



A Report for

## Safe Communities Project



# SAFE COMMUNITIES SURVEY RESULTS 2000

## SUBSAMPLE: SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

**Provided to the  
Nueces County Sheriff's Department**

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## *ADMINISTRATION OF THE SURVEY*

The Safe Communities Survey was designed to address safety concerns, perceptions of risk, safety knowledge, and driving behaviors. This project was envisioned as a needs assessment or problem identification project in support of the Safe Communities planning effort. The project was committed by grant provisions to collect 1,000 surveys from county residents. Within this number, the Safe Communities Coalition wanted to survey law enforcement, emergency medical service, and health care professionals, as well as young adults, senior citizens, and poor residents. This required the use of several processes. The survey was completed from May to July of 2000.

The most scientifically sound processes involved a survey of the county population by mail and surveys of the city police department's patrol officers and the county sheriff department's staff. The mail survey involved selecting a random sample of county residents from the local phone book. A random number generator was used to select one individual for the survey from each column of names from each page of the phone book. This resulted in a sample size of 1,100. The survey was mailed to each of these individuals followed by a reminder post card 14 days later. A total of 171 surveys were received for a response rate of 15.5%.

For the total population of police department patrol officers and the total population of sheriff department employees, surveys were distributed to each employee with a cover letter from the respective chief or sheriff through departmental mail procedures. From the 250 surveys distributed to the police patrol officers, 99 or 39.6% were returned and from the 230 distributed to sheriff department employees, 122 or 53.0% were returned.

Emergency medical service, fire department, and hospital employees at seven hospitals were surveyed by distribution through organizational procedures not in the control of project personnel. After permission to distribute the surveys was obtained by project staff, coalition members employed at each site worked out distribution and collection procedures as permitted by the site. Emergency room personnel were targeted at the hospitals. No method of accounting for how many surveys were actually distributed nor to whom they were distributed is available for these sites. The project received 45 surveys from the EMS/fire department and 201 from the hospitals.

To generate responses from young adults, senior citizens, and poor residents, the project collected convenience samples from students entering the University Center, seniors coming to programs at senior citizen centers, and clients arriving at the waiting room of the public health clinic. These efforts resulted in 144 surveys from students, 119 from senior citizens, and 179 from health clinic clients. An additional 28 surveys were received from a local private school system where a coalition member distributed surveys to the teachers.

These processes resulted in the collection of a total of 1,108 surveys. While only the first three sub-samples were collected with reasonably sound sampling procedures, the remainder adequately support the Coalition's desire to have the responses of specific groups of county citizens represented in the results.

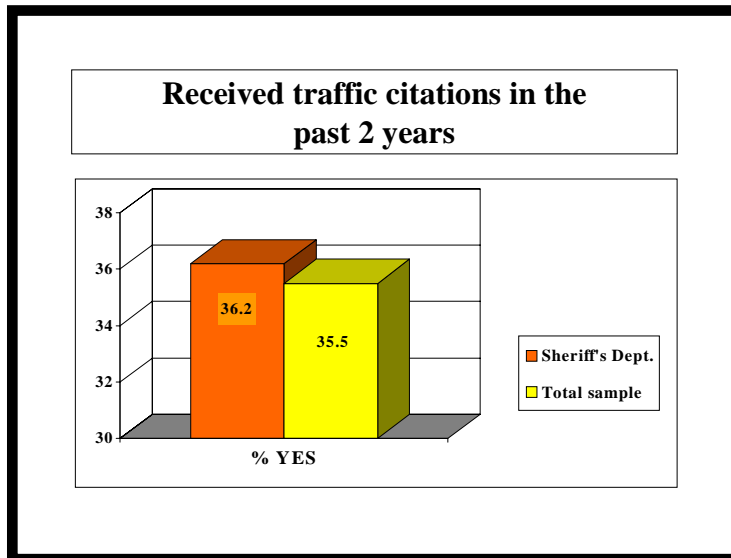
**This report is based on the 122 surveys received from the Sheriff's Department employees. A report for the total sample is available upon request. Here Sheriff's Department employees are compared to the total sample when appropriate.**

## Findings for Sheriff’s Department Employees

Of the Sheriff’s Department employees, 36.2% had received tickets for traffic violations in the last two years, while 63.9% had not.

<b>How many tickets, warnings, or “discussions” with police officers about traffic violations have you had in the past 2 years? (N=119)</b>	
	Percent
None	63.9
One	18.5
2 or 3	10.9
4 or 5	3.4
6 or more	3.4

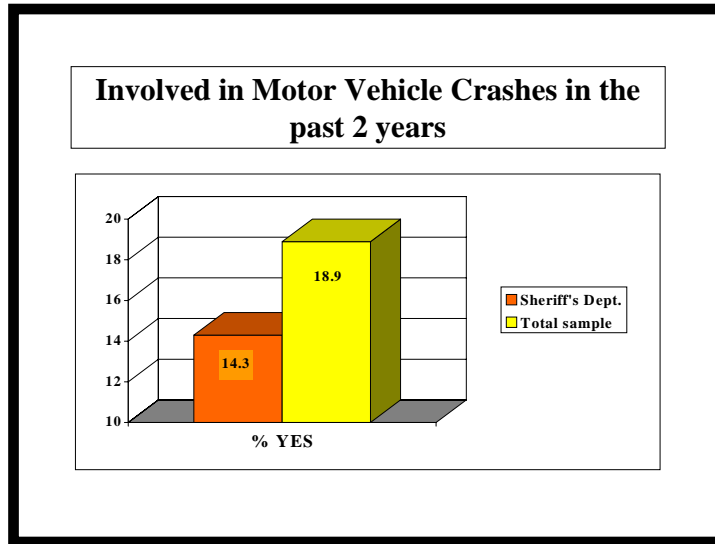
This compares to 35.5% in the total sample, who reported receiving tickets.



The majority of employees (85.7%) had not been involved in motor vehicle crashes in the past two years, while 14.3% had been in crashes.

<b>How many motor vehicle crashes have you had during the past 2 years? (N=119)</b>	
	Percent
None	85.7
One	12.6
2-3	1.7
4-5	0
6 or more	0

This compares to 18.9% of the respondents in the total sample, who reported that they had been in crashes. Thus, fewer Sheriff's Department employees had been involved in crashes.



Within the sample of Sheriff's Department employees, 55.5% had taken a driver safety course in the last six years. This compares to 54.5% in the total sample.

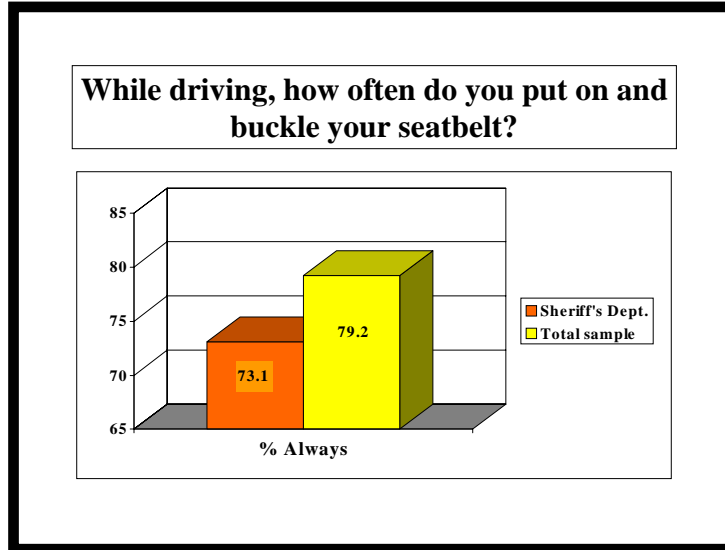
<b>How long ago was it that you last took a driving safety course? (N=119)</b>	
	Percent
1 year or less	8.4
2-3 years	24.4
4-6 years	22.7
6 years or more	28.6
Never	16.0

### **SEATBELT USAGE**

When asked about seatbelt usage, 73.1% of the respondents reported that they always wear a seatbelt when driving.

<b>While driving, how often do you put on and buckle your safety belt? (N=119)</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Always	87	73.1
Very Often	10	8.4
Often	10	8.4
Almost Never	5	4.2
Never	7	5.9

In the total sample, 79.2% reported that they always wear a seatbelt when driving. Thus, Sheriff's Department employees report always wearing seatbelts at smaller proportions.

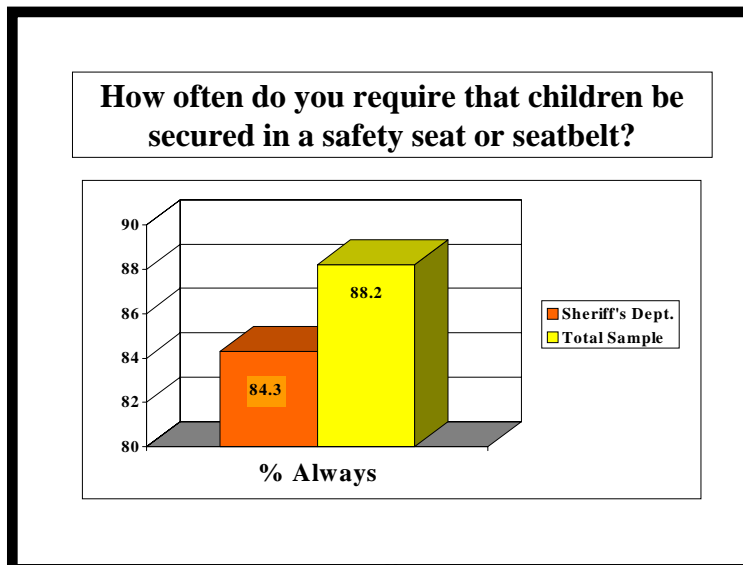


Regarding children and seatbelts, 84.3% of the employees reported that they always require children to wear a seatbelt or be put in a safety seat.

**How often do you require that children be secured in a seat or safety belt? (N=121)**

	Frequency	Percent
Always	102	84.3
Very Often	7	5.8
Often	7	5.8
Almost Never	0	0
Never	5	4.1

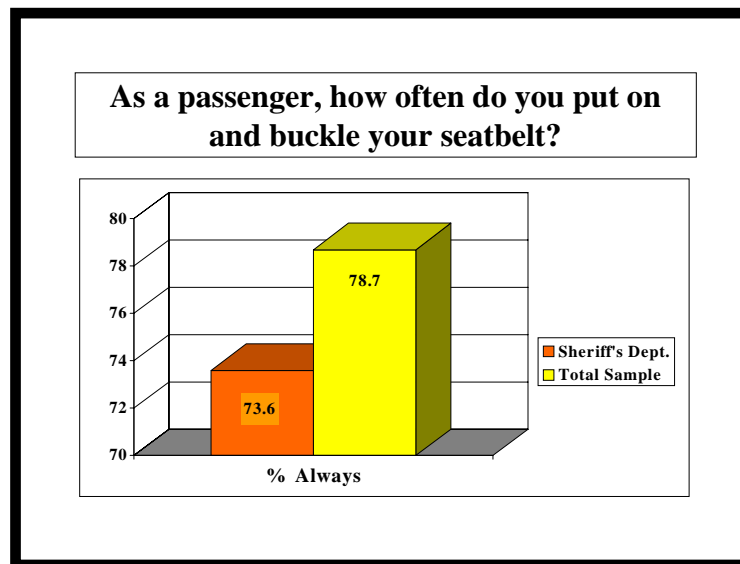
In the total sample, 88.2% of the respondents reported that they always require that children be secured. Again, Sheriff's Department employees report seatbelt use at lower rates.



As a passenger, 73.6% of the employees reported that they always wear a seatbelt.

<b>While a passenger, how often do you put on and buckle your safety belt? (N=121)</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Always	89	73.6
Very often	12	9.9
Often	7	5.8
Almost Never	8	6.6
Never	5	4.1

For the total sample, 78.7% reported that they always wear a seatbelt as a passenger. As was the case with the previous two questions, employees reported lower rates of seatbelt usage than that of the total sample.



## PERCEPTION OF SAFETY

Respondents were asked how safe they feel in various situations. The following table shows the results when these questions were asked of Sheriff's Department employees. Of the employees, 45.9% reported feeling somewhat safe at a local gas station, while 37.7% reported feeling somewhat safe at a bank or ATM. Alone at their job site, 25.4% reported feeling somewhat safe. While shopping in the community, 20.5% of the respondents feel very safe and 42.6% feel somewhat safe. When driving in Corpus Christi, 40.5% reported feeling somewhat safe, while when driving in Nueces County a similar percentage (41.8%) feel somewhat safe. At centers of entertainment, 35.5% of the employees reported feeling somewhat safe, while 19.8% reported feeling somewhat unsafe. In downtown Corpus Christi, 26.2% feel somewhat safe and 18.9% feel somewhat unsafe. Walking to their vehicles at night, 31.4% feel somewhat safe and

16.5% feel somewhat unsafe, while 22.1% feel very safe in their neighborhoods at night and 40.2% of the employees reported feeling somewhat safe in this situation.

<b>How safe do you feel...</b>					
	<b>Very Safe</b>	<b>Somewhat Safe</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Unsafe</b>	<b>Very Unsafe</b>
Alone, at local gas station (N=122)	19.7%	45.9%	25.4%	5.7%	3.3%
Alone, at local bank or ATM (N=122)	16.4%	37.7%	27.0%	11.5%	7.4%
Alone at job site (N=122)	19.7%	25.4%	31.1%	14.8%	9.0%
Alone in community, shopping (N=122)	20.5%	42.6%	25.4%	9.0%	2.5%
Driving in Corpus Christi (N=121)	9.9%	40.5%	24.5%	15.7%	9.1%
Driving in Nueces County (N=122)	8.2%	41.8%	31.1%	10.7%	8.2%
At centers of entertainment (N=121)	9.1%	35.5%	33.1%	19.8%	2.5%
In downtown Corpus Christi (N=122)	8.2%	26.2%	39.3%	18.9%	7.4%
Walking to car at night (N=121)	9.1%	31.4%	34.7%	16.5%	8.3%
Alone in neighborhood, at night (N=122)	22.1%	40.2%	19.7%	11.5%	6.6%

Looking at the means for this set of questions, the situations where respondents feel the safest are at a local gas station (mean = 3.73) and shopping in the community (3.7). While overall they feel least safe in downtown Corpus Christi (3.09).

<b>How safe do you feel...MEANS</b>	
Alone, at local gas station*	3.73
Alone, at local bank or ATM	3.44
Alone, at job site	3.32
Alone, in community, shopping*	3.70
Driving in Corpus Christi	3.26
Driving in Nueces County	3.31
At centers of entertainment	3.29
In downtown Corpus Christi*	3.09
Walking to car at night	3.17
Alone, in neighborhood at night	3.60

In the total sample of respondents, the highest perception of safety was at one's job site, while the lowest was walking to one's car at night. Comparing the means for the Sheriff's Department employees to the total sample of respondents, a few significant differences can be seen. Most noticeable, is the difference between the mean for the perception of safety at one's job site for the Sheriff's Department employees (3.32), and the mean for the total sample (3.93). This shows that department employees feel far less safe at their job site. Another difference is that department employees feel safer walking to their vehicles at night (3.17 compared to 2.84 for the total sample); however, they feel less safe at centers of entertainment (3.29 compared to 3.49 for the total sample).

**PERCEPTION OF CHILDREN'S SAFETY**

A number of questions were asked regarding perception of children's safety. Of those respondents with children, 72.2% reported that they never allow their children to go door to door alone, while 19% responded not very often and 8.9% often. When asked how often they allow their children to play alone in the neighborhood, 50.6% responded never, 40.7% not very often, 7.4% often and 1.2% very often.

When comparing these numbers to that of the total sample, two significant differences are noticeable. The percentage of Sheriff's Department employees reporting that they never allow their children to go door to door alone is higher (63.8% for the total sample) and the percentage of employees reporting that they do not very often allow their children to play in the neighborhood alone is higher (31% for the total sample).

<b>How often do you / would you let your children (under the age of 12)...</b>				
	Very Often	Often	Not Very Often	Never
Go door to door alone in neighborhood (N=79)	0%	8.9%	19.0%	72.2%
Play in neighborhood alone (N=81)	1.2%	7.4%	40.7%	50.6%

The following table shows the results of when respondents were asked about concern for their children's safety in various situations.

<b>On a scale of one to five, how would you rank your concern for child safety (all children) in regards to:</b>						
	Most Concern	4	3	2	Least Concern	MEAN
Drowning accident (N=118)	61.0%	11.0%	20.3%	5.9%	1.7%	4.24
Wandering off unsupervised (N=118)	65.3%	17.8%	11.9%	5.1%	0%	4.43*
Kidnapping (N=117)	64.1%	16.2%	14.5%	4.3%	0.9%	4.38
Riding as a passenger in a car (N=118)	33.9%	27.1%	29.7%	8.5%	0.8%	3.85*
Riding a bicycle on your street (N=117)	39.3%	31.6%	22.2%	3.4%	3.4%	4.00
Crossing the street (N=118)	50.8%	20.3%	22.0%	5.9%	0.8%	4.14

The means indicate that employees were most concerned with children wandering off unsupervised (mean = 4.43) and least concerned with children riding as a passenger in a car (3.85). The total sample of 1,108 respondents also rated wandering off unsupervised as their highest concern.

Respondents were also asked to rank the safety of their children in a number of public places. According to the means for this set of questions, the perceived safest of these seven locations is church (3.67). Parents rated the least safe place as parks (2.92). In the total sample, respondents also perceived churches as the safest of the seven locations, and they rated parks and malls as the least safe.

<b>How would you rank the safety of your children in the following public places?</b>						
	<b>Most safe</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Least safe</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
Malls (N=118)	11.0%	25.4%	32.2%	17.8%	13.6%	3.03
Parks (N=118)	12.7%	16.1%	33.9%	24.6%	12.7%	2.92*
Grocery store (N=116)	12.9%	26.7%	37.9%	12.1%	10.3%	3.20
Shopping centers (N=117)	13.7%	22.2%	35.0%	17.1%	12.0%	3.09
Movie theaters (N=117)	9.4%	29.1%	35.9%	13.7%	12.0%	3.10
Church (N=117)	31.6%	33.3%	15.4%	9.4%	10.3%	3.67*
Schools (N=117)	8.7%	31.3%	36.5%	14.8%	8.7%	3.17

**PERCEIVED RISK OF INJURY OR DEATH**

While driving in Nueces County, Sheriff’s Department employees indicated that they perceive the greatest risk of injury or death from improper lane changes (4.61) and perceive the least amount of risk associated with wet roads (3.98). The total sample rated DWI as the greatest risk and speeding as the next riskiest.

<b>While driving in Nueces County, how do you rate your risk of injury or death from the following? Motor vehicle crashes resulting from...</b>	
	<b>Means</b>
Wet roads (N=118)	3.98*
Speeding (N=117)	4.26
Running traffic lights / signs (N=119)	4.08
Unsafe aggressive driving (N=118)	4.16
Inattentive drivers (N=119)	4.08
Improper lane changes (N=119)	4.61*
DWI (N=118)	4.30

When asked to rate risk of injury from five causes, respondents rated motor vehicle crashes as the riskiest (mean = 4.0) and recreational accidents as the least risky (2.45). The total sample also rated crashes as the most risky and recreational accidents as the least risky.

<b>In Nueces County, how do you rate your risk of injury or death from the following?</b>	
	Means
Home accidents (N=118)	2.56
Violent crime (N=119)	3.57
Motor vehicle crashes (N=117)	4.00
Accident at work (N=119)	3.18
Recreational activities (N=117)	2.45

Within this sample, 58.5% rated motor vehicle crashes as the one greatest risk of injury or death. An accident at work was chosen by 5.9% of the employees as the one greatest risk, while 2.5% selected home accidents, 28.8% violent crime, and 4.2% recreational activities. A majority of the total sample of respondents (69.6%) also rated crashes as the one greatest risk.

When asked which age group they believe creates the greatest risk of injury or death, 31.9% replied the 16-18 year old age group, while 33.6% replied the 19-25 age group, 7.1% replied the 25-55 age group, 1.8% replied the 56-65 age group and 25.7% replied that the 66 and older age group creates the greatest risk. When the total sample was asked which age group they believe creates the greatest risk for motor vehicle crashes, the largest percentage (39.6%) responded 16-18 year olds.

## **DRIVER WORRY**

Four questions were asked concerning driver worry. When driving, 31.7% of the respondents reported that they are very much worried about being injured by someone speeding and 36.7% are worried somewhat in this situation. Being injured by other drivers running red lights, very much worries 43.3% of the employees and somewhat worries 37.5% of the employees. When asked about intoxicated drivers, 59.7% reported that they are very much worried about being injured by them and 24.4% are worried somewhat. Drivers doing other things while driving, very much worries 36.7% of the employees and somewhat worries 40% of the employees.

<b>While driving a car, how much do you worry about being injured by someone...</b>					
	Very much	Somewhat	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
Speeding (N=120)	31.7%	36.7%	21.7%	6.7%	3.3%
Running a red light (N=120)	43.3%	37.5%	11.7%	5.8%	1.7%
Driving while intoxicated / drunk (N=119)	59.7%	24.4%	12.6%	3.4%	0%
Doing other things (eating, reading, putting on makeup, etc.) (N=120)	36.7%	40.0%	17.5%	5.0%	0.8%

Looking at the means for this set of questions, the highest amount of worry is associated with intoxicated drivers (mean = 4.40). The total sample also indicated that they worry most about intoxicated drivers.

<b>While driving a car how much do you worry about being injured by someone...MEANS</b>	
Speeding	3.87
Running a red light	4.15
Driving while intoxicated / drunk	4.40
Doing other things	4.07

## **DRIVER BEHAVIOR**

Of the surveyed employees, 57.9% indicated that everyday they see someone tailgating, while 34.2% see swerving everyday, 52.9% see unsafe lane changes, 47.1% see other drivers disobeying lights or signs and 64.4% see aggressive driving each day.

For the total sample, everyday 51.8% reported that they see tailgating, 31.5% see swerving, 49.4% see unsafe lane changes, 44.4% see someone disobeying lights or signs, and 54.3% of the total respondents see aggressive driving each day.

<b>How often do you see someone driving in the following ways?</b>					
	Everyday	Almost everyday	A few times a week	Less than once a week	Never
Tailgating (N=121)	57.9%	29.8%	9.9%	1.7%	0.8%
Swerving (N=120)	34.2%	26.7%	25.0%	11.7%	2.5%
Making unsafe lane changes (N=121)	52.9%	28.9%	14.0%	3.3%	0.8%
Disobeying lights or signs (N=121)	47.1%	30.6%	19.0%	2.5%	0.8%
Driving aggressive (N=118)	64.4%	23.7%	11.0%	0%	0.8%

The means for this set of questions indicate that most often employees see aggressive driving (mean = 4.51) and least often they see swerving (3.78). The findings from the total sample also found aggressive driving as the most common behavior and swerving as the least common.

<b>How often do you see someone driving in the following ways? MEANS</b>	
Tailgating	4.42
Swerving	3.78
Making unsafe lane changes	4.30
Disobeying lights or signs	4.21
Driving aggressive	4.51

Looking at the employees' own driving behavior, 49.6% indicated that they never tailgate, 68.6% never swerve, 52.1% never make unsafe lane changes, 72.7% never disobey lights or signs and 45.5% reported that they never drive aggressively. Of the other respondents, 17.7% reported that they tailgate a few times a week or more often, and 11.1% reported that they swerve a few times a week or more often. While 13.6% reported that they make unsafe lane changes at least a few times a week, 6.8% reported that they disobey lights or signs at least a few times a week and 33.4% reported that they drive aggressively a few times a week or more often.

In the total sample, 53.7% reported that they never tailgate, 64.5% never swerve, 51.6% never make unsafe lane changes, 65.3% never disobey lights or signs, and 53.3% reported that they never drive aggressively. Comparing the responses of the employees to that of the total sample, a few differences are noticeable. A larger portion of Sheriff's Department employees reported that they never disobey lights or signs (72.7% compared to 65.3% in the total sample). Also, a smaller portion of the employees reported that they never drive aggressively (45.5% compared to 53.3% in total sample).

<b>How often do you drive in the following ways? (N=121)</b>					
	Everyday	Almost everyday	A few times a week	Less than once a week	Never
Tailgating	1.7%	8.3%	13.2%	27.3%	49.6%
Swerving	1.7%	2.5%	3.3%	24.0%	68.6%
Making unsafe lane changes	1.7%	5.8%	6.6%	33.9%	52.1%
Disobeying lights/signs	1.7%	4.1%	3.3%	18.2%	72.7%
Driving aggressively	4.1%	8.3%	13.2%	28.9%	45.5%

Looking at the means for this set of questions, most often drivers drive aggressively (mean = 1.97) and least often they disobey lights or signs (1.44). The total sample also indicated that most often they drive aggressively.

<b>How often do you drive in the following ways? MEANS</b>	
Tailgating	1.85
Swerving	1.45
Making unsafe lane changes	1.71
Disobeying lights or signs	1.44
Driving aggressive	1.97

While 43% reported that they never get mad and retaliate against bad drivers, 38.8% reported that they almost never retaliate, and 18.2% reported that they often, very often or always retaliate. When asked about getting impatient at traffic lights, 14.9% reported that they never do this, while 43% almost never, 31.4% often, and 10.7% very often or always get impatient in this situation. When a car ahead of them slows down, 11.7% reported that they never get impatient, while 38.3% reported almost never, 35% reported often, and 15% reported either very often or always. When asked about yelling

or gesturing at other drivers, 46.3% reported that they never do this, while 35.5% reported almost never, and 18.3% reported often, very often or always.

<b>How often do you...</b>					
	Always	Very Often	Often	Almost Never	Never
Get mad and retaliate against “bad drivers” (N=121)	1.7%	5.8%	10.7%	38.8%	43.0%
Get impatient at traffic lights (N=121)	3.3%	7.4%	31.4%	43.0%	14.9%
Get impatient when a car ahead slows down (N=120)	4.2%	10.8%	35.0%	38.3%	11.7%
Yell or gesture at other drivers (N=121)	1.7%	5.0%	11.6%	35.5%	46.3%

The means for this set of questions show that getting impatient at slow drivers and at lights are the most common of the four behaviors (means = 2.58 and 2.41, respectively). For the total sample, the means indicate that impatience when a car ahead slows down is most common.

<b>How often do you...MEANS</b>	
Get mad and retaliate	1.84
Get impatient at lights	2.41
Get impatient when car ahead slows	2.58
Yell or gesture at other drivers	1.80

In the past month, 80.7% of the Sheriff’s Department employees reported that they had driven above the speed limit, while 35.5% had driven through a traffic signal after it turned red, 24.8% had driven after consuming alcohol, and 1.7% of the employees had driven after taking mind-altering drugs.

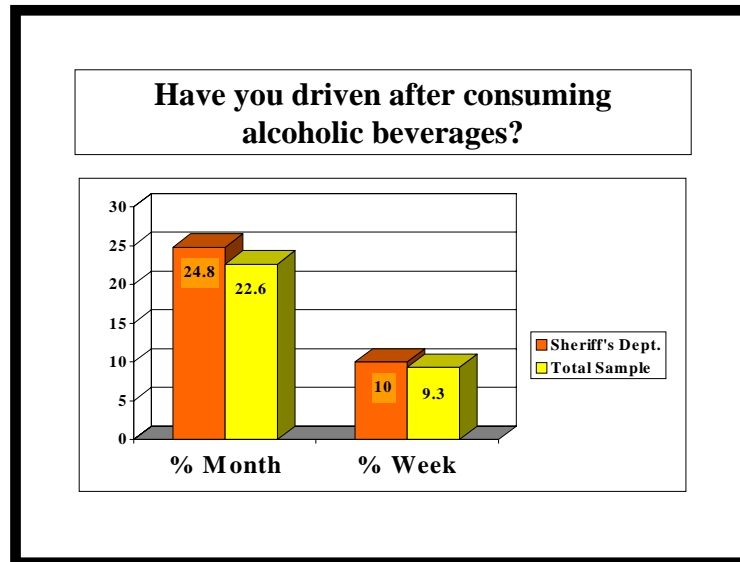
For the total sample, 73.7% reported that they had driven above the speed limit in the last month, 35.5% had driven through a red signal, 22.6% had driven after consuming alcohol and 4.5% had driven after taking drugs in the past month. A significantly larger percentage of Sheriff’s Department employees reported that they had driven above the speed limit in the last month (80.7% compared to 73.7% for the total sample).

<b>Have you driven...in the past month</b>	
	<b>YES</b>
Above the posted speed limit (N=119)	80.7%
Through a traffic signal after it turned red (N=121)	35.5%
After consuming alcoholic beverages (N=121)	24.8%
After taking drugs (other than alcohol) (N=121)	1.7%

In the past week, 66.7% admitted that they had driven above the speed limit, 10% had driven through a red signal, and 10% had driven after consuming alcohol. This compares to the total sample, where in the past week, 62% had driven above the speed limit, 15.1% had driven through a red signal, 9.3% had driven after consuming alcohol and 3.6% had driven after taking drugs.

<b>Have you driven...in the past week</b>	
	<b>YES</b>
Above the posted speed limit (N=111)	66.7%
Through a traffic signal after it turned red (N=110)	10.0%
After consuming alcoholic beverages (N=110)	10.0%
After taking drugs (other than alcohol) (N=109)	0%

The following chart illustrates the differences between the Sheriff's Department responses for the questions concerning driving after consuming alcohol and that of the total sample.



## **PERCEIVED CAUSES OF MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES**

Respondents were asked how likely nine driving behaviors are as causes of motor vehicle crashes involving injuries or death. Of the surveyed employees, 53.9% indicated that becoming sleepy or tired while driving is very likely to cause a crash, while 15.7% indicated that getting angry at other drivers is very likely to cause a crash, and 33.3% indicated that tailgating is very likely to cause a crash involving injuries or death. Arguing with passengers was reported to be very likely to cause a crash by 22.6% of the

respondents, while making an improper turn was reported to be very likely to cause a crash by 21.7% of the respondents. Of the employees, 37.9% reported that passing in a no passing zone is very likely to cause a crash, 51.7% reported that disregarding a stop sign or light is very likely to cause a crash, 39.7% reported that speeding is very likely to cause a crash, and 48.3% reported that failing to yield right of way is very likely to cause a crash.

<b>How likely is it for the following behaviors to cause a motor vehicle crash with injuries or death?</b>					
	Very Likely	Somewhat likely	Neutral	Not very likely	Not at all likely
Becoming sleepy or tired (N=115)	53.9%	30.4%	11.3%	3.5%	0.9%
Getting angry at other drivers (N=115)	15.7%	48.7%	26.1%	7.8%	1.7%
Tailgating or following too closely (N=114)	33.3%	41.2%	17.5%	6.1%	1.8%
Arguing with passengers in car (N=115)	22.6%	36.5%	29.6%	8.7%	2.6%
Making an improper turn (N=115)	21.7%	40.0%	27.0%	8.7%	2.6%
Passing in a no passing zone (N=116)	37.9%	29.3%	20.7%	7.8%	4.3%
Disregarding stop sign / traffic light (N=116)	51.7%	31.0%	11.2%	2.6%	3.4%
Speeding (N=116)	39.7%	34.5%	19.8%	4.3%	1.7%
Failing to yield right of way to other vehicle (N=116)	48.3%	39.7%	6.0%	2.6%	3.4%

Looking specifically at the means for this set of questions, the driving behavior that is perceived to most likely cause a motor vehicle crash is becoming sleepy or tired (mean = 4.33), followed by failing to yield right of way (4.27) and disregarding a light or stop sign (4.25). For the total sample, becoming sleepy or tired was also rated highest, and disregarding a stop sign or light was the second highest.

<b>How likely is it for the following behaviors to cause a motor vehicle crash with injuries or death? MEANS</b>	
Becoming sleepy or tired	4.33*
Getting angry at other drivers	3.69
Tailgating or following too closely	3.98
Arguing with passengers in your car	3.68
Making an improper turn	3.70
Passing in a no passing zone	3.89
Disregarding a stop sign / traffic light	4.25*
Speeding	4.06
Failing to yield right of way to other vehicle	4.27*

Increased rush hour traffic is perceived to be very important as a cause of motor vehicle crashes involving injuries or death by 52.6% of the Sheriff’s Department employees, while intersection design problems were indicated to be a very important issue by 37.9% of the employees. Holes or ruts in the pavement were reported to be a very important issue by 26.1% of the employees, while 18.3% indicated an animal on the roadway is a very important issue and 20.9% indicated an object on the roadway is a very important issue. A slippery, wet roadway was reported that to be a very important issue by 50.4% of the respondents, while 24.3% reported that an automobile defect is a very important issue and 24.1% replied that roadway construction is a very important issue.

<b>How important are the following environmental issues as causes of motor vehicle crashes with injury or death?</b>					
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not at all Important
Increased Rush hour traffic (N=116)	52.6%	31.9%	12.9%	1.7%	0.9%
Intersection design problems (N=116)	37.9%	36.2%	23.3%	1.7%	0.9%
Holes or ruts in pavement (N=115)	26.1%	40.0%	27.0%	4.3%	2.6%
Animal on roadway (N=115)	18.3%	28.7%	33.9%	11.3%	7.8%
Object on roadway (N=115)	20.9%	40.0%	26.1%	8.7%	4.3%
Slippery, wet roadway (N=115)	50.4%	27.8%	17.4%	3.5%	0.9%
Automobile defect (N=115)	24.3%	32.2%	28.7%	7.8%	7.0%
Roadway construction (N=116)	24.1%	37.9%	28.4%	5.2%	4.3%

The means on this set of questions indicate that employees reported increased rush hour traffic is the most important environmental issue (mean = 4.34). The total sample also rated rush hour traffic as the most important issue.

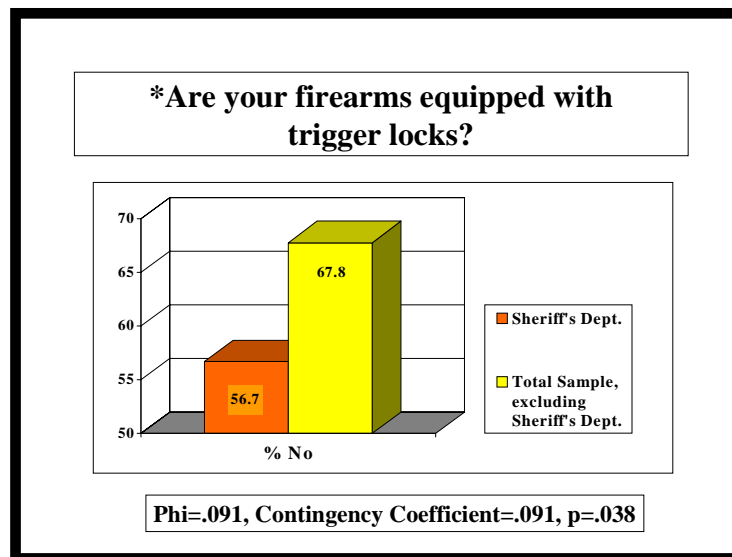
<b>How important are the following environmental issues as causes of motor vehicle crashes with injury or death? MEANS</b>	
Increased rush hour traffic in Nueces County	4.34*
Intersection design problems	4.09
Holes or ruts in pavement	3.83
Animal on roadway	3.38
Object on roadway	3.64
Slippery, wet roadway	4.23
Automobile defect	3.59
Roadway construction	3.72

## FIREARM OWNERSHIP AND STORAGE

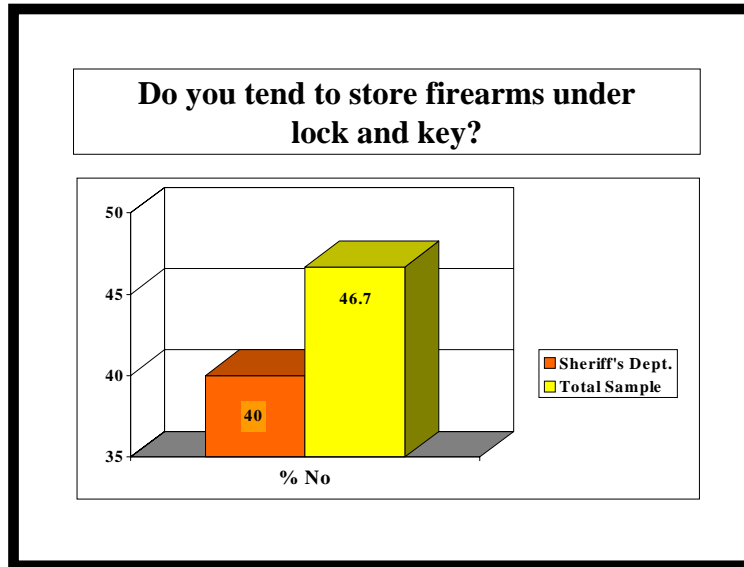
When employees were asked if they own a firearm, 81.4% replied yes. Of these, 99% own a handgun, 42.7% own a rifle, and 46.9% own a shotgun. When asked if their firearms are equipped with trigger locks, 56.7% replied no, and 40% replied that they do not store their firearms under lock and key.

For the total sample, 42.8% of the respondents own firearms. The majority of these (81.5%) own at least one handgun, while 56.8% own a shotgun, and 54.8% own a rifle. When asked if their firearms are equipped with trigger locks, 65.7% responded no, while 46.7% indicated that their firearms are not stored under lock and key.

The difference between the department employees and all other surveyed respondents is statistically significant for the question concerning trigger locks. While 67.8% of the total respondents (excluding Sheriff's Department employees) reported that their firearms are not equipped with trigger locks, 56.7% of the department employees reported this ( $\Phi=.091$ , Contingency Coefficient $=.091$ ,  $p=.038$ ). Thus, a larger portion of Sheriff's Department employees report having trigger locks on their firearms.



The following chart illustrates the difference between the Sheriff's Department employees' responses and those of the total sample for the question concerning firearm storage. Fewer Sheriff's Department employees reported that they do not store their firearms under lock and key (40% responded "no," compared to 46.7% in the total sample).



## BICYCLE SAFETY

When asked how often they ride a bicycle, 46.6% of the employees responded never, 36.2% replied almost never, 15.5% often, 0.9% very often, and 0.9% always. When asked about helmet use, 62.9% of those who ride bicycles responded that they never wear helmets, while 13.5% replied almost never, 2.2% often, 1.1% very often and 20.2% always. Of the respondents, 55% were correct in answering that helmets reduce the probability of head injury by 70%. When asked which set of laws bicycle rider in Texas must adhere to, 73.9% were correct in answering motor vehicle safety laws.

For the total sample of respondents, 57.1% of the bicycle riders never wear a helmet, while 20.6% always wear a helmet. In regards to the knowledge questions, 58.4% were correct in answering that helmets reduce the chance of injury by 70%. And 73.3% were correct in that bicycle riders must adhere to motor vehicle safety laws.

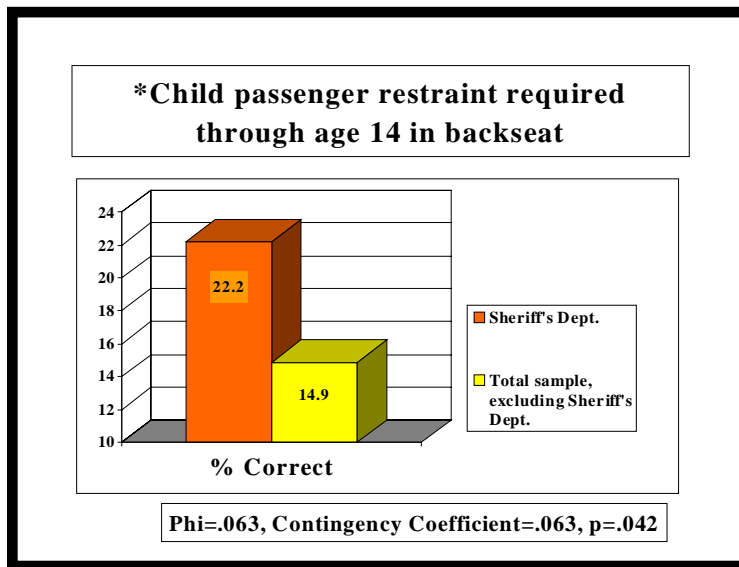
When comparing the Sheriff's Department employees to the total sample, a few differences can be seen. More department employees reported that they never wear helmets when riding a bicycle, compared to the total sample of respondents. A slightly larger percentage of respondents in the total sample were aware that helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 70%.

## SAFETY KNOWLEDGE

When asked what the legal limit for alcohol concentration in the blood is while driving in Texas, 73.3% were correct in answering .08. Respondents were also asked how chemicals, medicines and cleansers should be stored in homes with children. For the Sheriff's Department employees, 82.6% were correct in answering in a locked cabinet. Respondents were asked what age Texas law requires that child passengers be restrained up to. Of the employees, 22.2% were correct in answering age 14.

For the total sample, 60.6% gave the correct BAC, and 75.2% gave the correct response for chemical storage. When asked about child passengers in the back seat, 15.8% were correct in answering 14 years of age. A larger percentage of Sheriff's Department employees gave the correct BAC (73.3% compared to 60.6% in the total sample). As well, a larger portion of department employees were aware that chemicals should be stored in a locked cabinet.

The following chart illustrates the significant difference between the department employees' and other respondents' responses for the question concerning child restraint laws. While only 14.9% of the total sample (excluding the Sheriff's Department employees) gave the correct response, 22.2% of the Sheriff's Department employees gave the correct response ( $\Phi=.063$ , Contingency Coefficient=.063,  $p=.042$ ).



The Safe Communities Project staff and the Safe Communities Coalition hope that the information provided in this report is helpful to you. The information in the report may provide you with ways to improve the safety knowledge and behavior of your employees. Hopefully, with your assistance, Nueces County and Corpus Christi can become safer places to live.

You may want to share this information with your safety coordinator, training staff, or others. Please, feel free to duplicate this report as you choose.