

Backseat drivers a major source of stress on the road, says survey

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 12/28/2018

DEARBORN, Mich., Dec. 14, 2018 — Findings from a new Ford-commissioned study suggests in-vehicle breakups could be on the rise this holiday season¹, many Millennials would trade their morning coffee for a drive free of holiday road rage behavior¹, and that nearly twice as many women have been called a backseat driver in comparison to men (16% vs 28%)².

Ford asked American drivers and their passengers about the pain points associated with holiday travel to better understand stressful driving triggers. They discovered that holiday road rage is a pervasive issue and key driver of stress.¹ The study also points to a potential solution to backseat driving, as many backseat drivers say they would stop backseat driving if there was something that could help control their drivers' and other drivers' actions on the road.² While our driver-assist technologies do not control drivers, they can help people stay in their lane or automatically brake for possible risks ahead, can help people drive confidently and potentially quiet backseat driver complaints.

"Drivers already have to play defense against enough stressful driving scenarios during holiday road travel, between the traffic, bad road conditions, pedestrians and higher propensity of road rage," says Angela Cascaden, Edge consumer marketing manager at Ford Motor Company. "Ford Co-Pilot360™, and other technology features in the new 2019 Ford Edge, are making cars smarter — helping drivers navigate stressful situations so they can enjoy the experience behind the wheel."

Holiday Stress On-the-Road

Between travel, shopping and entertaining, nearly two-thirds of Americans agree the holidays are one of the most stressful (62%) and most tiring (65%) times of the year. This is especially taking shape on the road, where 89% of American drivers report that elements of holiday road travel cause them stress. Increased traffic is the number one stressor (58%) followed by unsafe driving conditions (44%).

Respondents admit they rely on "white lies," finding excuses to cancel social plans to avoid holiday traffic (27%), and "workarounds," ordering gifts online instead to circumvent crowded parking lots (58%), all to avoid getting on the road.

It's a Hotbed for Aggression—Inside and Outside the Car

For those who choose to brave the holiday streets, many have experienced naughty driving behaviors as a result. In particular, over half of Americans have experienced road rage in some form during the holidays, and 20% admit they are more likely to be the aggressor. According to nearly one-third of Americans (31%), the number one trigger for road rage is distracted drivers. The top forms of road rage behavior include yelling or using profanity (75%), cutting another driver off (71%) and honking (70%).

Interestingly, Millennial drivers are the worst offenders, yet four in 10 would forego caffeine forever if it meant they would never have to deal with holiday road rage again.

The survey also found that the road conditions also impact the mood inside the car. A majority of Americans (78%) have argued with a significant other while driving. Forty percent name backseat driving as the cause, and one in 10 drivers have gone so far as to end a relationship as a result. Millennials are almost twice as likely to have had a breakup over backseat driving (18%).

What Puts You Over the Edge?

In the pursuit to better understand the stress-induced outbursts taking shape inside the car, Ford surveyed passengers to identify what puts them over the edge.

While 54% of Americans are backseat drivers, half of those (50%) wish they were not. So why do passengers continue to provide unwanted advice when they know it will likely elicit an unfavorable response?

Backseat drivers report they felt compelled to speak up due to a lack of trust, in either the driver or the other drivers on the road (52%). Other reasons include being afraid in the moment (49%) and having a desire to be in control of the car (31%), and over one-third (37%) characterize their backseat driving as an involuntary response. However, over six in 10 (62%) backseat drivers say they would stop being backseat drivers if they knew there was something that could control their drivers' actions on the road.

Key reasons for backseat driving relate to two categories: various reckless actions while driving (92%) or reasons related to the driver's technique (82%). Specifically, top complaints within these categories include speed (68%), getting too close to another car (61%), distracted driving (51%), jerky stop-and-go driving (34%) and veering out of the lane unintentionally (33%).

Ford Co-Pilot360™ Can Help Take the Edge Off

While Americans cannot control the road rage that surrounds them on the streets this holiday season, they can control the tensions happening right inside the car.

[Ford Co-Pilot360™](#), a suite of standard driver-assist technologies, can help people drive more confidently, which in turn can help calm passengers for a more harmonious ride. This suite of technologies includes features that can automatically apply the brakes if drivers do not respond in time to detect potential risks ahead, identify and steer into parallel and perpendicular parking spots, or nudge a driver back into their lane if they mistakenly drift.

The [2019 Ford Edge](#) is outfitted with a wide range of instinctive and connected in-vehicle technology features, including:

Ford Co-Pilot360™:

- [Pre-Collision Assist with Automatic Emergency Braking](#): uses camera technology to scan the roadway ahead to detect a potential collision with pedestrians and or vehicles in front of the driver, provides a collision warning, and can automatically apply the brakes if the driver has not taken any corrective action **/**
- [Lane Keeping System](#): can warn the driver through a steering wheel vibration if it detects an unintentional drift of the vehicle out of its lane without the turn signal activated**/**
- BLIS® ([Blind Spot Information System](#)) with [Cross-Traffic Alert](#): uses radar to help detect vehicles entering a driver's blind spot on the road or approaching the driver, and alerts the driver with an indicator light in the side view mirror**
- Additional features include rear view camera and auto high beam lighting

Additional Available Driver-Assist Technologies:

- Adaptive Cruise Control with Stop-and-Go and Lane Centering: helps the vehicle maintain a pre-set driving distance from vehicles ahead and helps the driver keep the vehicle centered in its lane**
- Evasive Steering Assist: uses radar and a camera to detect slower-moving or stationary vehicles ahead and provides additional steering support that can assist drivers to avoid a vehicle if a collision is imminent**
- Post-Collision Braking: can potentially lessen the severity of a secondary collision by automatically applying moderate brake pressure when an initial collision is detected**

Connected Technology: Available features such as FordPass Connect™ with 4G LTE Wi-Fi hotspot and SYNC® 3 AppLink compatibility for Ford+Alexa and Waze navigation to keep time spent on-the-road entertaining and productive.

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