

# College students whose friends text and drive more likely to do it too, study shows

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Texting while driving is a significant risk factor for automobile collisions, and cell phone use while driving is especially prevalent among young people. More than half (52%) of a sample of 861 college students surveyed by University of Maryland School of Public Health researchers reported that they had texted while driving at least once in the past month. The web-based survey, led by Professor Kenneth Beck in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health, also examined how texting was associated with other forms of risky driving, perceptions of risk, and the driving and texting interactions of those surveyed with a significant other. The study is published in the journal *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*.

"We found that texting drivers were more likely to engage in other risky [driving](#) behaviors, to perceive that texting and driving is less risky than it is, and to feel more immune to traffic risks in general," said Dr. Beck. "Their friends were also more likely to text and drive." Even after accounting for a variety of [risky driving](#) behaviors (e.g., speeding, driving aggressively, etc.) and the perceived risks of getting a ticket or being involved in a collision, texting drivers were significantly more likely to text if they saw someone close to them text and drive.

"Our findings support the need for traffic safety campaigns to address important social influences on risky behavior," said Dr. Beck. "Previous campaigns have successfully utilized this approach in the area of drinking and driving prevention with the now familiar slogan 'Friends Don't Let Friends Drink and Drive.' Perhaps it is time we adapted this to 'Friends Don't Let Friends Text and Drive.'"

The article "Characteristics of college students who text while driving: Do their perceptions of a significant other influence their decisions?" was written by Kenneth Beck and Samantha Watters and published in the latest issue of the journal, *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic*

*Psychology and Behaviour*.

**More information:** *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, [www.sciencedirect.com/science/.../S1369847815002090](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/.../S1369847815002090)

Provided by University of Maryland

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