



*SMOOTH*  
**OPERATOR**  
P R O G R A M

2003 Annual Report

**Aggressive driving:**  
a combination of  
unsafe and unlawful  
driving actions that  
demonstrate a  
conscious and willful  
disregard for safety.

## ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This is the fourth in an annual series of reports outlining the aggressive driving problem and the efforts of the Smooth Operator program – a cooperative interstate effort to combat aggressive driving in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia.

This booklet describes the work performed and the results of efforts undertaken for Smooth Operator in 2003. Where possible, information on this year's program is compared and contrasted with the program last year.

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Motorists in the  
Washington area have  
rated **aggressive  
driving as the number  
one threat to highway  
safety.**

**88%** felt that the  
government should  
put the same level  
of effort into stopping  
deaths on highways  
as it does to fight  
terrorism.

**Traffic congestion  
tends to bring out  
the worst in drivers,  
as people drive  
aggressively on  
congested roads in an  
attempt to get to their  
destinations faster.**



## **AGGRESSIVE DRIVING IS A PROBLEM**

Aggressive driving is defined as a combination of unsafe and unlawful driving actions that demonstrate a conscious and willful disregard for safety. Aggressive driving includes such offenses as tailgating, unsafe lane changes, speeding, running red lights and stop signs, following too closely, improper passing and failing to yield the right of way.

For the past several years, motorists in the Washington area have rated aggressive driving as the number one threat to highway safety. In fact, nearly eight out of 10 motorists say that aggressive drivers are a greater danger than terrorists.

## **CONGESTION CONTRIBUTES TO THE PROBLEM OF AGGRESSIVE DRIVING**

Traffic congestion tends to bring out the worst in drivers, as people drive aggressively on congested roads and highways in an attempt to get to their destinations faster. Traffic congestion is a significant problem in both the Washington and Baltimore metropolitan areas.

In its annual Urban Mobility Report, the Texas Transportation Institute concluded that traffic conditions nationwide continue to deteriorate as congestion increases. In 2001, traffic congestion caused the nation's motorists to waste 5.7 billion gallons of fuel and 3.5 billion hours of lost productivity. This cost the nation \$69.5 billion, \$4.5 billion more than in the previous year. In addition, the extra time needed for rush hour travel has tripled over two decades.

The study also concluded that congestion is a serious problem in the Washington area. Although the Washington region ranks eighth in the nation in population, it ranks fourth worst in the nation in the toll that congestion takes on peoples' daily lives, behind Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago. Metropolitan Washington's roads and highways are the second most congested in the nation during both rush and non-rush hours. Each Washington area motorist spends 34 hours a year stuck in traffic, and a trip that should take 30 minutes takes 44 minutes in the Washington area, a delay that ranks sixth in the nation. The Washington region's congestion costs are the nation's sixth highest at nearly \$2.5 billion. Local roads in the Washington area carry a much higher volume of traffic than do local roads in other cities with comparable congestion.

Congestion in the Baltimore area is somewhat better, ranking 16th worst in the nation. Each Baltimore area resident spends 22 hours a year caught in traffic. Baltimore area motorists spend 33 percent of their daily driving time in congestion. Sixty percent of Baltimore area roads, highways and arterial streets were congested during rush hour in 2001, compared to 20 percent in 1982. Congestion costs in the Baltimore area are more than \$1 billion.

Congestion is only going to get worse. By 2020, the demands on Washington area roads and highways are expected to increase by 40 percent, while road capacity will increase only by nine percent. In that same time period, the population of the Washington metropolitan area will increase by 25 percent, or 1.4 million people. Most of these people will use area roads and highways to get to work every day.

## PARTICIPATION IN SMOOTH OPERATOR

### Funding Agencies:

- District of Columbia, District Department of Transportation
- Maryland State Highway Administration, Highway Safety Office
- Metropolitan Police Department
- Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Motor Vehicles

### Participating Agencies and Organizations:

- AAA Mid-Atlantic
- CompassionPower
- District of Columbia, Department of Motor Vehicles
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- George Washington University Hospital
- Inova Fairfax Hospital
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
- Maryland Transportation Authority
- National Center for State Courts
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Virginia Department of Transportation

### Participating Law

#### Enforcement Agencies

In 2003, the Smooth Operator program grew dramatically, and now comprises 66 law enforcement agencies in the District, Maryland and Virginia, including every barrack of the Maryland State Police. Participating law enforcement agencies include:

- Aberdeen Police Department
- Alexandria Police Department
- Alleghany County Sheriff's Office
- Annapolis Police Department
- Anne Arundel County Police Department
- Arlington County Police Department
- Arlington County Sheriff's Office
- Baltimore City Police Department
- Bel Air Police Department
- Brunswick Police Department
- Calvert County Sheriff's Office
- Cambridge Police Department
- Caroline County Sheriff's Office
- Carroll County Sheriff's Office
- Cecil County Sheriff's Office
- Charles County Sheriff's Office
- Chevy Chase Village Police Department
- Department of Defense Police, Patuxent River
- Town of Dumfries Police Department
- Easton Police Department
- Elkton Police Department
- Fairfax County Police Department
- Fairfax County Sheriff's Office
- Fairfax City Police Department
- Falls Church Sheriff's Office
- Fort Frederick State Park Police Department
- Fort Myers Military Police
- Frederick County Sheriff's Office
- Gaithersburg City Police
- Garrett County Sheriff's Office
- Greenbelt Police Department
- Hagerstown Police Department
- Hampstead Police Department
- Harford County Sheriff's Office
- Town of Herndon Police Department
- Howard County Police Department
- Hurlock Police Department
- Kent County Sheriff's Office
- Laurel Police Department
- Loudoun County Sheriff's Office
- Manassas City Police Department
- Manassas National Battlefield Park Police
- Maryland State Police
- Maryland Natural Resources Police Department
- Maryland Transportation Authority Police Department
- Metropolitan Police Department
- Montgomery County Police Department
- Pentagon Police Department
- Prince George's County Police Department
- Prince William County Police Department
- Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office
- Ridgely Police Department
- Smithsburg Police Department
- St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office
- Spotsylvania County Police Department
- Stafford County Sheriff's Office
- Sykesville Police Department
- Talbot County Sheriff's Office
- Thurmont Police Department
- United States Capitol Police
- United States Park Police
- Vienna Police Department
- Virginia State Police Department
- Washington County Sheriff's Office
- Westminster Police Department
- Wicomico County Sheriff's Office

## ORIGIN OF SMOOTH OPERATOR

Eighteen law enforcement agencies in the Washington area launched Smooth Operator in 1997, conducting four week-long enforcement waves in an effort to combat aggressive driving. Although the law enforcement effort was successful, it was felt that more needed to be done to raise awareness and change behavior.

In late 1999, a coalition of elected officials, government agencies, private sector organizations and law enforcement agencies from all three jurisdictions in the Washington area came together to develop a comprehensive program to reduce the incidence of aggressive driving. Members of the coalition felt that, in addition to law enforcement efforts, more needed to be learned about the seriousness of the aggressive driving problem in the Washington area. They also felt that motorists needed to be educated about the dangers of aggressive driving. As a result, in 2000, a public awareness and education component was added to inform people about the aggressive driving problem and encourage them to be more aware of their potential to drive aggressively, particularly in congested traffic or when they are stressed. Each year since then, the Smooth Operator program has expanded, both in terms of the number of participating law enforcement agencies and in the effectiveness of the program's public awareness and education component.

## OVERVIEW OF 2003 SMOOTH OPERATOR CAMPAIGN

The 2003 Smooth Operator campaign built on the successes of last year's campaign. Smooth Operator disseminated the message about aggressive driving through the news media, public awareness and increased law enforcement activity.

## SMOOTH OPERATOR CAMPAIGN GOALS

The goals of the 2003 Smooth Operator campaign were:

- Increase public awareness of aggressive driving behaviors and their destructive consequences.
- Support an intensive region-wide education and enforcement effort.
- Reduce the incidence of aggressive driving through a public awareness and education campaign, in conjunction with increased law enforcement to reinforce the negative consequences of aggressive driving.
- Create a social climate that stigmatizes aggressive driving as a socially unacceptable behavior through public awareness, increased law enforcement, stiffer penalties for lawbreakers and behavioral intervention.

The primary target audience for the campaign was all drivers in the District, Maryland and Virginia. Secondary audiences included pedestrians, employers, day care providers, driver education providers, judicial agencies, law enforcement and tourists.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS TO COMBAT AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

Law enforcement agencies from the District, Maryland and Virginia cracked down on aggressive drivers in four intensive waves that ran from May 26 to 31, June 23 to 28, July 21 to 26 and August 25 to 30, 2003. During those waves, a total of 238,198 citations and warnings were issued for aggressive driving behavior, compared to just 62,000 citations issued in 1997. This increase demonstrates that law enforcement is serious about getting tough on aggressive drivers.

Think there's  
no harm in  
aggressive driving?

**THINK AGAIN.**

In addition to paid  
advertising, radio  
stations provided  
**\$169,291.50** in  
added value by airing  
the Smooth Operator  
message for free.

The Smooth Operator  
public relations  
and media coverage  
had a conservatively  
estimated reach of  
**more than five million  
people.**

Stories in *The  
Washington Post*, the  
*Washington Times*  
and *The Sun* reached  
**at least two million  
people.**

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN**

The theme for the public education component of this year's Smooth Operator campaign was "Think Again." The "Think Again" theme was used in conjunction with such statements as, "Think you can stop in time if something happened? Think you can get through that yellow light before it changes? If you think you can drive like this and it's not a problem – think again."

The 2003 Smooth Operator public awareness and education campaign focused primarily on adult drivers age 18 to 49, because research has shown that they are more likely to drive aggressively than drivers over 50. The campaign used radio advertising in an effort to reach motorists while they were driving.

### **Media Advertising**

Radio advertising emphasizing the "Think Again" theme consisted of two 60-second spots, in both English and Spanish, that ran an average of 20 to 30 times per week per station from May 25 to 31, June 22 to 28, July 20 to 26 and August 24 to 30, coinciding with the four waves of law enforcement. A mix of several radio stations was used over the course of the campaign. Scripts were also translated into Spanish and played on Hispanic stations in the area. A total of 4,322 spots were concentrated primarily during peak driving times with a net reach of 3,113,396. (*Net reach: The total number of individuals who heard the message.*)

Ads on bus backs were used to supplement the radio message and target drivers while they were on the road. Ads ran on 123 buses per month for three months reaching 2,238,664 people.

A total of \$480,883.27 was spent on paid media. In addition to paid advertising, radio stations provided \$169,291.50 in added value by airing 30-second, 20-second and 10-second Smooth Operator messages for free.

### **Public Relations and Media Coverage**

- The Smooth Operator public relations and media efforts reached more than five million people, the equivalent of approximately two-thirds of the population of the campaign's target audience in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Northern Virginia.
- The 2003 Smooth Operator campaign was launched at a news conference outside the emergency room at Inova Fairfax Hospital on May 8, 2003.
- Media advisories were disseminated at the beginning of each law enforcement wave focusing on different aspects of aggressive driving.
- Television coverage included multiple placements on all four network affiliates (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC) in both the Baltimore and Washington markets. Top radio stations, such as WBAL in Baltimore and WTOP in Washington, covered the Smooth Operator story. At least 71 television stories and eight radio stories aired in Baltimore and Washington, reaching more than three million people.
- Stories in *The Washington Post*, the *Washington Times* and *The Sun* reached at least two million people, using audited circulation figures.
- **The media value for television and radio coverage that was generated from news outlets was \$210,000 in 2003.**



## Broadcast and Cable Coverage

### Washington, D.C. Television

- "News 4 at 10:00" WRC-TV CH 4 (NBC)  
May 8, 2003 10:00-11:00 am
- "ABC 7 News At Noon" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
May 8, 2003 12:00-12:30 pm
- "News 4 At 4:00" WRC-TV CH 4 (NBC)  
May 8, 2003 4:00-5:00 pm
- "News 4 At 5:00" WRC-TV CH 4 (NBC)  
May 8, 2003 5:00-6:00 pm
- "ABC 7 News At 6" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
May 8, 2003 6:00-6:30 pm
- "9 Eyewitness News At 6" WUSA-TV CH 9 (CBS)  
May 8, 2003 6:00-6:30 pm
- "Good Morning Washington" WJLA-TV CH7 (ABC)  
May 9, 2003 6:00-7:00 am
- "9 Eyewitness News Saturday Morning" WUSA-TV  
CH 9 (CBS) May 10, 2003 7:00-8:00 am
- "Fox 5 News @ 10" WTTG-TV CH 5 (FOX)  
May 10, 2003 10:00-11:00 pm
- "Weekend Midday Report" News Channel 8  
May 25, 2003 12:00-12:30 pm
- "Weekend Primetime Report" News Channel 8  
May 25, 2003 6:00-6:30 pm
- "ABC 7 News At 6" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
May 25, 2003 6:00-6:30 pm
- "Fox 5 News @ 10" WTTG-TV CH5 (FOX)  
May 25, 2003 10:00-11:00 pm
- "Weekend Latenight Report" News Channel 8  
May 25, 2003 11:00-11:30 pm
- "ABC 7 News At 11" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
May 25, 2003 11:00-11:35 pm
- "News 4 Today" WRC-TV CH 4 (NBC)  
May 26, 2003 6:00-7:00 am
- "The Rush House Report" New Channel 8  
May 26, 2003 6:00-7:00 am
- "The Rush House Report" New Channel 8  
May 26, 2003 7:00-8:00 am
- "Fox 5 Morning News" WTTG-TV CH 5(FOX)  
May 26, 2003 7:00-8:00 am
- "The Rush Hour Report" News Channel 8  
May 26, 2003 8:00-8:30 am
- "Local Cut-in" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
May 26, 2003, 8:55-9:00 am
- "News 4 at 10:00" WRC-TV CH 4 (NBC)  
May 26, 2003 10:00-11:00 am
- "9 Eyewitness News At Noon" WUSA-TV CH 9 (CBS)  
May 26, 2003 12:00-12:30 pm
- "ABC News At Noon" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
May 26, 2003 12:00-12:30 pm
- "Monday Report" News Channel 8  
May 26, 2003 12:00-1:00 pm
- "Washington Report" News Channel 8 Local Cable  
May 26, 2003 5:00-5:30 pm
- "ABC 7 News At 6" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
May 26, 2003 6:00-6:30 pm
- "Fox 5 News @10" WTTG-TV CH 5 (FOX)  
May 26, 2003 10:00-11:00 pm
- "ABC 7 News At 11" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
May 26, 2003 11:00-11:35 pm
- "Fox 5 Morning News" WTTG-TV CH 5 (FOX)  
May 27, 2003 5:30-6:30 am
- "Fox 5 Morning News" WTTG-TV CH 5 (FOX)  
May 27, 2003 6:30-7:00 am
- "News 4 at 11:00" WRC-TV CH 4 (NBC)  
June 22, 2003 11:00-11:30 pm
- "News 4 Today" WRC-TV CH 4 (NBC)  
June 23,2003 5:00-6:00 am
- "Good Morning Washington " WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
June 23, 2003 5:00-6:00 am
- "News 4 Today" WRC-TV CH 4 (NBC)  
June 23, 2003 6:00-7:00 am
- "Good Morning Washington" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
June 23, 2003 6:00-7:00 am
- "Fox 5 Morning News" WTTG-TV CH 5 (F)X  
June 23, 2003 6:30-7:00 am
- "Fox 5 Morning News" WTTG -TV CH 5 (FOX)  
June 23, 2003 7:00-8:00 am
- "Fox 5 Morning News" WTTG-TV CH 5 (FOX)  
June 23, 2003 8:00-9:00 am
- "Local Cut-In" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
June 23, 2003 8:25-8:30 am
- "Monday Report" News Channel 8 Local Cable  
June 23, 2003 8:30-9:00 am
- "News 4 At 10:00" WRC-TV CH 4 (NBC)  
June 23, 2003 10:00-11:00 am
- "Washington Report" News Channel 8  
June 26, 2003 5:00-5:30 pm
- "Washington Report" News Channel 8  
June 26, 2003 6:00-6:30 pm
- "The Rush Hour Report" News Channel 8  
June 27, 2003 7:00-8:00 am
- "ABC 7 News At 6" WJLA-TV CH 7 (ABC)  
August 9, 2003 6:00-6:30 pm
- "Fox 5 News @ 10" WTTG-TV CH 5 (FOX)  
August 9, 2003 10:00-11:00 pm

The earned media for television and radio coverage in May-August, 2003 was **\$210,000.**

At least **71 television stories and 8 radio stories** aired in Baltimore and Washington, resulting in **more than 3 million people.**

More than **230,000 citations and warnings** were issued during the **4 enforcement waves.**

The Smooth Operator campaign was effective in raising motorists' awareness of the Smooth Operator program and the dangers of aggressive driving.

#### Washington, DC Radio

- WTOP-AM (CBS Radio) May 8, 2003 4:00-5:00 pm
- "Morning Edition Local Cut-Ins WAMU-FM (NPR) May 26, 2003 6:00-8:00 am
- WTOP-AM (CBS Radio) May 26, 2003 4:00-5:00 pm

#### Baltimore Television

- "Eyewitness News At 6" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) May 24, 2003 6:00-6:30 pm
- "Eyewitness News" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) May 24, 2003 11:00-11:35 pm
- "Eyewitness News" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) May 25, 2003 8:00-9:00 am
- "Fox 45 Late Edition" WBFF-TV CH 45 (FOX) May 26, 2003 11:00-11:30 pm
- "ABC2 News: The Latest @ 11:00" WMAR-TV CH 2 (ABC) May 26, 2003 11:00-11:35 pm
- "11 News At 5" WBAL-TV CH 11 (NBC) June 20, 2003 5:00-6:00 pm
- "Eyewitness News At Five" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) June 20, 2003 5:00-6:00 pm
- "Eyewitness News At Six" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) June 20, 2003 6:00-7:00 pm
- "Rise and Shine" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) June 22, 2003 5:30-6:00 am
- "Eyewitness News" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) June 22, 2003 6:30-7:00 pm
- "Eyewitness News" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) June 22, 2003 11:00-11:35 pm
- "The Morning Edition" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) June 23, 2003 6:00-7:00 am
- "The Morning Edition" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) June 23, 2003 7:00-8:00 am
- "Eyewitness News At Five" WJZ-TV CH13 (CBS) August 18, 2003 5:00-6:00 pm
- "Eyewitness News At Five" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) August 21, 2003 5:00-6:00 pm
- "Eyewitness News" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) August 24, 2003 6:30-7:00 pm
- "Eyewitness News" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) August 24, 2003 11:00-11:35 pm
- "Rise and Shine" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) August 25, 2003 5:00-5:30 am
- "Rise and Shine" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) August 25, 2003 5:30-6:00 am
- "The Morning Edition" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) August 25, 2003 6:00-7:00 am
- "The Morning Edition" WJZ-TV CH 13 (CBS) August 25, 2003 7:00-8:00 am

#### Baltimore Radio

- WBAL Radio May 24, 2003 12:00 pm
- WBAL Radio May 24, 2003 4:00 pm
- WBAL Radio May 24, 2003 5:00 pm
- WBAL Radio May 24, 2003 6:00 pm
- WBAL Radio May 24, 2003 6:35 pm

#### Print/Online Coverage

- "Go with the Flow," editorial, Northern Virginia, Montgomery and Prince George's *Journals*, May 8, 2003
- "Anger Management Takes to the Streets, Highways," WTOPNews.com, May 8, 2003
- "Campaign to Last through August," NBC4.com, May 8, 2003
- "Police Get Aggressive About Driving," *The Washington Times*, May 9, 2003
- "Aggressive Driving Campaign Grows," *Northern Virginia Journal*, May 9, 2003
- "Smooth Operator Program Hopes to Put Stop to Aggressive Driving," WUSA.com, May 9, 2003
- "Aggressive Driving Awareness Pushed," *Times-Community Newspapers*, May 13, 2003
- "Smoothing Traffic's Rough Edges," *The Washington Post*, May 20, 2003
- "Fighting Speeders with Speed on I-95," *The Sun*, May 24, 2003
- "Is 2 Fast 2 Furious the Cause of Aggressive Driving," IGN.com, June 24, 2003

Inova Fairfax Hospital's Chief of Trauma, Dr. Samir Fakhry, addresses the audience at the May 8, 2003 news conference.



Chief Charles Ramsey of the Metropolitan Police Department, Administrator Annette Sandberg of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Officer Stephen Jones, Officer Todd Hand, Lt. Mark Haudenschild, F/Sgt. Carl Miller, and MPO Bob Barton accept their awards at the Smooth Operator luncheon October 9, 2003.

## COLLATERAL MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

- A total of 125,000 educational brochures were printed. They were distributed to law enforcement agencies, motor vehicle branch offices, highway safety programs, hospital waiting rooms, and various radio stations. Brochures were also distributed at court-ordered anger management classes for convicted aggressive drivers and inserted into mailings with red-light camera violations.



- A total of 3,000 posters, similar in design to the bus backs, were printed in two sizes – 22” x 28” and 11” x 14.” They were distributed to law enforcement agencies, motor vehicle branch offices, driver safety schools, and area hospitals.
- An awards luncheon was held in early October, 2003 to honor the law enforcement officers who participated in the 2003 Smooth Operator program. More than 300 people attended, and awards were presented to 140 law enforcement officers. Speakers included Charles Ramsey, Chief of Police for the Metropolitan Police Department; Annette Sandberg, Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; and Elizabeth Baker, Ph.D., Administrator for Region III of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



## EVALUATION OF THE 2003 SMOOTH OPERATOR PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Riter Research, Inc., of Easton, Maryland, conducted a telephone survey of 400 licensed drivers between the age of 18 and 54 who lived in the District of Columbia, Baltimore and the Salisbury area. The benchmark survey was conducted in May, prior to the beginning of the first public awareness campaign. A post-campaign survey of 400 licensed drivers from the same areas with the same demographics was conducted in late August and early September.

### Highlights of the Research

- The research showed that the Smooth Operator public awareness campaign was effective in raising motorists' awareness of the Smooth Operator program and the dangers of aggressive driving.
- The Smooth Operator campaign increased motorists' knowledge of enhanced police enforcement to reduce the incidence of aggressive driving.
- There is widespread support for the use of cameras and other technologies to catch aggressive drivers.
- The vast majority of motorists believe the government should put the same level of effort into stopping aggressive drivers as is being done to stop terrorists. This is consistent with the belief that the public considers aggressive drivers to be a greater danger to them than terrorists.



Recalled hearing or seeing a message about aggressive driving **increased 32 POINTS** from 46% to 78%.

Motorists who were aware of stepped-up law enforcement to stop aggressive driving **increased 8 POINTS** from 29 percent to 37.

**64%** favored using technology against aggressive drivers, while **62%** favored using technology against speeders.

**74%** favored using cameras and other technology to catch drivers who run red lights and stop signs.

## Campaign Awareness

- Those who recalled seeing or hearing messages about the overall subject of aggressive driving increased from **46 percent pre-campaign to 78 percent post-campaign**. Those who recalled messages about aggressive drivers and driving increased from 39 percent to 59 percent. Those who recalled messages about speeding and road rage increased from 8 percent to 15 percent, and from two percent to six percent, respectively. All of the increases were statistically significant.
- Between the beginning and the end of the campaign, the proportion of drivers who were aware of the Smooth Operator campaign **increased from 47 percent to 57 percent**.
- Motorists were more aware of the aggressive driving messages that focused on running red lights than of messages that featured driving behavior around large vehicles such as trucks and buses. The proportion of drivers who were aware of the running red lights messages **increased from 40 percent to 53 percent**, compared to an increase from 21 percent to 28 percent awareness of the “big vehicles” message. Both increases were statistically significant.
- The level of unaided awareness of messages about driving behaviors was largely unchanged between May and September, falling slightly from 37 percent to 36 percent. In May, drivers were equally aware of messages dealing with aggressive driving, drunk driving and seat belt compliance. However, in September, the dominant message drivers recalled related to aggressive driving.

## News Media

- Motorists became more aware of news on television and radio and in the newspapers about the law enforcement efforts to ticket drivers for driving aggressively. The percentage of those surveyed who were aware of efforts to get the message out about aggressive driving **increased from 65 percent before the campaign to 70 percent** following the campaign, a significant difference.

## Law Enforcement

- The number of motorists who were aware of stepped-up law enforcement efforts to stop aggressive driving **increased from 29 percent** before the campaign to **37 percent** after it concluded, a significant increase.

## Driving Behavior

- Between May and September, the proportion of motorists who rated their driving as “excellent” or “very good” increased from 70 percent to 74 percent.
- Self reported behavior of motorists who entered an intersection after the light turned yellow dropped from 55 percent in May to 48 percent in September
- The number of drivers who said they had speeded up to get through a light dropped from 50 percent in May to 43 percent in September.

- Drivers generally feel that personal vehicles are more of a danger to motorists than commercial vehicles. The top eight of 12 unsafe driving behaviors that people are concerned about involve personal vehicles. Driving behaviors rated “extremely serious” or “very serious” by more than half of those surveyed included:

- speeding
- drivers who whip in and out of lanes to get ahead
- aggressive driving by people in personal vehicles
- drivers who show disregard for anyone else on the road
- drivers who change lanes without signaling
- drivers of personal vehicles who tailgate

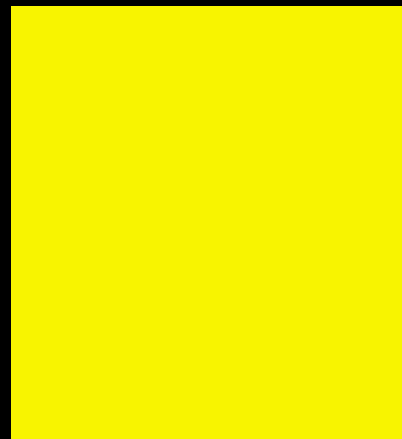
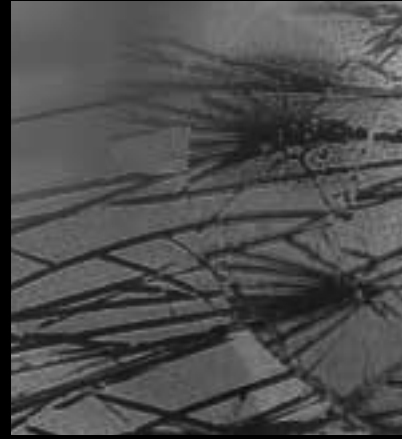
- In September, 67 percent of the people surveyed felt that speeding was an “extremely serious” or “very serious” problem facing motorists, up from 60 percent in May.
- Tailgating and changing lanes without signaling were also rated as serious problems, from 50 percent in May to 60 percent in September. Tailgating was also seen as a serious problem, from 40 percent to 58 percent.

## Use of Technology Against Aggressive Drivers

- The vast majority of motorists supported the use of cameras and other technology to catch aggressive drivers, speeders and those who run red lights or stop signs.
- Seventy-four percent of those surveyed favored using cameras and other technology to catch drivers who run red lights and stop signs.
- Sixty-four percent favored using technology against aggressive drivers, while 62 percent favored using technology against speeders.
- Motorists are divided on the use of cameras and other technology to catch those who violate seat belt laws, with 50 percent favoring their use.

## Government Efforts to Stop Aggressive Driving

- Nearly eight of every 10 motorists (77 percent) said aggressive drivers represent a greater danger than terrorists.
- Eighty-three percent of those surveyed felt that the government should put the same level of effort into stopping deaths on highways as it does to fight terrorism.



  
*SMOOTH*  
**OPERATOR**  
P R O G R A M

A Cooperative Interstate Effort to Combat Aggressive Driving  
in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia.