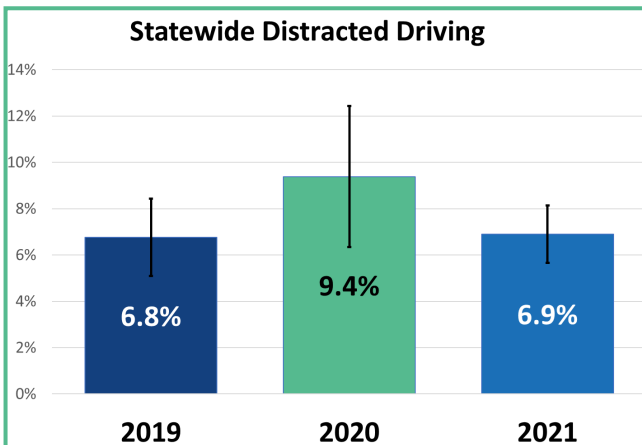
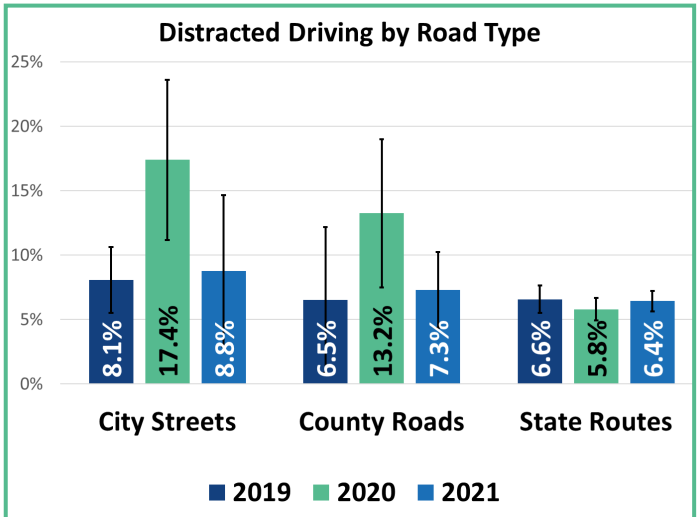




Distracted Driving Observation Survey Results

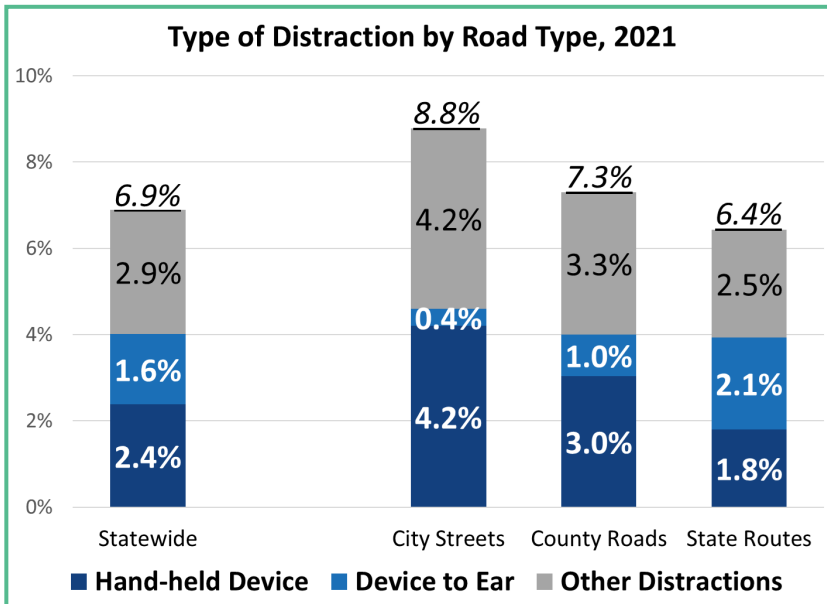
Driver distraction includes all activities that divert attention and full engagement from the task of driving. Washington law [RCW 46.61.672](#) bans all hand-held cell phone use while driving, even when stopped in traffic, punishable as a primary traffic offense; [RCW 46.61.673](#) defines “dangerously distracted” as a secondary traffic offense. Since 2019, the WTSC has conducted an annual observation survey of driver distractions to monitor the incidence of this dangerous behavior. Data is collected during the month of June at 375 locations across the state. The data is weighted based on several time and location factors to derive estimates of distracted driving in Washington state.



Did you know?

- ⇒ Most drivers in Washington do not drive distracted, over 90% are fully engaged.
- ⇒ Distracted driving in 2020 increased due to several factors in response to COVID-19. In 2021, the rate declined to the same rate it was in 2019.
- ⇒ Distracted driving is highest on city streets and lowest on state routes. This may be because drivers are more likely to engage in distractions when traveling at lower speeds.
- ⇒ Device use (hand-held or device to ear) is the most common source of driver distractions.

I care because more than 100 lives are lost every year to distracted driving, a crash factor that is likely under-reported.



Data Sources

Washington State Annual Seat Belt and Distracted Driver Observation Survey with funding support from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

If you need this publication in a different format, please contact the WTSC at (360) 725-9860.



Distracted Driving Observation Survey Results

	2019	2020	2021
Statewide	6.8% (+/-1.7%)	9.4% (+/-3.0%)	6.9% (+/-1.2%)
City Streets	8.1% (+/-2.6%)	17.4% (+/-6.2%)	8.8% (+/-5.9%)
County Roads	6.5% (+/-5.6%)	13.2% (+/-5.8%)	7.3% (+/-2.9%)
State Routes	6.6% (+/-1.1%)	5.8% (+/-0.9%)	6.4% (+/-0.8%)
Benton	5.3% (+/-3.5%)	13.0% (+/-18.8%)	2.0% (+/-1.0%)
Chelan	3.8% (+/-1.2%)	2.7% (+/-1.7%)	1.0% (+/-0.8%)
Clark	2.7% (+/-3.4%)	21.1% (+/-3.6%)	11.5% (+/-2.5%)
Cowlitz	1.9% (+/-1.4%)	5.9% (+/-6.5%)	7.5% (+/-5.9%)
Ferry	8.9% (+/-6.3%)	7.3% (+/-4.8%)	2.1% (+/-4.0%)
Franklin	5.5% (+/-2.1%)	20.4% (+/-14.4%)	2.3% (+/-1.8%)
Grant	5.1% (+/-1.4%)	2.9% (+/-0.7%)	1.5% (+/-1.2%)
Grays Harbor	4.9% (+/-1.3%)	6.4% (+/-2.6%)	6.9% (+/-2.9%)
Jefferson	4.5% (+/-2.7%)	4.4% (+/-2.7%)	5.3% (+/-1.3%)
King	8.0% (+/-1.5%)	5.7% (+/-2.4%)	5.4% (+/-1.2%)
Kitsap	5.4% (+/-2.0%)	5.5% (+/-1.2%)	7.4% (+/-1.5%)
Kittitas	2.3% (+/-1.0%)	2.2% (+/-1.1%)	2.1% (+/-1.4%)
Lewis	3.5% (+/-3.0%)	14.0% (+/-8.9%)	1.6% (+/-1.5%)
Lincoln	8.6% (+/-2.0%)	12.5% (+/-3.2%)	9.9% (+/-1.4%)
Mason	5.1% (+/-2.5%)	9.6% (+/-3.0%)	3.4% (+/-4.6%)
Okanogan	18.4% (+/-3.8%)	3.8% (+/-3.1%)	7.8% (+/-7.8%)
Pend Oreille	2.3% (+/-2.4%)	3.3% (+/-2.6%)	5.8% (+/-7.8%)
Pierce	7.9% (+/-4.2%)	6.2% (+/-2.0%)	7.4% (+/-1.7%)
Skagit	8.4% (+/-3.7%)	7.8% (+/-1.2%)	6.4% (+/-2.6%)
Snohomish	10.8% (+/-2.5%)	11.2% (+/-5.1%)	3.6% (+/-1.1%)
Spokane	5.3% (+/-2.6%)	5.9% (+/-4.5%)	12.8% (+/-3.4%)
Stevens	3.3% (+/-4.7%)	8.1% (+/-3.8%)	6.4% (+/-6.9%)
Thurston	9.7% (+/-3.4%)	8.0% (+/-1.8%)	5.0% (+/-3.5%)
Walla Walla	9.9% (+/-5.1%)	9.7% (+/-3.7%)	13.7% (+/-5.7%)
Whatcom	4.1% (+/-3.4%)	11.5% (+/-4.4%)	8.1% (+/-2.6%)
Yakima	4.3% (+/-1.5%)	6.9% (+/-8.7%)	2.3% (+/-1.1%)

WTSC Distracted Driving Reports <https://wtsc.wa.gov/research-data/traffic-safety-reports/>

Distracted Driving in Washington State During COVID-19: 2020 Observation Survey, Enforcement, and Crashes. March 2021.

Distracted Driving in Washington State 2019: Crash Statistics, Enforcement, and Results from the Statewide Observation Survey. Early Impacts from the 2017 Driving Under the Influence of Electronics Act (SSB 5289). March 2020.

Distracted Driving in Washington State 2016-2018: Results from the Annual Observation Surveys. November 2018.