THE ROAD SAFETY MONITOR 2010
DRINKING AND DRIVING IN CANADA
BY REGION
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 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.

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 September and October of 2010. Results can be considered accurate within plus or minus 2.9%, 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 second time, some respondents were contacted by phone (401 in 2010; 600 in 2009) and some on-line (800 in 2010; 600 in 2009) as part of a gradual transition to an on-line survey.

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December 2010
Traffic Injury Research Foundation
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ISBN: 978-1-926857-13-8
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This fact sheet summarizes regional results for Atlantic Canada (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) from The Road Safety Monitor (RSM), 2010 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 the Brewers Association of Canada and Transport 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. Regional and national results on drinking and driving across the country are contained in a companion series of fact sheets.

While the RSM has been conducted for many years, regional results have only become available since 2008. Also, regional results are based on smaller sample sizes compared to the national results (241 versus 1,201). Therefore, it warrants mentioning that it is too premature for robust comparisons between the regional results and the national results. More data are needed and will be collected in the future for such comparisons.

**How many Atlantic Canadians die in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver?** In 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, 73 Canadians were killed in a traffic crash involving a drinking driver in the Atlantic region. This represents the first decrease after a steady increase in fatalities since 2004. Given that these numbers are smaller than the national result (73 fatalities in Atlantic Canada versus 790 in Canada), these regional results are less stable. As a consequence, trends that emerge from the national
results may not immediately be apparent from these regional results. For example, it appears a decreasing trend may be emerging at the national level (see Canada’s national fact sheet) but it is too premature to know if this one decrease in Atlantic Canada from 92 in 2007 to 73 in 2008 is also indicative of the start of a decreasing trend. It is recommended to continue monitoring regional results in order to see whether they will follow national trends or whether they will further diverge from them.

What percentage of Atlantic Canadians drink and drive? When asked about driving after consuming any amount of alcohol in the past 30 days, 11.1% of Atlantic Canadians admitted to doing this in 2010. This percent was 15.1% in 2009 and 8.7% in 2008. It warrants mentioning that only preliminary conclusions regarding a trend in Atlantic Canada can be drawn based on these data. Without additional data points it is too premature to tell whether an increasing trend is truly emerging or not. As it stands, the limited evidence does suggest there may have been an increase in the percent of Atlantic Canadians admitting to driving after consuming any amount of alcohol compared to the first data point in 2008 — note that this includes drinking and driving after consuming lower levels of alcohol and levels below the legal or administrative limits. While this is in line with national findings, again, more data are needed to confirm this.

What percentage of Atlantic Canadians drink and drive when they think they are over the legal limit? When asked about driving when they thought they were over the legal limit in the past 12 months, 3.2% of Atlantic Canadians admitted to doing this in 2010. This was 4.4% in 2009 and 4.2% in 2008. This compares to 5.5% for Canada in 2010, 5.6% in 2009 and 5.2% in 2008. It appears that this indicator in Atlantic Canada stays below the national average.

Do Atlantic Canadians who drink consider alternative solutions to driving? Respondents were asked if they ever decided to use an alternative solution to driving when they had been drinking. Possible answers included public transport; taxi; ask someone else to drive; and wait a couple of hours until they were sober. Only 6% (compared to 14% nationally) answered they ever considered public transport; 20% (compared to 19% nationally) considered taking a taxi; 53% (compared to 48% nationally) asked someone else to drive; and 20% (compared to 30% nationally) answered they waited a few hours. Clearly, alternative solutions seem to work for the majority of people who drink. Such information could be useful to convince occasional drinking drivers to also consider alternatives.

Do Atlantic Canadians speak up to stop drivers who had too much to drink? Respondents were asked if they ever asked a person not to drive because they thought that person had drank too much. A clear majority (72.6%; compared to 66.7% nationally) said they have. Of those who answered they had never asked someone else not to drive, about 77.9% said it was because they had never been in a situation with someone who was about to drive after drinking. In other words, excluding those who had never been in such a situation, the percent of Atlantic Canadians who speak up to stop potential drinking drivers was
92.3% (compared to 87% nationally). This means the norm in Atlantic Canada is for people to speak up when someone may be driving after drinking.

**How many Atlantic Canadians have been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking?** Within the last month, 2.5% of Atlantic Canadians indicated that they had been a passenger on one occasion in a motor vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking, and 2.6% indicated that they had been a passenger on at least two such occasions. These passengers may be putting themselves at risk because even when blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) are low, the risk of being in a crash and the seriousness of potential injuries increase substantially, especially in combination with other impairing factors such as fatigue and sleepiness. It appears that informing these passengers about the risks involved as well as the knowledge that the large majority of Atlantic Canadians do speak up against drinking and driving might help decrease the number of people who ride along as passengers with drinking drivers.

**How many Atlantic Canadians are affected by drinking and driving?** Over one fifth (22.1%) of Atlantic Canadians know of a family member or close friend who has been the victim of a drinking and driving collision that they did not cause. Drinking and driving has a huge impact on the lives of Atlantic Canadians including serious injuries, the costs of health care, and the loss of family members and friends.

An estimated 15.2% of Atlantic Canadians know of a family member or friend who was drinking and driving and caused a collision where they were at fault. Note that Atlantic Canadians were asked only about family members or close friends, so these numbers likely underestimate the problem.

**Where does the issue of drinking and driving sit on the public agenda in Atlantic Canada?** Atlantic Canadians are more concerned about drinking and driving than about any other societal issue: 82.1% indicate they are very or extremely concerned about it. The next highest levels of concern are about the price of gas (70.6%) and road safety (69.5%). The lowest level was for airline safety (31.6%), comparable to last year (39.7%).

**Is drinking and driving a major road safety issue for Atlantic Canadians?** Of all the road safety issues, drinking drivers were rated as a very or extremely serious problem by 87% of Atlantic Canadians (compared to 84.4% nationally). While Atlantic Canadians clearly continue to express great concern about this issue, this year, for the first time ever, drinking and driving is no longer at the top of the list. The issue that most Atlantic Canadians express concern about in 2010 is texting while driving with 91.3% rating this as a very or extremely serious problem (compared to 91.3% nationally). Of interest, a recent poll by the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) also found that texting while driving has risen to the top of Canadians’ road safety concerns.
**Level of support for various measures.** Atlantic Canadians show strong support for a variety of measures to detect and prevent drinking and driving. The figure below shows that 84.8% of Atlantic Canadians agreed or strongly agreed that it should be mandatory for convicted impaired drivers to have an alcohol ignition interlock system (the same level of support was apparent at the national level). Atlantic Canadians also rated their support for the following measures: 74.2% (68.3% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that there should be more visible police enforcement for drinking drivers; 62.0% (59.1% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock should be mandatory for young drivers; 60.6% (64.5% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that the police should be allowed to do random breath tests to detect drinking drivers; and 49.6% (47.3% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock system should be mandatory for all drivers.

![Level of support for various measures](image)

Although the public is more supportive of mandatory ignition interlocks for convicted impaired drivers and young drivers than of mandatory ignition interlocks for all drivers, still almost 50% of Atlantic Canadians think these devices should be mandatory for all drivers. This trend may reflect a growing awareness of the safety benefits of these devices. In many jurisdictions ignition interlocks are being considered as a standard safety feature on vehicles, much like seatbelts and airbags. Efforts are underway to make the technology less obtrusive and more suitable for use in all vehicles.

**About the poll.** These results are based on the RSM, an annual public opinion poll developed and conducted by TirF. A total of 241 Atlantic Canadians completed the poll in September and October of 2010. Results can be considered accurate within plus or minus 6.3%, 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 second time, some respondents were contacted by phone and some on-line as part of a gradual transition to an on-line survey.
DRINKING AND DRIVING IN QUEBEC

This fact sheet summarizes regional results for Quebec from The Road Safety Monitor (RSM), 2010 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 the Brewers Association of Canada and Transport 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. Regional and national results on drinking and driving across the country are contained in a companion series of fact sheets.

While the RSM has been conducted for many years, regional results have only become available since 2008. Also, regional results are based on smaller sample sizes compared to the national results (239 versus 1,201). Therefore, it warrants mentioning that it is too premature for robust comparisons between the regional results and the national results. More data are needed and will be collected in the future for such comparisons.

How many Canadians die in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver in Quebec? In 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, 130 Canadians were killed in a traffic crash involving a drinking driver in Quebec. In last year's fact sheet it was argued that both the 2006 and 2007 numbers were extreme (in 2006 the number was extremely high and in 2007 extremely low), and that this may be the result of random fluctuations. The expectation for the 2008 number, then, was somewhere between both extremes. This can now be confirmed. In other words, the downward trend that started in 2003 still

![Number of Canadians who died in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver in Quebec](image)
appears to continue. It is recommended to continue monitoring regional results in order to see whether they will follow national trends or whether they will further diverge from them.

**What percentage of Canadians in Quebec drink and drive?** When asked about driving after consuming any amount of alcohol in the past 30 days, 30% of Canadians in Quebec admitted to doing this in 2010. This percent was 21.9% in 2009 and 24.9% in 2008. It warrants mentioning that only preliminary conclusions regarding a trend in Quebec can be drawn based on these data. Without additional data points it is too premature to tell whether an increasing trend is truly emerging or not. As it stands, the limited evidence does suggest there may have been an increase in the percent of Canadians in Quebec admitting to driving after consuming any amount of alcohol compared to the first data point in 2008 — note that this includes drinking and driving after consuming lower levels of alcohol and levels below the legal. While this is in line with national findings, again, more data are needed to confirm this.

**What percentage of Canadians in Quebec drink and drive when they think they are over the legal limit?** When asked about driving when they thought they were over the legal limit in the past 12 months, 7.1% of Canadians in Quebec admitted to doing this in 2010. This percent was 6.1% in 2009 and 7.5% in 2008. This compares to 5.5% for Canada in 2010, 5.6% in 2009 and 5.2% in 2008. It appears that this indicator is higher than the national average.

**Do Canadians in Quebec who drink consider alternative solutions to driving?** Respondents were asked if they ever decided to use an alternative solution to driving when they had been drinking. Possible answers included public transport; taxi; ask someone else to drive; and wait a couple of hours until they were sober. About 13.7% (compared to 14% nationally) answered they ever considered public transport; 15.7% (compared to 19% nationally) considered taking a taxi; 48.4% (compared to 48% nationally) asked someone else to drive; and 37.7% (compared to 30% nationally) answered they waited a few hours. Clearly, alternative solutions seem to work for the majority of people who drink. Such information could be useful to convince occasional drinking drivers to also consider alternatives.

**Do Canadians in Quebec speak up to stop drivers who had too much to drink?** Respondents were asked if they ever asked a person not to drive because they thought that person had drank too much. A clear majority (64%; compared to 66.7% nationally) said they have. Of those who answered they had never asked someone else not to drive, about 74.4% said it was because they had never been in a situation with someone who was about to drive after drinking. In other words, excluding those who had never been in such a situation, the percent of Canadians in Quebec who speak up to stop potential drinking drivers was 87.4% (compared to 87% nationally). This means the norm in Quebec is for people to speak up when someone may be driving after drinking.
How many Canadians in Quebec have been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking? Within the last month, 2.1% of Canadians in Quebec indicated that they had been a passenger on one occasion in a motor vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking, and 6.4% indicated that they had been a passenger on at least two such occasions. These passengers may be putting themselves at risk because even when blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) are low, the risk of being in a crash and the seriousness of potential injuries increase substantially, especially in combination with other impairing factors such as fatigue and sleepiness. It appears that informing these passengers about the risks involved as well as the knowledge that the large majority of Canadians in Quebec do speak up against drinking and driving might help decrease the number of people who ride along as passengers with drinking drivers.

How many Canadians in Quebec are affected by drinking and driving? About 15% (14.9%) of Canadians in Quebec know of a family member or close friend who has been the victim of a drinking and driving collision that they did not cause. Drinking and driving has a huge impact on the lives of people in Quebec including serious injuries, the costs of health care, and the loss of family members and friends.

An estimated 11.6% of Canadians in Quebec know of a family member or friend who was drinking and driving and caused a collision where they were at fault. Note that people were asked only about family members or close friends, so these numbers likely underestimate the problem.

Where does the issue of drinking and driving sit on the public agenda in Quebec? Many Canadians in Quebec are concerned about drinking and driving: 74.1% indicate they are very or extremely concerned about it. Quebec is the only region where the issue of drinking and driving is not ranked first but second. Interestingly, road safety ranks first (76.9%). Given that these differences between levels of concern for drinking and driving and road safety are not significant, the important thing is that many Canadians in Quebec are very concerned about the issue of drinking and driving. The lowest level was for airline safety (45.5%), like last year (41.4%).

Is drinking and driving a major road safety issue for Canadians in Quebec? Of all the road safety issues, drinking drivers were rated as a very or extremely serious problem by 89.6% of Canadians in Quebec (compared to 84.4% nationally). Also, in this region 90.9% of Canadians say young drinking drivers are a very or extremely serious problem. Clearly Canadians in Quebec continue to express great concern about this issue. Nevertheless, this year, for the first time ever, drinking and driving is no longer at the top of the list. The issue that most Canadians in Quebec express concern about in 2010 is texting while driving with 91.7% rating this as a very or extremely serious problem (compared to 91.3% nationally). Of interest, a recent poll by the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) also found that texting while driving has risen to the top of Canadians’ road safety concerns.
Level of support for various measures. Canadians in Quebec show strong support for a variety of measures to detect and prevent drinking and driving. The figure below shows that 87.5% agreed or strongly agreed that it should be mandatory for convicted impaired drivers to have an alcohol ignition interlock system (compared to 84.8% nationally). Canadians in Quebec also rated their support for the following measures: 73.1% (68.3% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that there should be more visible police enforcement for drinking drivers; 66.8% (64.5% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that the police should be allowed to do random breath tests to detect drinking drivers; 62.8% (59.1% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock should be mandatory for young drivers; and 50.4% (47.3% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock system should be mandatory for all drivers.

Although the public is more supportive of mandatory ignition interlocks for convicted impaired drivers and young drivers than of mandatory ignition interlocks for all drivers, still about 50% of Canadians in Quebec think these devices should be mandatory for all drivers. This trend may reflect a growing awareness of the safety benefits of these devices. In many jurisdictions ignition interlocks are being considered as a standard safety feature on vehicles, much like seatbelts and airbags. Efforts are underway to make the technology less obtrusive and more suitable for use in all vehicles.

About the poll. These results are based on the RSM, an annual public opinion poll developed and conducted by TIRF. A total of 239 Canadians in Quebec completed the poll in September and October of 2010. Results can be considered accurate within plus or minus 6.3%, 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 second time, some respondents were contacted by phone and some on-line as part of a gradual transition to an on-line survey.
This fact sheet summarizes regional results for Ontario from The Road Safety Monitor (RSM), 2010 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 the Brewers Association of Canada and Transport 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. Regional and national results on drinking and driving across the country are contained in a companion series of fact sheets.

While the RSM has been conducted for many years, regional results have only become available since 2008. Also, regional results are based on smaller sample sizes compared to the national results (240 versus 1,201). Therefore, it warrants mentioning that it is too premature for robust comparisons between the regional results and the national results. More data are needed and will be collected in the future for such comparisons.

How many Canadians die in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver in Ontario? In 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, 183 Canadians were killed in a traffic crash involving a drinking driver in Ontario. This number is the lowest number since 1995. Given that these numbers are smaller than the national result (183 fatalities in Ontario versus 790 in Canada), these regional results are less stable. As a consequence, trends that emerge from the national results may not immediately be apparent from these regional results. For example, it appears a decreasing trend may be emerging at the
national level (see Canada’s national fact sheet). While the 2008 number for Ontario may be indicative of a continued decrease after two years of stagnation in 2006 and 2007, it is still too premature to know if this recent decrease from 232 in 2007 to 183 in 2008 is also indicative of the start of a decreasing trend in Ontario. It is recommended to continue monitoring regional results in order to see whether they will follow national trends or whether they will further diverge from them.

What percentage of Canadians in Ontario drink and drive? When asked about driving after consuming any amount of alcohol in the past 30 days, 23.9% of Canadians in Ontario admitted to doing this in 2010. This percent was 19% in 2009 and 17.5% in 2008. It warrants mentioning that only preliminary conclusions regarding a trend in Ontario can be drawn based on these data. Without additional data points it is too premature to tell whether an increasing trend is truly emerging or not. As it stands, the limited evidence does suggest there may have been an increase in the percent of Canadians in Ontario admitting to driving after consuming any amount of alcohol compared to the first data point in 2008 — note that this includes drinking and driving after consuming lower levels of alcohol and levels below the legal or administrative limits. While this is in line with national findings, again, more data are needed to confirm this.

What percentage of Canadians in Ontario drink and drive when they think they are over the legal limit? When asked about driving when they thought they were over the legal limit in the past 12 months, 4.4% of Canadians in Ontario admitted to doing this in 2010. This percent was 4.4% in 2009 and 3.9% in 2008. This compares to 5.5% for Canada in 2010, 5.6% in 2009 and 5.2% in 2008. It appears that this indicator in Ontario stays below the national average.

Do Canadians in Ontario who drink consider alternative solutions to driving? Respondents were asked if they ever decided to use an alternative solution to driving when they had been drinking. Possible answers included public transport; taxi; ask someone else to drive; and wait a couple of hours until they were sober. About 15.5% (compared to 14% nationally) answered they ever considered public transport; 18% (compared to 19% nationally) considered taking a taxi; 42.3% (compared to 48% nationally) asked someone else to drive; and 27.2% (compared to 30% nationally) answered they waited a few hours. Clearly, alternative solutions seem to work for the majority of people who drink. Such information could be useful to convince occasional drinking drivers to also consider alternatives.

Do Canadians in Ontario speak up to stop drivers who had too much to drink? Respondents were asked if they ever asked a person not to drive because they thought that person had drank too much. A clear majority (65.3%; compared to 66.7% nationally) said they have. Of those who answered they had never asked someone else not to drive, about 67% said it was because they had never been in a situation with someone who was about to drive after drinking. In other words, excluding those who had never been in such a situation, the percent of Canadians in Ontario who speak up to stop potential drinking drivers
was 85% (compared to 87% nationally). This means the norm in Ontario is for people to speak up when someone may be driving after drinking.

**How many Canadians in Ontario have been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking?** Within the last month, 7.3% of Canadians in Ontario indicated that they had been a passenger on one occasion in a motor vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking, and 7.6% indicated that they had been a passenger on at least two such occasions. These passengers may be putting themselves at risk because even when blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) are low, the risk of being in a crash and the seriousness of potential injuries increase substantially, especially in combination with other impairing factors such as fatigue and sleepiness. It appears that informing these passengers about the risks involved as well as the knowledge that the large majority of Canadians in Ontario do speak up against drinking and driving might help decrease the number of people who ride along as passengers with drinking drivers.

**How many Canadians in Ontario are affected by drinking and driving?** Almost one fifth (17.9%) of Canadians in Ontario know of a family member or close friend who has been the victim of a drinking and driving collision that they did not cause. Drinking and driving has a huge impact on the lives of people in Ontario including serious injuries, the costs of health care, and the loss of family members and friends.

An estimated 9.8% of Canadians in Ontario know of a family member or friend who was drinking and driving and caused a collision where they were at fault. Note that people were asked only about family members or close friends, so these numbers likely underestimate the problem.

**Where does the issue of drinking and driving sit on the public agenda in Ontario?** Canadians in Ontario are more concerned about drinking and driving than about any other societal issue: 77.8% indicate they are very or extremely concerned about it. The next highest levels of concern are about road safety (65.2%) and pollution (62.1%). The lowest level was for airline safety (45.7%), comparable to last year (36.1%).

**Is drinking and driving a major road safety issue for Canadians in Ontario?** Of all the road safety issues, drinking drivers were rated as a very or extremely serious problem by 81.8% of Canadians in Ontario (compared to 84.4% nationally). Clearly Canadians in Ontario continue to express great concern about this issue. Nevertheless, this year, for the first time ever, drinking driving is no longer at the top of the list. The issue that most Canadians in Ontario express concern about in 2010 is texting while driving with 90.7% rating this as a very or extremely serious problem (compared to 91.3% nationally). Also, 81.5% of Canadians in Ontario rated distracted driving as a very or extremely serious problem. Of interest, a recent poll by the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) also found that texting while driving has risen to the top of Canadians’ road safety concerns.
Level of support for various measures. Canadians in Ontario show strong support for a variety of measures to detect and prevent drinking and driving. The figure below shows that 86.1% agreed or strongly agreed that it should be mandatory for convicted impaired drivers to have an alcohol ignition interlock system (compared to 84.8% nationally). Canadians in Ontario also rated their support for the following measures: 65.5% (68.3% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that there should be more visible police enforcement for drinking drivers; 61.5% (64.5% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that the police should be allowed to do random breath tests to detect drinking drivers; 57.4% (59.1% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock should be mandatory for young drivers; and 45.4% (47.3% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock system should be mandatory for all drivers.

Although the public is more supportive of mandatory ignition interlocks for convicted impaired drivers and young drivers than of mandatory ignition interlocks for all drivers, still more than 40% of Canadians in Ontario think these devices should be mandatory for all drivers. This trend may reflect a growing awareness of the safety benefits of these devices. In many jurisdictions ignition interlocks are being considered as a standard safety feature on vehicles, much like seatbelts and airbags. Efforts are underway to make the technology less obtrusive and more suitable for use in all vehicles.

About the poll. These results are based on the RSM, an annual public opinion poll developed and conducted by TIRF. A total of 240 Canadians in Ontario completed the poll in September and October of 2010. Results can be considered accurate within plus or minus 6.3%, 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 second time, some respondents were contacted by phone and some on-line as part of a gradual transition to an on-line survey.
DRINKING AND DRIVING IN THE PRAIRIES

This fact sheet summarizes regional results for the Prairies region (Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan) from The Road Safety Monitor (RSM), 2010 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 the Brewers Association of Canada and Transport 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. Regional and national results on drinking and driving across the country are contained in a companion series of fact sheets.

While the RSM has been conducted for many years, regional results have only become available since 2008. Also, regional results are based on smaller sample sizes compared to the national results (241 versus 1,201). Therefore, it warrants mentioning that it is too premature for robust comparisons between the regional results and the national results. More data are needed and will be collected in the future for such comparisons.

How many Canadians die in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver in the Prairies? In 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, 270 Canadians were killed in a traffic crash involving a drinking driver in the Prairies. This number is the same as in 2007. Given that these numbers are smaller than the national result (270 fatalities in the Prairies versus 790 in Canada), these regional results are less stable. As a consequence, trends that emerge from the national results may not immediately be apparent.
from these regional results. For example, it appears a decreasing trend may be emerging at the national level (see Canada’s national fact sheet) but it is too premature to know if the numbers in the Prairies will start to decrease too after continued increases from 2004 through 2007. It is recommended to continue monitoring regional results in order to see whether they will follow national trends or whether they will further diverge from them.

**What percentage of Canadians in the Prairies drink and drive?** When asked about driving after consuming any amount of alcohol in the past 30 days, 26.1% of Canadians in the Prairies admitted to doing this in 2010. This percent was 18.9% in 2009 and 13% in 2008. It warrants mentioning that only preliminary conclusions regarding a trend in the Prairies can be drawn based on these data. Without additional data points it is too premature to tell whether an increasing trend is truly emerging or not. As it stands, the limited evidence does suggest there has been an increase in the percent of Canadians in the Prairies admitting to driving after consuming any amount of alcohol compared to the first data point in 2008 — note that this includes drinking and driving after consuming lower levels of alcohol and levels below the legal or administrative limits. While this is in line with national findings, again, more data are needed to confirm this.

**What percentage of Canadians in the Prairies drink and drive when they think they are over the legal limit?** When asked about driving when they thought they were over the legal limit in the past 12 months, 6.5% of Canadians in the Prairies admitted to doing this in 2010. This percent was 6.6% in 2009 and 2% in 2008. This compares to 5.5% for Canada in 2010, 5.6% in 2009 and 5.2% in 2008. It appears that this indicator has become more similar to the national average compared to 2008.

**Do Canadians in the Prairies who drink consider alternative solutions to driving?** Respondents were asked if they ever decided to use an alternative solution to driving when they had been drinking. Possible answers included public transport; taxi; ask someone else to drive; and wait a couple of hours until they were sober. About 12% (compared to 14% nationally) answered they ever considered public transport; 20.4% (compared to 19% nationally) considered taking a taxi; 53.6% (compared to 48% nationally) asked someone else to drive; and 31.2% (compared to 30% nationally) answered they waited a few hours. Clearly, alternative solutions seem to work for the majority of people who drink. Such information could be useful to convince occasional drinking drivers to also consider alternatives.

**Do Canadians in the Prairies speak up to stop drivers who had too much to drink?** Respondents were asked if they ever asked a person not to drive because they thought that person had drank too much. A clear majority (67.9%; compared to 66.7% nationally) said they have. Of those who answered they had never asked someone else not to drive, about 71.9% said it was because they had never been in a situation with someone who was about to drive after drinking. In other words, excluding those who had never been in such a situation, the percent of Canadians in the Prairies who speak up to stop potential drinking drivers
was 88.3% (compared to 87% nationally). This means the norm in the Prairies is for people to speak up when someone may be driving after drinking.

**How many Canadians in the Prairies have been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking?** Within the last month, 10.1% of Canadians in the Prairies indicated that they had been a passenger on one occasion in a motor vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking, and 6.6% indicated that they had been a passenger on at least two such occasions. These passengers may be putting themselves at risk because even when blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) are low, the risk of being in a crash and the seriousness of potential injuries increase substantially, especially in combination with other impairing factors such as fatigue and sleepiness. It appears that informing these passengers about the risks involved as well as the knowledge that the large majority of Canadians in the Prairies do speak up against drinking and driving might help decrease the number of people who ride along as passengers with drinking drivers.

**How many Canadians in the Prairies are affected by drinking and driving?** More than one fifth (22.5%) of Canadians in the Prairies know of a family member or close friend who has been the victim of a drinking and driving collision that they did not cause. Drinking and driving has a huge impact on the lives of people in the Prairies including serious injuries, the costs of health care, and the loss of family members and friends.

An estimated 17.7% of Canadians in the Prairies know of a family member or friend who was drinking and driving and caused a collision where they were at fault. Note that people were asked only about family members or close friends, so these numbers likely underestimate the problem.

**Where does the issue of drinking and driving sit on the public agenda in the Prairies?** Canadians in the Prairies are more concerned about drinking and driving than about any other societal issue: 81.3% indicate they are very or extremely concerned about it. The next highest levels of concern are about crime (69.3%) and road safety (63.9%). The lowest level was for global warming (31.5%).

**Is drinking and driving a major road safety issue for Canadians in the Prairies?** Of all the road safety issues, drinking drivers were rated as a very or extremely serious problem by 83.6% of Canadians in the Prairies (compared to 84.4% nationally). Clearly Canadians in the Prairies continue to express great concern about this issue. Nevertheless, this year, for the first time ever, drinking and driving is no longer at the top of the list. The issue that most Canadians in the Prairies express concern about in 2010 is texting while driving with 91.6% rating this as a very or extremely serious problem (compared to 91.3% nationally). Also, 83.3% of Canadians in the Prairies rated distracted driving as a very or extremely serious problem. Of interest, a recent poll by the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) also found that texting while driving has risen to the top of Canadians’ road safety concerns.
Level of support for various measures. Canadians in the Prairies show strong support for a variety of measures to detect and prevent drinking and driving. The figure below shows that 80.2% agreed or strongly agreed that it should be mandatory for convicted impaired drivers to have an alcohol ignition interlock system (compared to 84.8% nationally). Canadians in the Prairies also rated their support for the following measures: 69.1% (64.5% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that the police should be allowed to do random breath tests to detect drinking drivers; 64.4% (68.3% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that there should be more visible police enforcement for drinking drivers; 54.8% (59.1% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock should be mandatory for young drivers; and 49.3% (47.3% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock system should be mandatory for all drivers.

Although the public is more supportive of mandatory ignition interlocks for convicted impaired drivers and young drivers than of mandatory ignition interlocks for all drivers, still almost 50% of Canadians in the Prairies think these devices should be mandatory for all drivers. This trend may reflect a growing awareness of the safety benefits of these devices. In many jurisdictions ignition interlocks are being considered as a standard safety feature on vehicles, much like seatbelts and airbags. Efforts are underway to make the technology less obtrusive and more suitable for use in all vehicles.

About the poll. These results are based on the RSM, an annual public opinion poll developed and conducted by TIRF. A total of 241 Canadians in the Prairies completed the poll in September and October of 2010. Results can be considered accurate within plus or minus 6.3%, 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 second time, some respondents were contacted by phone and some on-line as part of a gradual transition to an on-line survey.
DRINKING AND DRIVING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

This fact sheet summarizes regional results for British Columbia from The Road Safety Monitor (RSM), 2010 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 the Brewers Association of Canada and Transport 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. Regional and national results on drinking and driving across the country are contained in a companion series of fact sheets.

While the RSM has been conducted for many years, regional results have only become available since 2008. Also, regional results are based on smaller sample sizes compared to the national results (240 versus 1,201). Therefore, it warrants mentioning that it is too premature for robust comparisons between the regional results and the national results. More data are needed and will be collected in the future for such comparisons.

How many Canadians die in traffic crashes involving a drinking driver in British Columbia? In 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, 125 Canadians were killed in a traffic crash involving a drinking driver in British Columbia. This number is the lowest number since 1995. Given that these numbers are smaller than the national result (125 fatalities in British Columbia versus 790 in Canada), these regional results are less stable. As a consequence, trends that emerge from the national results may not immediately be apparent from these regional results. For example, it appears a decreasing trend may be
emerging at the national level (see Canada’s national fact sheet) but it is too premature to know if this one decrease in British Columbia from 149 in 2007 to 125 in 2008 is also indicative of the start of a decreasing trend. It is recommended to continue monitoring regional results in order to see whether they will follow national trends or whether they will further diverge from them.

What percentage of Canadians in British Columbia drink and drive? When asked about driving after consuming any amount of alcohol in the past 30 days, 23.3% of Canadians in British Columbia admitted to doing this in 2010. This percent was 16.4% in 2009 and 19.7% in 2008. It warrants mentioning that only preliminary conclusions regarding a trend in British Columbia can be drawn based on these data. Without additional data points it is too premature to tell whether an increasing trend is truly emerging or not. As it stands, the limited evidence does suggest there may have been an increase in the percent of Canadians in British Columbia admitting to driving after consuming any amount of alcohol compared to the first data point in 2008 — note that this includes drinking and driving after consuming lower levels of alcohol and levels below the legal or administrative limits. While this is in line with national findings, again, more data are needed to confirm this.

What percentage of Canadians in British Columbia drink and drive when they think they are over the legal limit? When asked about driving when they thought they were over the legal limit in the past 12 months, 5.3% of Canadians in British Columbia admitted to doing this in 2010. This percent was 8% in 2009 and 8.8% in 2008. This compares to 5.5% for Canada in 2010, 5.6% in 2009 and 5.2% in 2008. While these regional percentages for British Columbia appeared to be higher than the national one in previous years, both the national and the regional results are closer to one another in 2010.

Do Canadians in British Columbia who drink consider alternative solutions to driving? Respondents were asked if they ever decided to use an alternative solution to driving when they had been drinking. Possible answers included public transport; taxi; ask someone else to drive; and wait a couple of hours until they were sober. About 16.7% (compared to 14% nationally) answered they ever considered public transport; 25.5% (compared to 19% nationally) considered taking a taxi; 57% (compared to 48% nationally) asked someone else to drive; and 29.1% (compared to 30% nationally) answered they waited a few hours. Clearly, alternative solutions seem to work for the majority of people who drink. Such information could be useful to convince occasional drinking drivers to also consider alternatives.

Do Canadians in British Columbia speak up to stop drivers who had too much to drink? Respondents were asked if they ever asked a person not to drive because they thought that person had drank too much. A clear majority (70.5%; compared to 66.7% nationally) said they have. Of those who answered they had never asked someone else not to drive, about 69% said it was because they had never been in a situation with someone who was about to drive after drinking. In other words, excluding those who had never been in such a situation, the percent of Canadians in British Columbia who speak up to
stop potential drinking drivers was 88.5% (compared to 87% nationally). This means the norm in British Columbia is for people to speak up when someone may be driving after drinking.

**How many Canadians in British Columbia have been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking?** Within the last month, 6.5% of Canadians in British Columbia indicated that they had been a passenger on one occasion in a motor vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking, and 4.3% indicated that they had been a passenger on at least two such occasions. These passengers may be putting themselves at risk because even when blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) are low, the risk of being in a crash and the seriousness of potential injuries increase substantially, especially in combination with other impairing factors such as fatigue and sleepiness. It appears that informing these passengers about the risks involved as well as the knowledge that the large majority of Canadians in British Columbia do speak up against drinking and driving might help decrease the number of people who ride along as passengers with drinking drivers.

**How many Canadians in British Columbia are affected by drinking and driving?** Over a quarter (26.7%) of Canadians in British Columbia know of a family member or close friend who has been the victim of a drinking and driving collision that they did not cause. Drinking and driving has a huge impact on the lives of Canadians in British Columbia including serious injuries, the costs of health care, and the loss of family members and friends.

An estimated 20.6% of Canadians in British Columbia know of a family member or friend who was drinking and driving and caused a collision where they were at fault. Note that Canadians in British Columbia were asked only about family members or close friends, so these numbers likely underestimate the problem.

**Where does the issue of drinking and driving sit on the public agenda in British Columbia?** Canadians in British Columbia are more concerned about drinking and driving than about any other societal issue: 73.5% indicate they are very or extremely concerned about it. The next highest levels of concern are about road safety (59.7%) and pollution (57.8%). The lowest level was for airline safety (30.5%), comparable to last year (38.4%).

**Is drinking and driving a major road safety issue for Canadians in British Columbia?** Of all the road safety issues, drinking drivers were rated as a very or extremely serious problem by 82.2% of Canadians in British Columbia (compared to 84.4% nationally). Of interest, more Canadians in British Columbia express this level of concern about young drinking drivers in particular (88.1%). Clearly Canadians in British Columbia continue to express great concern about the issue of drinking and driving. Nevertheless, this year, for the first time ever, drinking and driving is no longer at the top of the list. The issue that most Canadians in British Columbia express concern about in 2010 is texting while driving with 92.3% rating this as a very or extremely serious problem (compared to 91.3% nationally). Of interest, a recent poll by the Canadian
Automobile Association (CAA) also found that texting while driving has risen to the top of Canadians’ road safety concerns.

**Level of support for various measures.** Canadians in British Columbia show strong support for a variety of measures to detect and prevent drinking and driving. The figure below shows that 81% of Canadians in British Columbia agreed or strongly agreed that it should be mandatory for convicted impaired drivers to have an alcohol ignition interlock system (compared to 84.8% nationally). Canadians in British Columbia also rated their support for the following measures: 68.6% (68.3% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that there should be more visible police enforcement for drinking drivers; 65.9% (64.5% nationally) agreed or strongly agreed that the police should be allowed to do random breath tests to detect drinking drivers; 60.6% (59.1% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock should be mandatory for young drivers; and 43% (47.3% nationally) think that an alcohol ignition interlock system should be mandatory for all drivers.

![Level of support for various measures](image)

Although the public is more supportive of mandatory ignition interlocks for convicted impaired drivers and young drivers than of mandatory ignition interlocks for all drivers, still more than 40% of Canadians in British Columbia think these devices should be mandatory for all drivers. This trend may reflect a growing awareness of the safety benefits of these devices. In many jurisdictions ignition interlocks are being considered as a standard safety feature on vehicles, much like seatbelts and airbags. Efforts are underway to make the technology less obtrusive and more suitable for use in all vehicles.

**About the poll.** These results are based on the RSM, an annual public opinion poll developed and conducted by TIRF. A total of 240 Canadians in British Columbia completed the poll in September and October of 2010. Results can be considered accurate within plus or minus 6.3%, 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 second time, some respondents were contacted by phone and some on-line as part of a gradual transition to an on-line survey.

Specifically with respect to BC it should be noted that announcements about significant changes in drinking driving legislation in BC received wide media attention in September, at the time when this survey took place (e.g., changes added significant new penalties, allowing police to immediately fine and suspend drivers caught with a blood-alcohol level as low as 0.05%). This may have affected results from this poll.