



RSA

The role of alcohol in casualty collisions

2021-2025

Published May 2026



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Background

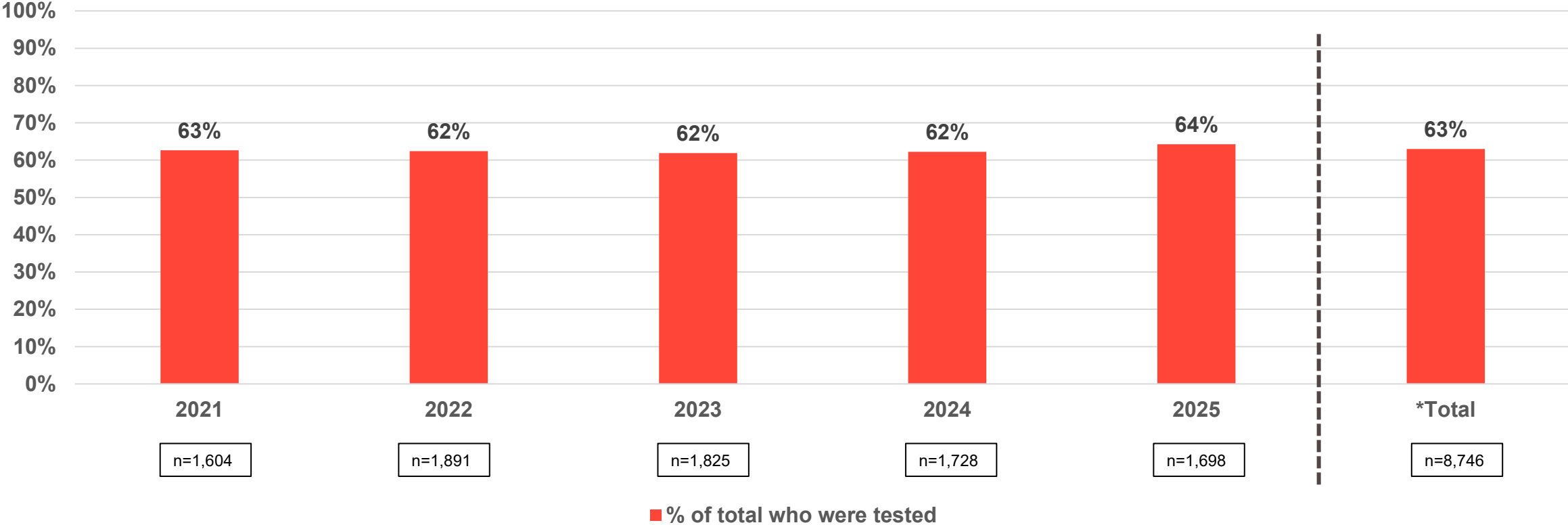
- This presentation provides an overview of information available on alcohol test results for drivers involved in fatal and serious injury collisions, as well as toxicology results for deceased drivers.
- The RSA has a statutory remit to report on injury collisions that have occurred on a public road using collision data provided by AGS*.
- Drivers involved in casualty collisions may have been tested for alcohol at the scene, station or hospital. The RTC data tells us at which (if any) of these locations a test was conducted and the result of this test (positive/negative). The blood alcohol level (BAC) level is not recorded.
- The analysis from road traffic collision data in this report relates to surviving drivers only. Toxicology results for deceased drivers are collected and reported separately.
- The Health Research Board (HRB) collects road traffic collision fatalities data annually on behalf of the RSA from closed coronial files using the National Drug-Related Deaths Index (NDRDI) methodology. These data are collected from closed coronial files (i.e., once the inquest has been completed).
- These data include detailed, definitive toxicology results for road user fatalities.
- This presentation also includes some findings in relation to alcohol from a nationally representative self-report driver attitudes and behaviour survey (2025).

*Note, incidents that occur in car parks and other non-public roads are not reported in the RSA official figures per convention and consistent with all EU member states. However, AGS may include these collisions as they record incidents that have occurred in public places. This means RSA and AGS collision figures may differ.

Surviving Drivers involved in fatal and serious injury collisions



Alcohol testing trend 2021-2025



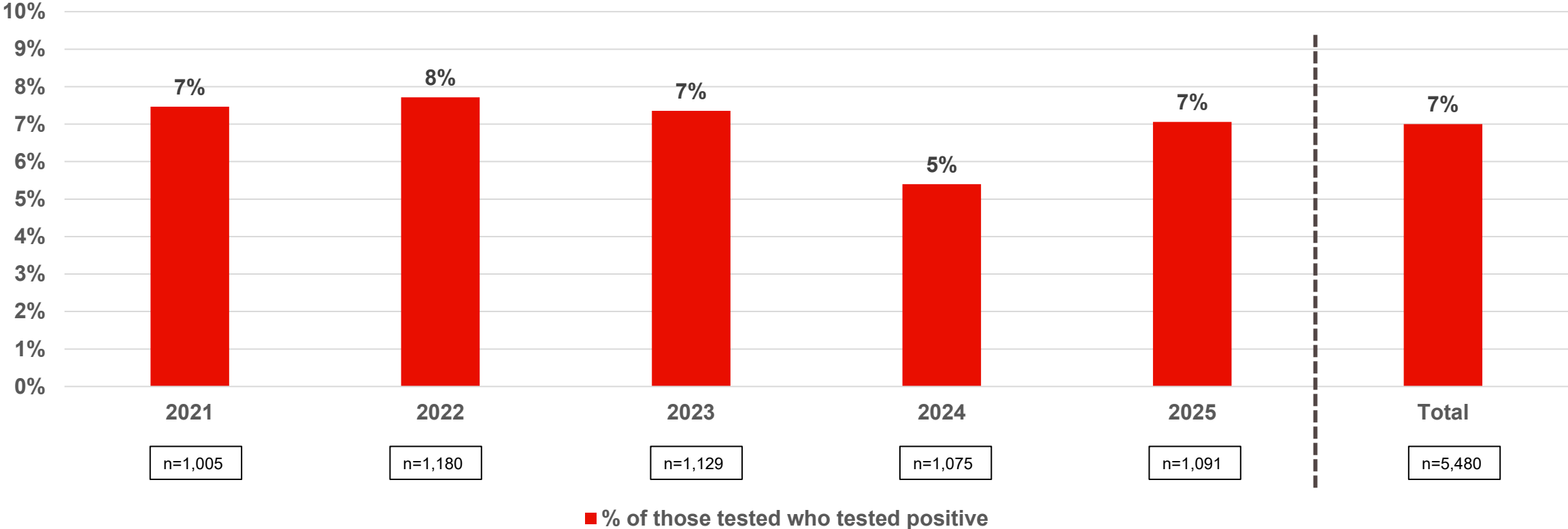
**The main reasons why a test was not taken include: driver gone to hospital (10%), insufficient time (6%) or medical grounds (3%).
Data for 2022 onwards is provisional and subject to change.*



Surviving Drivers involved in fatal and serious injury collisions



Positive result on alcohol test 2021-2025



Data for 2022 onwards is provisional and subject to change. Please note, over this five year time period, <1% of drivers had an unknown test result. The remaining drivers had a negative test result.

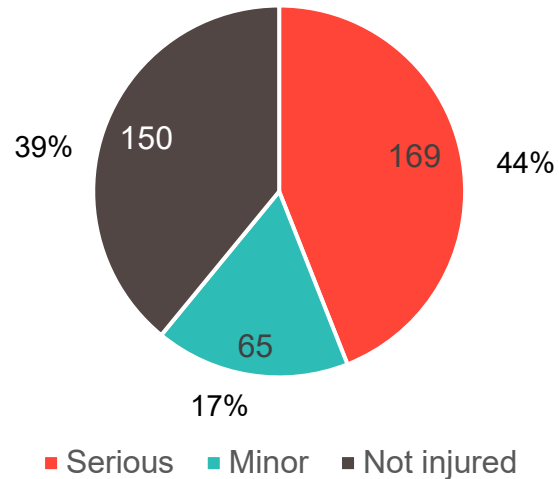


Injuries sustained in fatal and serious injury collisions where a driver had a positive alcohol result

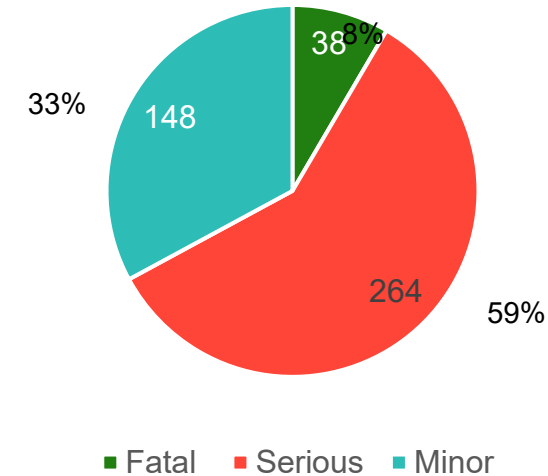
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Surviving driver who tested positive (n=384)



Injuries of other road users involved (n=450)



- There were 384 surviving drivers involved in fatal and serious injury collisions, who tested positive for alcohol. Almost half (169, 44%) of these drivers were seriously injured.
- In addition, 38 people died and a further 264 road users were seriously injured.

Data is provisional and subject to change.

Injuries sustained in fatal and serious injury collisions where a driver had a positive alcohol result

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Road User type	Fatal	Serious
Driver who tested positive	n/a	169
Other Driver	7	72
Passenger	23	143
Motorcyclist	2	8
Pedal cyclist	1	3
Pedestrian	4	36
E-scooter User	1	2
Total	38	433

- ❑ 23 passengers died, of which **20 (87%) were in the same vehicle** as the alcohol positive driver and 3 in another vehicle.
- ❑ 143 passengers were seriously injured, of which **105 (73%) were in the same vehicle** as the alcohol positive driver. 38 were in another vehicle.



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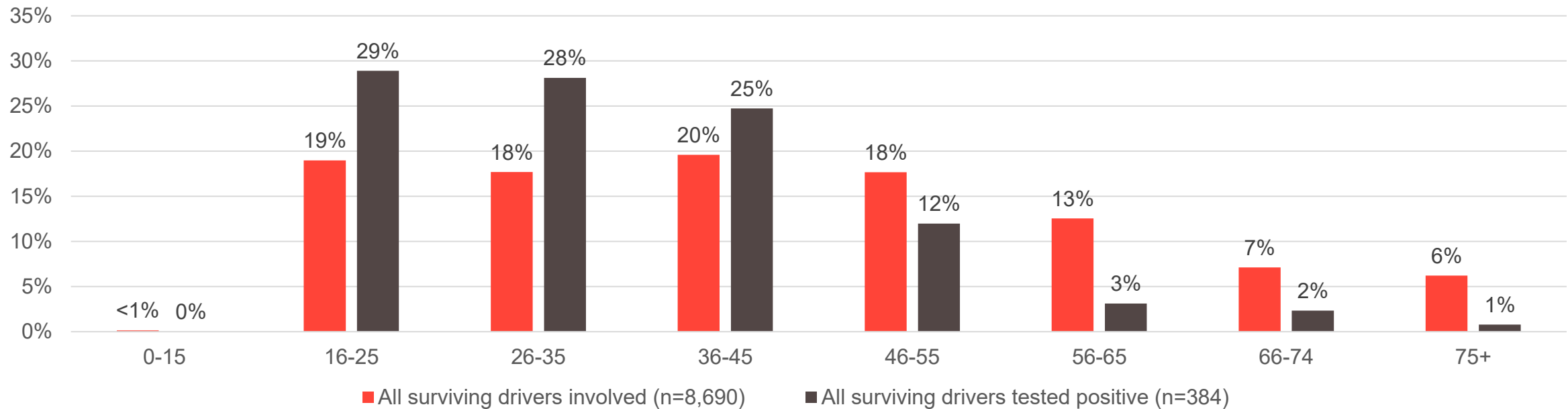
Profile of surviving drivers involved fatal and serious injury collisions, 2021-2025

Younger drivers more likely to test positive for alcohol



Comparison vs age profile of all drivers involved

Age Group of driver, 2021-2025



Of all surviving drivers who tested positive for alcohol, 29% were aged 16-25 years and a further 28% were aged 26-35 years. Over half (57%) were in these two age groups.

Data is provisional and subject to change. Of all drivers involved 56 have unknown ages at present.

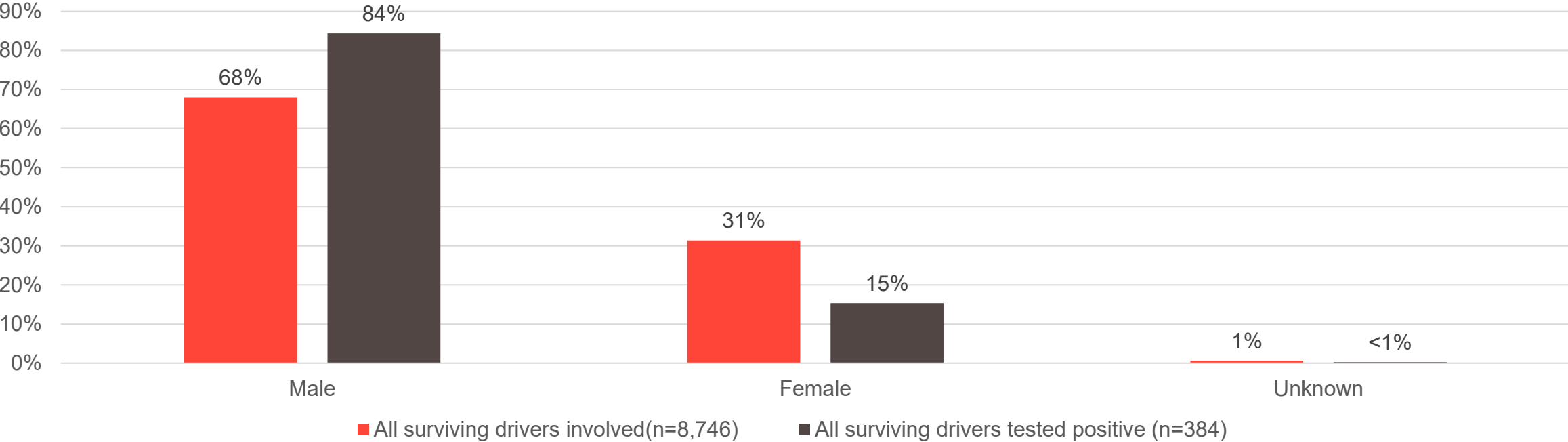


Male drivers more likely to test positive for alcohol



Comparison vs gender of all drivers involved

Gender, 2021-2025



Of all surviving drivers who tested positive for alcohol, 84% were male.

Data is provisional and subject to change.

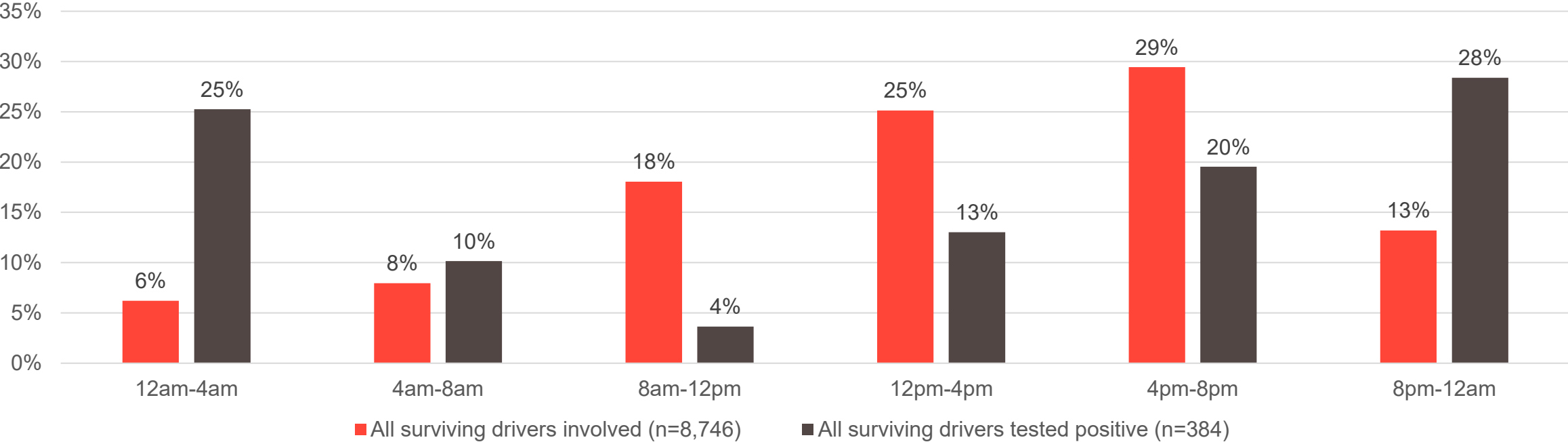


Drivers with a positive alcohol test result, more likely to be involved in collisions late at night and early morning.



Comparison vs time of day for all drivers involved

Time of day, 2021-2025



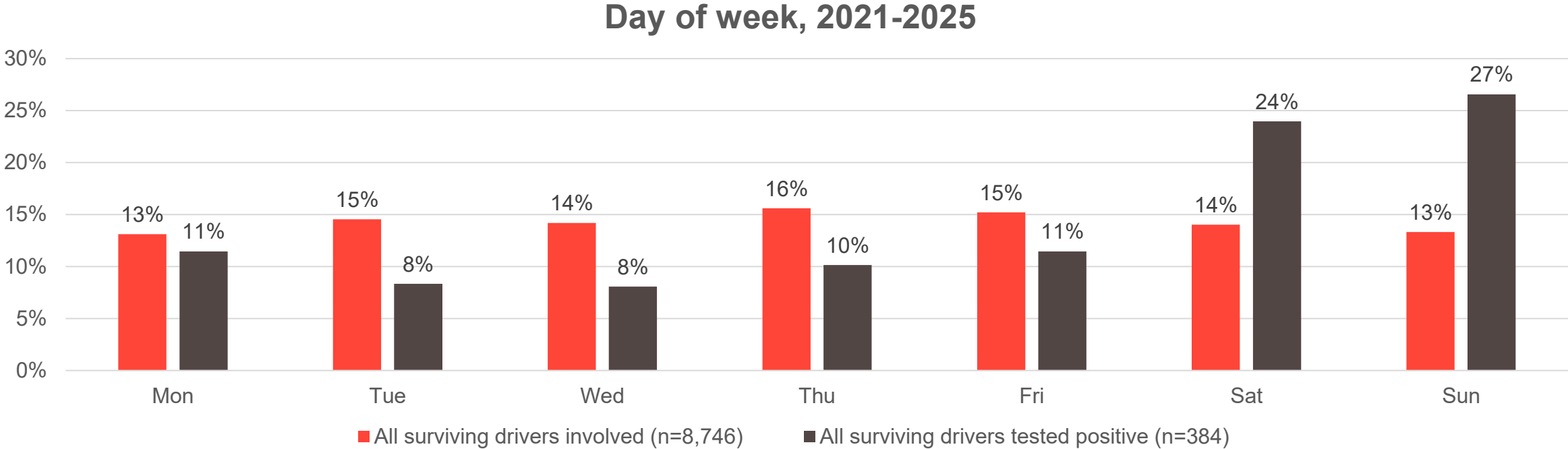
Data is provisional and subject to change.



Drivers with a positive alcohol test result, more likely to be involved in collisions at the weekend.



Comparison vs day of week for all drivers involved



Data is provisional and subject to change.



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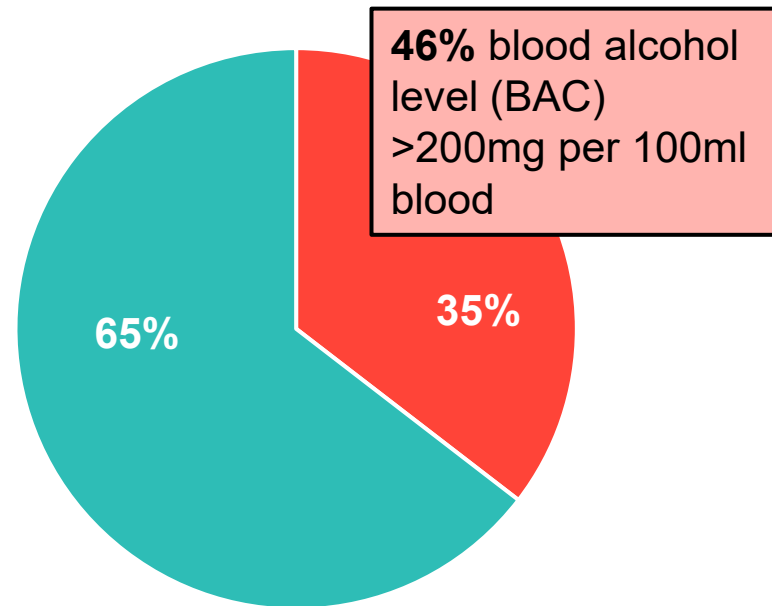
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Coronial data

Driver fatalities (2016-2020)

Key findings

Coronial data



- Positive toxicology for alcohol
- Negative toxicology for alcohol

- ❑ 316 of the 340 driver fatalities (2016-2020) had a toxicology result available.
- ❑ **35%** (n =112) of the 316 driver fatalities with a toxicology result available had a positive toxicology for alcohol*.
- ❑ **93%** of the 112 driver fatalities with a positive toxicology for alcohol were **male**. **76%** were **<45 years of age**.
- ❑ **79%** of these 112 fatal collisions occurred during **Friday-Monday**, with **39%** of them occurring on **Sunday**.
- ❑ **57%** of these 112 fatal collisions occurred between **10pm-6am**.
- ❑ **75%** of these 112 fatal collisions occurred on **rural roads** (limits ≥80km/h).

*A positive toxicology for alcohol was recorded where the BAC of the deceased was >20mg alcohol per 100ml blood (or equivalent in urine/vitreous humour).



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Driver attitudes and behaviour survey

2025 results

Research Background & Objectives



The National Survey of Driver Attitudes & Behaviour is a cornerstone of the Road Safety Authority research programme. It establishes the incidence of errant driving behaviour and habits among Irish motorists and determines their attitudes to a series of road safety measures; and analyses the extent to which these attitudes and behaviours are consistent both across demographic criteria and over time.

The research comprised a nationally representative online survey of 1,259 motorists aged 17+:

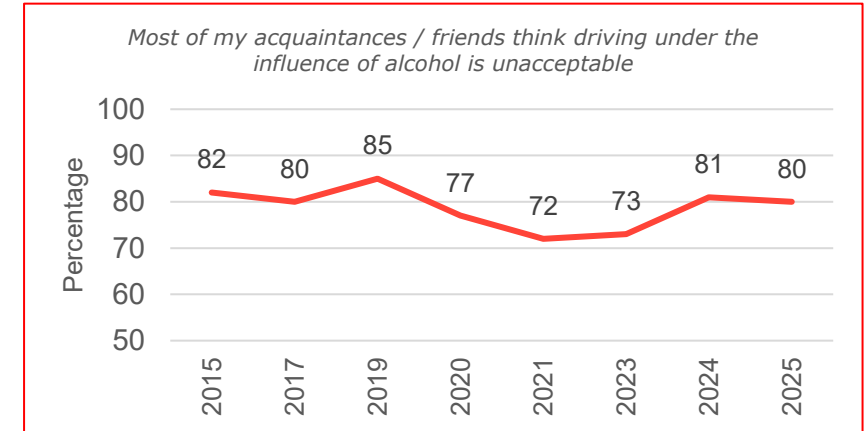
- Quota controlled in terms of gender, age, region and area.
- Fieldwork was conducted in October 2025.

The 2025 research builds off the findings from previous RSA Driver Attitudes & Behaviour National Surveys.

Intoxicated driving - Alcohol

Self-report survey data 2025

- Across studies, on average **1 in 10** drivers surveyed drove after consuming any alcohol (12 months)
- **Social unacceptability** of drink-driving is improving to pre-covid levels
- 1 in 4 motorists agree that:
 - **Driving short distances** after having a drink is acceptable
 - They may have been **over the limit** when driving **the morning after** a night out



Key findings

Coronial data – driver fatalities

2016-2020

- ❑ Analysis of driver fatalities (2016-2020) with a toxicology result available found that **35%** had a positive toxicology for alcohol.
- ❑ The majority of these driver fatalities were **male (93%)**, and **<45** years of age (76%).
- ❑ These collisions were more likely to occur over the **weekend (79%)**, and between **10pm-6am (57%)**, and on **rural roads** (≤80km/h speed limits) (75%).



Driver attitudes and behaviour survey

2025



B&A

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- ❑ **12%** of motorists reported driving after consuming any alcoholic drink in the last 12 months.
- ❑ **25%** of motorists agreed that it is acceptable to **drive short distances in your local area** after consuming one alcoholic drink.
- ❑ **23%** of motorists agreed that there were times where they may have been **over the limit when driving the morning after a night out.**



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APPENDIX

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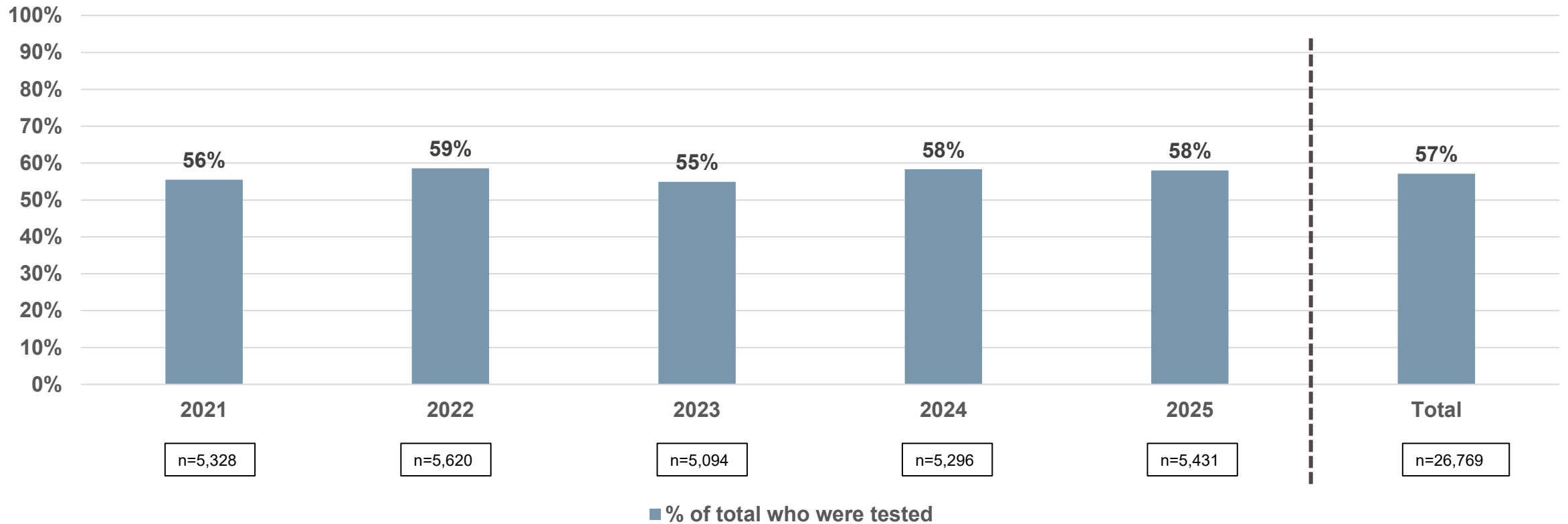
Drivers involved in minor injury collisions

2021-2025

Drivers involved in minor injury collisions



Alcohol testing trend 2021-2025

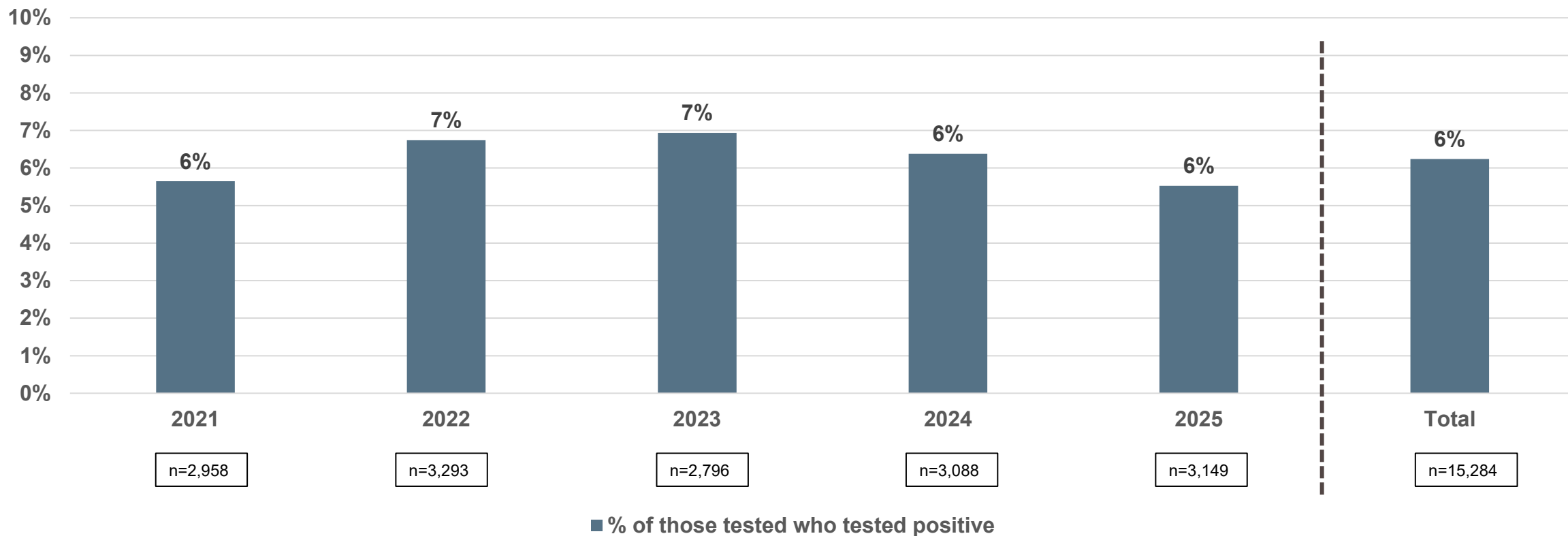


Data for 2022 onwards is provisional and subject to change. Please note, over this five year time period, <2% of drivers had an unknown test status and a further <1% of drivers refused the test. The remaining drivers had no test.



Drivers involved in minor injury collisions

Positive result on alcohol test 2021-2025



Data for 2022 onwards is provisional and subject to change. Please note, over this five year time period, <1% of drivers had an unknown test result. The remaining drivers had a negative test result.



Definitions

- A **fatality** is one where death occurs within 30 days of the date of the collision and is not the result of a medical cause or that of a deliberate act (e.g. suicide).
- A **serious injury** is one for which the person is detained in hospital as an in-patient, or any of the following injuries whether or not detained in hospital:
 - Fractures
 - Concussion
 - Internal Injuries
 - Crushing
 - Severe Cuts and Lacerations
 - Severe general shock requiring medical treatment





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