

Vehicle Safety

Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death among youth aged 15 to 19 in the United States⁽¹⁾ and alcohol use is associated with 19% of all traffic fatalities among drivers 16 to 20 years of age.⁽²⁾ Among high school students nationwide in 2021, 39.9% did not always wear a seat belt while 14.1% rode with a driver who had been drinking in the 30 days before the survey.⁽³⁾




2023 Results

The following are findings related to vehicle safety among NJ students for 2023:

- Half of New Jersey students (50%) indicated they did not always wear a seatbelt when driving in a vehicle with someone else.
- About one-in-eight students (13%) have driven in a car/vehicle in the past 30 days with a driver who had been drinking alcohol.
- Among students who have driven a car/vehicle in the past 30 days, 2% used alcohol prior to driving.
- Among students who have driven a car/vehicle in the past 30 days, 35% have texted/mailed while driving.

Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend for vehicle safety issues among New Jersey youth is positive. Among student drivers, the percentage of students who have used alcohol prior to driving decreased from 9% to 2% and the percentage of students who texted/mailed when driving declined from 36% in 2013 to 29%-31% in 2019-2021 but back up to 35% in 2023. Fewer students reported driving in a vehicle with someone who had used alcohol prior to driving – down from 20% to 13%. Meanwhile, the percentage of students who reported they did not always wear a seatbelt when driving in a car/vehicle was at 50%, the same as in 2013 after slight decreases to 45-46% in prior years.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
Does Not Wear a Seatbelt <i>does not always wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else</i>	50%	46%	45%	50%	No change in behavior 
Rode with a Driver Who had Used Alcohol <i>in a car or other vehicle 1+ times in the past 30 days</i>	20%	12%	12%	13%	Decrease in negative behavior 
Drove a Car/Vehicle after having used Alcohol <i>1+ times in the past 30 days (among students who had driven a car/vehicle in past 30 days)</i>	9%	3%	2%	2%	Decrease in negative behavior 

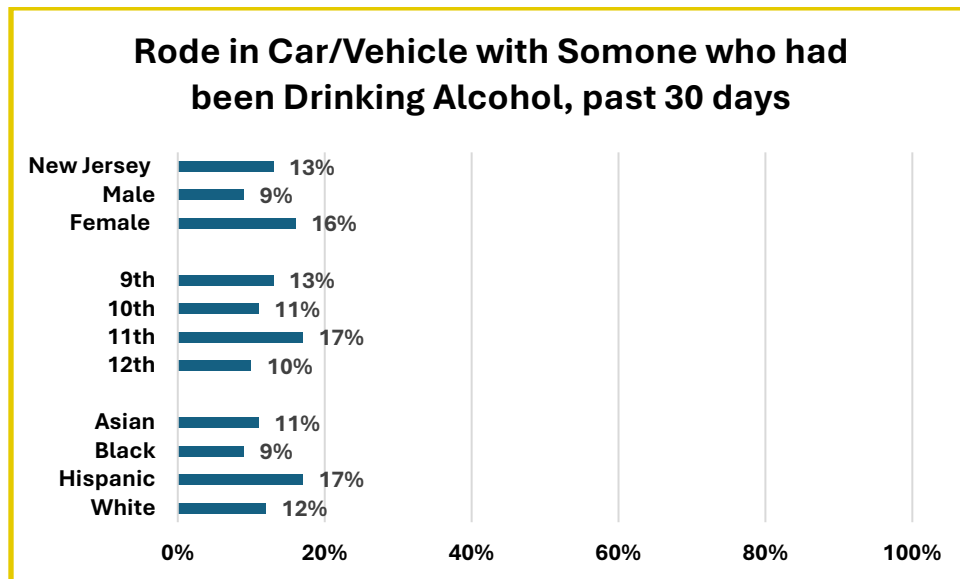
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
Texted or E-mailed while Driving a Car/Vehicle <i>on at least one of the past 30 days (among students who had driven a car/vehicle in past 30 days)</i>	36%	29%	31%	35%	Decrease in negative behavior ↓

Note: Trend analysis was performed by the CDC on data from 2013 to 2023 to determine which differences across years were statistically significant. For questions not asked in all survey years, the trend analysis was performed from 2021 back to the last consecutive year in which the question was asked.

Demographic Breakdown

The percentage of NJ high school students who reported driving in a car/vehicle in the past 30 days with someone who had drunk alcohol was 13%.

- **Gender** – Females were more likely than males to have reported driving with someone who had used alcohol (16% vs 9%).
- **Grade** – Those in 11th grade (17%) were most likely to have reported driving with someone who had used alcohol, compared to students in grade 9 (13%), 10 (11%) and 12 (10%).
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Hispanic students (17%) were most likely to have reported driving with someone who had used alcohol, compared to White (12%), Asian (11%) and Black (9%) students.



Resources

- Teen Driving | NHTSA: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving>
- NJ MVC: <https://www.state.nj.us/mvc/press/archives/2017/101817.htm>
- Teen Driver Safety Programs | NJM: <https://www.njm.com/teen-driver-safety>