

## Despite concerns over distracted drivers, consumers value use of hands-free devices

### Overview

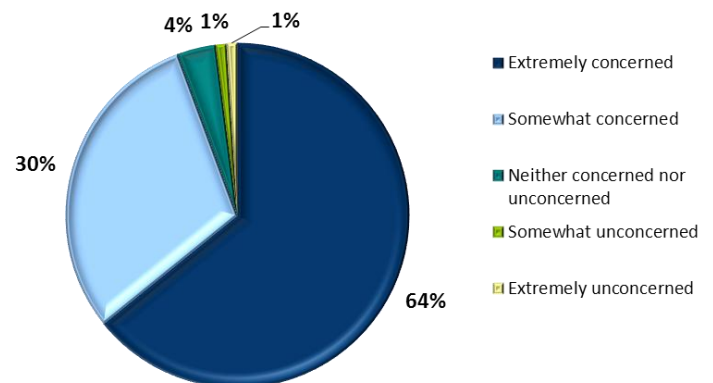
In the wake of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommending a ban on the use of hands-free communication devices that are not completely built-in to a vehicle in late 2011, Morpace asked consumers how they feel about issues such as distracted drivers and telematics components, which allow drivers to communicate hands-free in a vehicle while driving.

While there is clear concern about distracted drivers, which theoretically could include issues with the use of non built-in hand-held and hands-free communication devices in vehicles, the majority of consumers in the December 2011 Morpace Omnibus believe that such a ban would not be necessary and that the use of such devices will continue to be used despite the NTSB recommendation.

### Concern Over Distracted Drivers

A majority of consumers are either “extremely” (64 percent) or “somewhat concerned” (30 percent) about distracted drivers, according to the study. Responses increased among older consumers, and are consistent among cultural demographics. In fact between 90 and 97 percent of consumers among all demographics identified themselves as either “extremely concerned” or “somewhat concerned” about distracted drivers, whether the demographics was by age, income levels, ethnicity or marital status.

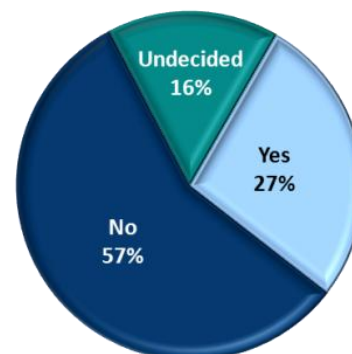
Concern Over Distracted Drivers



### Hands-free in-car devices

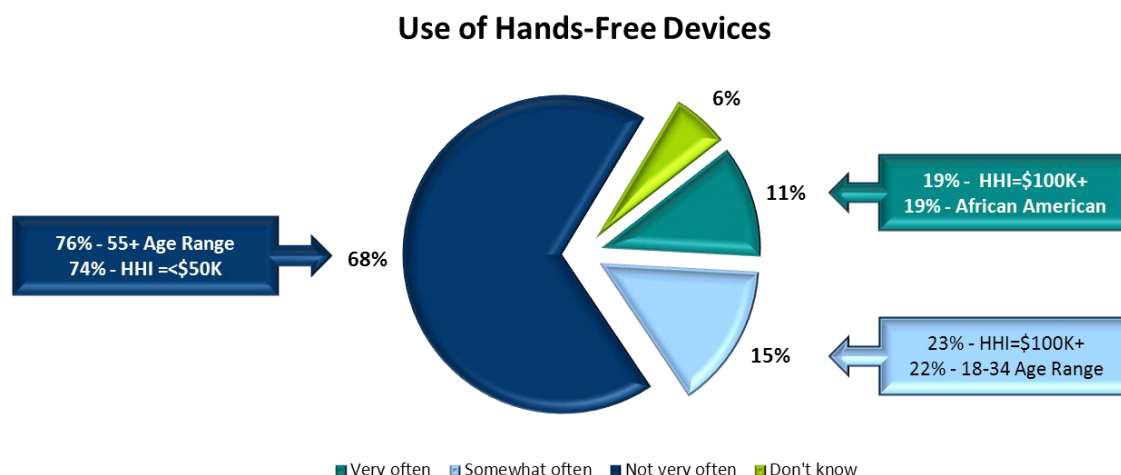
The study shows that consumers have a high comfort level with using hands-free devices. Only 27 percent of consumers feel that hands-free mobile phones or audio in-car devices should be made illegal. Fifty-seven percent don't feel they should be made illegal and 16 percent are undecided.

Should use of hands-free devices in a vehicle be made illegal?



Not surprising that 23 percent of younger consumers (ages 18-34) are less likely to feel such telematics devices should be made illegal, and 32 percent of older consumers (55 or over) feel hands-free devices should be made illegal for drivers to use in a vehicle. Household income had little impact when defining whether such devices should be made illegal. Twenty-seven percent of consumers who earn less than \$50,000, 29 percent earning \$50,000-99,999 and only 25 percent earning more than \$100,000 believe hands-free devices should be made illegal in vehicles.

## Consumers' use of hands-free devices



With a large percentage of consumers who want hands-free devices to remain legal, the common assumption might be that the majority of consumers already use these devices in their vehicle. That is not necessarily the case, according to the Morpace Omnibus. Among all demographics, 68 percent of consumers do not use a hands-free device “very often.” Fifteen percent use a hands-free mobile phone or audio in-car devices “somewhat often” and only 11 percent “very often.”

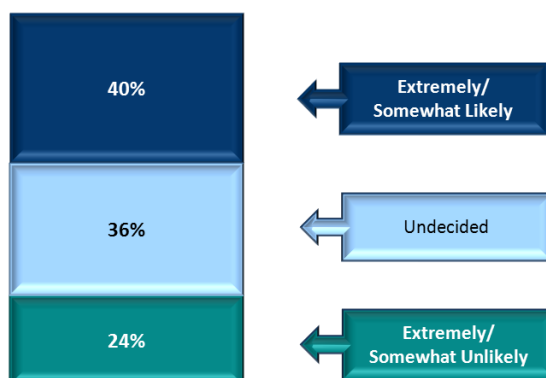
African American (19 percent) and Hispanic American (15 percent) consumers have a comparably larger incidence of using hands-free devices “very often” compared to other ethnical demographics. Among this group, consumers earning \$100,000 or more use hands-free devices “very often” more than 19 percent of the time.

### Likelihood of purchase if a ban is passed

When asked if a “ban was put into place that made it illegal to use communications devices while driving, how likely are you to purchase a vehicle that has a built-in, hands-free communication system?”, some consumers were undecided.

Forty-percent among all demographics are “extremely likely” or “somewhat likely” to purchase a vehicle that has a hands-free communication system. A smaller number of consumers (24 percent) are “somewhat unlikely” or “extremely unlikely” to make the same purchase and 36 percent are undecided. African American consumers (50 percent), consumers ages 18-34 (49 percent), consumers earning \$100,000 or more (49 percent) and Hispanics (47 percent) are least likely to care about making it illegal but considered themselves “extremely” or “somewhat likely” to purchase a vehicle that has a built-in, hands-free communications system.

### Likelihood to Purchase a Vehicle with Hands-free Communications if a Ban is Instituted



## Conclusion

It's too early to tell if a federal ban of hands-free, in-car communication devices not built-in to a vehicle is possible, or if the issue will be left up to the states. Regardless, it is clear that consumers have become used to telematics which allow them to talk on the phone or communicate wirelessly while driving. This data would suggest that support does not exist for a large-scale ban of hands-free devices, and that telematics providers will continue to have a market of interested consumers.

For further insights, or to explore research opportunities, contact Bryan Krulikowski, Morpace Vice President, at 248.514.5114 or [bkrulikowski@morpace.com](mailto:bkrulikowski@morpace.com).

*A total of 1,000 consumers were surveyed December 19 through 27, 2011 as part of the Morpace Omnibus.*