

# NHTSA Digital Landscape Analysis

## ***Situation Analysis***

The Internet is bustling. Products are researched, technologies are vetted, opinions are formed, and issues are debated. The voices of online communities, though physically separated across the globe, speak loudly and in ways that are increasingly more organized. People increasingly trust the opinions of their online friends and communities more than traditional marketing and advertising. And, thanks to e-mail, instant messaging and social networks like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, products and opinions can be shared among large groups of people in just a few mouse clicks.

More and more the opportunities the Internet offers are being realized by government agencies, which are finding increasing success from utilizing extended digital and web communication strategies, including participation in, and even the hosting of, online conversations through blogs. NHTSA's critical role in ensuring driver safety uniquely positions the organization to take advantage of to these opportunities through digital tactics that will not only help raise awareness of its programs and initiatives, but will also gather feedback to help focus and amplify its messaging even more.

## ***Communications Objectives***

As a basis for our research and to provide insight into how Stratacomm approached this digital landscape analysis, we have used the following communications objectives as guides:

- Expose as many Americans as possible to the valuable content NHTSA has to offer regarding traffic safety.
- Affect real and meaningful improvements in the driving habits of the American people.
- Understand citizen sentiment around a range of NHTSA programs to enlighten future communications strategy.

## ***Measurement***

Using a suite of proprietary and available-on-the-web tools, Stratacomm has surveyed the online landscape to determine who is saying what about NHTSA and where they're saying it. With these tools, we've audited the online conversation by searching "NHTSA" and approximately 85 keywords related to the Administration's programs and initiatives (e.g. car air bag, crash avoidance technology, frontal crash warning, van rollover, etc.) in blogs, online versions of traditional news sources, and social networks (Twitter, YouTube and other online communities).

Our analysis and recommended approach are based on a 90-day monitoring period beginning May 17 and ending August 17.

## ***Executive Summary***

Two key trends have emerged from monitoring the online conversation for 90-days, including:

- NHTSA is primarily sourced within online stories and discussions relating to vehicle safety, vehicle crash tests and major industry news announcements such as Cash for Clunkers and CAFE standards; and

- There are thousands of conversations relating to child passenger safety, texting while driving and drunk driving taking place void of NHTSA’s key messages.

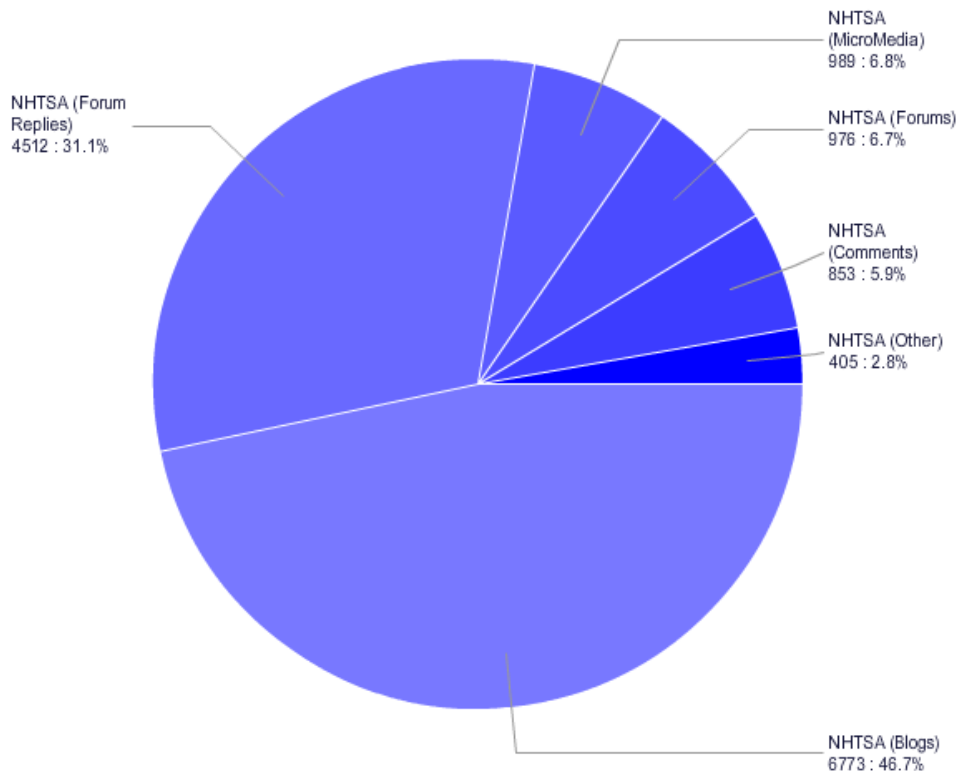
These trends suggest tremendous opportunity for NHTSA to engage the online community and develop relationships with online outlets that are already discussing topics of interest related to the Administration’s mission and initiatives. Research suggests that connecting with this community will better position NHTSA to be the leading trusted source for all things relating to the wide range of vehicle safety issues in play today. In addition, opportunity exists to develop targeted online campaigns around child passenger safety, texting while driving and drunk driving, perhaps in partnership with third-party organizations, to ensure NHTSA’s messages are being heard. Detailed below are Stratacomm’s key findings and our recommended strategic approach to position NHTSA as the leading resource on all issues relating to automotive safety.

## *The Online Discussion of NHTSA and its Issues*

### Direct Mentions of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

Stratacomm conducted an audit of the conversation online for direct mentions of “NHTSA.” In total, NHTSA was mentioned **14,610** times on blogs, online news outlets and online social communities like forums and Twitter. Of those mentions, 47 percent were made on blogs.

**PERCENTAGE OF DIRECT NHTSA MENTIONS BY MEDIA TYPE**



## ANALYSIS: TOP 10 POSTS

Upon reviewing the top ten blog posts, determined by the number of comments generated by a single posting, all ten discussed only automotive issues. Seven out of the 10 original posts came from the top-tier automotive blog, Jalopnik. Autoblog and Pajamas Media, a network of conservative blogs, authored the remaining three posts.

Topics of interest for the top 10 posts that directly mentioned NHTSA, included: Cash for Clunkers, advanced vehicle safety technology, and CAFE standards. Of the coverage, 20 percent was the direct result of a report or announcement made by NHTSA on the potential mandate requiring amber turn signals. The overall tone of coverage (80 percent) was neutral to factual, either citing NHTSA as a resource for vehicle safety data or as the administrator of the Cash for Clunkers program. Commentary directly targeting NHTSA or its programs was not found within the neutral coverage. One post did indicate negative discord (number 10 below); directly discussing whether NHTSA accurately reported to auto dealers that Cash for Clunker rebates were taxable.

The single occurrence of a direct quote in the top 10 posts from a NHTSA spokesperson is worth noting and serves as another indicator that opportunity for NHTSA to build relationships with these influential blogs exists. This provides the Administration with an opportunity to not only provide them with additional resources for the posts that they are already writing, but also to insert NHTSA's point-of-view into the story.

1. [No Automakers Meet Obama's New Fuel Economy Standard](#)  
Jalopnik  
May 19, 2009  
By Matt Hardigree  
Comments: 294  
Unique comments: 163
2. [The 25 Most Useful Car Technologies](#)  
Jalopnik  
August 4, 2009  
By Wes Siler  
Comments: 174  
Unique comments: 101
3. [Cash for clunkers](#)  
Pajamas Media  
August 2, 2009  
By N/A  
Comments: 168  
Unique comments: 72
4. [NHTSA May Force All-Orange Turn Signals](#)  
Jalopnik  
July 2, 2009  
By N/A  
Comments: 160  
Unique comments: 95
5. [EPA Secretly Changing MPG Numbers Ahead Of Cash For Clunkers, Screwing Consumers](#)  
Jalopnik  
July 27, 2009  
By Matt Hardigree  
Comments: 154  
Unique comments: 98
6. [REPORT: NHTSA may mandate amber turn signals](#)  
AutoBlog  
July 2, 2009  
By Chris Shunk  
Comments: 149  
Unique comments: 9
7. [Ten Most Dangerous Foods To Eat While Driving](#)  
Jalopnik  
July 17, 2009  
By The Auto Insider  
Comments: 128  
Unique comments: 83
8. [Cash For Clunkers Program Suspended!](#)  
Jalopnik  
July 30, 2009  
By Ray Wert  
Comments: 127  
Unique comments: 91

9. [Ballyhoed New CAFE Standards Riddled With Hummer-Sized Loopholes](#)

Jalopnik  
May 22, 2009  
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Comments: 120  
Unique comments: 77

10. [Doh! Dealers learn Cash for Clunkers rebates count as taxable income](#)

AutoBlog  
August 1, 2009  
By Alex Nunez  
Comments: 107  
Unique comments: 3

*\*Complete text of the top ten blog posts that directly mention NHTSA can be found in Appendix A*

### **ANALYSIS: OVERALL MENTIONS**

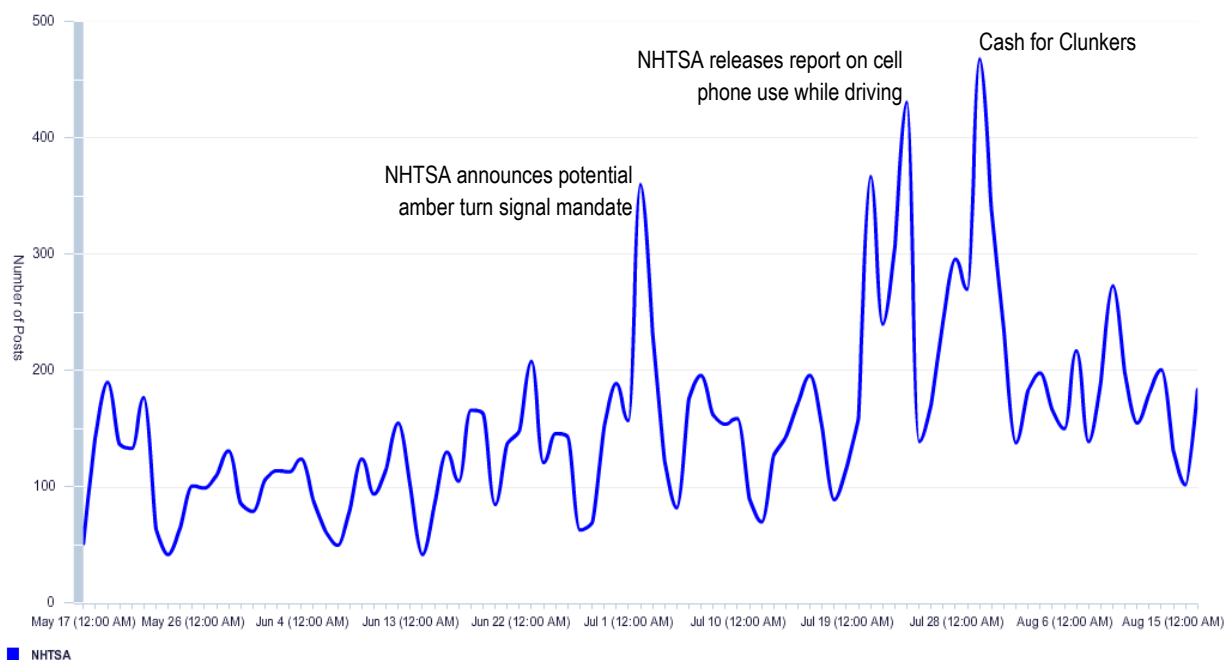
As a whole, we observed that the online conversation involving direct mentions of “NHTSA” spiked dramatically with announcements made regarding Cash for Clunkers. When discussing NHTSA within the context of Cash for Clunkers, the tone was typically neutral to negative. A majority of the coverage mentioned NHTSA simply as the administrator of the program; however negative tone appeared when the program was put on hold, as well as when discussing whether NHTSA accurately reported to auto dealers that Cash for Clunker rebates were taxable. In addition to this, NHTSA released reports and press releases over the monitoring period that contributed to spikes in coverage. While these “in the news” items increased the volume of conversation on the Administration, the average daily discussion held steady with approximately 100-200 posts per day.

When people aren’t discussing “in the news” items, the focus of the online conversation is on specific product-based information, such as crash test results for specific models, specific vehicle recalls, specific insurance companies, and car seat safety. Upon close review of all coverage mentioning NHTSA directly, less than 1 percent of posts by all media types resulted from direct reports and/or announcements released by NHTSA. This data suggests yet another opportunity for NHTSA, suggesting the Administration more effectively position released data in front of online audiences.

### **CONCLUSION**

- NHTSA is a hot topic among blogs, particularly those with an automotive focus. Opportunity exists to broaden the reach to include lateral audiences like mommy blogs, tech blogs, engineering blogs, environmental, and green blogs for outreach.
- Tone is overwhelmingly “neutral to factual,” confirming that NHTSA is viewed as a credible source of information by auto bloggers on issues concerning motor vehicle safety; however NHTSA’s commentary is absent from coverage, revealing an opportunity for more proactive online outreach to insert NHTSA’s point-of-view into the news.

## VOLUME OF DIRECT NHTSA MENTIONS BY ALL MEDIA TYPES



### ***NHTSA-related Keyword Analysis***

Stratacomm also conducted an audit of the digital landscape for approximately 85 keywords related to NHTSA programs and initiatives to see how often these “words of interest” appear online. Examples of these words include “car defects,” “crash test,” “rollover protection,” “NCAP” and “crash avoidance technology.” The full keyword list used appears in Appendix B.

### **ANALYSIS: TOP 10 POSTS**

Of the 85 keywords monitored, driving-related subject matter was consistently identified as the “hot topic” among online communities (more than 70,000 mentions). Impaired and distracted driving were recurring themes, specifically drunk driving and texting while driving. Sixty percent of the top 10 posts (determined by the number of comments generated by a single posting) focused on drunk driving; however texting while driving was compared as being just as bad, and potentially worse, as drunk driving in 30 percent of the coverage. Only one direct mention of NHTSA appeared in the top 10 posts, identifying yet another opportunity for NHTSA to deliver its key messages to the online influencers already writing about the automotive safety topics aligned with NHTSA’s mission and initiatives.

*\*Complete text of the top ten blog posts that focus on the topic of driving can be found in Appendix C*

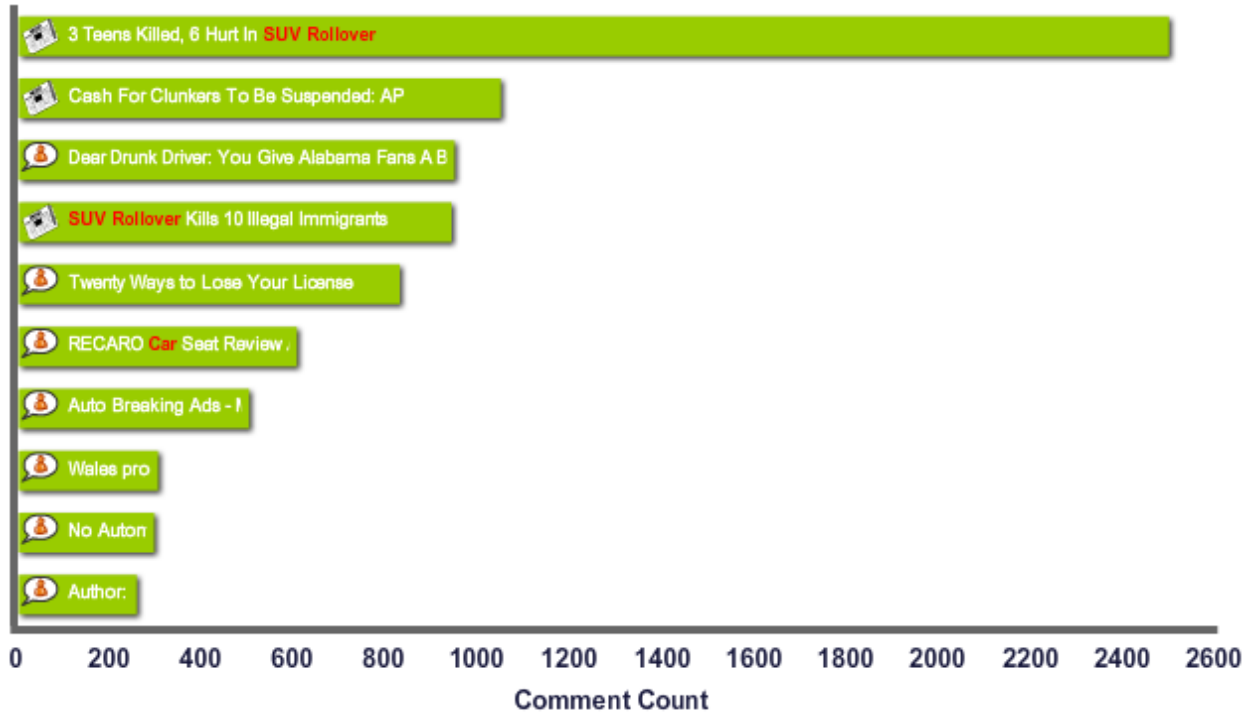
### **ANALYSIS: Coverage**

Stratacomm reviewed the top 20 online posts that included any of the 85 keywords that were being monitored. These were identified by total number of comments on specific posts discussing NHTSA-related keywords. The top posts range in topic, but are focused around key events and announcements. The tone of these posts are neutral to factual as they report the news. A major source of coverage

occurred around Cash for Clunkers and CAFE standards. While NHTSA was not often mentioned in these stories, it is an opportunity to position the Administration as a thought leader around news trends.

### TOP 10 ONLINE POSTS BASED ON NHTSA-RELATED KEYWORDS

*Ranked by number of comments*



\*Complete text from the top 20 posts that discuss NHTSA-related keywords can be found in Appendix D

### CONCLUSION

- Key news, events and announcements triggers interest and coverage of NHTSA-related topics.

### TOP 50 MOST DISCUSSED WORDS FROM POSTS INCLUDING NHTSA-RELATED KEYWORDS

*Ranked by volume of discussion*

buying road time shows think law fact home national vehicles  
 highway test drive read texting drunk child wheel crash good  
 free under driver buy seat cars kart vehicle students best sure  
 using school right high great safety traffic life news things  
 driving work old comes information look world drivers mario

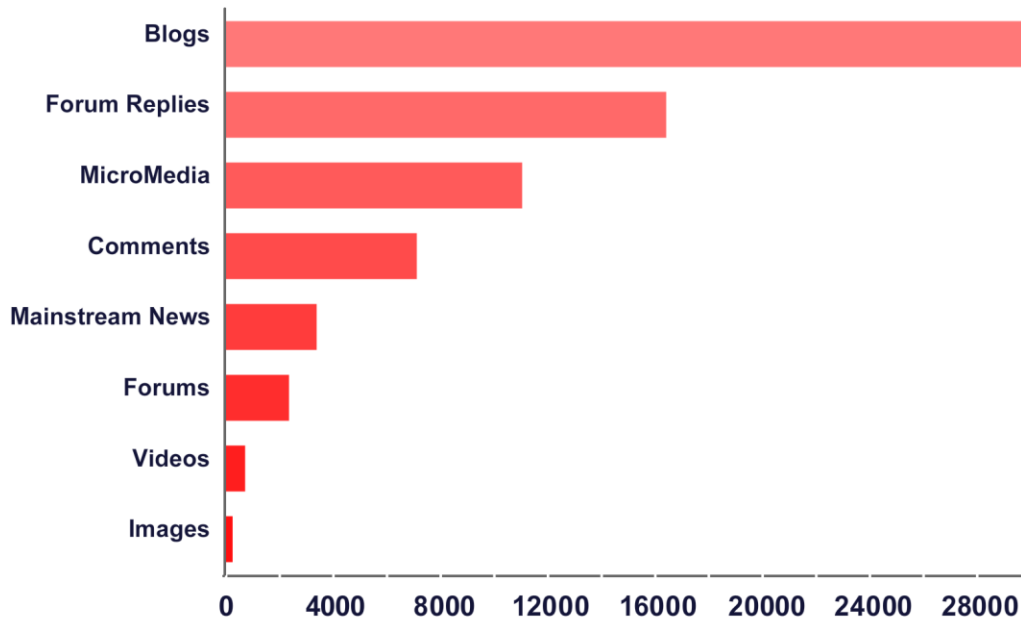
■ Hot     
 ■ Discussed Often     
 ■ Moderate     
 ■ Rarely

### ANALYSIS: OVERALL MENTIONS

During the 90-day monitoring period, nearly half of all online distracted driving mentions (30,000) were found on blogs. Analysis of the top 10 blogs posts revealed that more than half of them focused on the dangers of texting while driving.

#### VOLUME OF ONLINE CONVERSATION ON THE TOPIC OF “DRIVING” BY MEDIA TYPE

*May 17-August 17, 2009*



### ANALYSIS: NHTSA-RELATED KEYWORD SEARCH VOLUME

In August 2009, 75 percent of the top 30 most searched NHTSA-related key words focused on issues of child passenger safety. This finding points toward tremendous opportunity for NHTSA to provide educational content addressing the “ask” from the remaining 25 percent of searches on NHTSA-related keywords. In addition to offering crash test data and recall notices, NHTSA has an opportunity to better promote existing consumer-friendly content on vehicle safety, including tips on buying a new car and vehicle safety maintenance (i.e. tire pressure). Additional findings include:

- “Baby car seat” was the most searched for term, validating child passenger safety as a top concern for parents and caregivers and they spend a significant amount of time conducting research on the topic.
- Other child safety seat related topics ranked high in search volume, with “crash test” ranking third.

TOP 30 MOST SEARCH NHTSA-RELATED KEYWORDS	
baby car seat	<b>buying a new car</b>
convertible baby car seats	car seat installation
<b>crash test</b>	baby car safety
<b>car safety</b>	baby car seat laws
car seat safety	car seat review
child car seat	safety 1st car seats
convertible car seat safety	safety first car seat
baby car seat covers	<b>air tire pressure</b>
car safety seats	baby car seats safety
child safety seat	baby trend infant car seat
car seat reviews	child car safety
child booster seat	child restraint system
child seat laws	install car seat
<b>car safety ratings</b>	<b>car safety rating</b>
<b>crash test ratings</b>	convertible baby car seat

*\*Bolded items are not child passenger safety related.*

### ***Influencers***

Stratacomm took a deep dive into analyzing the top blog, online news and online community influencers related to NHTSA programs, initiatives and keywords. Influencers are determined by, in order of importance:

- Number of posts relating to NHTSA’s keywords;
- Amount of unique comments;
- Total comment count; and
- On topic comment count.

Below are the most influential blogs, online news outlets and online communities discussing keywords related to NHTSA.

### **ANALYSIS: TOP 10 MOST INFLUENTIAL BLOGS**

The top 10 most influential blogs revealed a mix of automotive, child and mommy, news and consumer blogs (e.g. lifestyle, sports and personal blogs). Child and mommy blogs, like Car Baby Seats, rank high as



influencers as they primarily focus on child safety products and feature posts including several of NHTSA’s keywords relating to children and vehicle safety.

DUI-related issues were often found on lifestyle, sports and personal blogs, as well as local news station websites. Lifestyle and sports blogs related coverage focused on celebrities and sports figures who have been arrested for drunk driving.

Stories posted on automotive and news blogs focus on vehicle and driving safety as well as vehicle crash test results released by NHTSA. In addition, NHTSA safety ratings are often mentioned in vehicle product review stories. As a result, there is a need to communicate child safety and drunk driving issues to these influential blogs in addition to vehicle safety ratings.

Rank	Source Name
1	<a href="#">Jalopnik</a>
2	<a href="#">Autoblog</a>
3	<a href="#">Engadget</a>
4	<a href="#">The Huffington Post</a>
5	<a href="#">Crash Test Dummy Diaries</a>
5	<a href="#">DUI Cure Kit</a>
6	<a href="#">Cash for Clunkers Facts</a>
7	<a href="#">Car Baby Seats</a>
8	<a href="#">Bleacher Report</a>
9	<a href="#">Consumerist</a>
10	<a href="#">Consumer Reports Car Blog</a>

**ANALYSIS: TOP 10 MOST INFLUENTIAL ONLINE NEWS OUTLETS**

The top online news influencers reported primarily on local drunk driving incidents. This shows a need to communicate the importance of safe driving and the consequences of driving under the influence within major markets.

Rank	Source Name
1	<a href="#">Knox News</a>
2	<a href="#">KOMO-TV</a>
3	<a href="#">Kansas City Star</a>
4	<a href="#">WBZ-TV</a>
5	<a href="#">Canadian News</a>
6	<a href="#">Upper Michigan Source</a>
7	<a href="#">Syracuse.com</a>
8	<a href="#">The Sudbury Star</a>
9	<a href="#">Miami Herald</a>
10	<a href="#">Chicago Breaking News</a>

## ANALYSIS: TOP 10 MOST INFLUENTIAL ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Online communities are great resources that target niche audiences. It is not surprising to find that the most influential online communities relating to NHTSA's keywords focus on automotive and drunk driving topics. Through our research, we found that these forums discuss a wide range of topics including drunk driving, vehicle safety, fuel economy and vehicle recalls. These forums can serve as an avenue to help NHTSA spread their messages to an influential group of consumers with a vested interest in their vehicle or driving.

Rank	Source Name
1	<a href="#">Drink Driving Discussion Forum</a>
2	<a href="#">Democratic Underground</a>
3	<a href="#">Final Gear</a>
4	<a href="#">CleanMPG Forums</a>
5	<a href="#">HD Forums</a>
6	<a href="#">PickupTrucks.com</a>
7	<a href="#">OKCTalk.com</a>
8	<a href="#">Say Anything Forum</a>
9	<a href="#">8thcivic.com</a>
10	<a href="#">TexansTalk.com</a>

## CONCLUSION

**Blogs:** The most influential online sites suggest NHTSA is viewed as a reliable source for vehicle safety stories. In addition, these influencers indicate an opportunity for NHTSA to position itself as a source for child passenger safety-related issues and drunk driving cases. NHTSA's credibility as a government agency offers the opportunity to develop targeted campaigns around drunk driving and child passenger safety that will resonate among these target audiences. For example, developing more consumer-friendly content on child passenger safety seats will help build credibility among child and mommy blogs, helping to position NHTSA as a trusted source on the topic.

**Online News Outlets:** The posts on the most influential online news outlets are often related to local drunk driving cases. As the leading government agency on vehicle and driving safety, NHTSA is well positioned to target communities with a high rate of drunk driving accidents. A tailored online editorial campaign could be developed for NHTSA to serve as the expert on the dangers and consequences of drunk driving.

**Online Communities:** Online communities are an effective way to humanize NHTSA to consumers. NHTSA representatives can create member accounts on the most influential online forums and start participating in the online conversations relating to relevant topics. In addition, outreach to community leaders and webmasters can position NHTSA as a source for exclusive web chats or blog or forum posts.

## ***Recommended Strategic Approach***

As the premier source of automotive safety information, NHTSA has tremendous opportunity to leverage the love and curiosity Americans have for their vehicles. NHTSA is in an advantageous position to consider a wide-reaching digital engagement campaign including online editorial outreach, robust and engaging content on the website, the forging of strategic promotional partnerships, and search engine optimization (SEO). If executed properly, a multi-platform digital outreach effort could turn many of the people already investing time in online searches into highly-effective marketing agents as they tell their online contacts and communities about good experiences with NHTSA outreach and content resources.

### **ONLINE EDITORIAL OUTREACH (OEO)**

As newspaper circulations continue to decline and more American's turn to blogs, online news outlets and community forums, it is important for NHTSA to engage and form relationships with these online outlets. OEO is an effective way to build NHTSA's presence on the most influential and most-read blogs and websites within your target audience, which have already been identified. By reaching out to strategically-selected bloggers and online news outlets to communicate NHTSA's unique value propositions and initiatives, such as National Child Passenger Safety Week and the 2009 Impaired Driving National Enforcement Crackdown, with the help of Stratacomm, NHTSA can enable these third-parties to tell its story, while keeping NHTSA top-of-mind, raising awareness and increasing web traffic.

To further position itself, Stratacomm recommends NHTSA utilize optimized digital press releases incorporating highly-searched keywords to make the information easier to find on search engines. To execute an OEO campaign, Stratacomm would develop a story bank to segment NHTSA's key safety messages, targeting strategically identified bloggers, organizations and third-party supporters within key horizontal sectors (automotive, parenting, transportation, etc).

### **BLOGGING TO SHOW THOUGHT LEADERSHIP**

Very few American drivers are searching for "how can I behave safer?" This dynamic of displaced responsibility creates a unique opportunity for NHTSA to generate interest in a variety topics ranging from driving behavior to mechanical maintenance through thought-leadership blogging. Many government agencies are seeing benefits from having their leading experts blog about consumer-related issues. The most effective and engaging of them understand the differences between blogging and other forms of writing, such as those suited for academic journals or newspapers. We recommend that NHTSA identify one to two leading experts who can begin blogging on relevant automotive safety topics. If he or she is not experienced in this form of media, Stratacomm offers a Blogging Boot Camp to provide an unfettered and nuanced view of the power and potential of blogging, as well as key lessons learned from successes and failures in the space that we would recommend each new blogger complete.

### **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

By further leveraging current partnerships or partnering with select third-party organizations to sponsor educational programs, NHTSA has an opportunity to position itself as an automotive safety authority among its target audiences. Examples of organizations include MADD and AARP, which both conduct driver safety programs throughout the U.S. Through further research, Stratacomm would identify similar third-party organizations and awareness campaigns concerned with vehicle, child-passenger and driving safety and present approximately 20 organizations for consideration to NHTSA. Once finalized, the partnership would be announced via national media outlets, both traditional and online, as well as through blogs.

### **TARGETING PAY-PER-CLICK CAMPAIGNS**

NHTSA is currently utilizing Google Ads to draw traffic to its site, but because blogs attract niche audiences and social network participants provide such comprehensive amounts of information about their personal and professional interests, placing ads on top-tier automotive and “mommy” blogs, in addition to Facebook, YouTube, etc. can produce high quality conversions. Additionally, we can accurately track costs by solely focusing on pay-per-click campaigns.

### **MOBILE AND ONLINE APPLICATIONS**

Today’s youth have grown up with the world at their fingertips—literally. Internet and mobile are like oxygen for most. Thanks to a new generation of mobile devices, young people have seamlessly moved all of their entertainment and communication experiences onto their wireless handsets in real time. To fully engage youth and truly integrate into their culture, while better positioning NHTSA as the leading provider of research among those interested in issues of drunk driving, Stratacomm recommends that NHTSA develop a cell phone application that will measure and display blood alcohol level once height, weight, type and number of alcohol drinks consumed has been entered. Similar mobile applications can be developed to address other consumer-focused needs.

Similarly, through our research, we were unable to find an application on the popular social networking site, Facebook. This presents an opportunity to create similarly themed useable, consumer applications for the traditional online community.

### **REDESIGN OF NHTSA’S WEBSITE(S) WITH SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)**

Eighty percent of online activity begins with a search, so discoverability through search engines like Google is crucial. Although NHTSA is already a trusted government agency additional measures can be taken to ensure that the content of NHTSA’s primary Web presence is robust, fully optimized and likely to show up more prominently in relevant searches.

With the advantage of being a trusted government agency, as well as having a .gov extension, NHTSA has a great opportunity to boost its SEO and position itself as the leading online resource for all things related to automotive safety. To accomplish this, we recommend a redesign and optimizing the current NHTSA website into a more consumer-focused site, with robust, easy-to-navigate, useable content and a sophisticated digital newsroom that addresses the topics most relevant to American drivers, identified through this landscape audit. Ideally, NHTSA should create individual, interconnected websites for each initiative to increase SEO, as a site’s SEO is based upon how many other sites link to it. Each individual site would use identical templates for design efficiency, but colors and graphics could be somewhat different to create an individual “feel” for each.

# Appendix A

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## Articles

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1. [No Automakers Meet Obama's New Fuel Economy Standard](#)  
Jalopnik  
May 19, 2009  
By Matt Hardigree  
Comments: 294  
Unique comments: 163
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6. [REPORT: NHTSA may mandate amber turn signals](#)  
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7. [Ten Most Dangerous Foods To Eat While Driving](#)

Jalopnik

July 17, 2009

By The Auto Insider

Comments: 128

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July 30, 2009

By Ray Wert

Comments: 127

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August 1, 2009

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## Articles

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### [No Automakers Meet Obama's New Fuel Economy Standard](#)

Jalopnik

May 19, 2009

By Matt Hardigree

Comments: 294

Unique comments: 163

The just-announced [fuel economy policy changes](#) demand 39 MPG for cars and 30 MPG for [light trucks](#). A look at the data shows not a single automaker currently meets the new guidelines proposed today. *Update.*

Using the Model-Year 2009 Fleet Fuel Economy standards provided by the National Highway Safety Transportation Administration (NHTSA), we determined the current ratings for passenger cars and light trucks and compared them to the goal for each of the major automakers selling cars in the U.S. A few automakers, like KIA and Hyundai, report their data separately because of a different ownership arrangement. We also took a look at what barriers exist for them reaching those standards.

*UPDATE: The Obama Administration contacted us to tell us the originally reported numbers of [42 MPG](#) for cars and [27 MPG](#) for light trucks were wrong. Instead, they're requiring an average of 39 MPG for cars and 30 MPG for light trucks. We've made the proper adjustments but even with these different numbers no one meets either requirement.*

#### **BMW**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 27.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -11.5 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 23.1 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.9 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** BMW currently offers no hybrid or electric vehicles and, as a matter of practice, has been *increasing* displacement not decreasing it. The use of diesel engines is a step in the right direction but they're well behind where they need to be.

#### **Chrysler**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 28.3 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -10.7 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 23.9 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.1 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Chrysler's biggest problem, in general, is the lack of appealing small cars with good fuel economy. Lacking any realistic vehicle on the horizon, the Chrysler-FIAT deal was envisioned to solve this issue. Let's see how that works out for them.

#### **Daimler**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 27.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -11.5 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 20.6 MPG



**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -9.4 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Mercedes-Benz may have to reconsider its policy of bringing over G-wagens and GL-wagens if it doesn't want to pay a fine, as the light truck numbers are low. The company has hinted at a smaller, possibly electric, model to bring up the average mileage but how many electric smarts do you need to outweigh an AMG G55?

#### **Ford**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 31.1 MPG (excluding foreign import)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -7.9 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 24.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -5.3 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Ford sells a lot of trucks. Despite fluctuations in fuel prices, the F-Series is bread + butter for the company. The addition of EcoBoost should help propel passenger vehicles to a higher overall value, and rumors of similar turbo'ed engines in the pickups should help as well.

#### **GM**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 31.3 MPG (excluding foreign import)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -7.7 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 22.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -7.5 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Barriers? What Barriers? The Volt will save everything... right? GM could be a victim of its own success if it turns out they start selling far more Camaros than hybrids and other fuel efficient vehicles.

#### **Honda**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 36.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -2.5 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 26.2 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -3.8 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Honda typically ranks highest among brands, so they're doing pretty well. But maybe now we know why they keep delaying the NSX.

#### **Hyundai**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 33.2 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -5.8 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 25.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -4.3 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Unlike most Asian brands, Hyundai has picked up steam by moving *away* from greener vehicles. Will the Genesis sedan and coupe cut into the gains made by their dinky little Korean hatches?

#### **Kia**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 33.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -5.3 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 24.4 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -5.6 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Kia has one big barrier to better fuel economy and it's

the Kia Borrego. Since no one seems to want the \$40K truck we don't see Kia having a hard time cutting it out of the lineup.

#### **Mazda**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 32.2/31.0 MPG (Import/Domestic)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.8 MPG/8.0 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 26.6 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -3.4 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** The only hybrid vehicle in the Mazda lineup is a rebadged Ford Escape and, so far as we know, diesel hasn't been considered an option. While the Mazda3 gets good mileage it's always placed Zoom-Zoom over glug-glug.

#### **Mitsubishi**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 29.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -9.5 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 26.1 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -3.9 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** The one saving grace for Mitsubishi, as it languishes in the U.S., is the [iMiev](#) electric car. But can the company produce enough electrics and hold out long enough to make it economically feasible?

#### **Nissan**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 30.1/34.0 MPG (Import/Domestic)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -8.9 MPG/ 5.0 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 23.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.5 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Nissan has built a reputation around their VQ V6 and don't seem intent on taking it out of any of their vehicles. To balance this, they'll try to use the Nissan Cube and other small cars, but they'll have to do better than the also-ran Sentra

#### **Porsche**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 27.0 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -12.0 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 19.3 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -10.7 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Porsche has historically been more content to pay fees than reform their ways given they're a performance brand. The profitable Cayenne, as well, presents a challenge. They could combine with VW to raise the Porsche average, but at the price of lowering VW's.

#### **Subaru**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 29.0 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -10.0 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 28.4 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -1.6 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Subaru builds cars disproportionately more fun than you'd expect and the popularity of vehicles like the WRX and the lack of a small, under-powered economy car is a threat to the brand's overall mileage. Could we see the return of the Justy hatchback?

## Suzuki

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 32.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.3 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 25.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -4.3 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** The current Suzuki lineup is so random and confusing it's hard to know where they could go. With the exception of the SX4 and Grand Vitara there aren't any products with much name recognition. Just scrap the whole thing and bring us the [Cappuccino](#).

## Toyota

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 38.1/35.9 MPG (Import/Domestic)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -0.9 MPG/3.1 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 25.8 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -4.2 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Unless Toyota discontinues the Prius and decides to make the Tacoma V8-only, the automaker is moving in the right direction. Let's just hope this doesn't torpedo plans for a new Supra although we fear it might.

## VW

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 30.2 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -8.8 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 23.9 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.1 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Volkswagen's greatest environmental asset is the TDI engine. It's greatest weakness is the high price of diesel fuel and the possibility of Americans turning on their technology. The greatest barrier on the horizon is Porsche, so we can't imagine them combining.

## Conclusion

Not a single automaker currently meets 2016 standards for fuel economy. In passenger cars, only Toyota and Honda, who have larger fleets of fuel-efficient cars are less than 10 MPG away from the proposed standards. This means companies will either have to radically alter their lineups, reduce the production of vehicles we actually want to drive, or invest heavily in alternative propulsion systems at a time when their capital is severely constrained. Good luck with that! Appliance vehicles, here we come!

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## [The 25 Most Useful Car Technologies](#)

Jalopnik

August 4, 2009

By Wes Siler

Comments: 174

Unique comments: 101

The other day we talked about bad car technology, the stuff designed to remove you from the experience. Now, let's look at good technology, the stuff designed to make driving better for you, the driver.

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[Cash for clunkers](#)

Pajamas Media

August 2, 2009

By N/A

Comments: 168

Unique comments: 72

The NYT's Lede describes the fiasco which the "Cash for Clunkers" program has become. The Lede's story focuses mostly on the program participant's difficulties in obtaining a reimbursement from the government. What the article doesn't discuss is the wisdom of scrappage programs themselves. The scrappage program essentially takes a perfectly good machine and destroys it in the name of an environmental benefit.

The program requires that the clunkers be put out of service for good, so dealers must destroy the engines on cars that are traded in. We watched this process yesterday at the DCH Paramus Honda in Paramus, N.J. It is quite laborious and potentially dangerous. And it certainly is final.

Nick Clites, who is in charge of used cars for the dealership, was prepping a 1988 BMW 535IS, with 214,000 miles on the odometer, for its death. He drained the oil, then donned a silky blue protective suit, goggles and gloves and poured a sodium silicate solution into the engine. He revved the car, and within a few seconds, the solution hardened into a glass-like substance, the engine seized up and the car was dead.

So here is one question: With the program now on shaky ground, even with a new infusion of money, what consumer and what dealer will risk rendering an engine irretrievably unusable?

Without an environmental justification, why would it not be better to simply send or sell the 1988 BMW 535IS to Africa, where it might be used as a sedan, or converted into a delivery vehicle, instead of destroying it? Come to that, why not sell it as a used car to an American who can't afford a new one?

The objective of a scrappage program is that: "of stimulating the automobile industry and removing inefficient, high emissions vehicles from the road. Many European countries have introduced large-scale scrappage programs as an economic stimulus to increase market demand in the industrial sector during the global recession." While the "clunker" exists it implicitly competes with the newer models, in price at least. Destroying an older car removes the unit from the market while removing a source of 'pollution' from the books of the environmentalists.

The fact that the clunker must be physically removed from the market proves it still has some economic value. Why should something which still retains a value, even in America, be destroyed? The Specialty Equipment Marketer's Association posed this very question when it wrote President Obama opposing the program. It argued that destroying the vehicles would hurt small businesses and the car business; it would penalize people who couldn't afford a new car in any case, cash voucher notwithstanding.

“Vehicles are frequently recycled down the economic chain as they age. Scrappage programs will disrupt the supply of used cars, raising prices further on the very vehicles most often purchased by low-income citizens.”

But even if one cared nothing for lower-income people or citizens of the Third World who would be glad to have a chance of owning a used car, one objection which environmentalists are obliged to take more seriously is that a scrappage program may artificially accelerate the car life cycle and does not take into account the “carbon footprint” of disposing of the dead cars. In which case the “cash for clunkers” scheme is not only destroying objects of economic value, it is actually polluting the environment. The Lede described the unease in the car industry.

“Oh my God, what a mess today,” Sally Ann Maggio, who co-owns Hackensack Auto Wreckers, also in New Jersey, said on Friday. We visited her car-crushing business on Thursday. She didn’t think much of the program to begin with.

Ms. Maggio said she generally makes her profit by reselling the engines, the most valuable parts of the cars she takes, but that’s not possible with the cars coming to her because of the cash for clunkers program, because they have been rendered unusable. That cuts down the salvage value of the cars — and the incentive for salvage yards and wreckers to take them — to almost nothing, considering the time and energy they must spend in going to the dealer, towing back the dead cars, removing the engines, crushing the bodies and shipping them to a metal scrap shredder and recycler.

And, of course, the process reduces the supply of used engines for people who can’t afford to buy a new car and come to the salvage yard looking to fix up old ones. In any case, Ms. Maggio said, dealers are “hitting the panic button” today.

One final problem is fiscal. A steady supply of tax dollars is required for government to keep distorting the market. On August 1st the White House announced it was “reviewing” the program.

Transportation Department officials called lawmakers’ offices earlier Thursday to alert them of plans to suspend the program as early as Friday. But a White House official said later the program had not been suspended and officials there were assessing their options.

“We are working tonight to assess the situation facing what is obviously an incredibly popular program,” White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said of the Car Allowance Rebate System. “Auto dealers and consumers should have confidence that all valid CARS transactions that have taken place to date will be honored.”

Gibbs said the administration was “evaluating all options” to keep the program funded. ...

A survey of 2,000 dealers by the National Automobile Dealers Association found about 25,000 deals had not yet been approved by NHTSA, or nearly 13 trades per store. It raised concerns that with about

23,000 dealers taking part in the program, auto dealers may already have surpassed the 250,000 vehicle sales funded by the \$1 billion program.

"There's a significant backlog of 'cash for clunkers' deals that make us question how much funding is still available in the program," said Bailey Wood, a spokesman for the dealers association.

Where's the funding going to come from? But that's another question.

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### [NHTSA May Force All-Orange Turn Signals](#)

Jalopnik

July 2, 2009

By N/A

Comments: 160

Unique comments: 95

NHTSA is considering mandating all rear [turn signals](#) come in amber on evidence they are 5.3% better at preventing crashes over red. A separate study found NHTSA just got 5.3% more anal. [[Cars.com](#) via [Autoblog](#)]

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### [EPA Secretly Changing MPG Numbers Ahead Of Cash For Clunkers, Screwing Consumers](#)

Jalopnik

July 27, 2009

By Matt Hardigree

Comments: 154

Unique comments: 98

Consumers hoping to trade in their old "clunkers" for new vehicles through the Cash for Clunkers (or CARS) program are discovering the EPA changed fuel economy numbers for some cars last week, making it impossible to trade them in! **Update.**

New Jersey resident Jeff Chase was considering trading in his 1989 Mazda 929 for a new car and checked the government's [FuelEconomy.gov](#) website and it said it met the 18 MPG threshold to be considered a gas-guzzling clunker. He went back later to buy the new car only to discover the numbers had been changed and the combined mileage was now 19 MPG and therefore disqualified from the discount.

"The dealer that I wanted to do business with had started to write sales orders for cars but were not delivering them until the final CARS rules were set," said Jeff Chance. "They are finding out that cars that they thought were qualified as trade-ins are no longer eligible. Now these people will not be able to purchase a car."

Jeff isn't alone. Daniel Anderson was planning to trade up from his 1991 V6 Toyota Camry only to be rejected because the number was changed sometime in the last week from 18 MPG, a number that would have garnered him a check, to a new 19 MPG rating.

Were the vehicles rechecked? Did they apply a new standard? Given the numerous Camrys and old Mazdas on the road, it's possible there are thousands of car owners on the road who believe they're qualified for a discount only to arrive at the dealership and find the numbers have changed.

This is especially troublesome because the official rules released this week states they'll use the latest combined mileage as determined by the EPA because the agency reconfigured how they measure mileage to more accurately reflect real-world MPG. Thus the Cash For Clunkers final rule states:

### **CARS Act Rule Language**

EPA changed the way it calculated fuel economy ratings starting in Model Year 2008, and has estimated the revised ratings for Model Years 1985-2007. Therefore, as described above, eligibility is determined by the revised ratings rather than the original EPA sticker on the vehicle. Since the revised ratings reflect a lower fuel economy, vehicles that would not be eligible under their original EPA rating may qualify for trade-in.

If this is the case, people who discovered their car's were formerly rated as 18 MPG technically had vehicles determined to qualify under the rules.

Karen E. Aldana with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says the agency wasn't aware of what happened. "On the final rule we said we'd use their [fuelconomy.gov](http://fuelconomy.gov) ratings, so the fact that they're changing it all of a sudden, if that's happening — this is the first I've heard of this."

NHTSA spokesperson Rae Tyson called us back after the story originally ran to inform us that, though they wrote the rule, the mileage measurements are completely under the control of the EPA and the rating that went into effect on Friday, July 24th is the one that currently determines eligibility and if anyone made a deal before Friday did so at their own risk.

"The fact is that we have said all along that any dealer entered into a sales agreement prior to the beginning of the agreement was doing so at his own or her own peril because until the program is final you always run into the risk of a deal made not qualifying," said Tyson.

An aide we've spoken to for one of the leaders behind the original bill in Congress says they were also unaware this was occurring.

*UPDATE: WE Just received this statement from the EPA confirming what happened:*

### **EPA Statement On Mileage Changes:**

In support of the new CARS program, the government conducted a month-long quality assurance and quality control effort regarding fuel economy calculations on more than 30,000 vehicle model types spanning the past 25 years.

As a result of the review, roughly an equal number of vehicles became eligible as those found to be not eligible. Of the above model types, eligibility for roughly 100 vehicles was affected.

An enormous effort went into completing these updates so that they would be in place with NHTSA's issuance of the CARS regulation last week — working to ensure that the most precise info possible would be available to consumers once the program took effect.

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[REPORT: NHTSA may mandate amber turn signals](#)

AutoBlog

July 2, 2009

By Chris Shunk

Comments: 149

Unique comments: 9

Some cars have red turn signal lamps, while others have an amber hue. Big deal, right? The National Highway Traffic Safety Association thinks it is, after finding that amber lights are 5.3% more effective at preventing crashes than the red blinkers. NHTSA came to that conclusion after comparing crash data of vehicles that switched from one color to another. Europe already mandates the amber turn signal, and NHTSA says that data from other agencies supports their findings. As it is, American cars sold in Europe already receive legal turn signal units – even if they aren't sold that way in America (see Chevrolet's C6 Corvette as an example).

NHTSA is now asking the public whether it should mandate amber turn signals for all vehicles sold in the States. Unfortunately for automakers, amber turn signals aren't exactly high fashion here in the U.S., as the vast majority of the signals are of the red blinking variety, likely because of cost considerations. While it's true that the auto industry is probably suffering from a case of far too many regulations, anything that can improve safety by up to 5.3% without costing an arm and a leg is probably worth considering. If NHTSA gives automakers a reasonable amount of time to implement the changes, automakers may be able to fit the change into the next design cycle.

[Source: Kicking Tires]

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[Ten Most Dangerous Foods To Eat While Driving](#)

Jalopnik

July 17, 2009

By The Auto Insider

Comments: 128

Unique comments: 83

For most, a half-gallon of coffee is an absolute must to wake up during your morning commute to the job you loathe. Little did you know how dangerous it, along with nine other foods, really are. Driving and eating are verbs describing two of American's favorite things to do and now, thanks to the cautious folks at [insurance.com](#), that's all ruined with a little list they put together on the 10 most dangerous foods to eat while driving. So how dangerous is it to eat these items in the car? Is it more or less dangerous than [texting](#)? Find out by clicking through.

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[Cash For Clunkers Program Suspended!](#)

Jalopnik

July 30, 2009

By Ray Wert

Comments: 127

Unique comments: 91

The US government will suspend the popular cash for clunkers program after almost four days, telling Congress they'll burn through the \$950 million budget by midnight. UPDATE: The Freep claims White House sources tell them the program's not been suspended.

Holy flip-flop, Batman! If the numbers the Department of Transportation claims they received from NADA are true, it would mean over 21,000 work trucks and 242,000 cars were potentially sold. But that flies in the face of the Freep now reporting White House official denying these reports late today that the program was suspended, and claiming all valid deals would be honored. Officials at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue are now seeking ways to send additional money to the program; the U.S. House was set to adjourn Friday for a month-long break.

The decision to suspend the plan came after auto dealers warned the government today that it was in danger of losing track of how many trades had actually been made.

A survey of 2,000 dealers by the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) found about 25,000 deals not yet approved by NHTSA, or about 13 trades per store. With 23,005 dealers asking to be part of the program, auto dealers may have already arranged the sale of more than the 250,000 vehicles that federal officials expected the plan to generate. That means an extra quarter million vehicles will be sold this year — potentially taking the U.S. annual sales rate above ten million units, a key metric in sustainability of the U.S. automakers. Well, as long as they sold some cars off those trade-ins.

Our sources at NHTSA tell us they're drafting a statement and should have it to us shortly. So, more coming soon as this story's still developing.

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[Ballyhoed New CAFE Standards Riddled With Hummer-Sized Loopholes](#)

Jalopnik

May 22, 2009

By Matt Hardigee

Comments: 120

Unique comments: 77

When Obama unveiled new fuel standards we decried the end of fun cars and pointed out how far most automakers are from meeting new-for-2016 fuel standards. It turns out, thanks to Hummer-sized loopholes like your car's air-conditioning, automakers should be able to meet them with little fear.

At issue is the federal government's twin towers of regulation power — the National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). What President Obama announced Tuesday was that the EPA and NHTSA intend to work together to regulate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards at the national level. This avoids different standards being implemented at the state versus federal level, and to avoid unharmonized or inconsistent GHG emission and CAFE standards.

The problem is, as has been widely reported by everyone in the media, ourselves included, NHTSA is not proposing a 35.5 MPG CAFE standard by model year 2016. Rather, as we're now being told by analysts at Credit Suisse, the EPA intends to propose GHG emission standards that, based on its estimates of model year 2016 light vehicle sales at that time, would result in fleet average CO2 emissions (of vehicles sold in that model year) of roughly 250 grams/mile. This creates at least one huge loophole in the system for automakers to take advantage of.

#### The Air Conditioner Loophole

That level of CO2 emission per mile would equate to about 35.5 MPG in fuel economy parlance. However — here's the big loophole — it's expected by the EPA and NHTSA that most manufacturers would apply air conditioning improvements to reduce GHG emissions. Air conditioning improvements do not enter into the NHTSA's calculation of MPG fuel economy.

Thus, the improvement in MPG that is equivalent to the estimated 250g of CO2/mile will actually fall well short of the 35.5 MPG mark. The gap between what the fleet CAFE will be and the widely reported 35.5, would be made up by air conditioner improvements. So basically, when you buy your supposedly more-fuel-efficient vehicle in 2016, it won't have as high of a fuel economy as it could — thanks to your car's air conditioning.

#### Automakers Get Lower Standards The More Large SUVs, Trucks They Build

Credit Suisse also points out in a new report released today that another key component of the proposal yesterday is that the EPA and NHTSA both intend to propose separate footprint-based standards. This is consistent with NHTSA's current approach to CAFE standards and, as such, means that there will be no set standard, with respect to either CO2 or fuel economy, for any single manufacturer or in fact for the fleet as a whole. Any standards you hear about for a given manufacturer or for the fleet as a whole are estimates.

This is because the actual MPG or CO2 "standard" for every manufacturer will vary depending on what they build. Footprint-based means the amount of CO2 emitted and the level of fuel economy will vary depending on the vehicles wheelbase multiplied by its track width. Put another way, the area between where the tires touch the road.

This quote from the proposal addresses the implications for automakers: "Under a footprint-based standard, each manufacturer would have a GHG and CAFE standard unique to its fleet, with a separate standard for passenger cars and light-trucks, depending on the footprints of the vehicle models

produced by that manufacturer. Generally, manufacturers of larger vehicles (i.e. vehicles with larger footprints) would face less stringent standards (i.e., higher CO2 grams/mile standards and lower CAFE standards) than manufacturers of smaller vehicles." This clearly favors the domestic makers.

#### Will That Be Cash Or Credit?

The EPA and NHTSA foresee flexibility in compliance with its proposed standards based on certain credits. Credits can be earned for fleet over-compliance in a given year, and applied in future years. Current consideration is to allow credits to be carried forward for at least 5 years.

In addition to credits at the fleet level that could be carried forward, the agencies intend to consider giving manufacturers the ability to transfer credits among its fleet. That is, if an automaker achieves over-compliance on the car side, it can transfer those credits to the truck side, and vice versa.

Air conditioning credits: AC units contribute to GHG emissions in two ways. First, through the leakage of hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) refrigerants, and second, by placing additional load on the engine, which causes the engine to produce additional CO2. The EPA is considering an approach that would enable automakers to earn credits by reducing GHG emissions (HFC and CO2) related to AC systems. Under the approach, reductions in HFCs would be converted to a CO2 equivalent reduction on a gram/mile basis that could be used as credits in meeting fleet CO2 standards. The EPA said it believes automakers would reduce HFC and CO2 emission through AC upgrades in order to take advantage of these credits.

Additional credit opportunities are being considered to help promote the commercialization of electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. They are called "super credits", and they would take the form of a multiplier such that the number of hybrid/electric vehicles sold would count as more than one vehicle in the manufacturer's fleet average. Thus helping automakers achieve fleet compliance by offering such vehicles, and applying those credits as needed.

#### Who Comes Out On Top?

All of this doesn't mean the automakers won't have to make an improvement. There's still much work to be done to bring all the vehicles up to these standards, but as we learn more it becomes clearer why so many auto execs were willing to stand behind President Obama.

[Credit Suisse, EPA, Green Car Advisor]

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[Doh! Dealers learn Cash for Clunkers rebates count as taxable income](#)

AutoBlog

August 1, 2009

By Alex Nunez

Comments: 107

Unique comments: 3

As you're aware by now, yesterday's big news was H.R. 3435, the emergency legislation passed by the House of Representatives authorizing an additional \$2B for the CARS scrappage scheme. As had been widely reported on Thursday, the clunkers program appeared to have run out of money a lot sooner than anyone had expected, sending legislators in favor of it into a panic. After a period of impassioned floor debate (the Michigan delegation appeared on the verge of a collective nervous breakdown, treating the possible suspension of C4C as the apocalypse), the resolution passed and will head on to the Senate next week for additional debate and a final vote. In the meantime, Cash for Clunkers stays online. For dealers, however, the action in the House wasn't the only important news to come out yesterday.

According to Automotive News, NHTSA -- the government bureaucracy responsible for administering the CARS program -- conducted a webinar for automobile dealers last Monday. During that session, retailers were reportedly told that the federal rebate cash they'd be receiving would be non-taxable. Now, for the buyers trading in so-called clunkers, this is indeed the case. Unfortunately for car dealers, however, it appears that NHTSA got the explanation wrong. In fact, AN reports that the IRS issued an advisory bulletin yesterday confirming that yes, the federal rebates dealerships receive for CARS trades count as taxable gross income.

Apparently, some retailers believed that since their customers weren't getting taxed, neither were they. And if the Automotive News account of events is accurate, it's fairly obvious that NHTSA didn't fully understand the tax implications either when they conducted their webinar. As a result, some dealer smiles around the country are likely turning into frowns this weekend. The money line in the AN piece comes from Dick Heider, a dealer accountant who points out that the CARS cash simply counts as a normal payment to the retailer, and thus is taxable. "What you are dealing with are people who don't understand accounting," he says. Apparently, on all sides of the equation.

[Source: Automotive News | Photo: Steve Lyon (CC by SA 2.0)]

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# Appendix B

1. 15 passenger van safety
2. 15-passenger van
3. 5/five Star ratings + safety
4. 5/five Star ratings + car/vehicle
5. Air bag failure
6. Air bag replacement
7. Air tire pressure
8. Airbag safety
9. Approved car seat
10. Automotive defects + recalls
11. Baby car seat
12. Best car for safety
13. Best rated car for safety
14. Brake Transmission Shift Interlock (BTSI)
15. Buying a new car
16. Car air bag
17. Car defect
18. Car safety
19. Car safety belt
20. Car safety rating
21. Car seat installation
22. Car seat recall
23. Car seat reviews
24. Car seat safety
25. Car seat-checking station
26. Car/vehicle heatstroke
27. Child + backover
28. Child + heatstroke
29. Child booster seat
30. Child car seat
31. Child restraint recalls
32. Child restraint system
33. Child safety + vehicle/car
34. Child safety seat
35. Child seat laws
36. Crash avoidance technology
37. Crash avoidance technology + safety
38. Crash prevention technology
39. Crash prevention technology + safety
40. Crash test
41. Crash test ratings
42. Electronic stability control
43. Ford rollover
44. Forward-facing car seat + safety
45. Frontal crash warning
46. Government 5-star safety ratings
47. Graco car seat recall
48. Highway car safety
49. Insurance car safety
50. Keep kids safe + car/vehicle
51. Lane departure warning
52. Monroney label
53. NCAP
54. New 5 Star rating system
55. New car safety ratings
56. NHTSA + car
57. Passenger car safety
58. Rear-facing car seat + safety
59. Recalled tires
60. Rollover prevention
61. Rollover protection
62. Safety defects +recalls
63. Safety road trip
64. Side air bag
65. Side-impact air bag
66. Summer car safety
67. SUV rollover
68. SUV safety
69. Technical Service Bulletin
70. Tire fuel efficiency
71. Tire fuel efficiency rating
72. Tire pressure safety
73. Tire safety
74. Top safety rated car
75. Traffic safety
76. Unattended vehicle + child
77. Van rollover
78. Van safety
79. Vehicle defect
80. Vehicle recall
81. Vehicle safety
82. Vehicle safety + defect
83. Vehicle safety + features
84. Vehicle safety + recall
85. Vehicle safety ratings
86. Vehicle star ratings

# Appendix C

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## Articles

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1. [Dear Drunk Driver: You Give Alabama Fans A Bad Name](#)  
Bleacher Report  
July 27, 2009  
By Cameon Shiflett  
Comments: 945  
Unique comments: 709
  
2. [Twenty Ways to Lose Your License](#)  
Article BB  
July 12, 2009  
By Josh McDowell  
Comments: 827  
Unique comments: 620
  
3. [Wales produces exceptionally graphic, educational film about the dangers of texting while driving](#)  
Engadget  
August 16, 2009  
By Laura June  
Comments: 304  
Unique comments: 228
  
4. [Texting law hard for police to enforce](#)  
Knox News  
August 5, 2009  
By Laura June  
Comments: 249  
Unique comments: 187
  
5. [A Guide To The Cash For Clunkers Bill](#)  
Jalopnik  
June 10, 2009  
By Matt Hardigree  
Comments: 215  
Unique comments: 106
  
6. [Research on cell-phone-use-while-driving quashed by feds](#)  
Jay Bookman (AJC Blog)  
July 21, 2009  
By Jay Bookman  
Comments:179  
Unique comments: 134



7. [The 25 Most Useful Car Technologies](#)  
Jalopnik  
August 4, 2009  
By Wes Siler  
Comments: 174  
Unique comments: 101
  
8. [Drunk Driving Safer Than Texting While Driving](#)  
Jalopnik  
June 25, 2009  
By Ray Wert  
Comments: 161  
Unique comments: 76
  
9. [Why Are We So Shocked When Moms Drive Drunk?](#)  
Jezebel  
June 25, 2009  
By Anna N.  
Comments: 156  
Unique comments: 90
  
10. [New Jersey bill aims to ban driver's use of GPS while driving](#)  
AutoBlog  
June 21, 2009  
By Jonathan Ramsey  
Comments: 150  
Unique comments: 5

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## Articles

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### [Dear Drunk Driver: You Give Alabama Fans A Bad Name](#)

Bleacher Report

July 27, 2009

By Cameon Shiflett

Comments: 945

Unique comments: 709

Dear Drunk Alabama Driver,

I came across your truck on Grants Mill last night on the way to pick up my sister from her friend's house and immediately thought "Someone has to be hurt in that car" when I realized that there was a young man standing outside the car trying to wave people down to help you.

Since I didn't have enough time to pull up and park I had to go up the road and turn around. And for those three minutes I thought "I hope I can make it in time to help that guy."

I didn't know if maybe you were a friend of mine that had been texting while driving and ran off the side of the road, or maybe someone's father that had dozed off because he was tired from all the late night diaper changes and bottle feedings, or worse, a family with little boys and girls screaming in the backseat because mommy and daddy weren't waking up.

When I finally got there I was told the other young guy didn't have a cell phone so I called 911 and tried to remember where I was and had to explain that I didn't know what had happened and I didn't know how long you had been there but that you were flipped over and was told someone would be there shortly.

Realizing that the seatbelt was strangling you, the guy that was there and I quickly did our best to remove you from the vehicle without moving you to try and help you get some air. But then we realized getting air was the least of your concerns.

You had a small cut on your forehead, one on your lip, and a small one on your leg that you wouldn't have even noticed had I not brought your attention to it. But you also couldn't walk straight and you were slurring your words asking if either one of us could take you to your fancy home in Greystone that was located about 10 minutes away.

When I realized that you were drunk out of your mind, I almost wished that I hadn't stopped. When I realized that you were wearing an Alabama shirt and had a Roll Tide tag on your car it made me want to throw up.

You could have killed anyone. Me, the guy that stopped to help you, the poor family that was heading back from church...anyone. You didn't even care. You knew that you would be put in jail for driving under the influence. As well you should have been. And you were trying to get away.

Luckily, the cops and even the ambulance workers knew you had been drinking within 30 seconds of being there. And none of us mentioned anything. The alcohol smell coming off of your clothes and your breath made it obvious even without the swaying and slurring.

"A deer ran out in front of me" you said as the officer asked you what had happened. I almost yelled out "Yeah! A DEER CALLED VODKA!" but after realizing that the cops were laughing at your excuse, I realized it wasn't necessary.

I hope I never see you in Bama Fever buying another car tag because you, sir are a disgrace to the university you root for. I guess money really isn't everything.

This was a letter I almost wrote to the man I saved last night. I decided against it, because well, I didn't catch his name. And I don't know that I would have cared even if I did catch his name honestly.

When this man stumbled out of the truck and I saw his Alabama shirt I wanted to be sick. This man could have killed someone wearing the shirt of the university I love so much. And the other guy that stopped to help (someone else that I didn't get the name of) felt the same way.

I ask that you please think before you drink and drive. I ask that while you are at a bar supporting your favorite team and taking a shot everytime your team get's a touchdown, that you have someone with you that isn't drinking to take you home. I ask that you remind the man sitting in front of you at the SEC Championship that while the loss sucks, killing themselves or someone else would be a lot worse.

Help protect the integrity of the team you love and support so much. Help protect your rival fans because without them there, what are you going to do? Help protect fellow B/R creatures and B/R creature's kids.

Remind yourself and them, that drinking and driving isn't cool under any circumstances.

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## [Twenty Ways to Lose Your License](#)

Article BB

July 12, 2009

By Josh McDowell

Comments: 827

Unique comments: 620

As anyone who has lost their license can attest, the privilege to drive is something many of us take for granted. All fifty States have a Governmental Department (such as the Department of Motor Vehicles) that monitors driving privileges, and has the ability to suspend or revoke driving privileges.

In December of 1975, the great Paul Simon released one of his biggest hits, "50 Ways to Leave you Lover". It hit number one on the billboard charts in February of the following year. It has been covered many times, in several different languages, including by the Muppets Floyd and Janice.

The cover versions reached their pinnacle in 1994 (in my humble opinion) when the Glam metal band Trixter, made two versions of this song on their album, Undercovers. Here is a link to the unplugged and underrated version: <http://new.music.yahoo.com/trixter/tracks/50-ways-to-leave-your-lover-unplugged-version-2545605>

Back to the topic at hand. Although every state is different when it comes to driver's license suspensions, many states have similar regulations. Below I have listed several ways that a person in Colorado may have their driver's license suspended or revoked. I am going to mention 20 ways under Colorado law, although there are certainly more ways than the twenty listed below.

Too many points in a given period of time (point suspension)

Drunk Driving Charges

Controlled substance violation

Failure to pay child support

An uninsured motorist

Financial responsibility

Outstanding Judgment or warrant (failing to pay court costs or missing a court appearance)

Vehicular Homicide

Vehicular Assault

Criminally Negligent Homicide (when a vehicle is used)

Defacing of property

Criminal Mischief on a vehicle (Juveniles only)

Failing to stop and render aid when injuries or death occurs

Habitual Traffic Offender

Two Drunk Driving convictions in a 5 year period

Three Drunk Driving convictions (lifetime)

Having been determined to be mentally incompetent

Three reckless driving convictions in two years

First or second degree perjury regarding ownership of a vehicle

Driving on a suspended license (consecutive suspension)

If any of these happen to you, or you lose your license any other way, you will need to reinstate your license before you are eligible to drive again in most states (legally, that is). You will need to check with your local Department of Revenue or Motor Vehicles to determine what is required to regain your driving privileges. Every state will have different rules and requirements.

#### About the Author:

Josh McDowell is a Colorado Springs DUI Attorney practicing in Criminal Defense, DUI, Misdemeanor and all other criminal charges. Go to our website to find out more about Colorado drunk driving laws.

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[Wales produces exceptionally graphic, educational film about the dangers of texting while driving](#)

Engadget

August 16, 2009

By Laura June

Comments: 304

Unique comments: 228

Alright, [texting while driving](#)? Obviously stupid -- but that doesn't stop tons and tons of people from doing it. The Gwent Police department in Wales hopes that its newest PSA film will help deter this bad behavior. In much the same spirit as the drunk driving on prom night films we ourselves had to sit thorough in high school, this film is pretty graphic. Okay, it's actually shockingly graphic -- but we're

pretty sure that's the idea. Video is after the break.



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[Texting law hard for police to enforce](#)

Knox News

August 5, 2009

By Laura June

Comments: 249

Unique comments: 187

Murfreesboro police have issued only two citations for texting while driving since a new state law took effect almost a month ago, according to a police spokesman.

Enforcement has been challenging because most patrol officers find it hard to distinguish between texting and dialing a number on a cell phone, which is still legal.

Read full story at The Daily News Journal.

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[A Guide To The Cash For Clunkers Bill](#)

Jalopnik

June 10, 2009

By Matt Hardigree

Curious exactly how the [Cash For Clunkers](#) bill works? This handy chart and fact sheet provide all you need to know about trading in a beater Isuzu for a shiny new car.

At first, a look at the chart gives the impression there's a lot of money to be made by trading in your old car for a new one. Unfortunately, the compromises in this bill make it unlikely many people will be able to utilize it and save a great deal. There are two factors working against making this a worthwhile proposition and they both have to do with the logic of the bill.

First of all, operable vehicles are required and there aren't many people driving around with vehicles worth less than \$1,500. Many old crappy cars, in fact, can still demand up to \$2,500 on the open market. This means you're going to get, max, \$2000 for your trade-in. The least valuable qualifying cars, of course, are actually the more efficient compact vehicles, which makes getting the necessary 10 MPG improvement unlikely.

The second problem, stemming from the first, is quantifying the number of people who actually drive around in cars worth less than \$2,500 and can actually afford a new car. Our instinct tells us there aren't many people. This means people taking advantage of the program will, typically, have to be excited by the prospect of saving \$1,000 or \$2,000. These people should already have been swayed by intense discounting from automakers in recent months.

This isn't to say there aren't people who won't be able to get money from the program because, say, they have an old light duty truck and have been meaning to trade up to a newer car for a while. But the greatest number taking advantage of this deal may be people who can afford a new car and have, for one reason or another, decided not to buy one. These people will likely be lured in by dealers combining the \$4,500 voucher with \$2,000 in additional savings for big numbers like "\$6,500 off a new Focus" that ignore the actual original value of the trade-in.

Either way, the promise of raising car sales by 1,000,000 units this year depends heavily on people with either poor mathematical abilities or an irrational fear of new car dealerships.

#### [Cash For Clunkers](#) Fact Sheet

The [CARS program](#) is established at National Highway Traffic Safety Administration under the Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT is required to promulgate regulations to implement the program within 30 days. The program will run for one year from the date the regulations are promulgated. The program is authorized for \$4 billion which will provide for the purchase of approximately one million new vehicles.

#### **Older Trade-In Vehicles:**

- \* Must be in drivable condition;
- \* Have been continuously insured to the same owner for at least one year immediately prior to trade-in;
- \* Manufactured in model year 1984 or later; and
- \* Have a combined fuel economy of 18 mpg or less.

**New Vehicles (divided in to 4 categories)** - The mpg values are EPA combined city/highway fuel economy as posted on the window sticker of the new vehicle.

**Passenger Cars:** New passenger cars with mileage of at least 22 mpg are eligible for vouchers. If the mileage of the new car is at least 4 mpg higher than the old vehicle, the voucher will be worth \$3,500. If the mileage of the new car is at least 10 mpg higher than the old vehicle, the voucher will be worth \$4,500.

**Light-Duty Trucks:** New light trucks or SUVs with mileage of at least 18 mpg are eligible for vouchers. If the mileage of the new truck or SUV is at least 2 mpg higher than the old truck, the voucher will be worth \$3,500. If the mileage of the new truck or SUV is at least 5 mpg higher than the old truck, the voucher will be worth \$4,500.

**Large Light-Duty Trucks:** New large trucks (pick-up trucks and vans weighing between 6,000 and 8,500 pounds) with mileage of at least 15 mpg are eligible for vouchers. If the mileage of the new truck is at least 1 mpg higher than the old truck, the voucher will be worth \$3,500. If the mileage of the new truck is at least 2 mpg higher than the old truck, the voucher will be worth \$4,500.

**Work Trucks:** Consumers can trade in a pre-2002 work truck (defined as a pick-up truck or cargo van weighing from 8,500-10,000 pounds) and receive a voucher worth \$3,500 for a new work truck in the same or smaller weight class. Vouchers are limited to 7.5 percent of total funds. There are no EPA mileage measures for these trucks; however, because newer models are cleaner than older models, the age requirement ensures that the trade will improve environmental quality. Consumers can also "trade down," receiving a \$3,500 voucher for trading in an older work truck and purchasing a smaller light-duty truck weighing from 6,000 – 8,500 pounds.

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[Research on cell-phone-use-while-driving quashed by feds](#)

Jay Bookman (AJC Blog)

July 21, 2009

By Jay Bookman

Comments:179

Unique comments: 134

You've seen it done.

You've done it yourself.

And you probably know that it's dangerous.

However, research compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and now released thanks to a lawsuit documents the high risks involved in using the cell phone while driving. (We won't even go into texting, which tanks the danger to whole 'nother level.)

According to the New York Times:

The highway safety researchers estimated that cellphone use by drivers caused around 955 fatalities and 240,000 accidents over all in 2002....

The research mirrors other studies about the dangers of multitasking behind the wheel. Research shows that motorists talking on a phone are four times as likely to crash as other drivers, and are as likely to cause an accident as someone with a .08 blood alcohol content.

The three-person research team based the fatality and accident estimates on studies that quantified the risks of distracted driving, and an assumption that 6 percent of drivers were talking on the phone at a given time. That figure is roughly half what the Transportation Department assumes to be the case now.



The Times reports that the data in question were available back in 2003, but officials at the Department of Transportation blocked public release, fearing the agency would draw punitive action by congressional budget committees and criticism by the cell phone industry.

Rather than risk getting people angry, the federal agency charged with highway safety chose to just keep quiet about it, ignoring the fact that its silence probably contributed to the deaths of hundreds of people a year. Even now, the data are becoming available only because outside groups filed lawsuits forcing its release.

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### [The 25 Most Useful Car Technologies](#)

Jalopnik

August 4, 2009

By Wes Siler

Comments: 174

Unique comments: 101

The other day we talked about bad car technology, the stuff designed to remove you from the experience. Now, let's look at good technology, the stuff designed to make driving better for you, the driver.

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### [Drunk Driving Safer Than Texting While Driving](#)

Jalopnik

June 25, 2009

By Ray Wert

Comments: 161

Unique comments: 76

One of us is a text-messenger-aholic, constantly fighting the urge to text (or tweet) while driving. The boys from CarandDriver spent time determining just how bad it really is versus, say, drunk driving. Turns out drunk driving's safer. Here's why.

Former Jalopnik contributor Mike Austin wired a Racelogic VBox III data logger C&D's long-term Honda Pilot, recording vehicle speed via the VBox's GPS antenna and brake-pedal position and steering angle via the Pilot's OBD II port. He then wired a red light to the windshield to play the role of brake lights from an imaginary car ahead of the Pilot. When the red light lit up, the driver's supposed to hit the brakes.

Each trial, one with C&D young buck Jordan Brown and his trusty iPhone, the other with old man Eddie Alterman and a Samsung Alias (we're assuming he hasn't yet received his Hachette-assigned Blackberry yet), would have the driver respond five times to the light, and the slowest reaction time — the time between activation of the light and driver hitting the brakes — was dropped.hey'd

How'd they fare? Let's let Mike tell us how Jordan Brown fared:

Intern Brown's baseline reaction time at 35 mph of 0.45 second worsened to 0.57 while reading a text, improved to 0.52 while writing a text, and returned almost to the baseline while impaired by alcohol, at 0.46. At 70 mph, his baseline reaction was 0.39 second, while the reading (0.50), texting (0.48), and drinking (0.50) numbers were similar. But the averages don't tell the whole story. Looking at Jordan's slowest reaction time at 35 mph, he traveled an extra 21 feet (more than a car length) before hitting the brakes while reading and went 16 feet longer while texting. At 70 mph, a vehicle travels 103 feet every second, and Brown's worst reaction time while reading at that speed put him about 30 feet (31 while typing) farther down the road versus 15 feet while drunk."

And C&D head honcho Eddie Alterman? He fared much worse.

While reading a text and driving at 35 mph, his average baseline reaction time of 0.57 second nearly tripled, to 1.44 seconds. While texting, his response time was 1.36 seconds. These figures correspond to an extra 45 and 41 feet, respectively, before hitting the brakes. His reaction time after drinking averaged 0.64 second and, by comparison, added only seven feet.

The results at 70 mph were similar: Alterman's response time while reading a text was 0.35 second longer than his base performance of 0.56 second, and writing a text added 0.68 second to his reaction time. But his intoxicated number increased only 0.04 second over the base score, to a total of 0.60 second.

So what does this mean — which is worse? It seems to us that if you are young and virile, it's safer to be drunk driving than it is to be texting while driving, simply because you're spending more time looking at the road even if you're inebriated. If, however, you're old n' busted, it's safer to be driven by one of those short community home vans. Also, they shouldn't be texting while driving because it's hard for them to see the little buttons to press. Silly old people — stick to drinking, not texting.

We've got video from this morning's Today Show where Mike and Eddie show Phil LeBeau how to hold a whiskey bottle properly behind the wheel coming shortly. Want to read more — head over to CarandDriver.

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[Why Are We So Shocked When Moms Drive Drunk?](#)

Jezebel

June 25, 2009

By Anna N.

Comments: 156

Unique comments: 90

Women's drunk driving arrests are rising, but Daniel Schuler, husband of the woman who killed herself and seven others by driving the wrong way on the Taconic State Parkway with a BAC of 0.19, says drinking didn't cause her crash.

According to the AP, arrests of women for driving under the influence of alcohol or drug rose 28.8% between 1998 and 2007. In that time, men's arrests fell by 7.5%. As of 2007, women got 18% of DUIs. They are drinking more, too — the number of women having four or more drinks a day rose from 1.5% 2.6% between 1992 and 2002, and doubled in women between the ages of 30 and 44. Some say these increases are caused by the pressures of the recession, in which women bear an increased responsibility for bringing in money while still taking care of their homes and children. Clinical psychologist Carol Goldman said, "because of that, they have a bigger burden than most men do. We have to look at the pressures on women these days. They have to be the supermom."

Dr. Petros Levounis of the Addiction Institute of New York says women often seek treatment for alcoholism at a later stage than men, and are more likely to conceal their drinking. But Daniel Schuler, whose wife Diane drove head-on into an SUV on the Taconic State Parkway, killing herself, her daughter, three nieces, and three men in the oncoming car, denies that alcoholism caused the crash. Although the equivalent of 10 shots of vodka was found in her blood, and even more undigested in her stomach, and an autopsy revealed high levels of THC, Mr. Schuler insists, "She is not an alcoholic. Something medically had to happen."

He cites a tooth abscess, a previous case of gestational diabetes, and a lump in her leg that "kept moving" as possible causes for the crash. He also denies that they were having problems in their marriage, contradicting a "bar friend" the New York Post identifies only as "Sheila," who supposedly said Diane Schuler's "marriage seemed a bit rocky, and I think she felt trapped by it . . . for the last couple of months. She didn't appear to be a happy person."

Though we don't know all the facts — and the Schuler family is considering exhuming Diane's body to conduct an independent autopsy — Daniel Schuler's claim that a tooth abscess rather than 10 shots of vodka caused his wife's crash seems like denial. It can be difficult for family and friends to admit when someone has an addiction problem, but the difficulty is compounded in the Schulers' case by a greater one: the shock of a mother causing harm to her children (her son Bryan was also in the car, and is recovering).

The AP's coverage of women's drunk driving is permeated with this shock. Mothers Against Drunk Driving CEO Chuck Hurley says, "Women are picking up some of the dangerously bad habits of men." And there's a hint of moral outrage in the assertion of Tom Meier, director of Drug Prevention and Stop DWI for Westchester County, that "we realized for the last two to three years, the pattern of more female drivers, particularly mothers with kids in their cars, getting arrested for drunk driving." He offers no numbers to back this up, but the AP tells us of a woman arrested after clubbing with her teenager, and another whose children let her car in fear at her drunkenness. Alcoholism is an old story, but the AP implies that this is new: these are women, these are moms.

Then again, the mom who kills her children is an old story too. With little evidence, Double X's Emily Yoffe writes, "It's hard not to speculate that this was a Medea-like act on Schuler's part." She then quotes a New York Daily News commenter named DougInHouston, who shares this story:

39 years ago, on the day my dad told my mom that he was leaving us for another women, she drove the car head-one [sic] into a tree. I was in the front seat and my two sisters were in the back. It was a biga\$\$ car so luckily none of us were seriously injured. I took the worst of it, cracked skull and broken arm from smashing into the dash board. And yes I had my seat belt on. Back then we only had lap belts... no shoulder harnesses. She said she couldn't see because of the tears in her eyes. But I could see her and she wasn't crying. She was just really really mad.

Schuler's actions were irresponsible, and they had terrible, tragic consequences. But do we need to brand her as a woman scorned? Do we need to subject her remaining family to our double outrage, for the crimes not only of driving under the influence but of being a bad mom? Of course, Diane Schuler bears the blame for the deaths of the children in her care. But by heaping extra shock on the situation because she was a woman and a mother, we only perpetuate the stereotype that there is a single kind of person who is an alcoholic. And we make it harder for men like Daniel Schuler to see the warning signs in people they love.

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[New Jersey bill aims to ban driver's use of GPS while driving](#)

AutoBlog

June 21, 2009

By Jonathan Ramsey

Comments: 150

Unique comments: 5

It is already illegal to manually use a cell phone for texting or calling while driving in New Jersey. A state legislator has aimed at the next in-car distraction: GPS devices. Democratic Assemblyman Harvey Smith wants a ban on manually programming GPS devices while driving. You would need to pull over to input your destination, or have a voice-operated unit. Punishment otherwise would be a \$100 fine.

Probably every single one of us has had to drive defensively around someone who was obviously not paying attention to their driving. At this point, the question in New Jersey is how many activities are they going to ban? And what makes a GPS unit worse than an MP3 player or those folks who drive with their knees while they eat?

Another Assemblyman, John Wisniewski, had proposed a blanket ban on distracted driving in 2006 but that was passed over in favor of the cell phone-specific ban. New Jersey also already has a law against careless driving, which carries a \$100 fine and two points on your license. Smith's proposed law would give New Jersey officers -- Smith is an undersheriff -- a specific behavior to target, but it all seems a bit scattershot in light of the copious distracting activities drivers engage in. Hat tip to Rich!

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# Appendix D

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## ARTICLES

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1. [3 Teens Killed, 6 Hurt In SUV Rollover](#)  
News4Jax.com  
June 5, 2009  
Comments: 2,494  
Unique Comments: 1,167
2. [Cash for Clunkers To Be Suspended](#)  
The Huffington Post  
July 30, 2009  
By Tom Krisher (The Associated Press)  
Comments: 1,046  
Unique Comments: 785
3. [Dear Drunk Driver: You Give Alabama Fans A Bad Name](#)  
bleacher report  
July 27, 2009  
By Cameon Shiflett  
Comments: 945  
Unique Comments: 709
4. [SUV Rollover Kills 10 Illegal Immigrants](#)  
AOL News  
June 8, 2009  
By The Associated Press  
Comments: 939  
Unique Comments: 601
5. [Twenty Ways to Lose Your License](#)  
Article BB  
July 12, 2009  
By Josh McDowell  
Comments: 827  
Unique Comments: 620
6. [RECARO Car Seat Review And Giveaway](#)  
Two of a Kind, Working on a Full House  
July 1, 2009  
Comments: 604  
Unique Comments: 58
7. [Auto Breaking Ads – Mercedes-Benz Capitalizes on the Quest for Vehicle Safety](#)  
TrendHunter  
July 7, 2009  
By Shelby Lee Walsh  
Comments: 500

Unique Comments: 375

8. [Wales produces exceptionally graphic, educational film about the dangers of texting while driving](#)  
engadget  
August 16, 2008  
By Laura June  
Comments: 303  
Unique Comments: 227
9. [No Automakers Meet Obama's New Fuel Economy Standard](#)  
Jalopnik  
May 19, 2009  
By Matt Hardigree  
Comments: 294  
Unique Comments: 163
10. [Author: Obama's Proposed Emissions & Mileage Standards Would Kill More Americans than the Iraq War](#)  
Ace of Spades HQ  
May 19, 2009  
By Gabriel Malor  
Comments: 257  
Unique Comments: 241
11. [Texting law hard for police to enforce](#)  
knoxnews.com  
August 5, 2009  
By Mark Bell (The Daily News Journal)  
Comments: 259  
Unique Comments: 187
12. [A Guide To The Cash For Clunkers Bill](#)  
Jalopnik  
June 10, 2009  
By Matt Hardigree  
Comments: 215  
Unique Comments: 106
13. [Obama Administration To Triple Workers In Cash for Clunkers](#)  
The Huffington Post  
August 17, 2009  
By Ken Thomas and Stephen Manning  
Comments: 206  
Unique Comments: 156

14. [REPORT: Ford Focus is top-selling Cash For Clunkers car, nearly half buying domestic](#)  
Autoblog  
August 3, 2009  
By Chris Shunk  
Comments: 201  
Unique Comments: 5
15. [Research on cell-phone-use-while-driving quashes by feds](#)  
ajc  
July 21, 2009  
By Jay Blackman  
Comments: 179  
Unique Comments: 134
16. [New Jersey bill aims to ban driver's use of GPS while driving](#)  
Autoblog  
June 21, 2009  
By Jonathan Ramsey  
Comments: 150  
Unique Comments: 6
17. [REPORT: NHTSA may mandate amber turn signals](#)  
Autoblog  
July 2, 2009  
By Chris Shunk  
Comments: 149  
Unique Comments: 9
18. [Government Motors Announces Rebate Program](#)  
The Elephant Bar  
July 25, 2009  
By Bill Roberts  
Comments: 148  
Unique Comments: 7
19. [Rear-Facing Car Seats Safest for Kids Up to Age 4](#)  
ABC News  
July 12, 2009  
By Dan Childs  
Comments: 134  
Unique Comments: 101
20. [Senators to introduce legislation banning texting while driving](#)  
engadget  
July 29, 2009  
By Donald Melanson  
Comments: 129  
Unique Comments: 97



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**Articles**

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[3 Teens Killed, 6 Hurt In SUV Rollover](#)

News4Jax.com

June 5, 2009

Comments: 2,494

Unique Comments: 1,167

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla.** -- Three Ed White High Schools students died and six other young people were hospitalized after an SUV carrying all nine flipped several times and crashed on Interstate 295 Friday morning.

The Florida Highway Patrol said the victims were all teenagers headed for a day at the beach rather than attending the last day of school when a rear tire blew out and the driver lost control. Duval County school officials confirm that two ninth-grade students and one 11th-grader died in the wreck.

The FHP said all nine victims were in a Ford Explorer that overturned while northbound just before New Kings Road about 8:30 a.m.

"We believe the left rear tire may have separated -- we're still investigating that," FHP Lt. Bill Leeper said. "The driver lost control, traveled over onto the shoulder of the roadway, struck a light pole."

According to Leeper, everyone except the driver -- 15-year-old Brandon Hodges -- was ejected from the SUV. The FHP believes Hodges was the only person wearing a seat belt. One victim was one found 200 feet from the vehicle.

Five people were airlifted to Shands-Jacksonville Medical Center, where two died and the other three were in critical condition. Three other victims were transported to Baptist Medical Center.

VICTIMS OF TRAGEDY ON I-295		
John Kiely	15	Died at scene
Kimber Krebbs	15	Died at Shands
Dennis Stout	17	Died at Shands
Brandon Hodges	15	Driver - at Baptist with minor injuries
Rebecca Pilkinton	16	Front-seat passenger - critical condition at Shands
Jimmy Gracia	15	Critical condition at Baptist

Erin Hurst	15	Critical condition at Shands
Timothy Adam	15	Critical condition at Shands
Shannon Broome	15	Serious condition at Baptist

At Ed White High, some students said they got calls and text messages about the wreck. School officials said some students in a car driving in front of the SUV witnessed the crash and they showed up at the school in tears.

"Everybody was just crying," student Toni Meyers said. "They had guidance counselors out -- students wanted to talk about it."

"I haven't stopped thinking about it yet. It's just in my head," said student William Lawson, who witnessed the crash. "I saw them flip like once or twice, and the pole fell."

He was with other teens in the car in front of the SUV on 295 as the students headed toward the beach.

"I walked up and saw everybody just laying there, and I felt like I couldn't do anything. I just felt bad for everybody just seeing everybody just laying and seeing people dying," Lawson said.

He said he ran to his friend Krebbs and told her, "It's gonna be OK. It's gonna be all right." The 15-year-old girl didn't survive.

Duval County schools spokeswoman Jill Johnson said grief counselors were rushed to campus to speak with students before early dismissal on the last school day of the year. She said counselors would be available at the school again on Monday beginning at 8 a.m., which is a post-planning day for teachers.

There will also be a prayer service and vigil for the victims of the crash from 6 p.m. to midnight Saturday at Real Life Christian Fellowship on Lennox Avenue on the Westside.

"My heart and my prayers go out to each and every parent," said parent Reba Brown as she came to pick up her daughter, who knows at least three of the victims. "I hope God can lift them all."

Principal James Clark -- who is retiring in a few days -- had to notify the student body and faculty of the wreck. He said the victims were all good students -- several of them on the honor roll.

"It's a tragedy any time we lose a kid," Clark said. "Two of these were ninth-graders; one was and 11th-grader. I knew most of them -- knew them by sight or name; talked to them almost every day. It's certainly going to be there -- that memory -- for a long time."

Emergency room doctors at Shands said all five victims they received suffered from severe trauma. The three who survived were rushed into surgery.

"When we have moments to step back and reflect. It's extremely difficult," Dr. Miren Schinco said. "I had to talk to a family -- that was extremely difficult. I have children of this age, and they went to the beach with their friends."

All northbound lanes of I-295 northbound lanes were closed at New Kings Road for nearly an hour. All lanes reopened by 9:45 a.m., but traffic remained slow much of the morning while FHP investigators conducted their investigation and a tow truck loaded up the damaged vehicle.

The FHP said charges were pending against the driver because he was driving on a learner's permit and no adult was in the car. Troopers said the investigation into the accident is ongoing, including the fact that there were more people in the vehicle than it was designed to carry.

According to the Ford Motor Company, Explorers seat only seven passengers. Troopers said they believe at least some of those injured were sitting in the very back, cargo area of the vehicle.

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### [Cash for Clunkers To Be Suspended](#)

The Huffington Post

July 30, 2009

By Tom Krisher (The Associated Press)

WASHINGTON — The White House said Thursday it was reviewing what has turned out to be a wildly popular "cash for clunkers" program amid concerns the \$1 billion budget for rebates for new auto purchases may have been exhausted in only a week.

Transportation Department officials called lawmakers' offices earlier Thursday to alert them of plans to suspend the program as early as Friday. But a White House official said later the program had not been suspended and officials there were assessing their options.

"We are working tonight to assess the situation facing what is obviously an incredibly popular program," White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said of the Car Allowance Rebate System. "Auto dealers and consumers should have confidence that all valid CARS transactions that have taken place to date will be honored."

Gibbs said the administration was "evaluating all options" to keep the program funded.

A Transportation Department official said the department was working with Congress and the White House to keep the program going. The administration officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the discussions.

The CARS program offers owners of old cars and trucks \$3,500 or \$4,500 toward a new, more fuel-efficient vehicle.

Congress last month approved the program to boost auto sales and remove some inefficient cars and trucks from the roads. The program kicked off last Friday and was heavily publicized by car companies and auto dealers.

Through late Wednesday, 22,782 vehicles had been purchased through the program and nearly \$96 million had been spent. But dealers raised concerns about large backlogs in the processing of the deals in the government system, prompting talk of a possible suspension.

A survey of 2,000 dealers by the National Automobile Dealers Association found about 25,000 deals had not yet been approved by NHTSA, or nearly 13 trades per store. It raised concerns that with about 23,000 dealers taking part in the program, auto dealers may already have surpassed the 250,000 vehicle sales funded by the \$1 billion program.

"There's a significant backlog of 'cash for clunkers' deals that make us question how much funding is still available in the program," said Bailey Wood, a spokesman for the dealers association.

Alan Helfman, general manager of River Oaks Chrysler Jeep in Houston, said he was worried that the government wouldn't pay for some of the clunker deals his dealership has signed because they aren't far enough along in the process.

His dealership has done paperwork on about 20 sales under the clunker program, but in some cases the titles haven't been obtained yet or the vehicles aren't yet on his lot.

"There's no doubt I'm going to get hammered on a deal or two," Helfman said.

The clunkers program was set up to boost U.S. auto sales and help struggling automakers through the worst sales slump in more than a quarter-century. Sales for the first half of the year were down 35 percent from the same period in 2008, and analysts are predicting only a modest recovery during the second half of the year.

So far this year, sales are running under an annual rate of 10 million light vehicles, but as recently as 2007, automakers sold more than 16 million cars and light trucks in the United States.

Even before the suspension, some in Congress were seeking more money for the auto sales stimulus. Rep. Candice Miller, R-Mich., wrote in a letter to House leaders on Wednesday requesting additional funding for the program.

"This is simply the most stimulative \$1 billion the federal government has spent during the entire economic downturn," Miller said Thursday. "The federal government must come up with more money, immediately, to keep this program going."

Michigan lawmakers planned to meet on Friday to discuss the program.

Brendan Daly, a spokesman for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said they would work with "the congressional sponsors and the administration to quickly review the results of the initiative."

General Motors Co. spokesman Greg Martin said Thursday the automaker hopes "there's a will and way to keep the CARS program going a little bit longer."

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[Dear Drunk Driver: You Give Alabama Fans A Bad Name](#)

bleacher report

July 27, 2009

By Cameon Shiflett

*Dear Drunk Alabama Driver,*

*I came across your truck on Grants Mill last night on the to pick up my sister from her friend's house and immediately thought "Someone has to be hurt in that car" when I realized that there was a young man standing outside the car trying to wave people down to help you.*

*Since I didn't have enough time to pull up and park I had to go up the road and turn around. And for those three minutes I thought "I hope I can make it in time to help that guy."*

*I didn't know if maybe you were a friend of mine that had been texting while driving and ran off the side of the road, or maybe someone's father that had dosed off because he was tired from all the late night diaper changes and bottle feedings, or worse, a family with little boys and girls screaming in the backseat because mommy and daddy weren't waking up.*

*When I finally got there I was told the other young guy didn't have a cell phone so I called 911 and tried to remember where I was and had to explain that I didn't know what had happened and I didn't know how long you had been there but that you were flipped over and was told someone would be there shortly.*

*Realizing that the seatbelt was strangling you, the guy that was there and I quickly did our best to remove you from the vehicle without moving you to try and help you get some air. But then we realized getting air was the least of your concerns.*

*You had a small cut on your forehead, one on your lip, and a small one on your leg that you wouldn't have even noticed had I not brought your attention to it. But you also couldn't walk straight and you were slurring your words asking if either one of us could take you to your fancy home in Greystone that was located about 10 minutes away.*

*When I realized that you were drunk out of your mind, I almost wished that I hadn't stopped. When I realized that you were wearing an Alabama shirt and had a Roll Tide tag on your car it made me want to throw up.*

*You could have killed anyone. Me, the guy that stopped to help you, the poor family that was heading back from church...anyone. You didn't even care. You knew that you would be put in jail for driving under the influence. As well you should have been. And you were trying to get away.*

*Luckily, the cops and even the ambulance workers knew you had been drinking within 30 seconds of being there. And none of us mentioned anything. The alcohol smell coming off of your clothes and your breath made it obvious even without the swaying and slurring.*

*"A deer ran out in front of me" you said as the officer asked you what had happened. I almost yelled out "Yeah! A DEER CALLED VODKA!" but after realizing that the cops were laughing at your excuse, I realized it wasn't necessary.*

*I hope I never see you in Bama Fever buying another car tag because you, sir are a disgrace to the university you root for. I guess money really isn't everything.*

*This was a letter I almost wrote to the man I saved last night. I decided against it, because well, I didn't catch his name. And I don't know that I would have cared even if I did catch his name honestly.*

*When this man stumbled out of the truck and I saw his Alabama shirt I wanted to be sick. This man could have killed someone wearing the shirt of the university I love so much. And the other guy that stopped to help (someone else that I didn't get the name of) felt the same way.*

I ask that you please think before you drink and drive. I ask that while you are at a bar supporting your favorite team and taking a shot everytime your team get's a touchdown, that you have someone with you that isn't drinking to take you home. I ask that you remind the man sitting in front of you at the SEC Championship that while the loss sucks, killing themselves or someone else would be a lot worse.

Help protect the integrity of the team you love and support so much. Help protect your rival fans because without them there, what are you going to do? Help protect fellow B/R creatures and B/R creature's kids.

Remind yourself and them, that drinking and driving isn't cool under any circumstances.

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[SUV Rollover Kills 10 Illegal Immigrants](#)

AOL News

June 8, 2009

By The Associated Press

SONOITA, Ariz. (June 7) - Ten illegal immigrants "stacked like wood" in the back of a sports utility vehicle crammed with at least 27 people were killed when the driver lost control and rolled over on a remote southern Arizona highway, authorities said Sunday.

The Ford Excursion had no rear seat and most of the men and women were ejected when the SUV crashed just before midnight Saturday near Sonoita, about 40 miles southeast of Tucson. Authorities said all the victims are believed to be illegal immigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Equador and perhaps Mexico.

Arizona Department of Public Safety spokeswoman Joy Craig told The Associated Press that the remote area where the crash happened is a route commonly used by those smuggling illegal immigrants into the U.S.

"We see the people stacked like wood frequently," she said. "If they had had the right number of people in there and they all had their seat belts on, they would have lived."

A dozen people injured in the crash were treated at area hospitals and authorities were looking for possibly more.

The identity of the driver, passengers and the vehicle's owner are being withheld pending their identification and notification of relatives. Many victims did not have ID, Craig said. If the driver survives, Craig said he would likely be charged.

"Basically, this is like a 10-time homicide scene," she said.

Initially, Craig said there were 22 victims, but several left the crash scene and sought help from businesses in the Sonoita area.

U.S. Border Patrol has eight men who were treated at local hospitals in custody, Border Patrol spokesman Omar Candelaria said.

"There was no rear seat in the (Ford) Excursion. They stack live people, as many as they can, like stacking wood," Craig told The Associated Press.

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## Twenty Ways to Lose Your License

Article BB

July 12, 2009

By Josh McDowell

As anyone who has lost their license can attest, the privilege to drive is something many of us take for granted. All fifty States have a Governmental Department (such as the Department of Motor Vehicles) that monitors driving privileges, and has the ability to suspend or revoke driving privileges.

In December of 1975, the great Paul Simon released one of his biggest hits, "50 Ways to Leave you Lover". It hit number one on the billboard charts in February of the following year. It has been covered many times, in several different languages, including by the Muppets Floyd and Janice.

The cover versions reached their pinnacle in 1994 (in my humble opinion) when the Glam metal band Trixter, made two versions of this song on their album, Undercovers. Here is a link to the unplugged and underrated version: <http://new.music.yahoo.com/trixter/tracks/50-ways-to-leave-your-lover-unplugged-version-2545605>

Back to the topic at hand. Although every state is different when it comes to driver's license suspensions, many states have similar regulations. Below I have listed several ways that a person in Colorado may have their driver's license suspended or revoked. I am going to mention 20 ways under Colorado law, although there are certainly more ways than the twenty listed below.

1. Too many points in a given period of time (point suspension)
2. [Drunk Driving](#) Charges
3. Controlled substance violation
4. Failure to pay child support
5. An uninsured motorist
6. Financial responsibility
7. Outstanding Judgment or warrant (failing to pay court costs or missing a court appearance)
8. Vehicular Homicide
9. Vehicular Assault
10. Criminally Negligent Homicide (when a vehicle is used)
11. Defacing of property
12. Criminal Mischief on a vehicle (Juveniles only)

13. Failing to stop and render aid when injuries or death occurs
14. Habitual [Traffic](#) Offender
15. Two [Drunk Driving](#) convictions in a 5 year period
16. Three [Drunk Driving](#) convictions (lifetime)
17. Having been determined to be mentally incompetent
18. Three reckless driving convictions in two years
19. First or second degree perjury regarding ownership of a vehicle
20. Driving on a [suspended license](#) (consecutive suspension)

If any of these happen to you, or you lose your license any other way, you will need to reinstate your license before you are eligible to drive again in most states (legally, that is). You will need to check with your local Department of Revenue or Motor Vehicles to determine what is required to regain your driving privileges. Every state will have different rules and requirements.

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[RECARO Car Seat Review And Giveaway](#)

Two of a Kind, Working on a Full House

July 1, 2009

By Dee



When looking for new products, I look for items that will keep my child safe. Safety is top priority to any mom, but sometimes we aren't aware of all the options. I used the car seat that I got for my baby shower and never paid much attention to other brands.

I have recently had the opportunity to learn about everything that [RECARO](#) has to offer. RECARO has over 100 years of company history and experience in vehicle seat construction. They have learned how to provide both safety and comfort for the whole family. In 2005, they dove into the market of [Child](#)

[restraints](#) in the United States.

The attention that they paid to safety is fantastic. The [RECARO child Safety Seats](#) were inspired by Racing seats. Each seat is designed to provide maximum safety in the event of an accident. The RECARO Side Impact Protection makes me feel like my son is as safe as possible.



RECARO Como





RECARO sent us their [Signo Convertible Car Seat](#) in midnight desert for my son. You can view the whole demo if you click, [here](#).



**RECARO Signo Features:**

- up to 8 years
- 5-30 lbs. rear facing
- 20-70 lbs. forward facing
- up to 50 inches
- Original RECARO Side Impact Protection
- 5-point Harness System
- Double Wall Head Support
- Recline Position
- Ergonomic Shape
- Microfiber Cover
- Top Tether
- Latch Storage
- Ventilation System
- Latch Bar
- 3-point Seat Belt Guide

The Recaro Signo arrived in this box. We immediately took it out and read all of the instructions. We had the complete concept in just a few minutes.

Evan was so excited about his new car seat. He wanted to sit in it as soon as we took it out of the box and we let him so that we could adjust the straps and headrest. I was amazed that you can adjust the headrest to protect your child's head-there are infinite adjustments with the Signo headrest. Not only is it safer, but it helps when they fall asleep in the car. With his old car seat, I would always look back and see his head slumped forward. He has fallen asleep several times since we've had the Signo and his head always stays put.



He also enjoys it because he sits up higher in this seat. It has an amazing amount of padding and I wish they had seats in my size. There is even fabric where you snap the buckles in. In the summer time. That part is HOT and the fabric protects his little legs.

I could go on and on about the amazing features of the Signo. The cover is microfiber and can be hand washed. We all know how gross children can make these seats. I am looking forward to using the recline feature with my daughter. I never knew that convertible car seats could recline when facing backwards. Since it holds children 5-70 pounds, this is the only car seat you'd have to buy!

We have had the pleasure of using the RECARO Signo for about two months and I love everything about it. The only thing that I would add is a cup holder. Evan keeps trying to put his sippy cup somewhere because his old car seat had a cup holder. As far as structure and comfort goes, we all give the RECARO Signo two thumbs up!

RECARO carries many other seats including the [Vivo and Vivo Lite](#).



-Ventilation System

These seats are High Back Boosters. You can view the full Demo [here](#). Their features include:

- Holds child from 3-12 years
- 30-100 lbs.
- up to 59 inches
- RECARO Side Impact Protection
- Adjustable Headrest
- 3 Seating Positions
- Innovative Belt Routing System
- Vivo has the Microfiber Cover
- One Hand Headrest Adjustment
- Reinforced Aluminum Structure

The Vivo and Vivo lite are both adorable and extremely safe for your growing child. There is comfortable padding and an adjustable backrest. They each have a carrying handle so that they can be easily transported between vehicles. The only difference between the Vivo and the Vivo lite is the cover material. The Vivo comes with a microfiber cover or microfiber with soft mesh inserts and the Vivo lite comes in a breathable fabric/mesh inserts combination.

Our family recommends RECARO to everyone we know. To learn more about their company and other products, visit the [RECARO](#) website.

**Buy It!**

There are many stores and websites where you can purchase RECARO products. For a full list of those locations, visit their [website](#). On the RECARO website, you can purchase the [Signo](#) for \$289.99 and the [Vivo](#) and [Vivo Lite](#) for \$99.99.

**WIN IT!!!**

RECARO is giving a Vivo or Vivo Lite Car Seat to one of my readers!

To enter, visit [RECARO](#) and tell me if you'd rather have the Vivo or Vivo Lite and which color you would choose. **This is required and must be done before the extra entries count!**

**EXTRA ENTRIES!**

You can do any of these things for an extra entry. Make sure to leave a separate comment for EACH thing you do.

- 1- For TWO extra entries, Subscribe to my blog via email.
- 2- For THREE extra entries, blog about the Baby Bash and this giveaway. Be sure to link back to this post AND [RECARO](#).
- 3- Follow me on twitter AND tweet about this giveaway! **You can tweet once a day for an extra entry every day!!** You can copy and paste: **1st Baby Bash Giveaway- WIN a RECARO Car Seat @twoofakind <http://bit.ly/bR9Wk>**
- 4- Add my Baby Bash button to your blog.
- 5- Follow my blog.
- 6- For FIVE extra entries, purchase any product from [RECARO](#) before the end of the giveaway.

Contest ends at 11:59pm EST on July 20th when I will draw a winner at random. PLEASE leave your email address if it is not visible on your profile. I will notify the winner will have 36 hours to respond!

Open to US Only!

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[Auto Breaking Ads – Mercedes-Benz Capitalizes on the Quest for Vehicle Safety](#)

TrendHunter

July 7, 2009

By Shelby Lee Walsh

Breaks are one of the most important features a car can have and Mercedes-Benz attempts to capitalize on people’s constant quest for vehicle safety. Their print ads for their “Brake Assist Plus” feature claims to have “Extra braking force when you need it.”

The ads depict literal numbers quickly coming to a halt in the face of a mother with a stroller, a dog and a kid running across the street. This campaign is very visual and very effective.

\*\*\*\*\*

[Wales produces exceptionally graphic, educational film about the dangers of texting while driving](#)

engadget

August 16, 2008

By Laura June

Alright, [texting while driving](#)? Obviously stupid -- but that doesn't stop tons and tons of people from doing it. The Gwent Police department in Wales hopes that its newest PSA film will help deter this bad behavior. In much the same spirit as the drunk driving on prom night films we ourselves had to sit thorough in high school, this film is pretty graphic. Okay, it's actually shockingly graphic -- but we're pretty sure that's the idea. Video is after the break.



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[No Automakers Meet Obama's New Fuel Economy Standard](#)

Jalopnik

May 19, 2009

By Matt Hardigee

The just-announced [fuel economy policy changes](#) demand 39 MPG for cars and 30 MPG for [light trucks](#). A look at the data shows not a single automaker currently meets the new guidelines proposed today. *Update.*

Using the Model-Year 2009 Fleet Fuel Economy standards provided by the National Highway Safety Transportation Administration (NHTSA), we determined the current ratings for passenger cars and light trucks and compared them to the goal for each of the major automakers selling cars in the U.S. A few automakers, like KIA and Hyundai, report their data separately because of a different ownership arrangement. We also took a look at what barriers exist for them reaching those standards.

*UPDATE: The Obama Administration contacted us to tell us the originally reported numbers of [42 MPG](#) for cars and [27 MPG](#) for light trucks were wrong. Instead, they're requiring an average of 39 MPG for cars and 30 MPG for light trucks. We've made the proper adjustments but even with these different numbers no one meets either requirement.*

## **BMW**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 27.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -11.5 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 23.1 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.9 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** BMW currently offers no hybrid or electric vehicles and, as a matter of practice, has been *increasing* displacement not decreasing it. The use of diesel engines is a step in the right direction but they're well behind where they need to be.

## **Chrysler**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 28.3 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -10.7 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 23.9 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.1 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Chrysler's biggest problem, in general, is the lack of appealing small cars with good fuel economy. Lacking any realistic vehicle on the horizon, the Chrysler-FIAT deal was envisioned to solve this issue. Let's see how that works out for them.

## **Daimler**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 27.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -11.5 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 20.6 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -9.4 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Mercedes-Benz may have to reconsider its policy of bringing over G-wagens and GL-wagens if it doesn't want to pay a fine, as the light truck numbers are low. The company has hinted at a smaller, possibly electric, model to bring up the average mileage but how many electric smarts do you need to outweigh an AMG G55?

## **Ford**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 31.1 MPG (excluding foreign import)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -7.9 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 24.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -5.3 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Ford sells a lot of trucks. Despite fluctuations in fuel prices, the F-Series is bread + butter for the company. The addition of EcoBoost should help propel passenger vehicles to a higher overall value, and rumors of similar turbo'ed engines in the pickups should help as well.

## **GM**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 31.3 MPG (excluding foreign import)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -7.7 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 22.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -7.5 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Barriers? What Barriers? The Volt will save everything... right? GM could be a victim of its own success if it turns out they start selling far more Camaros than hybrids and other fuel efficient vehicles.

## **Honda**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 36.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -2.5 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 26.2 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -3.8 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Honda typically ranks highest among brands, so they're doing pretty well. But maybe now we know why they keep delaying the NSX.

## **Hyundai**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 33.2 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -5.8 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 25.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -4.3 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Unlike most Asian brands, Hyundai has picked up steam by moving *away* from greener vehicles. Will the Genesis sedan and coupe cut into the gains made by their dinky little Korean hatches?

## **Kia**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 33.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -5.3 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 24.4 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -5.6 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Kia has one big barrier to better fuel economy and it's the Kia Borrego. Since no one seems to want the \$40K truck we don't see Kia having a hard time cutting it out of the lineup.

## **Mazda**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 32.2/31.0 MPG (Import/Domestic)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.8 MPG/8.0 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 26.6 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -3.4 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** The only hybrid vehicle in the Mazda lineup is a rebadged Ford Escape and, so far as we know, diesel hasn't been considered an option. While the Mazda3 gets good mileage it's always placed Zoom-Zoom over glug-glug.

## **Mitsubishi**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 29.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -9.5 MPG



**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 26.1 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -3.9 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** The one saving grace for Mitsubishi, as it languishes in the U.S., is the [iMiev](#) electric car. But can the company produce enough electrics and hold out long enough to make it economically feasible?

#### **Nissan**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 30.1/34.0 MPG (Import/Domestic)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -8.9 MPG/ 5.0 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 23.5 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.5 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Nissan has built a reputation around their VQ V6 and don't seem intent on taking it out of any of their vehicles. To balance this, they'll try to use the Nissan Cube and other small cars, but they'll have to do better than the also-ran Sentra

#### **Porsche**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 27.0 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -12.0 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 19.3 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -10.7 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Porsche has historically been more content to pay fees than reform their ways given they're a performance brand. The profitable Cayenne, as well, presents a challenge. They could combine with VW to raise the Porsche average, but at the price of lowering VW's.

#### **Subaru**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 29.0 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -10.0 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 28.4 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -1.6 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Subaru builds cars disproportionately more fun than you'd expect and the popularity of vehicles like the WRX and the lack of a small, under-powered economy car is a threat to the brand's overall mileage. Could we see the return of the Justy hatchback?

#### **Suzuki**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 32.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.3 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 25.7 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -4.3 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** The current Suzuki lineup is so random and confusing it's hard to know where they could go. With the exception of the SX4 and Grand Vitara there aren't any products with much name recognition. Just scrap the whole thing and bring us the [Cappuccino](#).

#### **Toyota**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 38.1/35.9 MPG (Import/Domestic)

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -0.9 MPG/3.1 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 25.8 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -4.2 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Unless Toyota discontinues the Prius and decides to

make the Tacoma V8-only, the automaker is moving in the right direction. Let's just hope this doesn't torpedo plans for a new Supra although we fear it might.

**VW**

**2009 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 30.2 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** -8.8 MPG

**2009 Light Truck Fleet Fuel Economy Rating:** 23.9 MPG

**Distance From 2016 Light Truck Fuel Economy Rating:** -6.1 MPG

**Barriers To Meeting New Fuel Economy Ratings:** Volkswagen's greatest environmental asset is the TDI engine. It's greatest weakness is the high price of diesel fuel and the possibility of Americans turning on their technology. The greatest barrier on the horizon is Porsche, so we can't imagine them combining.

**Conclusion**

Not a single automaker currently meets 2016 standards for fuel economy. In passenger cars, only Toyota and Honda, who have larger fleets of fuel-efficient cars are less than 10 MPG away from the proposed standards. This means companies will either have to radically alter their lineups, reduce the production of vehicles we actually want to drive, or invest heavily in alternative propulsion systems at a time when their capital is severely constrained. Good luck with that! Appliance vehicles, here we come!

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[Author: Obama's Proposed Emissions & Mileage Standards Would Kill More Americans than the Iraq War](#)

Ace of Spades HQ

May 19, 2009

By Gabriel Malor

Via my friend Dave, Steve Milloy suggests that [Obama's new automobile standards will result in thousands of American deaths each year.](#)

Obama's standards will require automakers to meet a 35 miles-per-gallon standard by 2016 — four years earlier than the same standard imposed by the Energy Security and Independence Act of 2007.

As discussed in my new book Green Hell, the only way for carmakers to meet these standard is to make smaller, lighter and deadlier cars.

The National Academy of Sciences has linked mileage standards with about 2,000 deaths per year. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that every 100-pound reduction in the weight of small cars increases annual traffic fatalities by as much as 715.

In contrast in the more than six years since the Iraq war began, there have been 4,296 deaths among American military personnel.

Read the whole thing.

\*\*\*\*\*



[Texting law hard for police to enforce](#)

knoxnews.com

August 5, 2009

By Mark Bell (The Daily News Journal)

Murfreesboro police have issued only two citations for texting while driving since a new state law took effect almost a month ago, according to a police spokesman.

Enforcement has been challenging because most patrol officers find it hard to distinguish between texting and dialing a number on a cell phone, which is still legal.

"It is difficult to differentiate texting from dialing," said Murfreesboro Police spokesman Kyle Evans. "Officers that have written the citations observed the person for a considerable length of time prior to conducting the stop, and the persons did not dispute the fact they were texting."

One driver even used the fact that he was texting as an excuse for speeding, according to Evans.

"Both of the officers were following the vehicles because they were speeding," he said.

The new law makes it illegal to both write and read text messages while driving, according to Tennessee law. No points are added to a person's license for violating the law, as long as no other infraction occurred.

One of the only exceptions to the law is that police and other emergency workers can still text, if they are doing so in the course of their official duties.

Morgan James said he believes that exception is unfair.

"How are they going to hold us to a higher standard," he said. "They're the ones who are supposed to be held to the higher standard. It's just not fair."

But it is the law, as shown in Public Acts, Chapter 201.

"Officers are permitted to use the phones and two-way communication for ... work-related issues," Evans said. "There's an exemption in the law."

According to Evans, many of the crashes that occur in Murfreesboro every day could be avoided if drivers would pay attention to the road.

"A motorist's main job is to watch the road and drive," Evans said. "With that said, it not illegal to listen to the radio or talk on the phone, so it is best to manage distractions and keep them to a minimum for the safest driving."

Texting while driving may be more hazardous than most think, according to several recent studies.

In a study released last week, the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute found that when drivers of heavy trucks texted, their collision risk was 23 times greater than when not texting. Dialing a cell phone

and using or reaching for an electronic device increased risk of collision about six times in cars and trucks.

The Virginia Tech researchers said the risks of texting generally applied to all drivers, not just truckers.

A separate report by Car and Driver magazine found that texting and driving is more dangerous than drunk driving.

The Governors Highway Safety Association, which represents state highway safety agencies, has said it does not doubt the dangers of texting and driving but does not support a ban because it would be difficult to enforce.

"There are a variety of challenges with distracted driving, and we commend the secretary for leading the effort to address this important highway safety issue," Barbara Harsha, the safety association's executive director, said in a statement.

The association "is particularly interested in strategies for enforcing texting and cell phone bans as well as technological applications that would limit or eliminate distractions," she said.

Texting grew from nearly 10 billion messages a month in December 2005 to more than 110 billion in December 2008, according to CTIA, the cellular phone industry's trade group.

Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have passed laws making texting while driving illegal. A group of Democratic members of Congress introduced legislation last week to impose a national ban on texting while driving.

It's a ban that 19-year-old Murfreesboro resident Ashley Parker says is needed. She was rear-ended by a car traveling more than 20 mph almost a month ago while in Nashville.

"I suffered whiplash and a mild concussion," she said. "The driver said he was truly sorry for what he'd done. I told him if he was truly sorry he should hang up his phone in the future while driving.

"I hope he's following my advice."

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[A Guide To The Cash For Clunkers Bill](#)

Jalopnik

June 10, 2009

By Matt Hardigree

Curious exactly how the [Cash For Clunkers](#) bill works? This handy chart and fact sheet provide all you need to know about trading in a beater Isuzu for a shiny new car.

At first, a look at the chart gives the impression there's a lot of money to be made by trading in your old car for a new one. Unfortunately, the compromises in this bill make it unlikely many people will be able to utilize it and save a great deal. There are two factors working against making this a worthwhile proposition and they both have to do with the logic of the bill.

First of all, operable vehicles are required and there aren't many people driving around with vehicles worth less than \$1,500. Many old crappy cars, in fact, can still demand up to \$2,500 on the open market. This means you're going to get, max, \$2000 for your trade-in. The least valuable qualifying cars, of course, are actually the more efficient compact vehicles, which makes getting the necessary 10 MPG improvement unlikely.

The second problem, stemming from the first, is quantifying the number of people who actually drive around in cars worth less than \$2,500 and can actually afford a new car. Our instinct tells us there aren't many people. This means people taking advantage of the program will, typically, have to be excited by the prospect of saving \$1,000 or \$2,000. These people should already have been swayed by intense discounting from automakers in recent months.

This isn't to say there aren't people who won't be able to get money from the program because, say, they have an old light duty truck and have been meaning to trade up to a newer car for a while. But the greatest number taking advantage of this deal may be people who can afford a new car and have, for one reason or another, decided not to buy one. These people will likely be lured in by dealers combining the \$4,500 voucher with \$2,000 in additional savings for big numbers like "\$6,500 off a new Focus" that ignore the actual original value of the trade-in.

Either way, the promise of raising car sales by 1,000,000 units this year depends heavily on people with either poor mathematical abilities or an irrational fear of new car dealerships.

#### [Cash For Clunkers](#) Fact Sheet

The [CARS program](#) is established at National Highway Traffic Safety Administration under the Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT is required to promulgate regulations to implement the program within 30 days. The program will run for one year from the date the regulations are promulgated. The program is authorized for \$4 billion which will provide for the purchase of approximately one million new vehicles.

#### **Older Trade-In Vehicles:**

- \* Must be in drivable condition;
- \* Have been continuously insured to the same owner for at least one year immediately prior to trade-in;
- \* Manufactured in model year 1984 or later; and
- \* Have a combined fuel economy of 18 mpg or less.

**New Vehicles (divided in to 4 categories)** - The mpg values are EPA combined city/highway fuel economy as posted on the window sticker of the new vehicle.

**Passenger Cars:** New passenger cars with mileage of at least 22 mpg are eligible for vouchers. If the mileage of the new car is at least 4 mpg higher than the old vehicle, the voucher will be worth \$3,500. If the mileage of the new car is at least 10 mpg higher than the old vehicle, the voucher will be worth \$4,500.

**Light-Duty Trucks:** New light trucks or SUVs with mileage of at least 18 mpg are eligible for vouchers. If the mileage of the new truck or SUV is at least 2 mpg higher than the old truck, the voucher will be worth \$3,500. If the mileage of the new truck or SUV is at least 5 mpg higher than the old truck, the voucher will be worth \$4,500.

**Large Light-Duty Trucks:** New large trucks (pick-up trucks and vans weighing between 6,000 and 8,500 pounds) with mileage of at least 15 mpg are eligible for vouchers. If the mileage of the new truck is at least 1 mpg higher than the old truck, the voucher will be worth \$3,500. If the mileage of the new truck is at least 2 mpg higher than the old truck, the voucher will be worth \$4,500.

**Work Trucks:** Consumers can trade in a pre-2002 work truck (defined as a pick-up truck or cargo van weighing from 8,500-10,000 pounds) and receive a voucher worth \$3,500 for a new work truck in the same or smaller weight class. Vouchers are limited to 7.5 percent of total funds. There are no EPA mileage measures for these trucks; however, because newer models are cleaner than older models, the age requirement ensures that the trade will improve environmental quality. Consumers can also "trade down," receiving a \$3,500 voucher for trading in an older work truck and purchasing a smaller light-duty truck weighing from 6,000 – 8,500 pounds.

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[Obama Administration To Triple Workers In Cash for Clunkers](#)

The Huffington Post

August 17, 2009

By Ken Thomas and Stephen Manning

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is tripling the number of workers processing Cash for Clunkers transactions as some dealers complain the government has been slow to reimburse them for the car incentives of up to \$4,500 per vehicle.

An administration official said Monday the Transportation Department hoped to have 1,100 public and private sector workers processing the vouchers by the end of the week, up from a work force of about 350 through the end of last week.

Employees at a department service center in Oklahoma City have taken the lead in processing the vouchers, the official said, and workers have responded to calls for voluntary overtime to process the forms. The official was not authorized to discuss the work force issues publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Dealers have reported submitting tens of thousands of dollars – in some cases more – worth of rebates to the federal government for repayment that are still outstanding. Many report they have been repaid for only a small fraction of the deals they made under the program, creating strain on cash flows at dealers nationwide.

Rick DeSilva, who owns Hyundai and Subaru dealerships in northern New Jersey, said an inspector from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which is overseeing the program, visited his offices Monday to review his dealerships' paperwork. Until now, none of the 70 Cash for Clunkers deals DeSilva made have been reimbursed.

"Every car that goes out, you are \$4,000 behind the 8-ball," said DeSilva, who is still owed about \$280,000.

The National Automobile Dealers Association applauded the boost in staff reviewing the dealer claims. "Anything that will speed up the dealer reimbursement process is welcome news," NADA spokesman Charles Cyrill said.

The government said Monday that dealers have submitted requests for rebates that total \$1.6 billion – more than half of the money provided to the program – through the online system set up to process and pay the claims. The program has led to more than 390,000 vehicle sales.

Rep. Joe Sestak, D-Pa., who is challenging Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter in the state's Democratic primary, urged President Barack Obama to increase staffing levels in a letter Sunday. Sestak wrote that many dealers face a loss on each transaction until the government reimburses them.

"Carrying a loss for an extended period will put them out of business – meaning more lost jobs," Sestak wrote.

With the increased staffing, the government's work force is much larger than originally anticipated. A week before Cash for Clunkers formally began July 27, NHTSA estimated it would need just 30 new hires and 200 contractor workers to handle the program over a six month period, according to the guidelines drafted by the agency.

But dealers flooded the online reimbursement system shortly after the program began, overwhelming the computer system and staff set up to process the deals. That led to big delays for dealers trying to file the paperwork they needed to get paid back for the rebates.

Under the program, car buyers are eligible for vouchers of \$3,500 or \$4,500 depending on the fuel efficiency of the vehicles they trade in and buy. Dealers subtract the rebate from the sales price, and then submit paperwork to the government certifying the sale with the assurance that the trade-in will be scrapped.

NHTSA has told dealers they can expect to wait 10 days to be repaid if their paperwork is in order and the deal is approved. But if there is a problem, dealers must resubmit their claim, leading to another potential waiting period. Dealers typically borrow money to put new cars on their lots and must repay lenders within a few days of a sale.

Government officials have said some of the submitted paperwork has been incomplete or inaccurate, leading to delays.

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[REPORT: Ford Focus is top-selling Cash For Clunkers car, nearly half buying domestic](#)

Autoblog

August 3, 2009

By Chris Shunk

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has processed 80,500 transactions so far, and the early winner of Cash For Clunkers appears to be the Ford Focus. *The Detroit News* is reporting that the Focus is the number one vehicle purchased under the government program, showing us why Ford's C-Segment vehicle [gained 43.6%](#) in July. Ford also saw an amazing 97% increase in Escape sales in July, a tally that was likely improved with the help of Cash For Clunkers.

The controversial and somewhat clumsy program is drawing plenty of attention for its popularity amongst car buyers, and Detroit automakers appear to be taking more than their fair share of sales. The White House says 47% of all vehicles sold through the bill so far come from US automakers; 2% higher

than the domestics' 45% overall share. Four of the top 10 vehicles purchased under the program come from domestic automakers, and over half of all vehicles were built in the States.

With so many orders in the cue, the Cash For Clunkers program will likely have to be pulled by Friday if more money isn't appropriated. The House voted last week to add another \$2 billion to the initiative's coffers, and the Senate will vote on the measure on Wednesday or Thursday.

To drum up support for more dollars, the White House is touting the program's value. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs says the average fuel economy increase so far is 9.4 mpg; a 61% increase verses the vehicles destined for a sodium silicate bath. So far, 83% of the vehicles traded in have been trucks, while 60% of the vehicles purchased under the program have been cars. The White House estimates that Cash For Clunkers will save the average car buyer \$700 - \$1,000 in gas prices during the life of the vehicle.

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[Research on cell-phone-use-while-driving quashes by feds](#)

ajc

July 21, 2009

By Jay Blackman

You've seen it done.

You've done it yourself.

And you probably know that it's dangerous.

However, research compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and now released thanks to a lawsuit documents the high risks involved in using the cell phone while driving. (We won't even go into texting, which tanks the danger to whole 'nother level.)

According to the New York Times:

The highway safety researchers estimated that cellphone use by drivers caused around 955 fatalities and 240,000 accidents over all in 2002....

The research mirrors other studies about the dangers of multitasking behind the wheel. Research shows that motorists talking on a phone are four times as likely to crash as other drivers, and are as likely to cause an accident as someone with a .08 blood alcohol content.

The three-person research team based the fatality and accident estimates on studies that quantified the risks of distracted driving, and an assumption that 6 percent of drivers were talking on the phone at a given time. That figure is roughly half what the Transportation Department assumes to be the case now.

The Times reports that the data in question were available back in 2003, but officials at the Department of Transportation blocked public release, fearing the agency would draw punitive action by congressional budget committees and criticism by the cell phone industry.

Rather than risk getting people angry, the federal agency charged with highway safety chose to just keep quiet about it, ignoring the fact that its silence probably contributed to the deaths of hundreds of people a year. Even now, the data are becoming available only because outside groups filed lawsuits forcing its release.

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[New Jersey bill aims to ban driver's use of GPS while driving](#)

Autoblog

June 21, 2009

By Jonathan Ramsey

It is already illegal to manually use a cell phone for texting or calling while driving in New Jersey. A state legislator has aimed at the next in-car distraction: GPS devices. Democratic Assemblyman Harvey Smith wants a ban on manually programming GPS devices while driving. You would need to pull over to input your destination, or have a voice-operated unit. Punishment otherwise would be a \$100 fine.

Probably every single one of us has had to drive defensively around someone who was obviously not paying attention to their driving. At this point, the question in New Jersey is how many activities are they going to ban? And what makes a GPS unit worse than an MP3 player or those folks who drive with their knees while they eat?

Another Assemblyman, John Wisniewski, had proposed a blanket ban on distracted driving in 2006 but that was passed over in favor of the cell phone-specific ban. New Jersey also already has a law against careless driving, which carries a \$100 fine and two points on your license. Smith's proposed law would give New Jersey officers -- Smith is an undersheriff -- a specific behavior to target, but it all seems a bit scattershot in light of the copious distracting activities drivers engage in. *Hat tip to Rich!*

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[REPORT: NHTSA may mandate amber turn signals](#)

Autoblog

July 2, 2009

By Chris Shunk

Some cars have red turn signal lamps, while others have an amber hue. Big deal, right? The National Highway Traffic Safety Association thinks it is, after finding that amber lights are 5.3% more effective at preventing crashes than the red blinkers. NHTSA came to that conclusion after comparing crash data of vehicles that switched from one color to another. Europe already mandates the amber turn signal, and NHTSA says that data from other agencies supports their findings. As it is, American cars sold in Europe already receive legal turn signal units – even if they aren't sold that way in America (see Chevrolet's C6 Corvette as an example).

NHTSA is now asking the public whether it should mandate amber turn signals for all vehicles sold in the States. Unfortunately for automakers, amber turn signals aren't exactly high fashion here in the U.S., as the vast majority of the signals are of the red blinking variety, likely because of cost considerations. While it's true that the auto industry is probably suffering from a case of far too many regulations, anything that can improve safety by up to 5.3% without costing an arm and a leg is probably worth considering. If NHTSA gives automakers a reasonable amount of time to implement the changes, automakers may be able to fit the change into the next design cycle.

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## [Government Motors Announces Rebate Program](#)

The Elephant Bar

July 25, 2009

By Bill Roberts

A federal rebate is bringing back customers after car sellers endured a spell of sagging sales. Vicki Duckett put herself behind the wheel of a new car Friday, and a \$4,500 rebate from the federal government helped get her there.

Duckett, of Boise, took home a 2009 Hyundai Sonata, which gets about 25 miles a gallon, while giving up her 1993 Mazda Navajo, which she says gets only 13 miles a gallon.

"It's a huge gas savings," said Duckett, who is buying from Bronco Motors in Boise. "It kind of all worked out for us."

Duckett is among the Idahoans taking advantage of the federal government's Car Allowance Rebate System - dubbed "cash for clunkers" - which gives new car buyers up to \$4,500 off qualified vehicles if they trade in their gas-guzzling older models. Dealers get a small fee for handling the clunkers, which will be subject to strict salvage rules that ensure the engines will be destroyed.

Dealers began registering Friday with the federal government to qualify for the program. The government Web site collapsed under the pressure of too many people trying to sign on at the same time, a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration spokesman said.

New-car dealers, which have seen anemic sales for much of the past year, think the clunkers rebate could increase business up to 20 percent. Used-car dealers think the rebate could raise the prices of older models as vehicles that otherwise might have gone to their lots go to salvage instead. And iSuppli Corp., which follows the auto tech market, worries that the bump in sales today could steal from sales later, when the country begins to emerge from the recession.

Some dealers laud the program for putting real money in the hands of consumers.

"It will help the producers, American consumers and employment," said D.J. Wiebold, general manager of Dan Wiebold Ford in Nampa.

By Friday afternoon, Wiebold already had 10 customers ready to buy new cars and dump their old ones. Grant Petersen Jr., president and CEO of Bronco Motors, which sells Nissans and Hyundais, had 25 potential sales lined up.

Petersen said his dealership has been making conditional sales with customers who have qualifying vehicles and the right paperwork for the program. They can take home new cars while Bronco Motors awaits word on its expected certification to be a part of the federal program. Wiebold is taking deposits on cars that people hope to get under the program.

While the government hopes to take about 250,000 old cars off the road, not every old vehicle qualifies.

Most vehicles must be from the 1984 model year or newer. Nathan Herren's 1978 F150 Ford pickup is too old. He jokes that his truck gets 10 miles to the gallon on a "good, mostly downhill travel day."



If the truck qualified, it might have headed to the boneyard. "\$4,500 is nothing to sneeze at," said Herren, who lives near Eagle. "That is way better than even a down payment."

Cash for clunkers, however, did get Duckett out of her normal shopping place for vehicles: used-car lots. Between the government rebate and dealer incentives, she figures she has saved about \$8,000 on the cost of her new car.

"I can see how this is an effective part of the stimulus," she said.

Used-car customers seem to be a main target for the rebate, Wiebold said. Wiebold is offering a 2009 Ford Focus for \$8,995, about \$7,000 off the retail price with the government rebate and other incentives. "You can't buy a used Focus for that," he said.

Used-car dealers aren't sure how the rebate for new cars will affect them. Petersen thinks older-model used cars will hold their value "because the supply is going to go away." But for people looking for that \$2,000 used car that will drive until it drops, the hunt may take longer than usual. "Those cars are not going to be easy to find," Petersen said.

Duckett plans to have her new car any day. She's pleased with her deal.

"I love this," she said. "My car is only worth about \$1,000."

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[Rear-Facing Car Seats Safest for Kids Up to Age 4](#)

ABC News

July 12, 2009

By Dan Childs

Vanessa Lal, 32, of Lake Zurich, Ill., said she considers herself fortunate that both of her children -- a 2-and-a-half-year-old daughter and a 9-month-old son -- took to the family's [rear-facing child car seat](#) well.

"I'm lucky -- both of my kids don't have too much of a problem with it," she said.

Lal, like many parents, follows the current guidelines from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) that children less than 1 year of age or lighter than 20 pounds should be placed in a [rear-facing child car seat](#) -- which positions young children facing backwards in the car's cabin -- in order to decrease the risk that they will be injured in an accident.

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[Senators to introduce legislation banning texting while driving](#)

engadget

July 29, 2009

By Donald Melanson

It's already been banned by a number of [states](#) and the District of Columbia, but a group of Democratic senators led by New York's Charles Schumer are now set to introduce legislation that would ban texting while driving throughout the United States. That, as you may be aware if you've been watching the news this past week, follows a study from the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, which found that truck drivers that texted while driving were 23 times more likely to get into an accident than non-texters -- to

say nothing of several calls for a ban from [major safety groups](#) over the years. While complete details on the proposed bill are still a bit light, it would apparently withhold 25% of the annual federal highway funding from states that did not comply with the ban, and would reportedly be modeled on the way the national drunken driving ban was introduced.

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