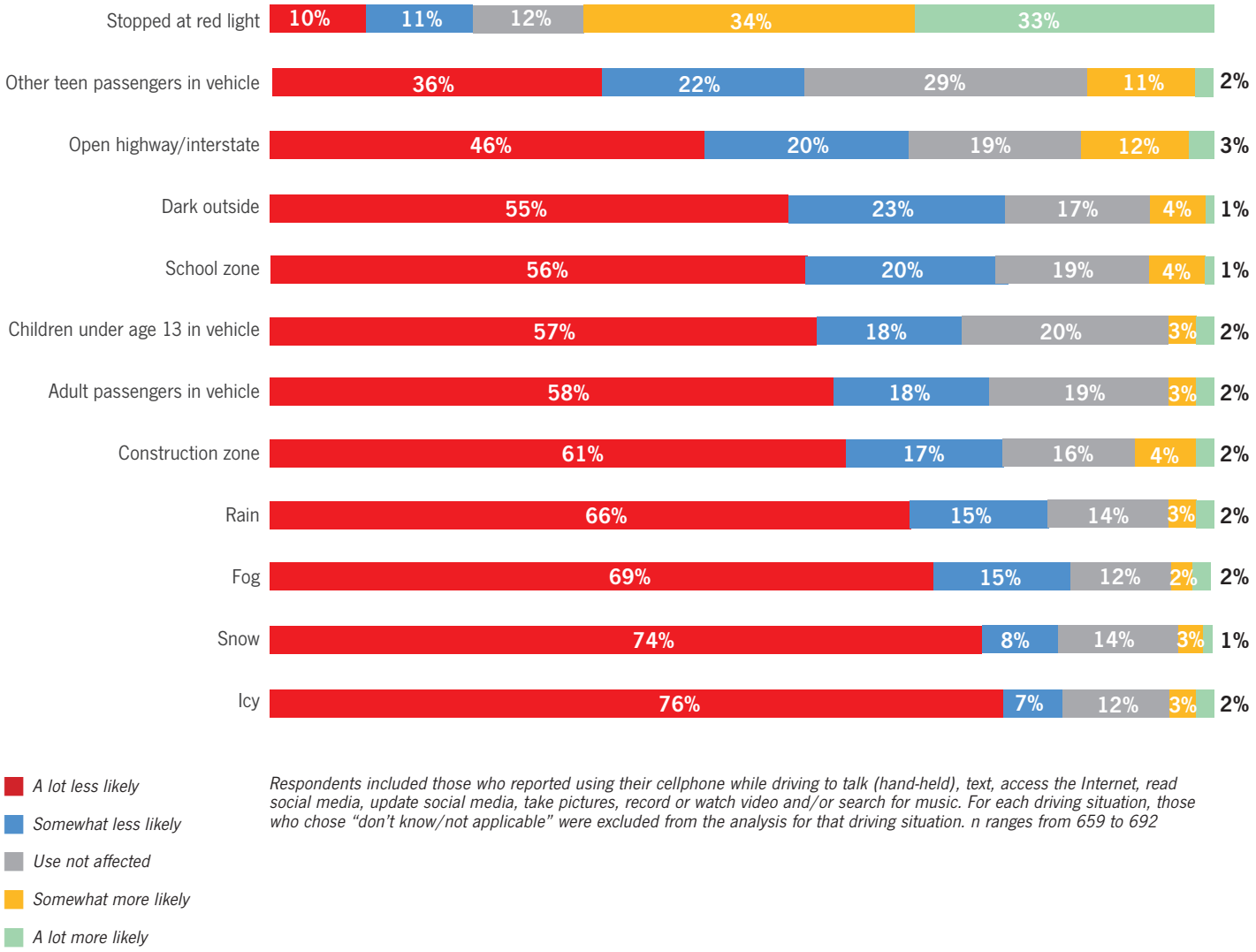
	All Teen Drivers	Drivers Age 16-17	Drivers Age 18-19	Drivers w/ License < 6 mos.	Drivers w/ License 6-11 mos.	Drivers w/ License 1-2 yrs.	Drivers w/ License 3-4 yrs.
	n = 858	n = 425	n = 433	n = 182	n = 209	n = 328	n = 132
Talk on a hand-held cellphone	48%	41%	55%	28%	47%	56%	59%
Talk on a hands-free cellphone	44%	44%	45%	38%	46%	49%	36%
Text message	44%	38%	49%	29%	47%	49%	46%
Listen to directions from a navigation system/GPS	79%	74%	84%	69%	79%	84%	82%
Program a navigation system/GPS	60%	53%	66%	46%	60%	65%	67%
Access the Internet on cellphone	36%	31%	41%	24%	37%	42%	36%
Read social media networks	29%	24%	34%	20%	32%	32%	30%
Update social media networks	26%	20%	32%	20%	26%	29%	27%
Use in-car wireless Internet built into car	19%	15%	22%	15%	21%	21%	14%
Take pictures with cellphone	27%	22%	31%	17%	29%	31%	26%
Record video with cellphone	20%	17%	24%	14%	22%	24%	17%
Use voice-command technology for calls, texting or navigation	49%	48%	50%	37%	54%	53%	45%
Talk with a passenger	94%	95%	93%	91%	95%	95%	95%
Attend to a child(ren) in the backseat	22%	18%	25%	21%	22%	24%	18%
Attend to a pet that is riding in the vehicle	26%	20%	32%	21%	24%	29%	32%
Watch videos (e.g., YouTube, Netflix)	15%	11%	18%	9%	14%	17%	16%
Search for music, (e.g., on iPod, cellphone, radio, CD)	73%	70%	76%	63%	74%	76%	78%

Of the total respondents, these are respondents who had a valid driver's license, owned a cellphone, and drove between 1 and 80 hours per week. Respondents who said they had held a driver's license for '5 or more years' were excluded from length of time with a license analyses.

Driving situations can play an important role in teen drivers' decisions to participate in cellphone-related distracted driving behaviors that involve looking at the cellphone and interacting with the screen and/or buttons.

- Sixty-seven percent of teen drivers who use their cellphone while driving reported that being stopped at a red light makes them *more* likely to use their cellphone compared to when the vehicle is in motion.
- Three-quarters of teens said they were *less* likely to use their cellphone when *adult* passengers were in their vehicle compared to 58% who were less likely to use their phone when *other teens* were present.
- At least two-thirds of teen drivers reported being "a lot less likely" to use their cellphone when driving in poor weather conditions such as rain, fog, snow or ice.

Think only about the times you use your cellphone while driving that require you to look at your cellphone and interact with the screen and/or buttons. How do the following driving situations affect your cellphone use while driving?



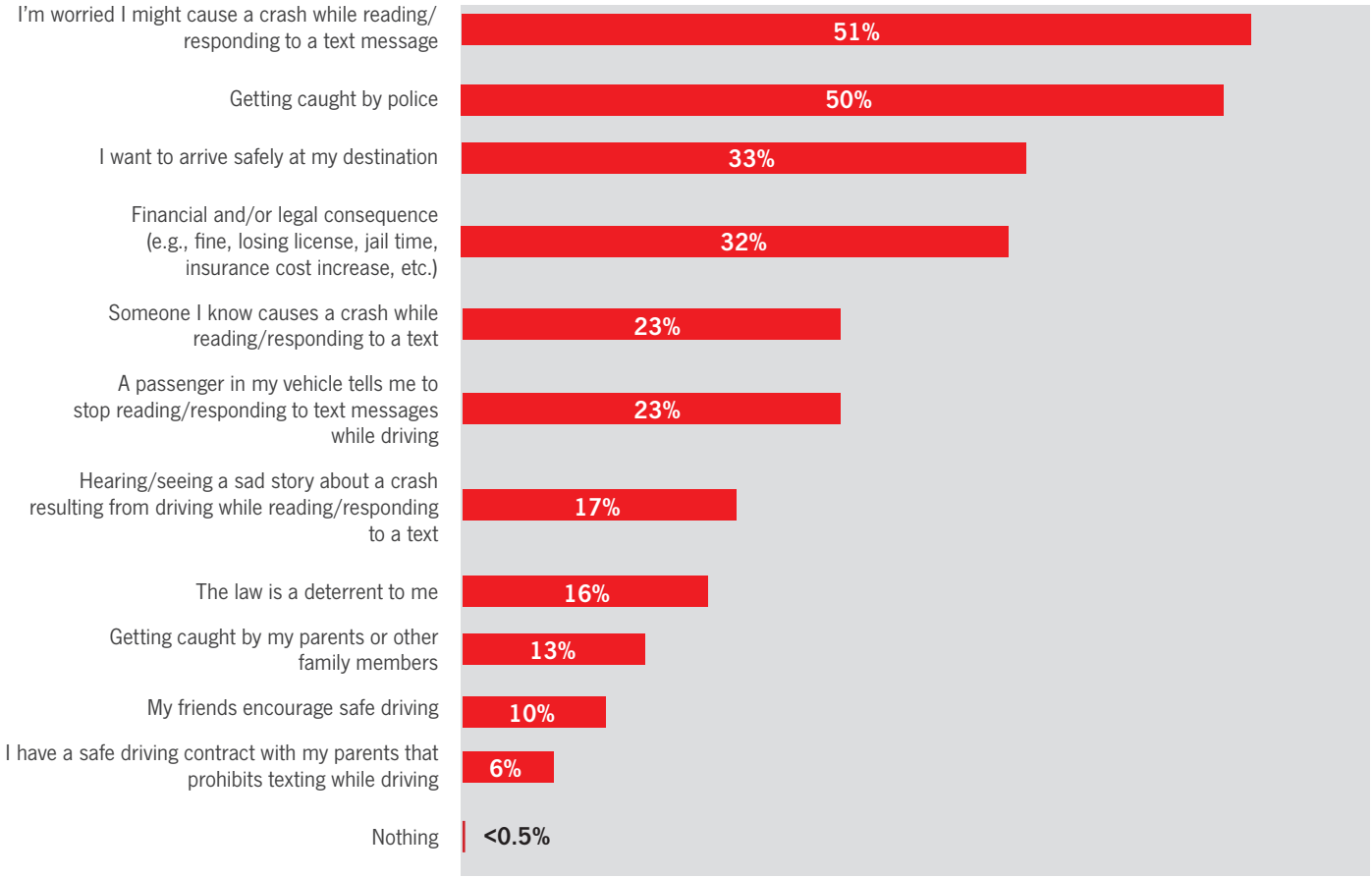
Respondents included those who reported using their cellphone while driving to talk (hand-held), text, access the Internet, read social media, update social media, take pictures, record or watch video and/or search for music. For each driving situation, those who chose "don't know/not applicable" were excluded from the analysis for that driving situation. n ranges from 659 to 692

Drivers who regularly text behind the wheel are most likely to be deterred from texting if they fear they will cause a crash or get caught by police.

Roughly three in 10 teen drivers reported *reading* texts "frequently" or "sometimes" while driving, whereas 16 percent said they *respond* to texts at these frequencies while driving. Among these drivers, one-third or more selected the following responses as the most likely deterrents to texting while driving: causing a crash, getting caught by the police, wanting to arrive safely at their destination and facing financial and/or legal consequences. Less than one percent reported that "nothing" would deter them from text messaging while driving.

What, if anything, is most likely to deter you from reading or responding to text messages while driving*?

(Up to 3 responses allowed)

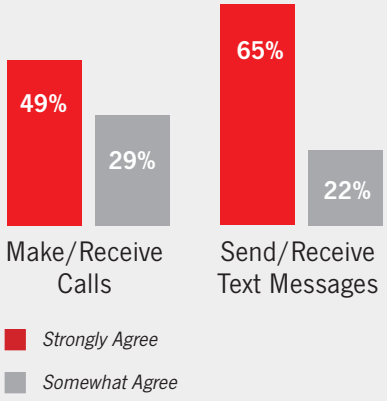


**Respondents included individuals who reported reading or responding to text messages "sometimes" or "frequently" while driving. n = 256*

Teens appear somewhat more supportive of laws prohibiting texting while driving than ones prohibiting making/receiving phone calls.

Roughly nine in 10 teen drivers said they support laws prohibiting young drivers from sending/receiving text messages while driving. About eight in 10 teen respondents were supportive of laws prohibiting young drivers from making/receiving phone calls on cellphones when driving under normal, everyday circumstances.

Do you agree or disagree with laws that would prohibit young drivers from using a cell phone to _____ while driving under normal, everyday circumstances (not emergency situations)?

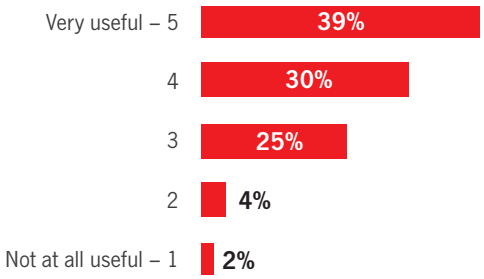


All respondents *n* = 957

Many teen drivers believe crash avoidance technology in vehicles may be useful in preventing crashes resulting from distracted driving, but few currently drive such vehicles.

Roughly seven out of 10 respondents thought crash avoidance technologies such as lane departure or blind spot warnings could be useful in preventing motor vehicle crashes involving distracted driving. However, these innovative safety features have not yet made their way into the vehicles that teens drive most often, as only 16 percent of respondents said their vehicle was equipped with such technology.

Some vehicles are being equipped with crash avoidance technology, such as lane departure warnings, blind spot warnings, automatic braking, etc. How useful do you think these technologies are in preventing crashes involving distracted drivers?



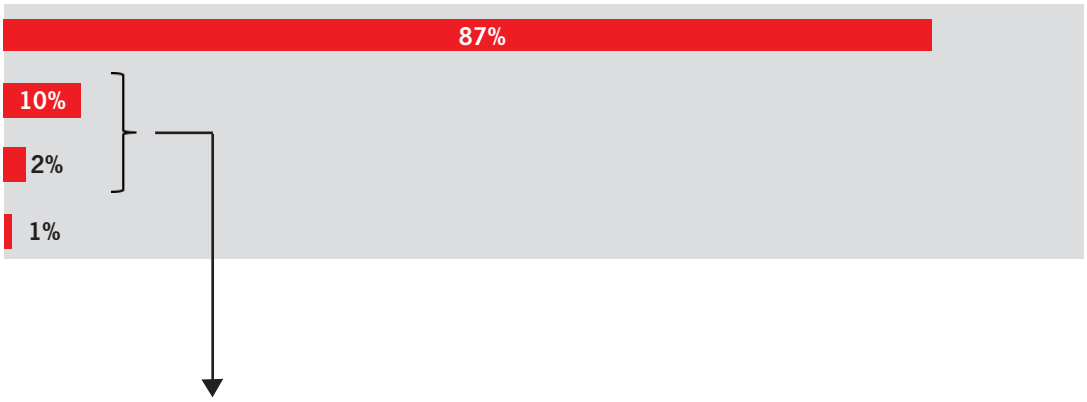
Thinking about the vehicle you drive most often, is your vehicle equipped with crash avoidance technology?

All respondents included in both charts above. n = 957

Fortunately, most teens have not been involved in auto crashes recently. Among those who have been, though, some reported performing distracted driving behaviors at the time of the crash.

Nearly nine out of 10 teen drivers said they had *not* been involved in an auto crash (as a driver) in the past year. Among those who had been, 17 percent said they were talking with passengers at the time of their crash, while about one in 10 were reading/looking for street signs, reading/responding to text messages or recording video on a cellphone. About four out of 10 felt their actions as a driver were the cause of their recent crash.

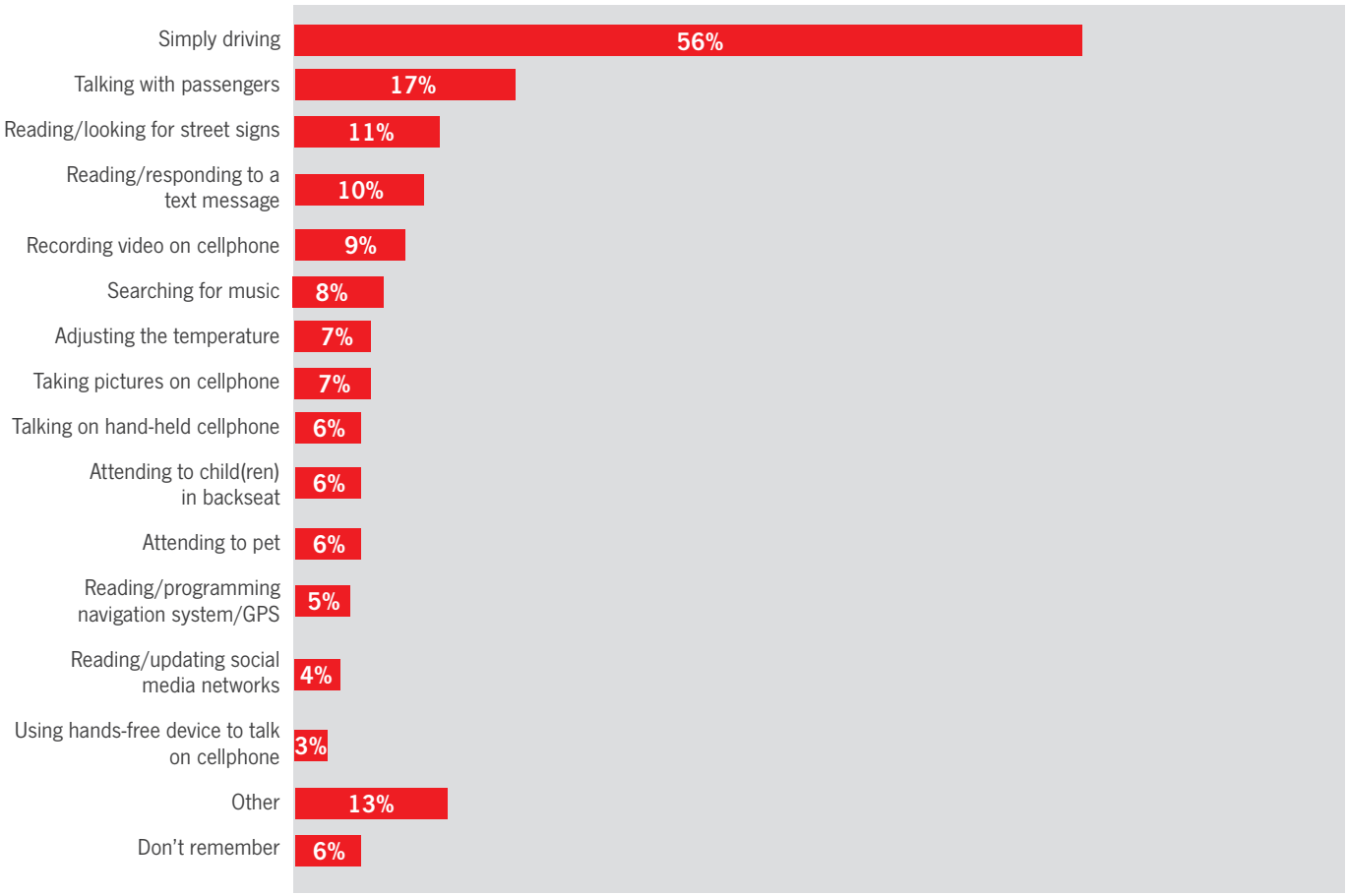
Within the past year, how many auto accidents have you been involved in as a driver where you were determined to be at fault or where no fault was established*?



Includes all respondents. n = 957

Thinking about your most recent accident, what were you doing at the time of the accident?**

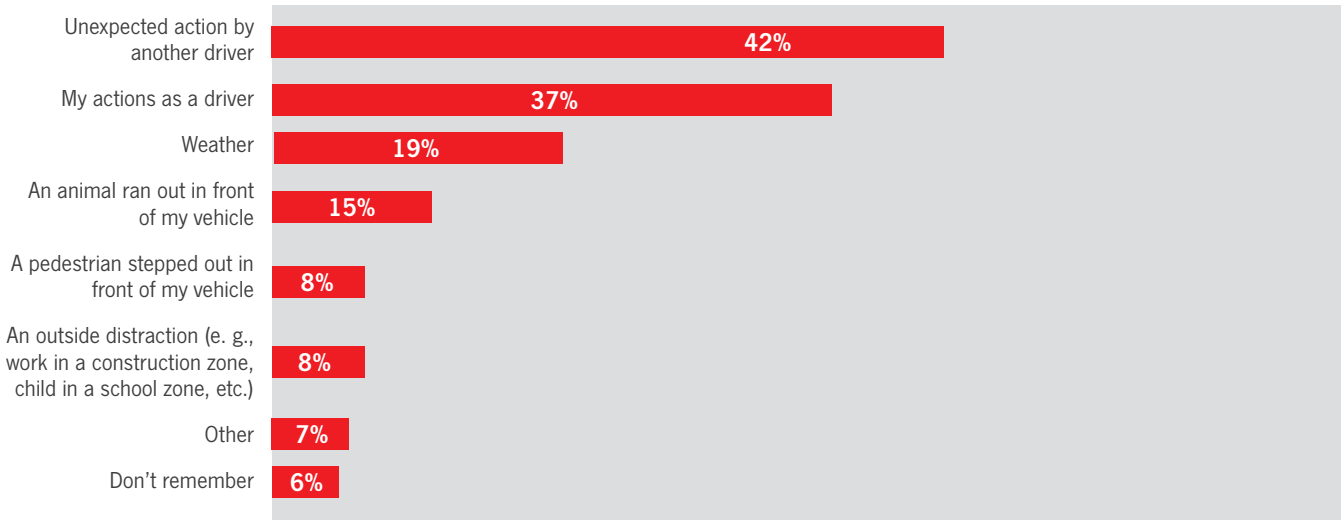
(Multiple responses allowed)



**Includes respondents who said they had been involved in one or more accidents in the past year. n = 119*

In your opinion, what was the cause of your most recent auto accident?

(Multiple responses allowed)



Includes respondents who said they had been involved in one or more accidents in the past year. n = 119

Methodology

In August 2015, the State Farm Strategic Resources Department used an outside panel vendor to conduct an online survey of U.S. consumers ages 16-19. Survey responses were received from approximately 1,000 teens who identified themselves as having a valid driver's license. The current study was the first time this survey had been conducted with a sample comprised solely of teens. Thus, historical results are not available.