

Research project:

Investigating Distracted Driving Behavior During the COVID-19 Pandemic

What's the issue?

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has brought many modes of transportation to a halt, with major implications for all forms of transportation. Our transportation networks and systems started to look very different as we went through this crisis: very few cars on the road, empty lines at airports, clean air, very little noise, and so on. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant shift in people's travel behaviors and distraction while driving. The statewide statistics indicates that during the pandemic (2020), total crashes and injuries due to distraction decreased, however, fatality due to distracted driving increased. Knowing what else has been affected during the COVID-19 and the effect of the pandemic on driving behavior is critical.

What did the research discover?

The statewide statistics indicates that during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020), the total number of injured and total crashes due to distraction decreased which is the same as the result of this study, however, the fatalities due to distraction increased. Researchers developed a survey in the state of Maryland to find out who gets distracted the most and what is the most distracted driving behavior before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that the results are aligned with the statewide statistics which indicate that distracted driving crashes dropped in 2020 during the pandemic. the distracted driving rate decreased more than 3% during the pandemic. The respondents' daily trips have significantly decreased, about 44% below pre-pandemic rates. The findings show that hands-free cell phone use while driving dropped by 5% (from 68% to 63% of users) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the results show that aggressive behavior – including swearing under one's breath, driving over the speed limit, using the horn when annoyed, failing to signal, tailgating, weaving in or out traffic, failing to stop at stop sign, and speeding up to get through light– decreased during the pandemic.



Learn more:

The full report is available on our website:

https://www2.morgan.edu/school_of_engineering/research_centers/urban_mobility_and_equity_center/research/completed_research.html