Interviewing for the Road Safety Survey was conducted by telephone from the facilities of the Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory, Center for Public Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia between October 22 and November 12, 2001. A staff of professionally trained, paid interviewers using computer-assisted telephone interviewing software conducted the interviews. The randomly selected, stratified sample consisted of 2,415 adult residents of Virginia (n=602), Maryland (n=600), North Carolina (n=610) and West Virginia (n=603) who had valid drivers’ licenses.

The sample of telephone numbers was prepared by Genesys Sampling Systems of Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania, and was designed so that all residential telephones, including new and unlisted numbers, had a known chance of inclusion. The cooperation rate for the survey was 52%. Using the CASRO response rate calculations, interviews were obtained with respondents in 43% of the known or assumed residential households in the sample. The data were weighted to adjust for unequal probabilities of selection due to multiple telephone lines and multiple adults living in the household. In addition, the data were weighted on gender, race, age, and region of residence to reflect the demographic composition of the individual state’s adult population. Figures reported in the report’s tables are weighted on this basis. Questions answered by the sample of 2415 drivers in the four states are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus approximately 2 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples like the one used here, the results obtained should be no more than 2 percentage points above or below the figure that would be obtained by interviewing all drivers in the four states with telephones.

Where the answers of subgroups are reported, the sampling error would be higher. Because of nonresponse (refusals to participate, etc.), standard calculations of sampling error are apt to understate the actual extent to which survey results are at variance with the true population values. Surveys are also subject to errors from sources other than sampling. While every effort is made to identify such errors, they are often difficult or impossible to measure.