

Cell phone use while driving

Health indicator report

Background

- The purpose of this health indicator report is to provide information about the use of cell phones while driving by adults aged 18 and over living in Halton Region.
- The use of a cell phone or other mobile device, while driving is considered distracted driving.¹ In Ontario, the number of deaths from distracted driving collisions has doubled since 2000.¹ It is estimated that a distracted driver using a cell phone is four times more likely to crash compared to a focused driver, and two people are injured from a distracted driving collision in Ontario every hour.¹ Suggestions to reduce distracting driving include the use of a hands-free device or pulling over to an appropriate and safe area.¹
- The Ontario government first introduced legislation prohibiting the use of mobile devices when driving on October 26, 2009, through Bill 118: the Countering Distracted Driving and Promoting Green Transportation Act.² Drivers must either refrain from using these devices while driving or use hands-free mode.² Effective January 1, 2019, the Ontario government increased existing fines and penalties for distracted drivers to further discourage the use of devices while driving.
- This health indicator report uses data from the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS).

Key findings

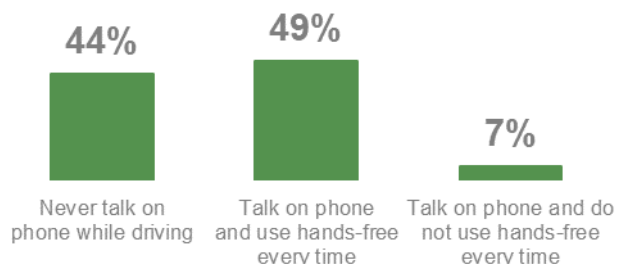
- In 2018, 7% of Halton adults reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving, and 26% of Halton adults reported reading or writing a text message or email while driving.
- Males, adults aged 18-24 and 25-64, and adults in the highest income group were more likely to report sending or reading a text message or email while driving in a typical week.



Talking on a cell phone while driving

Overview

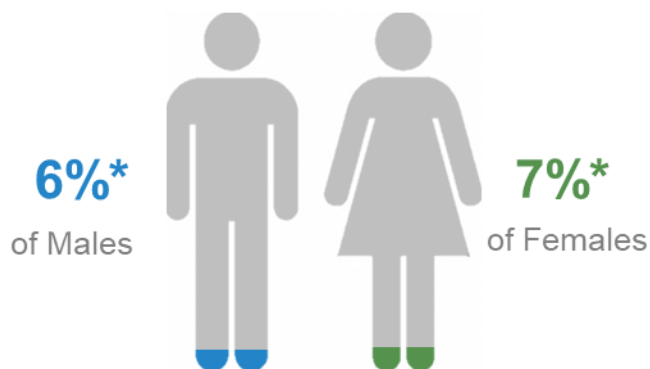
- In 2018,
 - 44% of Halton adults reported that in a typical week they never talk on a cell phone while driving,
 - 49% reported that they always use hands-free while talking on a cell phone while driving, and
 - 7% reported that they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving.



Talking on a cell phone while driving, adults aged 18 and over, Halton Region, 2018

Sex

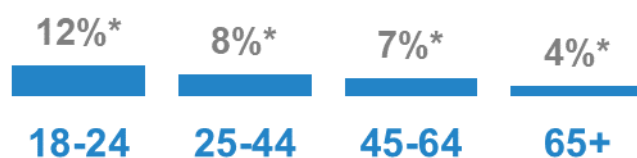
- In 2018, there was no statistically significant difference by sex in the percentage of Halton adults who reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving, by sex, Halton Region, 2018

Age

- In 2018, there were no statistically significant differences by age in the percentage of Halton adults who reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving.



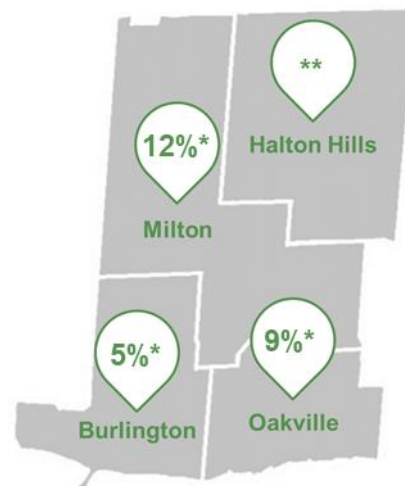
Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving, by age, Halton Region, 2018



Cell phone use while driving

Municipality

- In 2018, there were no statistically significant differences by municipality in the percentage of Halton adults who reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving, by municipality, Halton Region, 2018

Income

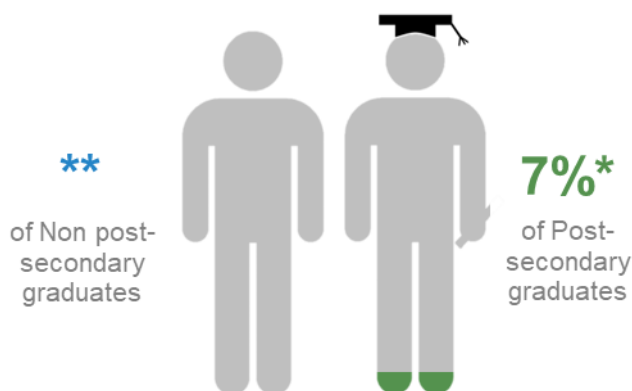
- In 2018, there were no statistically significant differences by income in the percentage of Halton adults who reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving, by income, Halton Region, 2018

Education

- In 2018, 7%* of post-secondary graduates in Halton reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving. The percentage of non post-secondary graduates who reported talking on a cell phone while driving and not always using hands-free is not reportable.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported that in a typical week they don't always use hands-free when talking on a cell phone while driving, by education, Halton Region, 2018



Texting while driving

Overview

- In 2018, 26% of Halton adults reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week.

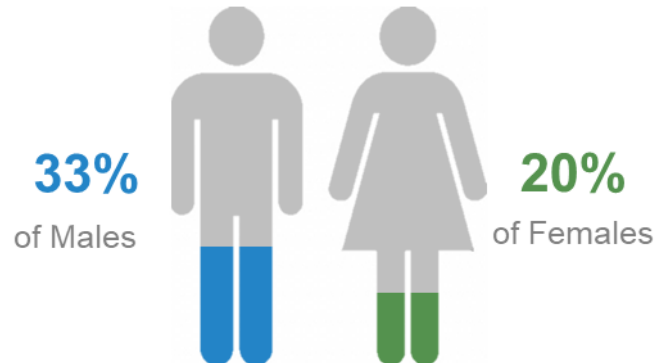


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Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week, Halton Region, 2018

Sex

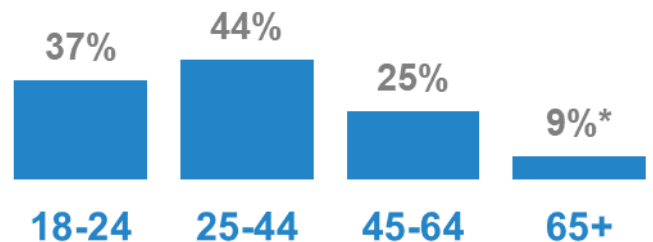
- In 2018, Halton males were more likely than females to report sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week. This difference was **statistically significant**.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week, by sex, Halton Region, 2018

Age

- In 2018, the percentage of Halton adults who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week generally decreased as age increased. These differences were **statistically significant** when comparing ages 18-24 to ages 65+ and ages 25-44 to ages 45-64 and 65+.



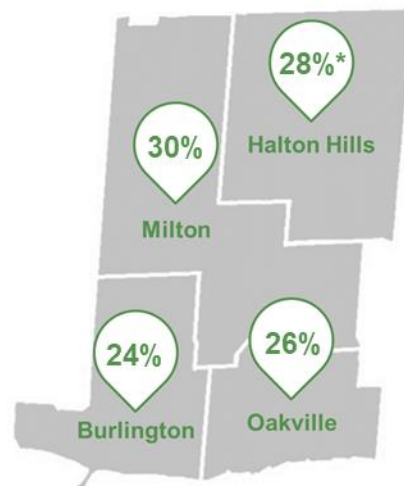
Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week, by age, Halton Region, 2018



Texting while driving

Municipality

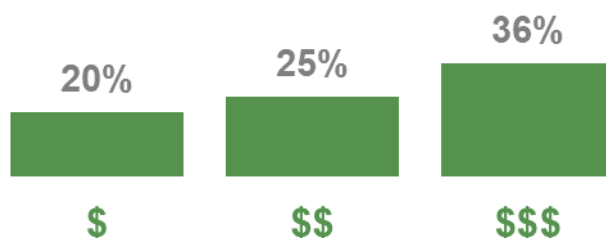
- In 2018, there were no significant differences by municipality in the percentage of Halton adults who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week, by municipality, Halton Region, 2018

Income

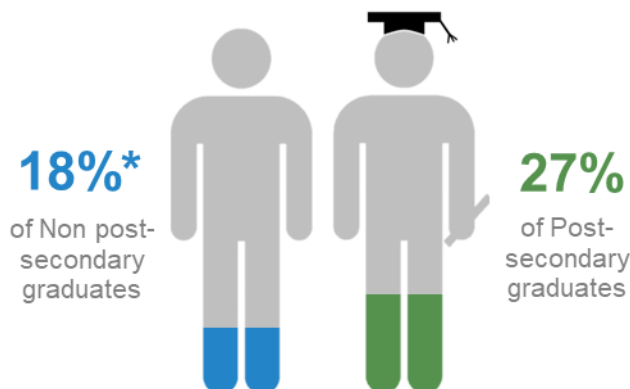
- In 2018, the percentage of Halton adults who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week increased as income increased. These differences were **statistically significant** when comparing adults in the lowest income group to the highest income group.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week, by income, Halton Region, 2018

Education

- In 2018, there were no statistically significant differences by education in the percentage of Halton adults who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported sending or reading text messages or email while driving in a typical week, by education, Halton Region, 2018

About RRFSS

- The Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System is an on-going telephone survey (land line and cell phone) used to collect information on attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and awareness of issues related to health in Halton. RRFSS is conducted by the Institute of Social Research and York University.
- Each year, a random sample of approximately 1,200 adults aged 18 and over are surveyed in Halton Region.
- In 2016, RRFSS underwent changes in sampling and analysis methodology. **Therefore, it is not recommended to compare data from the 2016 onwards to past years of RRFSS data.**
- For more information on RRFSS methodology and limitations, see the RRFSS Data Notes and Data Interpretation Guide at halton.ca.

Data notes

Definitions:

Hands-free refers to cell phone accessories that enable an individual to use a mobile phone without holding it. Examples include Bluetooth headsets and speakers.

The survey questions asked respondents about their use of a “cell phone, Smartphone, tablet or any other mobile or wireless device used for phone calls, text messaging or email”.

Survey questions were only asked of adults who owned a cell phone and had driven a motor vehicle in the past 12 months.

Data Source: Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System [2018], Halton Region Health Department and Institute for Social Research, York University.

Estimates marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability. Estimates marked with a double asterisk (**) are not reportable.

References

1. Ontario Ministry of Transportation. 2019. Distracted driving. Accessed July 2019 from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/distracted-driving>
2. Legislative Assembly of Ontario. 2009. Bill 118, Countering Distracted Driving and Promoting Green Transportation Act, 2009. Accessed July 2019 from http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2099

For more health indicator and health status reports, visit the Halton Health Statistics website at halton.ca.

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