

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Zealanders not yet ready to ditch the right hand rule.

In the *Safer Journeys* transport strategy for 2010-20, recently released by the Minister of Transport, one of the proposals is to scrap the right-hand give-way rule and go back to the old left-hand give-way rule which was scrapped in 1977. New Zealand is, according to media reports, the only country in the world to have this rule. The *Safer Journeys* strategy envisages that the left-hand rule will be considered by Cabinet later this year.

Indications are that the Ministry of Transport is ahead of the people on this issue, because it does not receive a great deal of support, a Research New Zealand public opinion poll shows.

Only 44 percent of people 15 years and over are in favour of a change to the right-hand give-way rule, while 51 percent are opposed. Males favour the change by a small margin (52 percent as against 43 percent who are opposed), while females are solidly opposed to a change (36 percent in favour as opposed to 57 percent against).

Younger people are even more against a change than older people. Those under 35 are against a change by 61 percent to 35 percent, while among those 55 years and over 49 percent favour a change as against 42 percent who are against. "This makes good sense", says Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis. "Those under 35 years of age have grown up with the current right-hand give-way rule and are the class of drivers who would have to make the most effort to learn the new rule".

The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between 15 and 19 March. The maximum margin of error is +/- 4.8 % (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organization, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.



Table 1: Should the right hand rule be changed?

At present drivers turning left must give way to drivers turning right. It has been suggested that this be changed so that drivers turning right must give way to drivers turning left. Are you in favour or not in favour of this change?

	Total	Male	Female
Base =	500	249	251
	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	44	52	36
No, not in favour	51	43	57
Don't know	6	5	6
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 2: Should the right hand rule be changed?

At present drivers turning left must give way to drivers turning right. It has been suggested that this be changed so that drivers turning right must give way to drivers turning left. Are you in favour or not in favour of this change?

	Total	15 to 34 years	35-54 years	55 years and over
Base =	500	106	161	233
	%	%	%	%
Yes	44	35	48	49
No	51	61	48	42
Don't know	6	4	4	10
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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