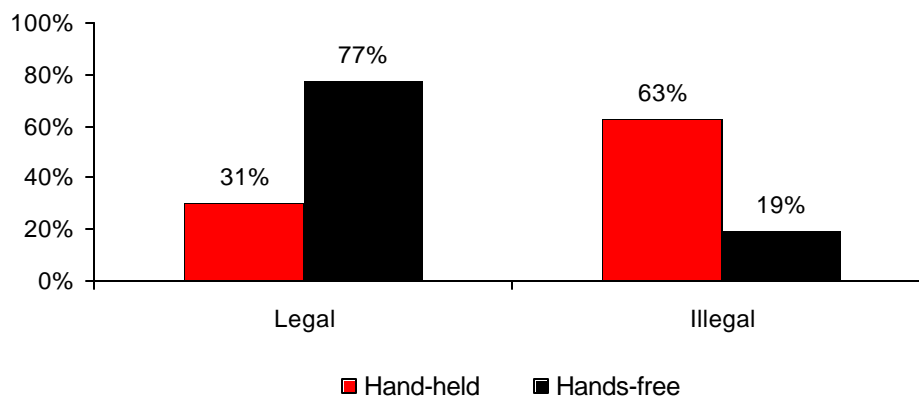


PEACH STATE POLL, June 2002
Public Opinion in Georgia Regarding the Use of Cell Phones

A recent Peach State Poll finds that a majority of Georgians favor making it illegal to use a hand-held cell phone while driving in this state. Sixty-three percent of those polled believe that the use of hand-held phones while driving should be illegal, but this sentiment does not extend to the use of hands-free cellular phones; about three out of four respondents (77 percent) believe that the use of hands-free phones while driving should remain legal.

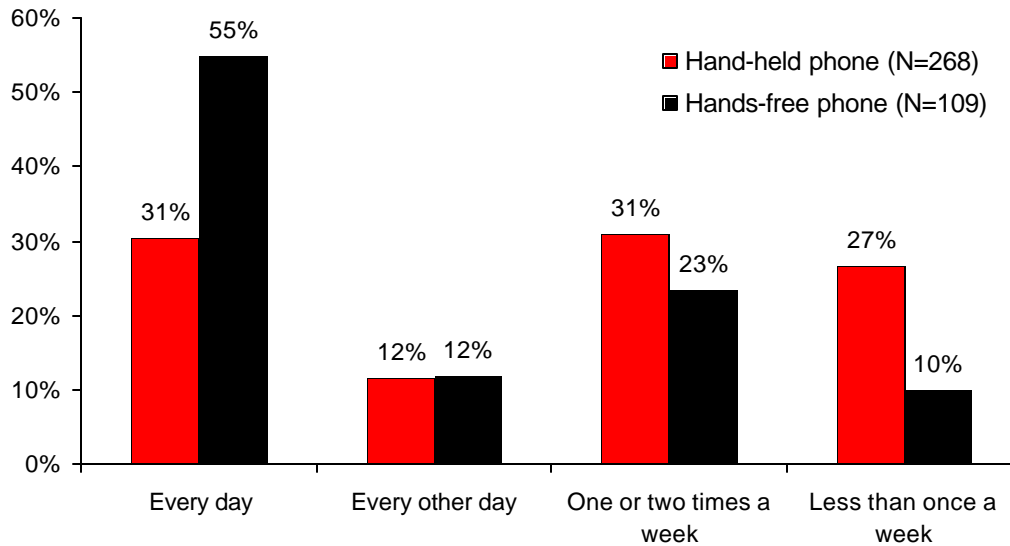
Do you think it should be legal or illegal to use a {hand-held/hands-free} cellular telephone while driving a car?



Sixty-five percent of all respondents to our summer poll report using a cell phone, and 78 percent of the cell phone users report using the cell phone while driving at least occasionally; thus, 51 percent of all respondents use a cell phone while driving. Not surprisingly, those who use a cell phone while driving most often are less likely to support making the practice illegal. In fact, a majority (57 percent) of those who use their cell phones while driving every day say the use of hand-held phones should remain legal. What is surprising, however, is that 40 percent of those who report using a hand-held cell phone while driving on a daily basis still favor making it illegal. Eighty-five percent of cell phone users who say they never use a hand-held phone while driving favor making the practice illegal.

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How often do you use your cell phone while driving a car?

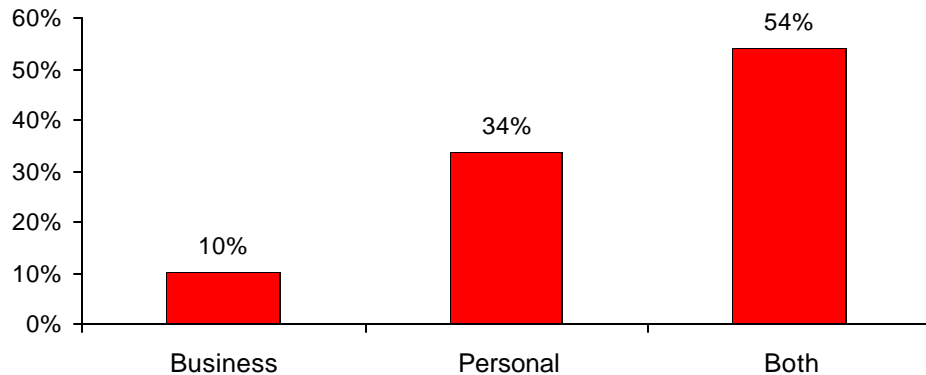


Women are more likely than men to believe that the use of hand-held cell phones while driving should be made illegal (67 percent compared with 59 percent), nonwhites are more likely than whites (68 percent compared with 60 percent), and self-described Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to favor making the practice illegal (72 percent to 52 percent). Nevertheless, a majority in nearly all demographics believe that using a hand-held cell phone while driving should be made illegal.

Those who use a cell phone while driving are more likely to be having a personal conversation than a business conversation. Of those who use a cell phone while they drive, only 10 percent say it is exclusively for business purposes, whereas 34 percent say it is strictly for personal calls. The majority of those using a cell phone while driving (54 percent) use it for both business and personal purposes. On a favorable note, those who report using a cell phone while driving most often are also most likely to use hands-free options.

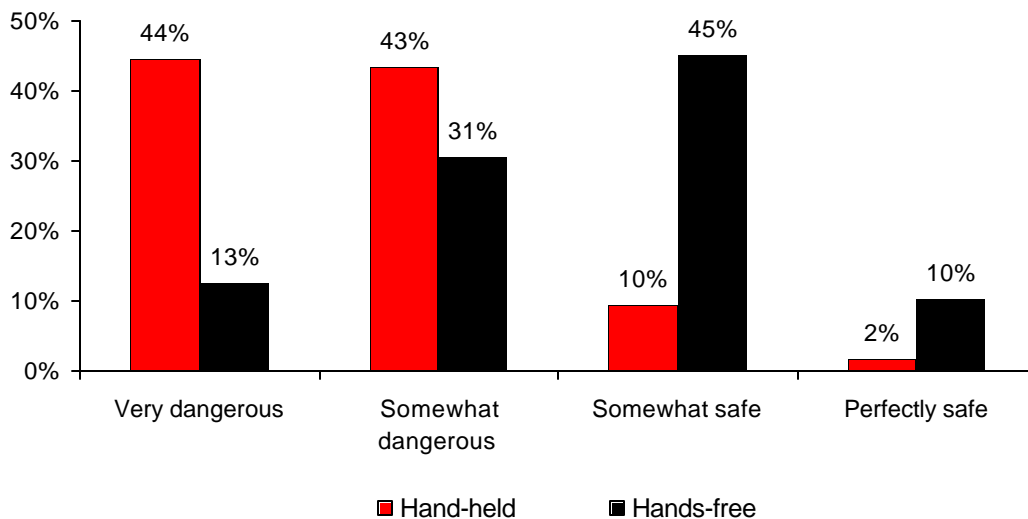
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Do you use the phone while driving for business, for personal matters, or for both? (N=413)



Behind the public's willingness to ban the use of hand-held cell phones while driving is the public perception that the practice of using the hand-held phone while driving is dangerous. Eighty-seven percent of the public believes that using a hand-held cell phone while driving is either very dangerous (44 percent) or somewhat dangerous (43 percent). The public does not see the hands-free devices as posing the same amount of danger on the roads. In fact, a majority (55 percent) say that using a hands-free cell phone while driving is either perfectly safe (10 percent) or somewhat safe (45 percent).

Do you believe that using a {hand-held/hands-free} cell phone while driving is dangerous, or is it safe?

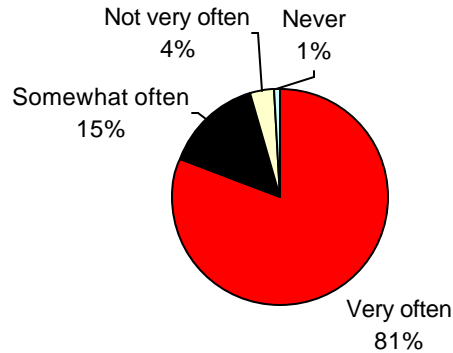


Most Georgians also believe that their safety has been compromised very often to some degree by other drivers using a cell phone. Nearly all respondents report seeing other drivers on their cell phones either very often (81 percent) or somewhat often (15 percent),

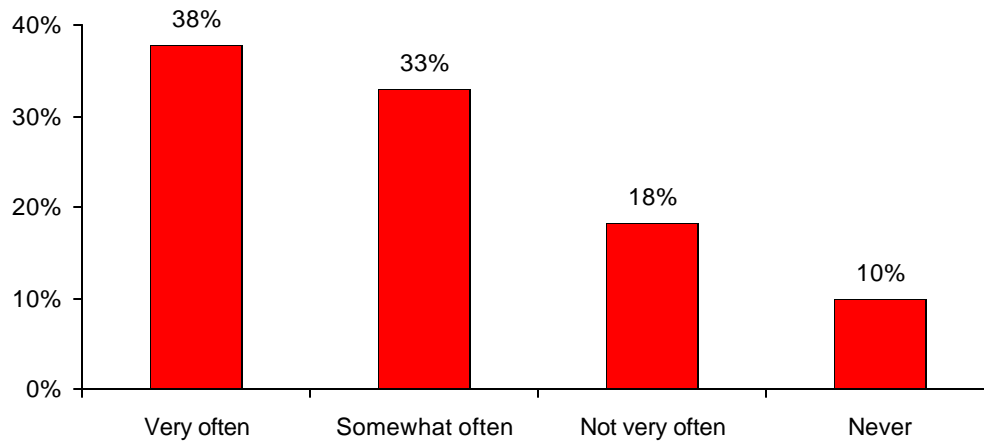
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71 percent feel that their safety has been compromised by other drivers' cell phone use either very often (38 percent) or somewhat often (33 percent).

How often have you seen other drivers using a cell phone while driving?



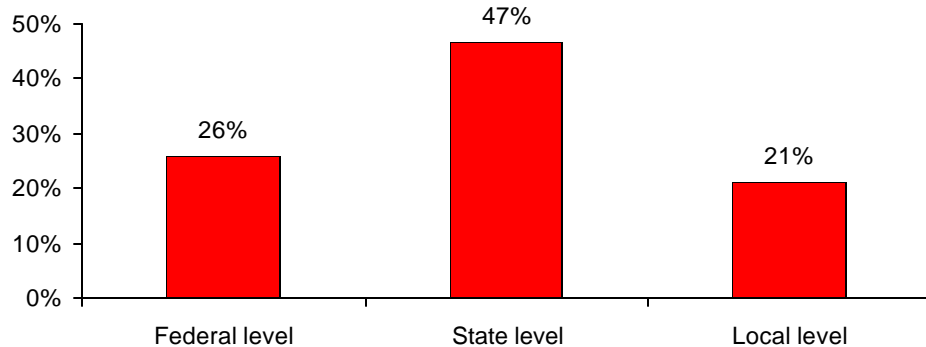
How often have you felt that your safety was compromised by other drivers use of their cell phones?



Georgians from all walks of life are more apt to say that any decision to restrict the use of cell phones while driving should be addressed by state government, rather than local or federal government.

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Do you think the issue of whether or not to ban cell phone use while driving should be addressed by government at the federal level, the state level, or the local level?



The public recognizes that it will be difficult to enforce a ban on cell phone use while driving. Seventy-two percent of respondents say it would be either very difficult (42 percent) or somewhat difficult (30 percent) to enforce a law prohibiting the use of hand-held cell phones while driving. A majority of respondents say that a monetary fine would be the most appropriate penalty if such a ban were in place; the average amount for a fine suggested by respondents is \$73.

The data presented in this report are taken from a Peach State Poll conducted by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government between June 10 and June 17, 2002. The poll included 801 telephone interviews of randomly selected adults in Georgia. For a sample of this size, the margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level is +/- 3.5 percent. Although sampling error is only one source of potential survey error, all precautions have been taken to minimize other sources of error for this survey.

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government, a public service and outreach unit of the University of Georgia, has as part of its mission to provide policymakers with systematic, objective research to inform policy decisions. In accordance with that mission, the Peach State Poll aims to give voice to the public on important policy matters and issues pertaining to political, social, and economic life in Georgia.

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