

As Gas Prices Near \$4.00 a Gallon Nationally, Over Two Thirds of Americans Say they Have Changed their Driving Habits

More Americans will Change their Habits as Prices Continue to Rise

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As Gas Prices Near \$4.00 a Gallon Nationally, Two Thirds of Americans Say they Have Changed their Driving Habits

More Americans Will Change Their Habits as Prices Continue to Rise

New York, NY – A new telephone survey of 1,000 Americans, conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of Access America Travel Insurance and Assistance, has found that 67% have already changed their driving habits because of gas price increases.

Among those who have changed their driving, the median gas price at which they did so was \$3.20 per gallon, a level that was reached back in March.

As the price at the pump continues to rise, more and more Americans will be changing their driving habits: at \$3.00 per gallon, 35% of Americans had changed their habits; by \$4.00 per gallon — a reality in many parts of the U.S. already —, it will be 74%; and by \$5.00 per gallon, 85% of all Americans will have changed their driving habits.

However, one in ten Americans (9%) say they will never change their driving habits, regardless of the how high the price climbs.

Those who have already changed their driving habits are particularly prevalent among adults with a household income of less than \$50,000 per year (73%), parents of children under 18 (72%), those living in the South (72%) and those saying the country is headed on the wrong track (71%).

In an effort to save on gas, Americans first tend to reduce non-essential driving. More than a quarter (26%) say that cutting back on travel or recreational driving is the first substantial change they made or will make due to rising gas prices. One in five (21%) say the first thing they did or will do is to consolidate or reduce errands (21%). Fewer Americans first look to alternate forms of transportation such as carpooling (7%), walking or biking when possible (6%), or using public transportation more often (4%). Only 3% say that the first thing they did or will do is buy a more fuel-economic car or a hybrid.

Proportions of Americans who first cut back on recreational driving as a response to higher gas prices vary little across age and income groups. However, those aged 55 and older are more likely than younger adults aged 18-54 to mention consolidating or reducing errands (30% vs. 18%). Southerners (12%) and those aged 18-34 (10%) are more likely than others to mention carpooling. Those making less than \$25,000 (9%) and Northeasterners (7%) are more likely than others to cite using public transportation as their first response to higher gas prices.



These are some of the findings of an Ipsos/Access America poll conducted May 30 – June 2, 2008. For the survey, a nationally representative sample of 1,000 randomly-selected adults aged 18 and over residing in the U.S. interviewed by telephone via Ipsos' U.S. Telephone Express omnibus. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population in the U.S. been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/gender composition reflects that of the actual U.S. population according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

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