



CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL
For Release: October 27, 2009
6:30 PM (EDT)

TEXTING AND USING CELL PHONES WHILE DRIVING
October 5-8, 2009

Americans are in nearly complete agreement that texting while driving should be against the law, and a slight majority of those who thinks so say it should be penalized as seriously as driving while intoxicated. Eight in 10 Americans think talking on a hand-held cell-phone should be illegal as well, though Americans do see a difference between hand-held and hands-free phones: most think hands-free phones are safer to use when driving and their use should remain legal.

TEXTING AND DRIVING

An overwhelming 97% of Americans think texting while driving should not be legal, up from an already overwhelming 90% recorded last month. Just 1% says texting while driving should remain legal.

TEXTING WHILE DRIVING SHOULD BE...?

Table with 3 columns: Response, Now, 9/2009. Rows: Legal (1%, 8%), Illegal (97%, 90%)

Both men and women, frequent drivers and those who drive less frequently, and Americans from all regions of the country agree that texting while driving should be illegal.

Of those who say texting while driving should be illegal, a slight majority of 52% think texting while driving should be punished just as severely as driving while intoxicated, while another 2% think it should be punished more severely. 44% think it should be punished less severely.

COMPARED TO DRUNK DRIVING, TEXTING WHILE DRIVING SHOULD BE PUNISHED...?

(Among Americans who think texting while driving should be illegal)

Table with 4 columns: Response, All Americans, Under, Over. Rows: More severely (2%, 2%, 3%), Less severely (44%, 58%, 30%), About the same (52%, 39%, 65%)

Here there are significant differences based on age. 58% under 45 say texting while driving should be punished less severely than

driving while intoxicated, while 65% of those over 45 say the severity of the punishment should be equal for both.

CELL PHONES AND DRIVING: ARE HANDS-FREE CELL PHONES SAFER?

Although some experts may disagree, most Americans think talking on hands-free cell phones while driving is safer than using a hand-held device. 68% think it is safer.

**COMPARED TO HAND-HELD CELL PHONES,
DRIVING WITH HANDS-FREE CELL PHONES IS...?**

More safe	68%
Less safe	3
The same	28

In keeping with this, while eight in 10 Americans think using a hand-held cell phone while driving should be against the law, seven in 10 think using a hands-free device while driving should remain legal.

USING A CELL PHONE WHILE DRIVING SHOULD BE...

	Hand-held	Hands-free
Legal	17%	71%
Illegal	80	27

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 829 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone October 5-8, 2009. Phone numbers were dialed from random digit dial samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

CBS News/New York Times Poll
Texting and Using Cell Phones While Driving
October 5-8, 2009

q51 Do you think it should be legal or illegal to use a hand-held cellular telephone while driving a car?

**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****

	%
Legal	17
Illegal	80
DK/NA	3

q52 How about a hands-free cellular telephone, which you don't have to pick up or hold to use? Do you think it should be legal or illegal to use a hands-free cellular telephone while driving a car?

Legal	71
Illegal	27
DK/NA	2

q53 Do you think using a HANDS-FREE cell phone while driving is more safe than using a HAND-HELD cell phone, or is it less safe, or is using a HANDS-FREE cell phone just the same as using a HAND-HELD cell phone?

More safe	68
Less safe	3
Just the same	28
DK/NA	1

q54 Do you think sending a text message while driving, either on a cell phone or other electronic device, should be legal or illegal?

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	%	%
Legal	1	8
Illegal	97	90
DK/NA	2	2

q55 Should texting while driving be punished more severely than drunk driving, less severely than drunk driving, or about the same as drunk driving?

**** THOSE WHO THINK TEXTING WHILE DRIVING SHOULD BE ILLEGAL****

More severely	2
Less severely	44
About the same	52
DK/NA	2

q56 How often do you, yourself, drive - very often, somewhat often, occasionally or hardly ever?

** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **

	%
Very often	66
Somewhat often	13
Occasionally	10
Hardly ever	8
Never (vol.)	3
DK/NA	0

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	829	
Think texting while driving should be illegal	804	806