

# 2013 Road Safety Monitor - Distractions

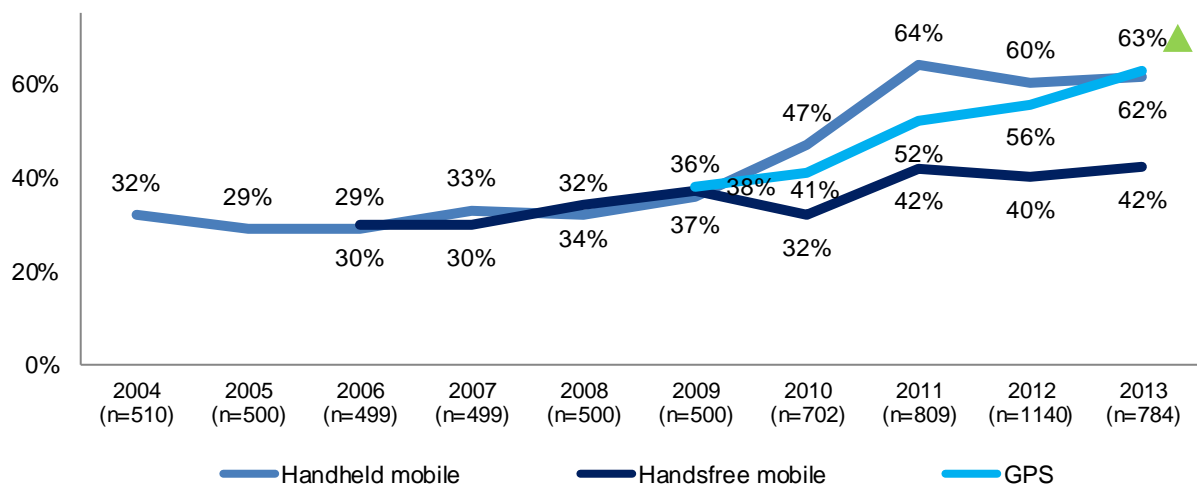
## 1.1 Background

The TAC's 13<sup>th</sup> Road Safety Monitor examined the behaviours and attitudes of 946 licence holders and registered vehicle owners across Victoria. The sample is representative of Victoria's population based on age, gender, location and socio-economic factors. The questionnaire was conducted over a six-week period ending in September last year.

## 1.2 Distractions while driving

Around two in five (63%) licence holders aged 18 to 60 reported using a GPS or electronic navigation device in their car in 2013, which is a significant increase from 2012 (56%). These devices could be factory fitted, built-in or portable. Similarly, 42% of licence holders aged 18 to 60 reported using a hands free mobile phone whilst driving in the last month.

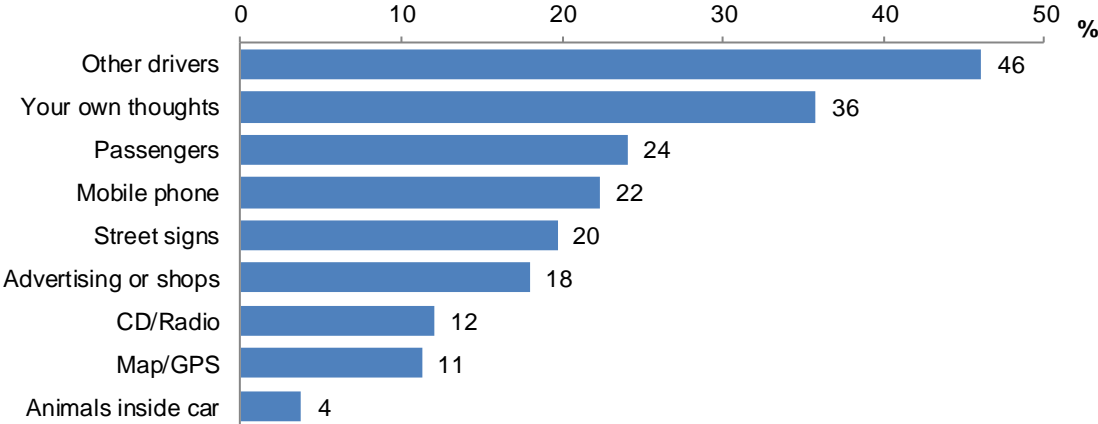
**Figure 1.1: Use of electronic devices while driving – time series**



Base: Licence holders aged 18-60 years (n=784)  
 Q43 During the last month, have you used a HANDHELD mobile phone? [single response]  
 Q48 During the last month, have you used a HANDS FREE mobile phone whilst driving? [single response]  
 Q50 Do you ever use a GPS or Electronic Navigation device in your car? This is including either factory fit, built in or portable devices [single response]

In 2013 respondents were asked to indicate if they had been distracted while driving in the past week. In total, 80% of respondents indicated that they had been distracted by something while driving. Almost half (46%) were distracted by other drivers, while around one in three (36%) were distracted by their own thoughts; only 22% were been distracted by a mobile phone, and 11% by a map or GPS.

**Figure 1.2: Distractions while driving (multiple response) (2013)**



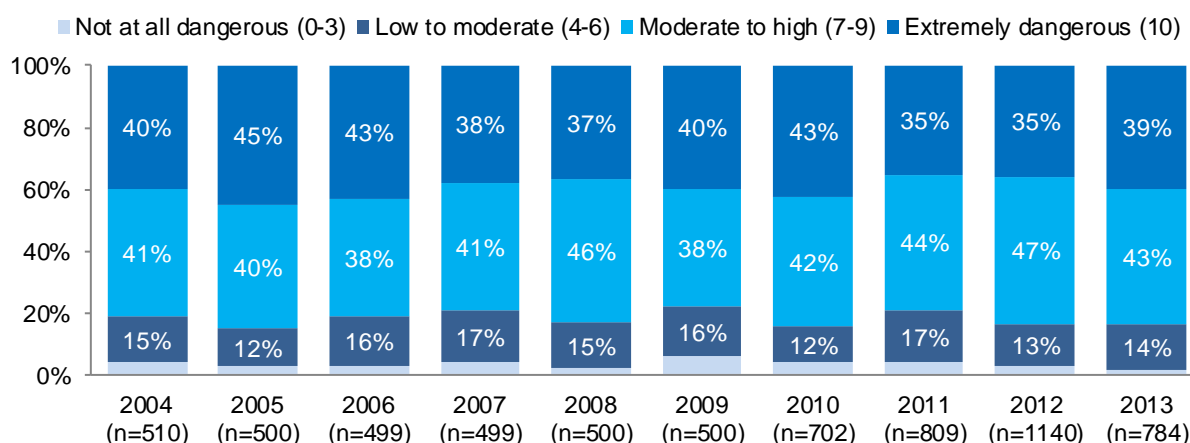
Base: All respondents (n=946)  
Q53 In the last week, have you been distracted while driving by any of the following? [multiple response]

## 1.3 Attitudes to distractions

### 1.3.1 Level of danger in using handheld mobile while driving

Respondents were asked how dangerous they thought it was to drive while using a handheld mobile phone (not a hands free unit), using a rating scale from 0 (not at all dangerous) to 10 (extremely dangerous). In 2013, 82% of licence holders aged 18 to 60 considered driving while using a handheld mobile phone dangerous (rating of 7 or higher). While this figure is slightly lower than in 2012 (84%), a significantly higher percentage provided a rating of 10 in 2013 (39% compared to 35%).

**Figure 1.3: Level of danger in using handheld mobile while driving – time series**



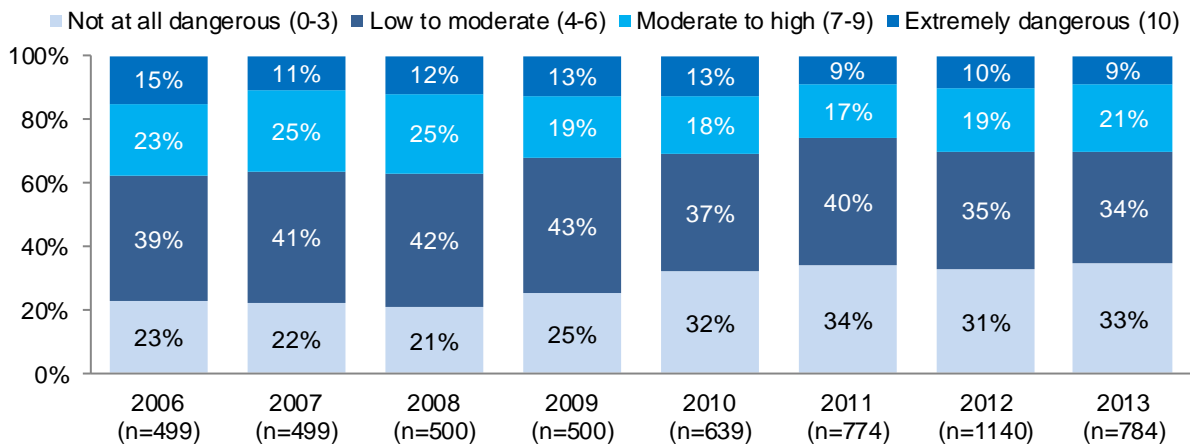
Base: Licence holders aged 18-60 years (n=784)

Q47 Using a scale where 0 is not at all dangerous and 10 is extremely dangerous, how dangerous do you think it is to drive while using a handheld mobile phone? [single response]

### 1.3.2 Level of danger in using a hands free mobile while driving

Perceptions of the level of danger associated with using a hands free mobile phone while driving are considerably lower (30% rated 7 or higher) compared with driving while using a handheld mobile. The proportion of licence holders aged 18 to 60 who thought that driving with a hands-free mobile is extremely dangerous has remained fairly stable. The vast majority (67%) considered driving with a hands free mobile phone to be not at all dangerous (33%) or low to moderate danger (34%).

**Figure 1.4: Level of danger in using hands free mobile while driving – time series**

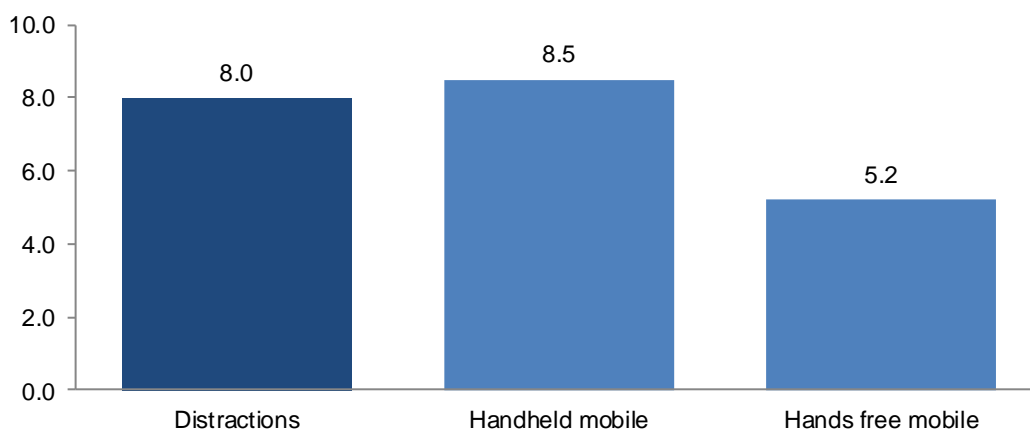


Base: Licence holders aged 18-60 years (n=784)  
 Q49 Using a scale where 0 is not at all dangerous and 10 is extremely dangerous, how dangerous do you think it is to drive while using a hands free mobile phone? [single response]

### 1.3.3 Level of danger in being distracted while driving

In 2013, respondents were also asked to rate the perceived level of danger associated with driving while distracted in general. As previously discussed, respondents on average gave a higher rating of perceived danger for using a hand held mobile (8.5 out of 10), compared to a hands free mobile (5.2 out of 10). However, when asked about distractions in general, respondents generally feel that driving while distracted is dangerous (8.0 out of 10). This may indicate that respondents do not consider using a mobile (hands free) while driving as a distraction.

**Figure 1.5: Level of danger while driving (mean) (2013)**



Base: All respondents (n=946)  
 Q54 Using a scale where 0 is not at all dangerous and 10 is extremely dangerous, how dangerous do you think it is to drive while distracted? [single response]

There were also considerable differences in perceived danger by demographic characteristics:

- Females considered mobile use and distractions in general more dangerous than males.
- Older age groups (aged 40 and over) considered mobile use and distractions in general more dangerous than younger age groups (18 to 39).

- Regional respondents considered hands free mobiles more dangerous than metropolitan respondents.

**Table 1.1: Level of danger while driving by demographics (mean) (2013)**

	Total	Region		Gender		Age group			
	2013 (946)	Metro (614)	Regional (332)	Males (518)	Females (428)	18-25 (199)	26-39 (242)	40-60 (352)	61+ (153)
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Danger of distractions	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.8	8.2	7.8	7.7	8.0 <b>E,F</b>	8.4 <b>E,F,G</b>
Danger of hand held mobile	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.2	8.8	7.5	8.0 <b>E</b>	8.8 <b>E,F</b>	9.1 <b>E,F,G</b>
Danger of hands free mobile	5.2	5.1	5.3	4.9	5.4	4.4	4.2	5.5 <b>E,F</b>	6.4 <b>E,F,G</b>

Base: All respondents (n=946)

Q54 Using a scale where 0 is not at all dangerous and 10 is extremely dangerous, how dangerous do you think it is to drive while distracted? [single response]

There were also differences according to driving behaviours, where mobile phone use and distractions were considered less dangerous by those who:

- Speed at least half the time,
- Drive long distances, and
- Had been in a crash in the past five years.

**Table 1.2: Level of danger while driving by driving behaviour (mean) (2013)**

	Total	Speed...		Drink driving...		Road accident...		Distance...	
	2013 (946)	At least most of the time (41)	None to half of the time (874)	Yes (55)	No (665)	Yes (143)	No (803)	Short (327)	Long (484)
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Danger of distractions	8.0	7.7	8.0	7.4	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.2	7.7
Danger of hand held mobile	8.5	8.1	8.5	7.3	8.4	8.0	8.5	8.7	8.2
Danger of hands free mobile	5.2	4.1	5.2	4.3	4.9	4.9	5.2	5.6	4.8

Base: All respondents (n=946)

Q54 Using a scale where 0 is not at all dangerous and 10 is extremely dangerous, how dangerous do you think it is to drive while distracted? [single response]

#### 1.4 Electronic navigation devices

The proportion of respondents who use a GPS or electronic navigation device in their car has increased from 51% in 2012 to 59% in 2013. Drivers were asked to describe the type of device used in their car and how they use the device. Around half (49%) use a portable device; 32% use a feature of their mobile phone and 19% used a factory installed device.

The majority of drivers use their GPS by looking at the screen while driving (75%), however 66% rely on the voice prompts only, and 26% touch the GPS to make adjustments while driving. Those with a portable GPS device were significantly more likely to rely on voice prompts (71%) than users of GPS units contained within mobile phones (58%).

**Table 1.3: Use of GPS device by type of GPS device (2013)**

	Total	Device type...		
	2013 (536)	Factory installed (90)	Portable device (259)	Feature of phone (185)
		A	B	C
Look at the screen	75%	77%	73%	75%
Rely on voice prompts only	66%	67%	71%	58%
Touch the GPS to make adjustments	26%	27%	22%	30%

Base: Respondents who ever use a GPS or Electronic Navigation device in car (n=536)

Q51 Is GPS or Electronic Navigation device you use in your car... [single response]

Q52 How do you use the GPS or Electronic Navigation device? Do you... [single response]

Regional respondents were significantly more likely to use a portable device (57%) than metropolitan respondents (46%), while the latter were more likely to use the GPS feature of their mobile phone (35% compared with 26%). Older drivers (61 years and over) were significantly more likely to have a portable device (69%) than those aged 18 to 25 years (50%) or 26 to 39 years (38%). Only 5% of drivers aged over 61 were likely to use the GPS feature of their mobile phone.

**Table 1.4: Use of GPS or electronic navigation in car by demographics (2013)**

	Total	Region		Gender		Age group			
	2013 (555)	Metro (368) A	Regional (187) B	Males (331) C	Females (224) D	18-25 (133) E	26-39 (177) F	40-60 (186) G	61+ (59) H
<i>Type of GPS used in car</i>									
Factory installed	19%	19%	17%	20%	16%	6%	15% E	24% E,F	26% E
Portable device	49%	46%	57%	48%	51%	50%	38%	52% F	69% E,F,G
Feature of mobile phone	32%	35%	26%	32%	32%	43% G,H	47% G,H	24% H	5%
<i>How uses GPS</i>									
Rely on voice prompts only; not look at screen	66%	64%	70%	67%	64%	62%	60%	70%	73%
Look at screen while driving	74%	74%	75%	77%	71%	78%	79%	70%	71%
Touch the GPS to make adjustments	26%	27%	23%	29%	21%	29% G	33% G	19%	22%

Base: Respondents who ever use a GPS or Electronic Navigation device in car (n=555)

Q51 Is GPS or Electronic Navigation device you use in your car... [single response]

Q52 How do you use the GPS or Electronic Navigation device? Do you... [single response]

## 1.5 Mobile phone use

While 22% of respondents in 2013 said they were distracted by a mobile phone (see Figure 7.2), when asked how likely they would be to use their phone while driving, 36% said they would. In comparison, 44% would use their phone in a restaurant and 11% in a cinema. There were notable differences by demographics where metropolitan respondents (13%) were more likely than regional respondents (8%) to use their phone in a cinema. There were considerable age group differences, most notably:

- Young drivers (aged 18 to 25) were most likely than all other age groups to use their phone in a restaurant and a cinema.
- Older adults were less likely than all other age groups to use their phone in all three scenarios.

**Table 1.5: Likely to answer phone by demographics (total 'likely' %) (2013)**

	Total	Region		Gender		Age group			
	2013 (946)	Metro (614)	Regional (332)	Males (518)	Females (428)	18-25 (199)	26-39 (242)	40-60 (352)	61+ (153)
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Having a quiet dinner in a restaurant	44%	45%	42%	44%	44%	58% <b>G,H</b>	49% <b>H</b>	42% <b>H</b>	31%
In a cinema	11%	13%	8%	12%	10%	26% <b>F,G,H</b>	13% <b>H</b>	9% <b>H</b>	2%
Driving a car	36%	35%	39%	39%	34%	39% <b>H</b>	48% <b>G,H</b>	36% <b>H</b>	19%

Base: All respondents (n=946)

Q44 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Would not have my phone turned on" and 5 is "Very likely", how likely would you be to answer a call or respond to a message on your mobile phone in each of the following situations? [single response]

Respondents were asked how they normally use their phone to make or answer calls while driving. In 2013, 41% of respondents reported never making or answering a phone call while driving. This is a significant decrease from 2012 figures (45%). Other notable differences include:

- More females (44%) (but not significantly) reported never making or answering a call than males (35%).
- Significantly fewer females use a Bluetooth kit (30% versus 39%) than males.
- Significantly more respondents aged 61 and over (65%) reported never making or answering a call than all younger drivers.
- Respondents aged 26 to 39 years were least likely to report not using their mobile phone while driving (26%).

**Table 1.6: Normal phone use in car by demographics (2013)**

	Total	Region		Gender		Age group			
	2013 (946)	Metro (614)	Regional (332)	Males (518)	Females (428)	18-25 (199)	26-39 (242)	40-60 (352)	61+ (153)
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Hold phone to ear	8%	6%	10%	8%	7%	7%	7%	7%	9%
Hold phone away from ear	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	1%
Put phone in lap or on console	15%	17%	13%	14%	17%	34% <b>F,G,H</b>	25% <b>G,H</b>	9% <b>H</b>	4%
Only use hands free kit such as Bluetooth	35%	36%	32%	39%	30%	29% <b>H</b>	41% <b>E,H</b>	40% <b>E,H</b>	19%
I never make or answer call while driving	41%	40%	44%	39%	45%	31%	26%	43% <b>E,F</b>	67% <b>E,F,G</b>

Base: All respondents (n=946)



Q45 When you use your phone to make or answer calls while driving, do you normally... [single response]

There were also notable differences according to driving behaviour, where a higher proportion of those not flagged as 'speeders' (43%), who don't drink and drive (39%) and who drive short distances (54%) reported never making or answering a call while driving. This demonstrates that risky behaviours tend to occur together. Three times the proportion of respondents who drink and drive reported holding their phone to their ear (23%) than people who do not drink and drive (7%). Respondents who reported driving long distances generally demonstrated riskier behaviours in relation to phone use.

**Table 1.7: Normal phone use in car by driving behaviour (2013)**

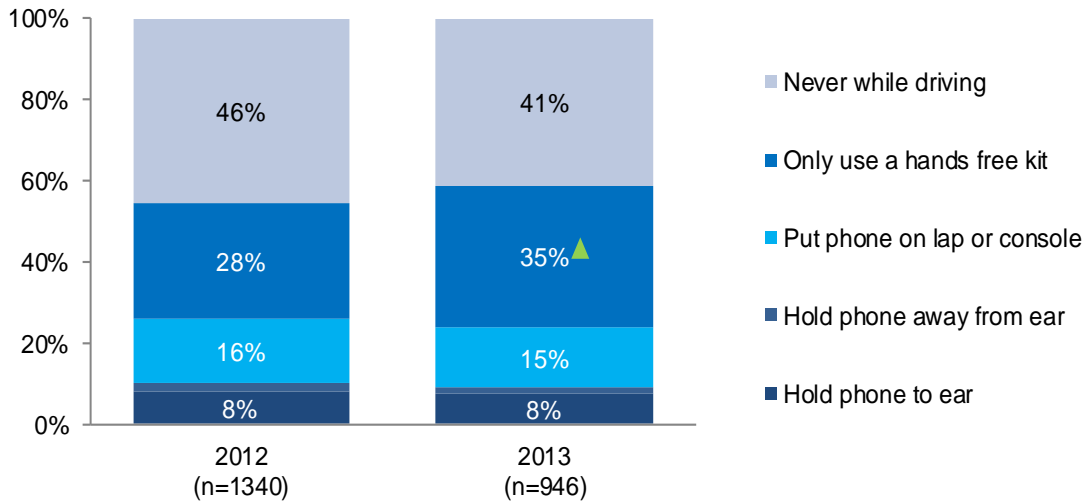
	Total	Speed...		Drink driving...		Road accident...		Distance...	
	2013 (946)	At least most of the time (41)	None to half of the time (874)	Yes (55)	No (665)	Yes (143)	No (803)	Short (327)	Long (484)
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Hold phone to ear	8%	15%	7%	23%	7%	8%	7%	9%	7%
Hold phone away from ear	1%	3%	1%	3%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%
Put phone in lap or on console	15%	31%	14%	31%	16%	20%	14%	15%	16%
Only use hands free kit such as Bluetooth	35%	39%	35%	32%	37%	31%	35%	22%	46%
I never make or answer call while driving	41%	13%	43%	12%	39%	38%	42%	54%	29%

Base: All respondents (n=946)

Q45 When you use your phone to make or answer calls while driving, do you normally ... [single response]

The proportion of respondents who reported only using a hands free kit (such as Bluetooth) increased significantly from 28% in 2012 to 35% in 2013. Please note, in 2011 this question was presented as a multiple response option and therefore has been omitted from analysis.

**Figure 1.6: Mobile phone use while driving (multiple response) (2013)**



Base: All respondents (n=946)  
 Q45 When you use your phone to make or answer calls while driving, do you normally ...[single response]

In total, around half (50%) typically use their phone while stopped at the lights, just 28% use the inbuilt speaker and 25% make or answer calls while actively driving. More specifically, respondents were more likely to answer calls (between 21% and 27%) than make them (between 10% and 16%); and were most likely to answer the phone while at the lights (25%) or holding it on their lap (27%) and least likely to make calls while actively driving (10%).

Younger drivers were significantly more likely than older drivers to use their mobile under any circumstance. Males were significantly more likely than females to answer a call while holding their phone on their lap (30%), to answer a call while actively driving (26%) and to make a call while actively driving (12%). Metropolitan drivers were more likely than regional drivers to use their phone while stopped at the lights, and less likely to use their phone while actively driving.

**Table 1.8: Use of handheld mobile for calls in car by demographics (2013)**

	Total	Region		Gender		Age group			
	2013 (946)	Metro (614) A	Regional (332) B	Males (518) C	Females (428) D	18-25 (199) E	26-39 (242) F	40-60 (352) G	61+ (153) H
To answer a call while stopped at the lights	25%	28%	21%	27%	23%	34% G,H	32% G,H	23%	17%
To make a call while stopped at the lights	15%	18%	11%	16%	15%	24% G,H	26% G,H	12% H	3%
To answer a call but phone on lap and used in-built speaker	27%	27%	26%	30%	23%	48% G,H	39% G,H	20% H	11%
To make a call but phone on lap and used in-built speaker	16%	17%	15%	18%	15%	30% G,H	31% G,H	10% H	1%
To answer a call while actively driving	21%	19%	25%	26%	15%	30% G,H	23% H	20%	14%

To make a call while actively driving	10%	8%	13%	12%	7%	17% G,H	14% G,H	8% H	2%
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Base: All respondents (n=946)

Q43a, c, e, f, i, j During the last month, have you used a HANDHELD mobile phone [single response]

In 2013, 42% of all respondents used their mobile phone to read a text message while stopped at the lights. Reading and writing text messages was more common at traffic lights than while actively driving, particularly for metropolitan (47% reading), female (48% reading) and younger respondents, where over half of all respondents aged 18 to 39 years reported reading text messages while stopped at the lights in the last month.

**Table 1.9: Use of handheld mobile for texting in car by demographics (2013)**

	Total	Region		Gender		Age group			
	2013 (946)	Metro (614) A	Regional (332) B	Males (518) C	Females (428) D	18-25 (199) E	26-39 (242) F	40-60 (352) G	61+ (153) H
	To read a text message while stopped at the lights	42%	47%	35%	38%	48%	59% G,H	53% G,H	43% H
To write and send a text message while stopped at the lights	21%	24%	15%	22%	21%	35% G,H	36% G,H	16% H	2%
To read a text message while actively driving	13%	12%	16%	16%	10%	25% G,H	22% G,H	10% H	1%
To write and send a text message while actively driving	6%	6%	6%	7%	5%	16% G,H	12% G,H	2%	-

Base: All respondents (n=946)

Q43h,g,d,b During the last month, have you used a HANDHELD mobile phone? [single response]