Summary of 2005 AARP Driver Safety Program Graduate Study

November 2005
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Data Collected by AARP
Report Prepared by Gail Kutner

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**Acknowledgements**

AARP collected and analyzed the data and wrote the report. S.A.I.D., Inc. tabulated the data. For additional information contact the author, Gail Kutner, at (202)-434-6325.
INTRODUCTION

The AARP Driver Safety Program (DSP) is the nation's first and largest classroom refresher course for drivers age 50 and older that has helped millions of drivers remain safe on today's roads. The courses are taught by trained volunteer instructors.

The 2005 AARP DSP Graduate Study was conducted to evaluate the AARP DSP course in terms of:
- usefulness of the course
- concerns about driving situations
- changes graduates made as a result of course
- topics to include in future courses

METHODOLOGY

The 2005 AARP DSP Graduate Survey was mailed in May 2005 to a random sample of 10,000 people from the AARP Driver Safety Program database, who had taken and graduated from the AARP Driver Safety Program course between October 2004 and December 2004. A total of 3,512 usable questionnaires were received before the cutoff date, which resulted in a 35% response rate.

AARP mailed out and received the completed questionnaires and the data entry was done by S.A.I.D., Inc. Gail Kutner, AARP, Knowledge Management, analyzed the data and wrote the report.

The annotated questionnaire (questionnaire with the answers written in) can be found in the Appendix.
FINDINGS

Impact of AARP DSP Course on DSP Graduates

Almost all of the 2005 AARP DSP graduates (91%) had said that they had changed at least one driving behavior as a result of taking the DSP course. The following list includes the top five behaviors that graduates report having changed as a result of DSP:

- always checking your blind spots
- following distance and space cushion
- paying more attention when entering or exiting highways
- being aware of where you park
- yielding right of way

(See Figure 1.)
Figure 1
Graduates Behavior Changes as a Result of DSP Course
(Percent reporting most of the time, some of the time, and occasionally)

- Always checking your blind spots: 70%
- Following distance and space cushion: 66%
- Paying more attention when entering or exiting highways: 61%
- Being aware of where you park: 60%
- Yielding right of way: 58%
- Keeping your eyes moving/scanning traffic: 56%
- Turning in general: 53%
- Driving in bad weather: 53%
- Looking for safety features when buying a car: 52%
- Using anti-lock brakes properly: 51%

Source: 2005 AARP Driver Safety Program Graduate Study
Prevention of Traffic Incidents

In addition to behaviors that they believe were changed as a result of a DSP course, more than eight in ten of the 2005 AARP DSP graduates felt that information learned in the DSP has helped to prevent them from being involved in a traffic incident. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2
Since Taking Course, Information has Helped Prevent being Involved in a Traffic Incident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2005 AARP Driver Safety Program Graduate Study

Traffic Violations, Citations or Crashes

Only four percent of the graduates in 2005 said they had some traffic violations, citations, or crashes either for the 12 months before the DSP course or since taking the most recent DSP course. (See Figure 3.)
IMPLICATIONS

Overall, the graduates from the 2005 AARP Driver Safety Program believe that the DSP course has positively affected their driving behaviors. The most frequently reported changes in driving behaviors correspond to the emphasis of the course material in the DSP course.

The graduates also said that information learned in the DSP courses has helped prevent them from being involved in traffic incidents.

As a result of the course, some graduates said they had considered limiting the times when they drove and limiting or stopping driving.
APPENDIX
ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE
2005 AARP DRIVER SAFETY GRADUATE SURVEY**

Dear AARP Driver Safety Program Graduate:

The AARP Driver Safety Program is evaluating the AARP Driver Safety Program and requesting feedback from you. This short survey will only take a few minutes of your time to complete and will provide invaluable information about the AARP Driver Safety Program.

Please check the appropriate response box. When you finish, just fold the survey into thirds and place it in the enclosed return envelope which is already pre-addressed and has the postage pre-paid. (Please do not add stamps to the enclosed envelope.). Sincerely,

Frank Carroll, Director
AARP Driver Safety Program & Mobility Issues

(n = 3,512)
1. In what month and year did you take your most recent AARP Driver Safety course?
   _____Month _____ Year
   13% Jan – Aug 2004
   69% Sept – Dec 2004
   7% Jan – June 2005
   11% No response

2. Was this your first time taking the AARP Driver Safety course (previously called AARP 55 Alive)?
   33% Yes (GO TO Question 3)
   63% No (GO TO Question 4)
   4% No response

3. Including your first AARP Driver Safety course, how many total times have you taken the AARP Driver Safety course? (Please check (✓) ONE response.)
   11% Twice
   8% Three times
   12% Four or more times
   69% No response (note: there was an error in the skip pattern for question 2)

**A random sample of people who had taken and graduated from the AARP Driver Safety Program course between October 2004 and December 2004.
4. As a result of what you learned in this or previous AARP Driving Safety course(s), have you changed your driving habits? (Please check (✓) ONE response for each topic in the table below.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in Driving Habits</th>
<th>Yes, most of the time (%)</th>
<th>Yes, some of the time (%)</th>
<th>Yes, occasionally (%)</th>
<th>No, I did this before course (%)</th>
<th>No, I did not change (%)</th>
<th>No response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Limiting times when you drive</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Avoiding left turns</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Looking for safety features when buying a car</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Always checking your blind spots</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Limiting your travel on highways and freeways</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Paying more attention when entering or exiting highways</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Yielding right of way</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Turning in general</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Following distance and space cushion</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Using anti-lock brakes properly</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Keeping your eyes moving/scanning traffic</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Driving in bad weather</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Being aware of where you park</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Learning medications' effects on driving</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Always using safety belts</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Limiting use of cell phones while driving</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Considering limiting or stopping your driving</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Since taking the course, have you felt that the information you learned has helped prevent you from being involved in a traffic incident?
   83% Yes
   13% No
   4% No response

6. Have you had any traffic violations, citations or crashes since taking your most recent course?
   4% Yes
   94% No
   2% No response
7. Have you had any traffic violations, citations or crashes since in the last 12 months leading up to your most recent course?
   4% Yes
   94% No
   2% No response

This last section asks for information about you. We use this information so that AARP can get a better understanding of the background of the kinds of people who take the AARP Driver Safety course. Your responses are anonymous and confidential.

8. What is your age? Are you between...?:
   * Less than 45 17% 55 and 64 36% 75 and 84
   2% 45 and 54 37% 65 and 74 6% 85 or older
   2% No response

9. Are you currently employed?
   7% Yes, full-time 10% Yes, part-time 81% No, not employed (including 2% No response)

10. Are you....?
    91% White 1% Hispanic or Latino
    3% Black/African American 1% Asian/Pacific Islander
    1% Other 3% No response

11. We greatly valuable your opinions and we may want to contact you again in the future. What is your name? (Please print)
    86% name written in 14% No response

12. What is your e-mail address? (Please print)
    27% e-mail written in 73% No response

Thank you for your participation.

PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED SURVEY WITHIN 5 DAYS OF RECEIVING IT.
Please fold the survey into thirds and place it in the enclosed return envelope which is already pre-addressed and has the postage pre-paid. (Please do not add stamps to the enclosed envelope.)
(If the envelope is missing, please send the completed survey to: AARP, ATTN: Gail Kutner, Strategic Issues Research Dept, 601 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20049)