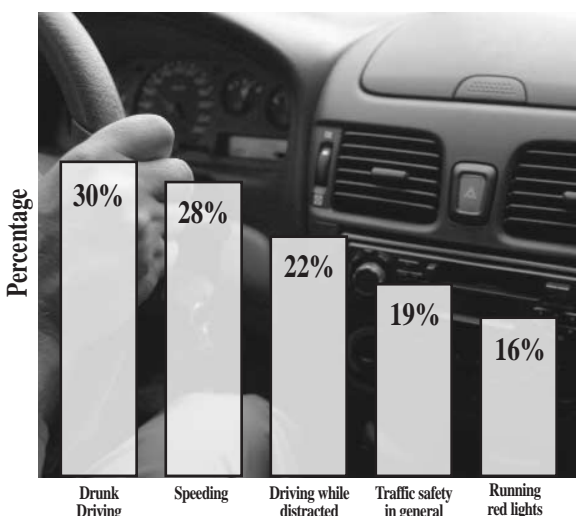


# Edmontonians' poll station

By Linda Banister

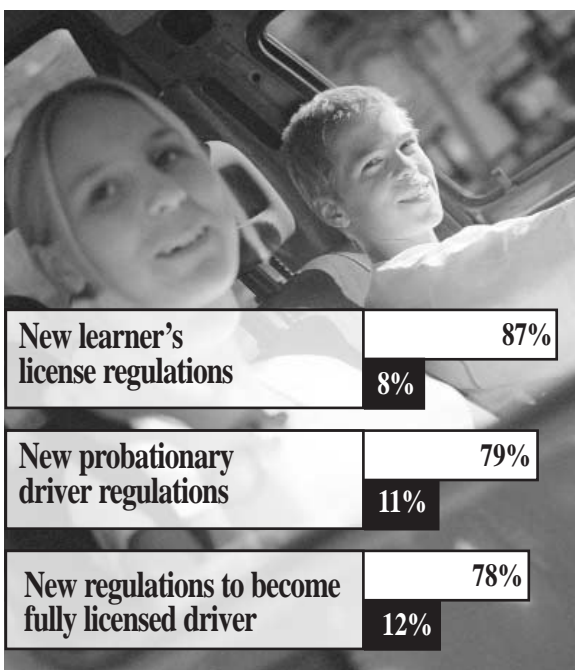
**W**ith skyrocketing insurance rates and increased medical costs to treat injuries resulting from auto collisions, driving and traffic safety have become primary concerns for Edmontonians and the province as a whole. Recently, the Alberta government introduced the new Graduated Driving License which implements a number of restrictions for new drivers. In this month's poll station, Edmontonians were asked to give us their opinions on the new licensing system and other driving and traffic safety issues.

## WHAT ARE YOUR MOST URGENT CONCERNS ABOUT DRIVING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY?



Edmontonians' most pressing concerns in regards to driving and traffic safety were drunk driving (30%) and speeding (28%). Other concerns included driving while distracted (22%), driving/traffic safety in general (19%), and drivers running red lights (16%).

## DO YOU SUPPORT THE GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING SYSTEM?



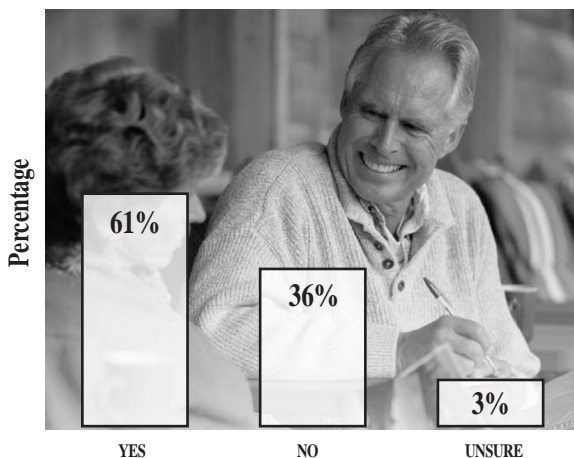
Respondents were asked their level of support for the new regulations for a learner's license. These drivers are not permitted to drive between midnight and 5:00 a.m., must have a zero alcohol level, have no more passengers than seatbelts, and be accompanied by a fully-licensed driver who is 18 years of age or older seated next to the driver. An overwhelming 95 percent of respondents either strongly or somewhat supported these regulations.

Respondents were then asked to comment on the new regulations for those with a probationary license. These drivers must spend a minimum of two years as a probationary driver, have no more passengers than seat belts, have a zero alcohol level and cannot

serve as an accompanying driver to a learner. Ninety percent of respondents either strongly or somewhat supported these regulations.

Ninety-one percent of respondents also supported the regulation requiring that a probationary driver is suspension-free for the last year of their two-year probationary stage and must pass an advanced level road test prior to becoming a fully licensed driver.

## DO YOU FEEL THAT THERE SHOULD BE MANDATORY RE-TESTING OF ALL DRIVERS?



Respondents were asked whether all drivers, regardless of age and experience, should be re-tested on their driving skills. Almost two-thirds (61%) of respondents felt there should be mandatory re-testing, while 36 percent felt this was not necessary. When respondents supportive of re-testing were asked their opinion on frequency, 43 percent felt drivers should be tested every 10 years, 38 percent every five years, and seven percent every three years (with an average of seven years).

Eighty-one percent of respondents supported mandatory testing of senior drivers. Reasons for support included seniors' slow reaction times (38%), medical conditions (22%), loss of driving skills (16%), and decreased motor skills (15%) as the primary reasons for re-testing. Those against the mandatory testing of seniors felt it is discriminatory (35%), the evidence supporting seniors' reduced driving skills is inconclusive (24%), and testing would have a negative impact on seniors' independence (12%).

## WHAT REGULATIONS SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY OVERALL?

Respondents offered a number of suggestions to improve general traffic safety. These included more law enforcement (14%), more driver education classes (8%), eliminating impaired driving (7%), enforcing speed limits (6%), increasing photo radar (4%), and building better roadways (4%).

The Poll Station surveyed 100 City of Edmonton residents on the topic and, while the results of the research are not statistically reliable, they do provide a qualitative indication of what Edmontonians are thinking. ✓



Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research & Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. If you have a question you would like included in the Edmontonians Poll, contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at [research@banister.ab.ca](mailto:research@banister.ab.ca). For further information on the firm visit [www.banister.ab.ca](http://www.banister.ab.ca).