

THE ROAD SAFETY MONITOR 2013
DRINKING AND DRIVING IN CANADA



The knowledge source for safe driving

THE TRAFFIC INJURY RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The mission of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) is to reduce traffic-related deaths and injuries. TIRF is a national, independent, charitable road safety research institute. Since its inception in 1964, TIRF has become internationally recognized for its accomplishments in a wide range of subject areas related to identifying the causes of road crashes and developing programs and policies to address them effectively.

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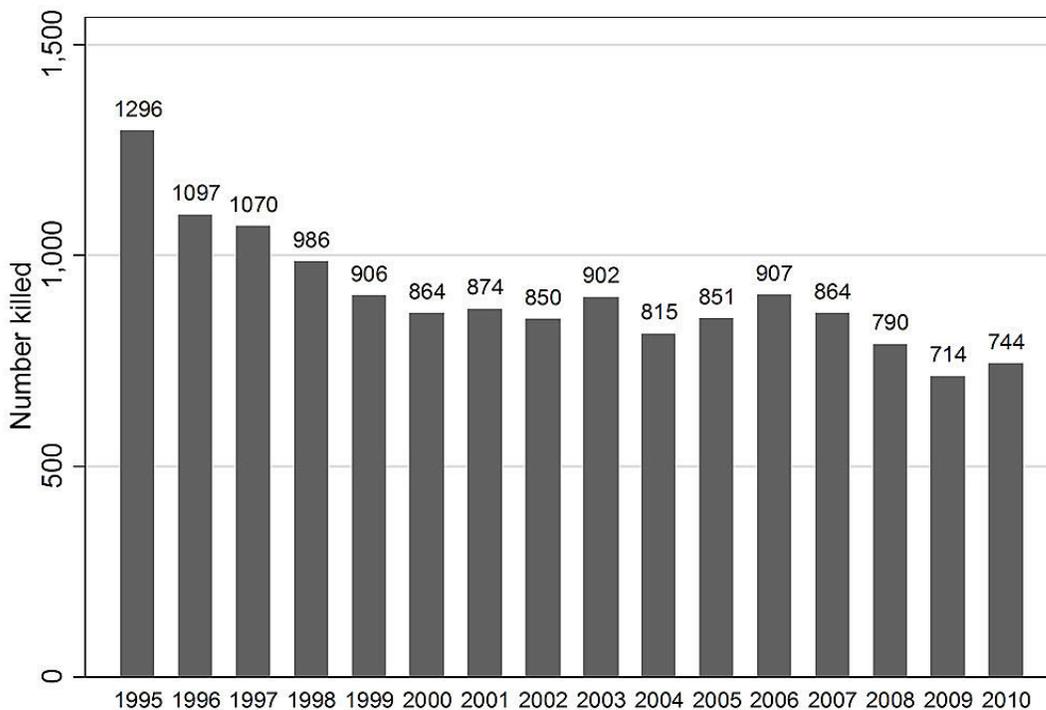


DRINKING AND DRIVING IN CANADA

This fact sheet summarizes national results from *The Road Safety Monitor (RSM)*, 2013 on drinking and driving in Canada. The RSM is an annual public opinion survey conducted by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) under sponsorship from Beer Canada, the Toyota Canada Foundation and Aviva Canada. The survey takes the pulse of the nation on key road safety issues by means of a telephone and on-line survey of a random, representative sample of Canadian drivers.

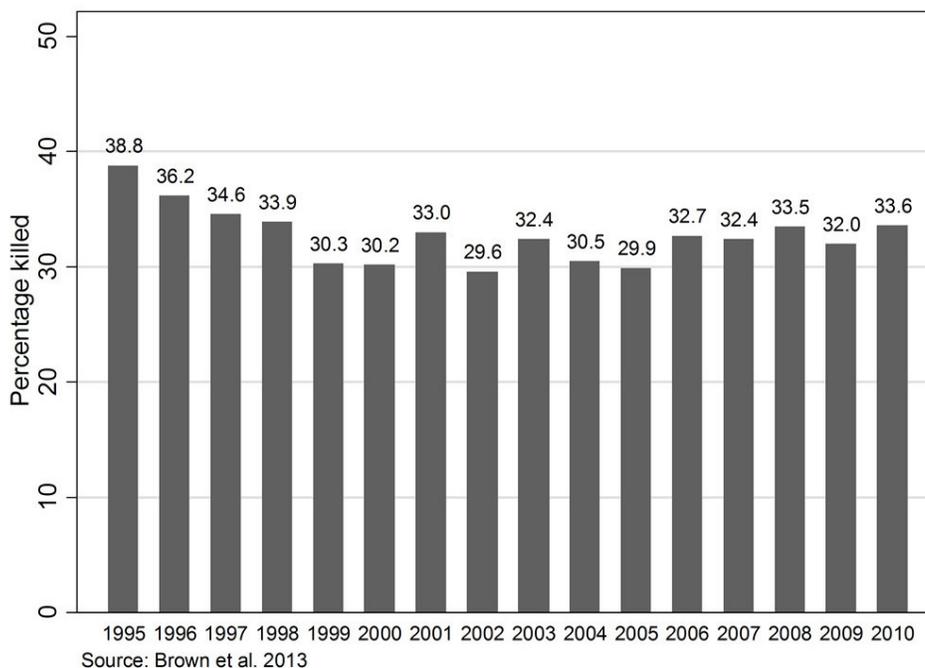
How many Canadians die in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver? In 2010, the most recent year for which data are available, 744 Canadians were killed in a traffic crash involving a drinking driver. While this disrupts the continued and consistent decrease since 2006, results from 2010 are still below the 2008 number (790), the lowest count from 1995 through 2008. An overall decreasing trend in alcohol related deaths was emerging from 2006 through 2009, but it is not clear whether this trend will continue when considering the 2010 data. This will have to be further monitored.

Number of Canadians who have died in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver



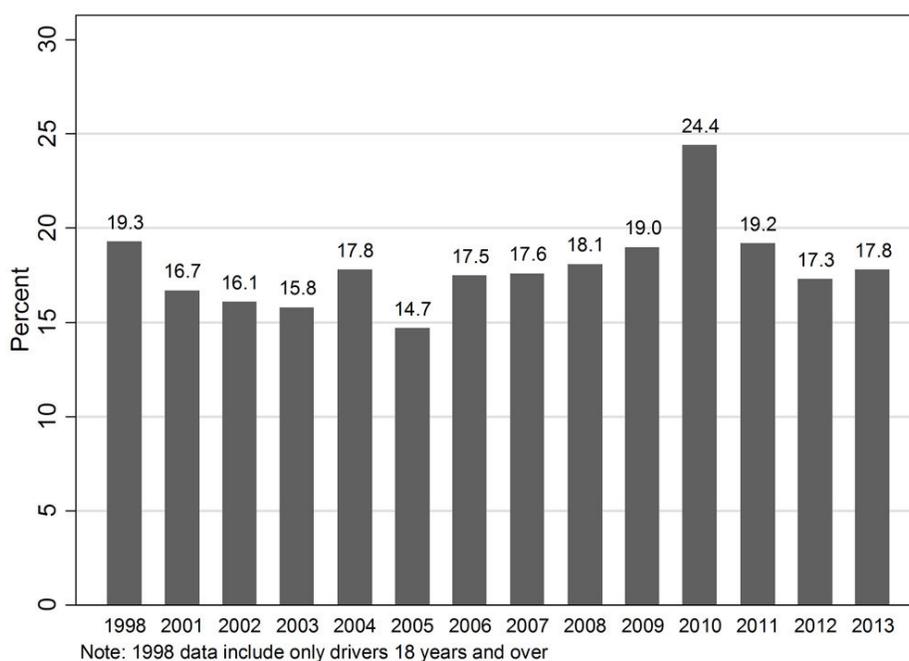
What percentage of Canadians die in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver? When looking at the percentage of persons killed in a traffic crash in Canada involving a drinking driver out of all persons killed in traffic crashes on principal roadways in that year, in 2010, 33.6% of fatal crashes involved a drinking driver. This percentage has decreased from a high of 38.8% in 1995 and has been fairly consistent since 1997 remaining below 35%.

Percentage of Canadians who died in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver



Is the percentage of drinking drivers increasing? When asked about driving after consuming any amount of alcohol in the past 30 days, 17.8% of Canadians admitted to doing this in 2013. It warrants mentioning that this includes drinking and driving after consuming lower levels of alcohol and levels below the legal limit or administrative limits (where they exist). Before 2006, this percent had decreased from 19.3% in 1998 to 14.7% in 2005. The percentage then slightly increased between 2006 and 2009, jumped to 24.4% in 2010, decreased to 17.3% in 2012 before rising again to 17.8% in 2013.

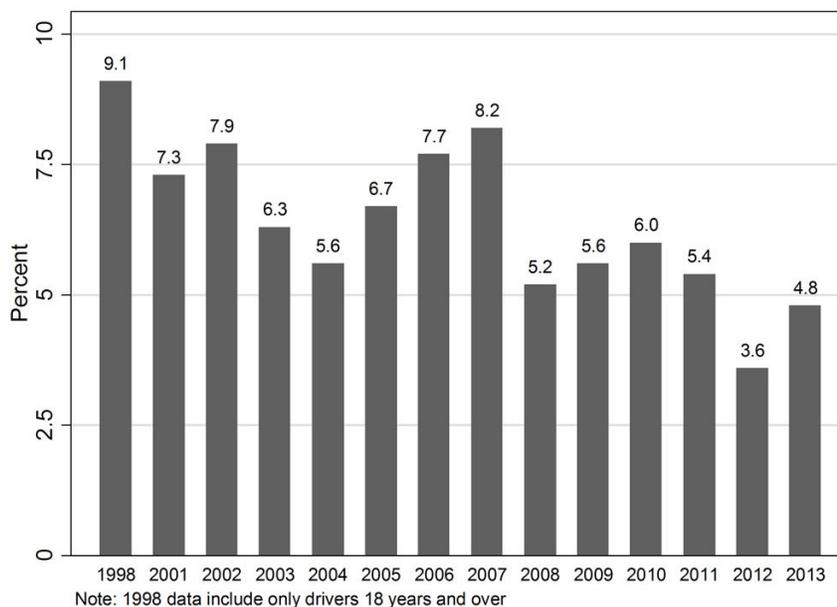
Percentage of drinking drivers



The percentages of respondents from 2006-2009 and 2011-2013 who admitted to drinking and driving were relatively consistent. This suggests that the high percentage of respondents who admitted to drinking and driving in 2010 was an anomaly.

When asked about driving when they thought they were over the legal limit in the past 12 months, 4.8% of Canadians admitted to doing this in 2013. This represents a significant decrease compared to 2007 when the percent was 8.2%. Of importance, the percentages from 2008 to 2013 do appear to confirm the considerable drop from 8.2% in 2007 to 5.2% in 2008. This significant decrease to 5.2% in 2008 could perhaps be explained by the passage of Bill C-2 (this new law was announced in July 2008), designed to strengthen drunk driving legislation as well as the media attention these amendments received. In light of this possible explanation, a small increase (in this case from 5.2% in 2008 to 5.6% in 2009 and 6.0% in 2010) is not surprising given that the effect of any legislation can dissipate somewhat after its introduction due to lower awareness among the public about it (e.g., because media attention disappears after a while or because enforcement efforts decrease).

Percentage who drove when they thought they were over the legal limit



Note that the difference between 2007 and every year until 2013 is significant, so both the consistency in the trend itself as well as significance tests suggest a decrease in drivers admitting to driving while they thought they were over the legal limit in the past 12 months. Reasons explaining the increase from 3.6% in 2012 to 4.8% in 2013 are not immediately apparent but this increase may be cause for concern and will require further monitoring.

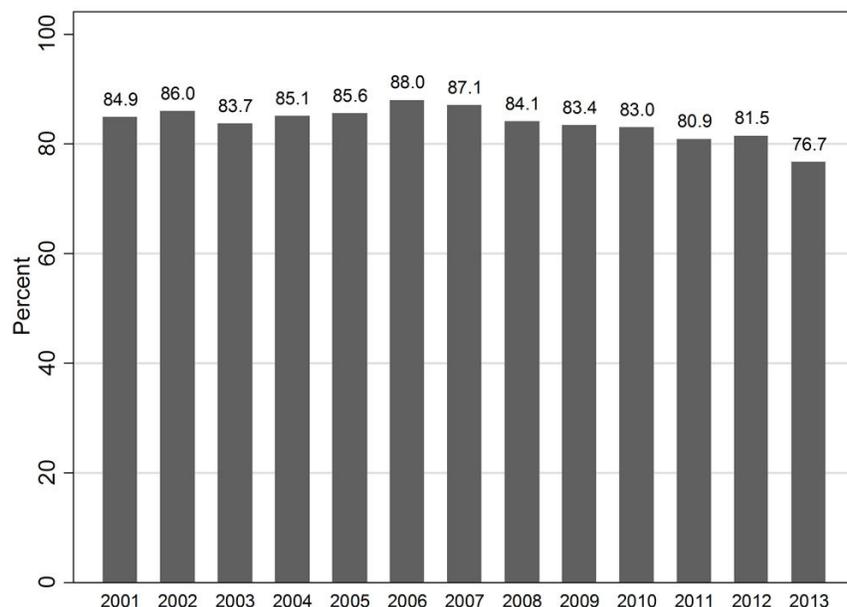
Where do drivers do most of their drinking? In 2013, 25.5% (15.3% in 2012) of those who drove when they thought they were over the legal limit report doing most of their drinking at a bar; 24.4% (37.9% in 2012) report doing most of their drinking at the home of a friend or relative; 21.4% (17.5%

in 2012) report doing most of their drinking in a restaurant; 11.5% (15.1% in 2012) report doing most of their drinking in their own home; 10.0% (14.2% in 2012) report doing most of their drinking at a party; and 7.0% (0.0% in 2012) report doing most other their drinking at other locations. Such a pattern suggests a variety of messages and approaches may be needed to reach these different groups and influence their behaviour.

Where does the issue of drinking and driving sit on the public agenda? Canadians continue to regard drinking and driving as a priority concern. The percentage of those who say that they are concerned or very concerned about drinking and driving rose from a low of 69.3% in 2011 to 71.6% in 2012, before decreasing slightly in 2013 (70.0%). When compared to other societal issues such as crime and global warming, the issue of drinking and driving has consistently been at the top of the list of societal concerns. With the exception of 2011 and 2012, drinking and driving was the issue of foremost concern to Canadian drivers. In those two years, the issue of greatest concern was the price of gas, mentioned by 69.7% of Canadians in 2011 and 78.8% Canadians in 2012. Gas prices continued to be a major issue in 2013, according to 69.9% of respondents, only slightly fewer than those who were concerned about drinking and driving.

Is drinking and driving a major road safety issue for Canadians? When comparing drinking and driving to other road safety issues (rather than societal issues), in 2013 drinking drivers were rated as a very or extremely serious problem by 76.7% of Canadians (compared to 81.5% in 2012 and 80.9% in 2011). Although a smaller percentage of respondents regarded drinking and driving as a major road safety issue in 2013 compared to 2006 (88.0%), a clear majority of Canadians continue to express great concern about drinking and driving.

Percentage who consider drinking and driving to be a major road safety issue



When asked if the issue of young drivers impaired by alcohol was a very or extremely serious problem, 74.4% of respondents agreed in 2013. This is lower than those 82.2% of respondents who cited that this particular issue was of concern to them in 2010. In 2013, respondents were also asked about how concerned they were about three other issues. Young drivers impaired by drugs (67.0%), drugged drivers (63.5%), and older drivers impaired by prescription drugs (48.6%) were considered to be less problematic than drinking and driving and young drivers impaired by alcohol. Although the issue of drinking and driving in general, and drinking and driving by young drivers in particular, appears to be regarded as a less serious problem than in past years, the vast majority of respondents continue to believe that this issue is an important one.

It is interesting to see that the highest levels of concern occurred in 2006 and 2007, the years leading up to the previously mentioned legislative change implemented in 2008. After this legislative change, the level of concern has declined. While speculative, this may be related to decreasing media attention once the new legislation was passed and perhaps other issues such as distracted driving became a greater focus of attention. Moreover, a range of other factors may explain this decline.

About the poll. These results are based on the RSM, an annual public opinion poll developed and conducted by TIRF. A total of 1,201 Canadians completed the poll in October of 2013. Results can be considered accurate within plus or minus 2.8%, 19 times out of 20. The majority of the questions were answered using a scale from one to six where six indicated high agreement, concern, or support and one indicated low agreement, concern or support. For the fifth time, some respondents were contacted by phone (301 in 2013; 225 in 2012; 303 in 2011; 401 in 2010; 600 in 2009) and some on-line (900 in 2013; 678 in 2012; 905 in 2011; 800 in 2010; 600 in 2009).