

More Americans of all ages spurning driver's licenses

January 21 2016, by Bernie Degroat

While more and more teens and twentysomethings are forgoing driver's licenses, the most recent trend holds true for pretty much all age groups, say University of Michigan researchers.

In a new report examining changes in driver licensure in the U.S. from 1983 to 2014, Michael Sivak and Brandon Schoettle of the U-M Transportation Research Institute found a continuous decrease in the percentage of those under age 45 with a license.

Even the proportion of Americans ages 45-69 with driver's licenses have declined overall since 2008, following a 25-year rise.

The study reinforces previous findings by Sivak and Schoettle that show that much lower proportions of teens and twentysomethings today have licenses compared to their counterparts in the 1980s.

About 87 percent of 19-year-olds in 1983 had their licenses, but more than 30 years later, that percentage had dropped to 69 percent. Other teen driving groups have also declined: 18-year-olds fell from 80 percent in 1983 to 60 percent in 2014, 17-year-olds decreased from 69 percent to 45 percent, and 16-year-olds plummeted from 46 percent to 24 percent.

Drivers in their 20s, 30s and 40s also saw their ranks fall as a percentage of their age group population since 1983—down about 13 percentage points for those in their 20s, more than eight percentage points for

thirtysomethings and nearly three percentage points for those in their 40s.

However, for those in their late 50s and older, the proportion of those with driver's licenses is up about 12 percentage points since 1983—although down more than two percentage points since 2008. The only age group to show a slight increase since 2008 is the 70-and-older crowd.

"Overall, the future evolution of these changes will have potentially major implications for future transportation and its consequences," Sivak said. "Specifically, licensing changes will likely affect the future amount and nature of transportation, transportation mode selected, vehicles purchased, the safety of travel and the environmental consequences of travel."

Provided by University of Michigan

Citation: More Americans of all ages spurning driver's licenses (2016, January 21) retrieved 5 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-01-americans-ages-spurning-driver.html>

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