



Occupational Driver Impairment: Knowledge, Perceptions and Attitudes Amongst Employers in British Columbia

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Terms

“Driver impairment”

- Reduced ability to adequately perform the various elements of the task of driving
- Alcohol, drugs (illicit, prescription and over-the-counter) and fatigue

“Employers”

- Individuals from organizations who have direct influence on work practices or policies
- Supervisor, manager, foreperson, owner, director etc...

The Issue

- Occupational drivers are more likely to be involved in crashes than non work-related drivers
- Occupational driving crashes are expensive
 - Costs est. £2.7 billion annually in the UK and \$54.7 billion in the US annually (European Commission on Work-Related Road Safety, 2009)
- In BC, 24% of drivers (or 624,000 drivers) reports driving for work purposes (outside of commuting to and from work) (Ipsos Reid, 2012)

The Issue

- Driver impairment is a road safety problem in BC
- Alcohol, drugs and fatigue are known to impair driving ability and increase crash risk
- Governed by multiple legal bodies and regulations
- Limited recent data on the prevalence of occupational driver impairment due to data deficiencies, privacy concerns and administrative complexities
- Potential risks and costs to society, business, governments and public properly are high
- No existing targeted OHS response strategies

Policy Questions

How can occupational-related motor vehicle incidents where impairment is a factor be reduced?

What can occupational health and safety bodies, like WorkSafeBC do to best address this issue?

Research Questions

- (1) How do employers understand legal responsibilities relating to occupational driver impairment in BC?
- (2) What are employers' knowledge and attitude towards factors that impair driving, which include drugs, alcohol, fatigue and medical conditions?
- (3) To what extent do employers perceive occupational driver impairment as an issue in BC workplaces or their workplaces?
- (4) What tools and resources do employers presently have in place to address occupational driver impairment?

Methodology

(1) Online cross-sectional survey

- 456 completed surveys
- Sample was representative of size of organization and sector
- 11.1% response rate, 76.5% completion rate
- 4.2% sampling error

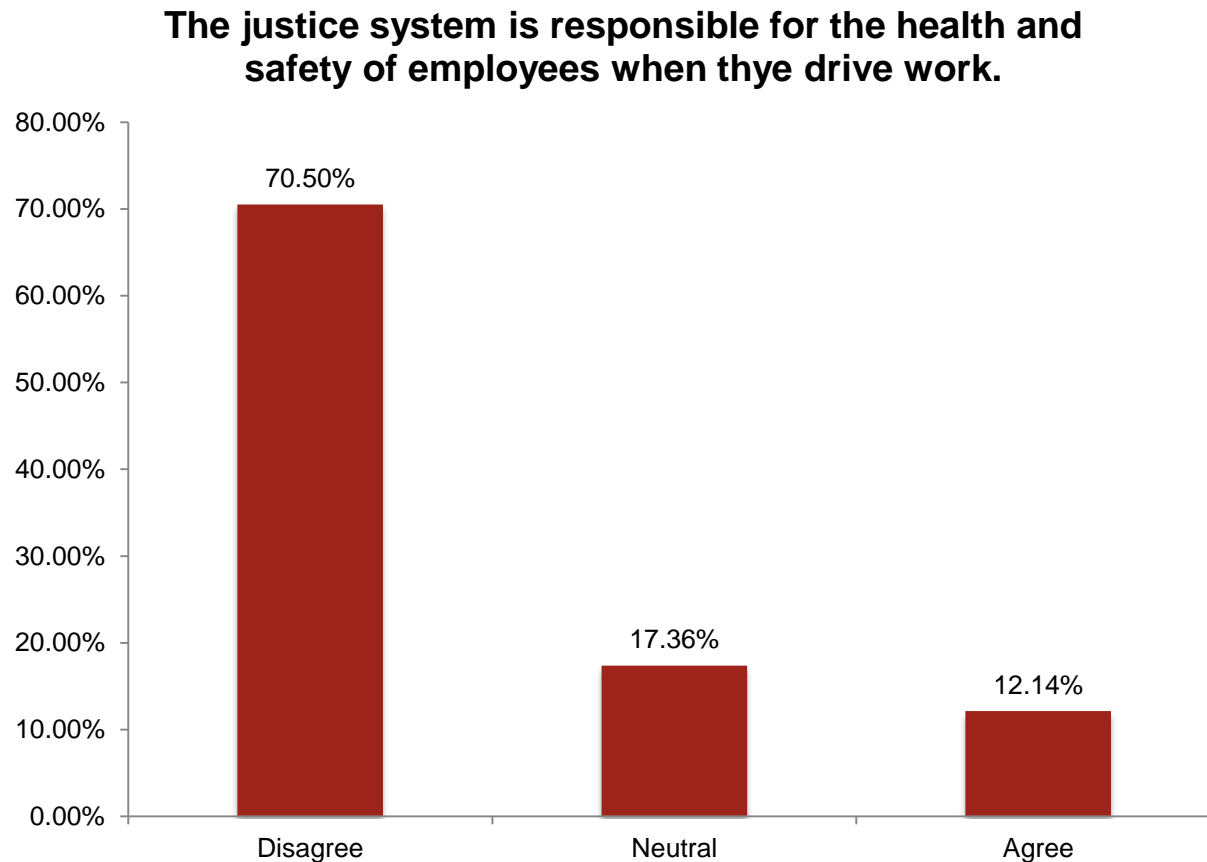
(2) Qualitative semi-structured interviews

- 17 interviews
- Recruited from the survey
- Services, construction and manufacturing employers

(Approved by SFU Research Ethics Board and WorkSafeBC)

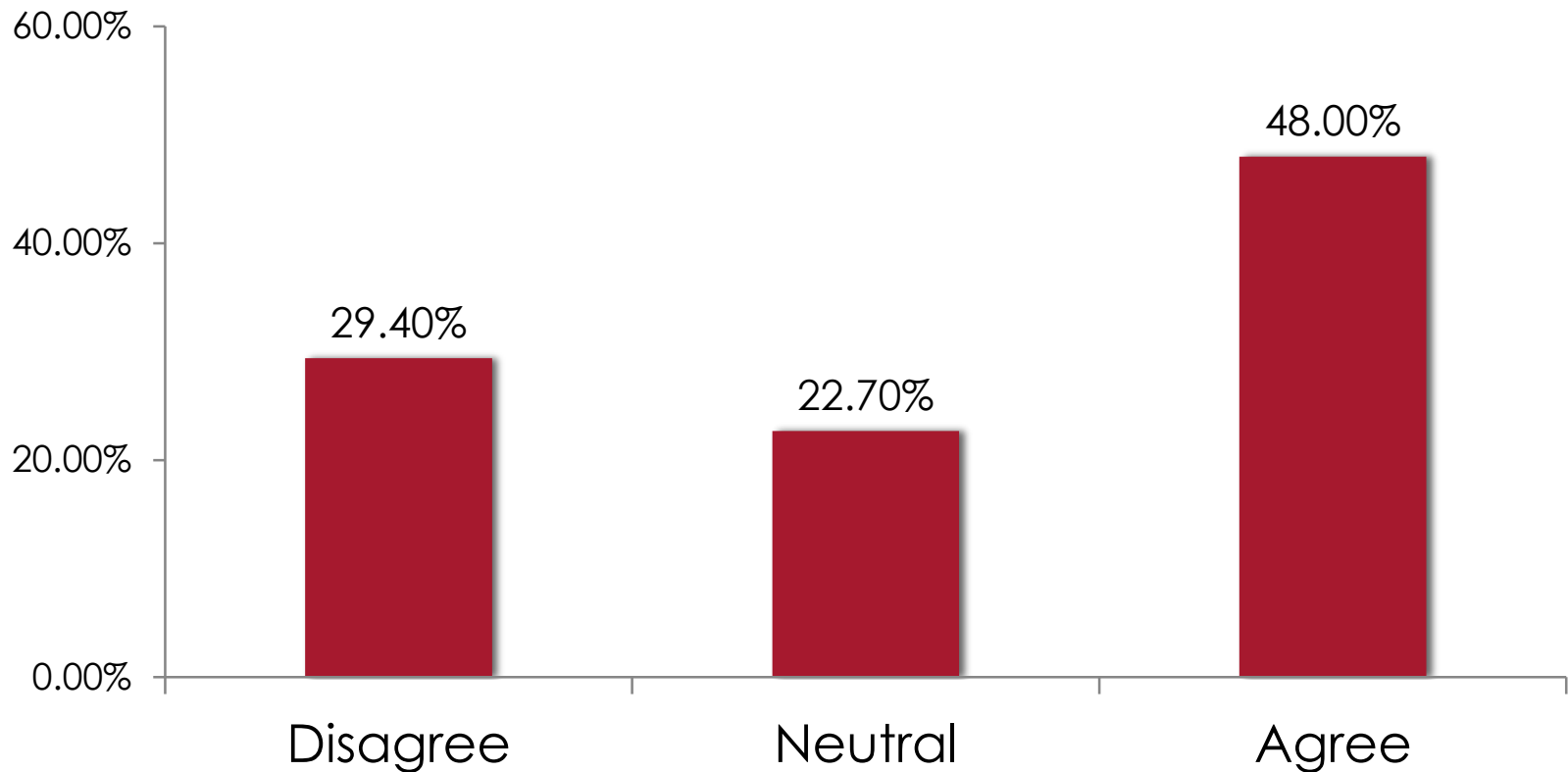
Selected Key Findings: Survey

(1) Do employers understand the legal and regulatory responsibilities to occupational driver impairment?



Selected Key Findings: Survey

I am aware of WorkSafeBC's Act and Regulations relating to impairment

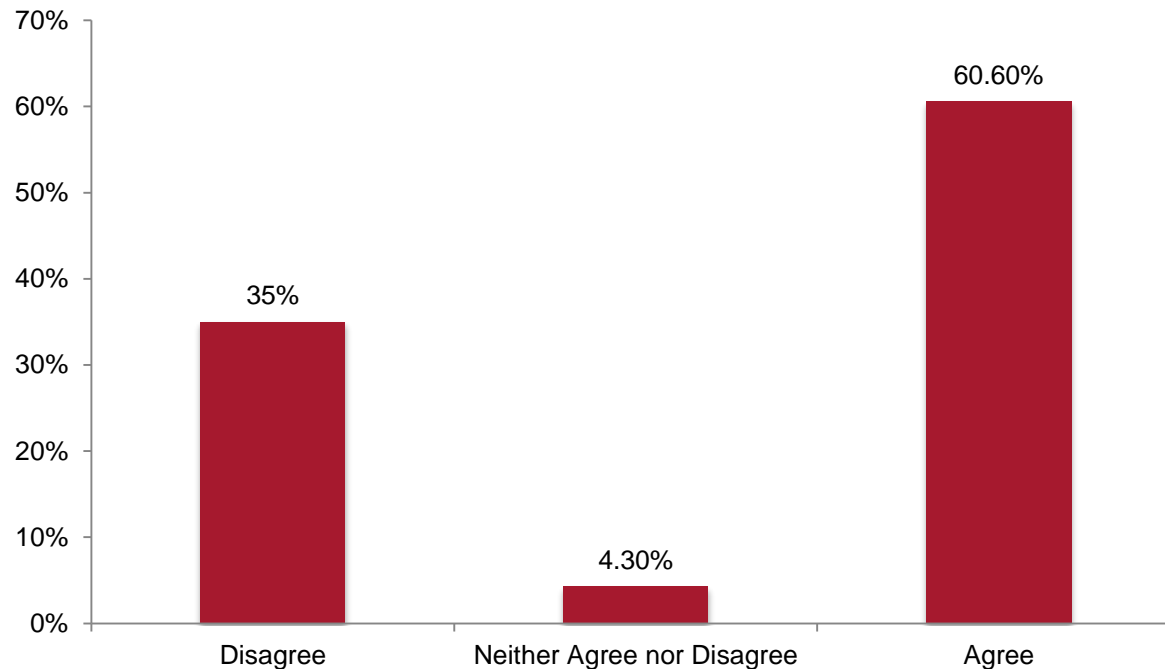


Selected Key Findings: Survey

(2) Do employers recognize and understand the factors that impair driving?

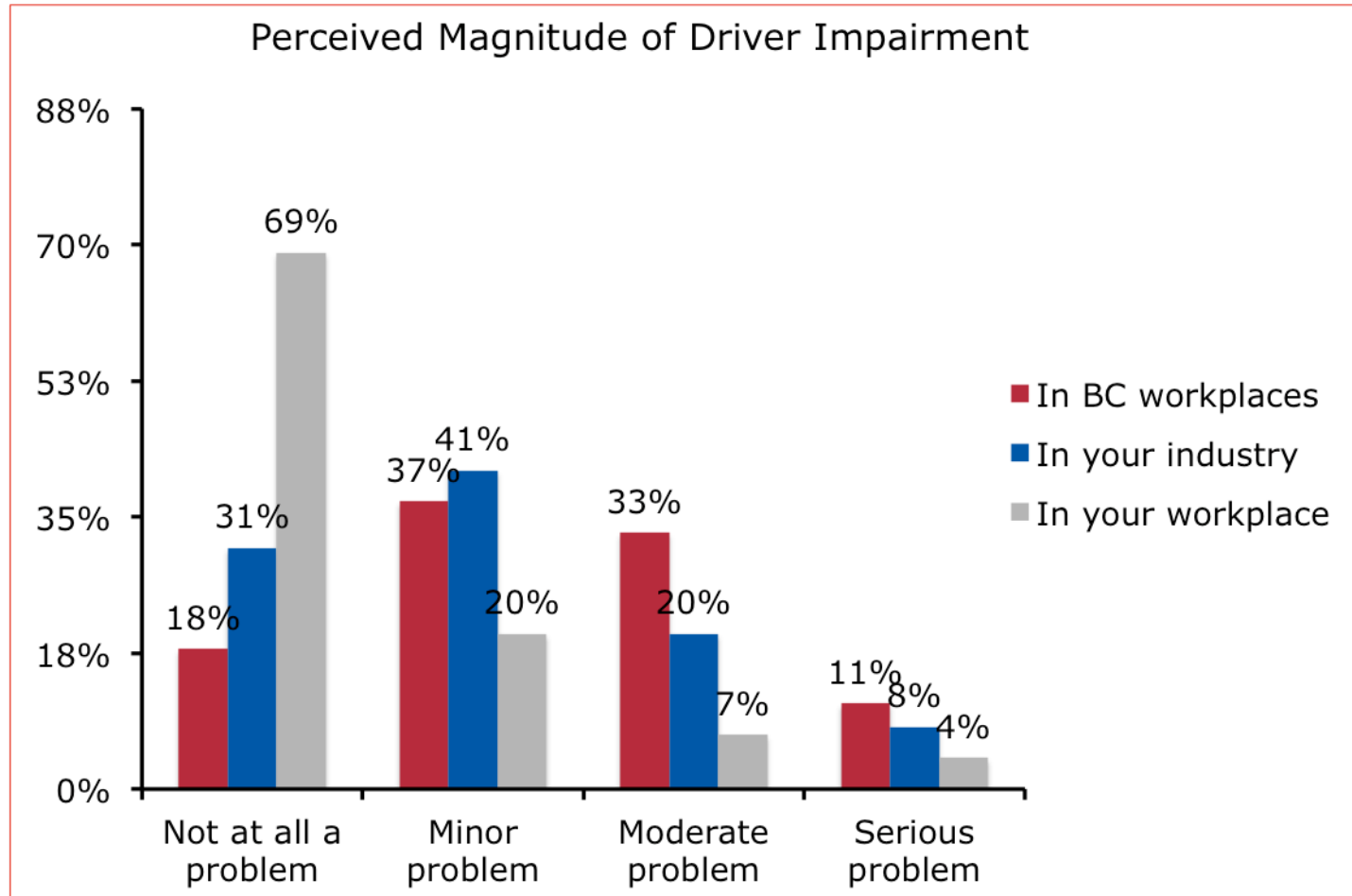
- Yes, employers largely recognize and understand the factors that impair driving (alcohol, illicit and prescription/OTC drugs)
- Exception is view on marijuana

Smoking a joint and driving is dangerous



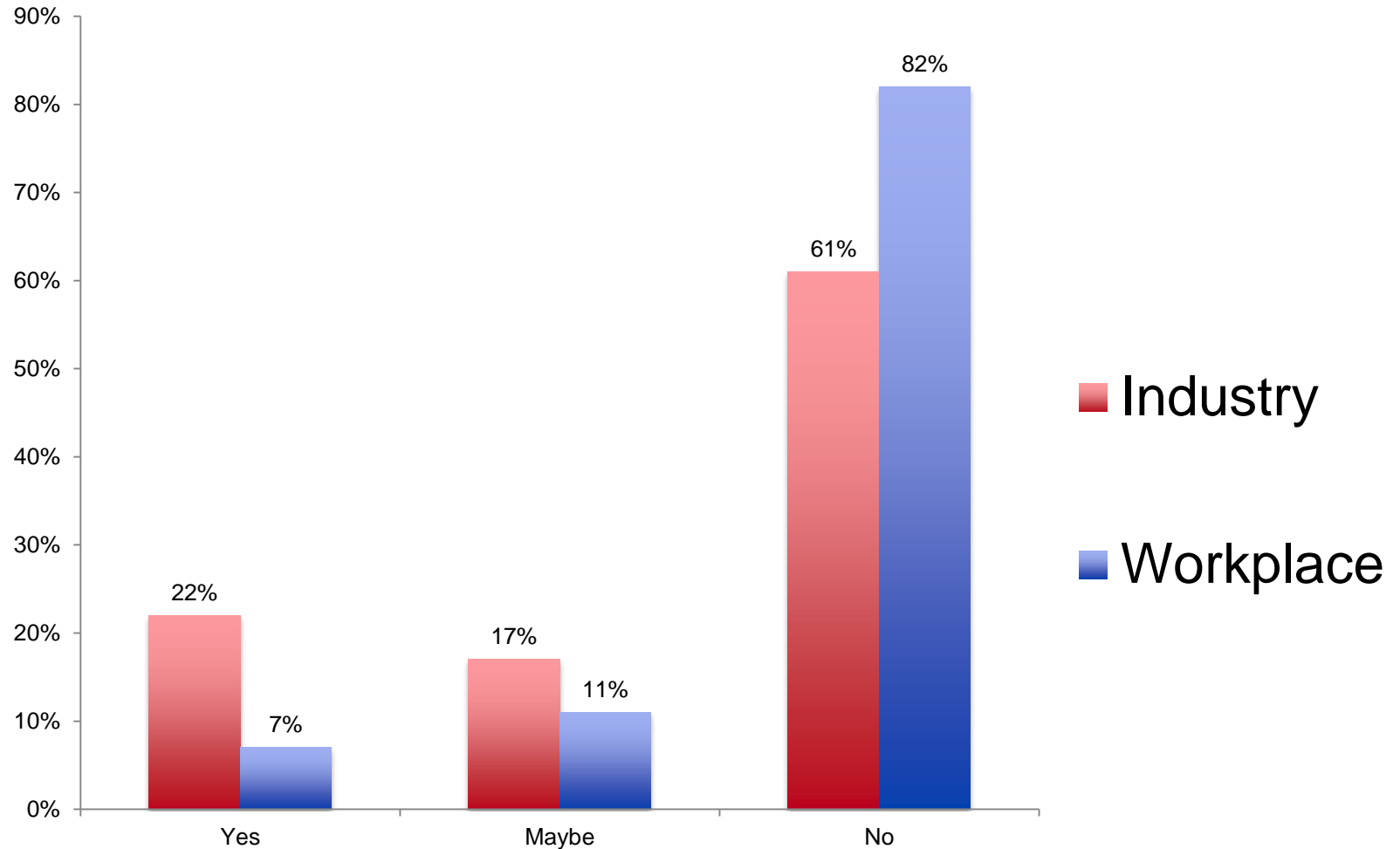
Selected Key Findings: Survey

(3) Is driver impairment an issue in BC workplaces and industry?



Selected Key Findings: Survey

Do you know workers who drive while impaired?

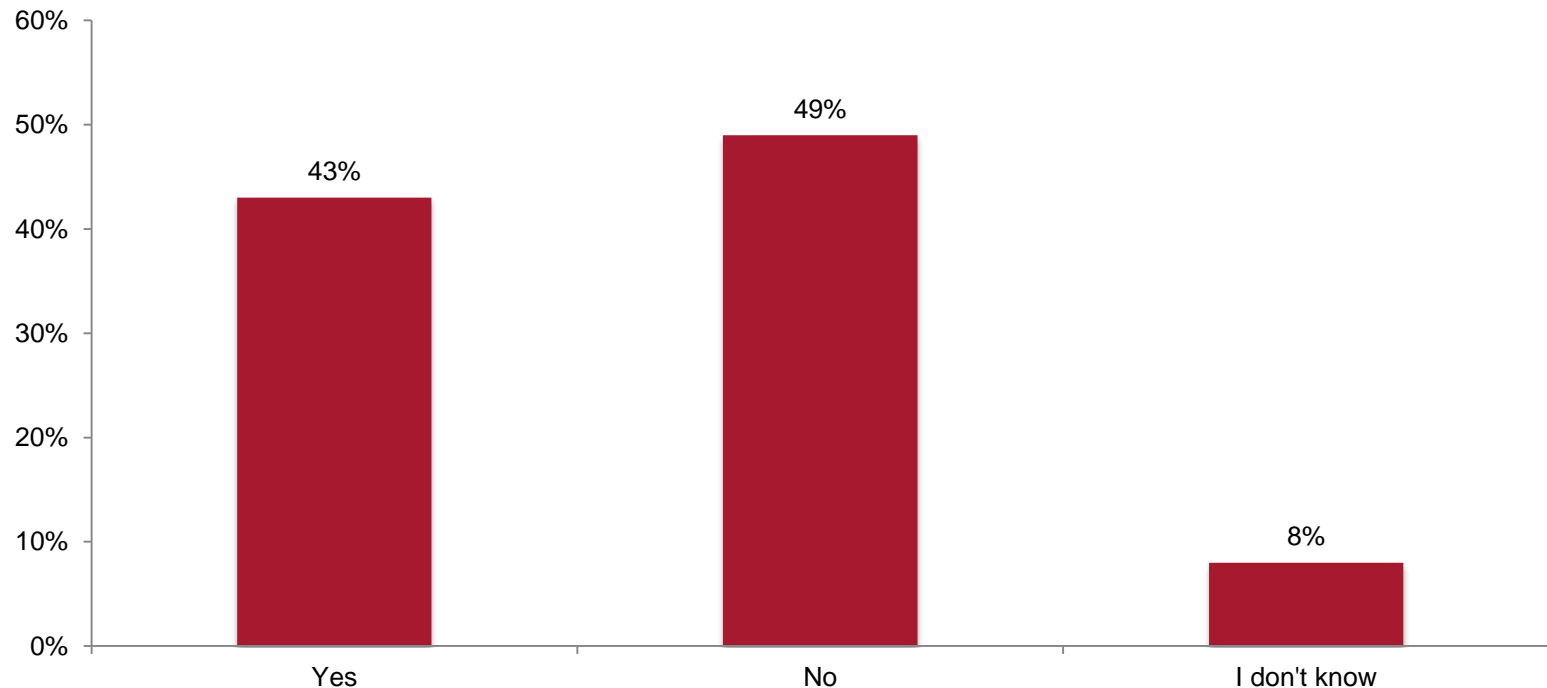


Selected Key Findings: Survey

(4) Do employers have the tools and resources to address driver impairment?

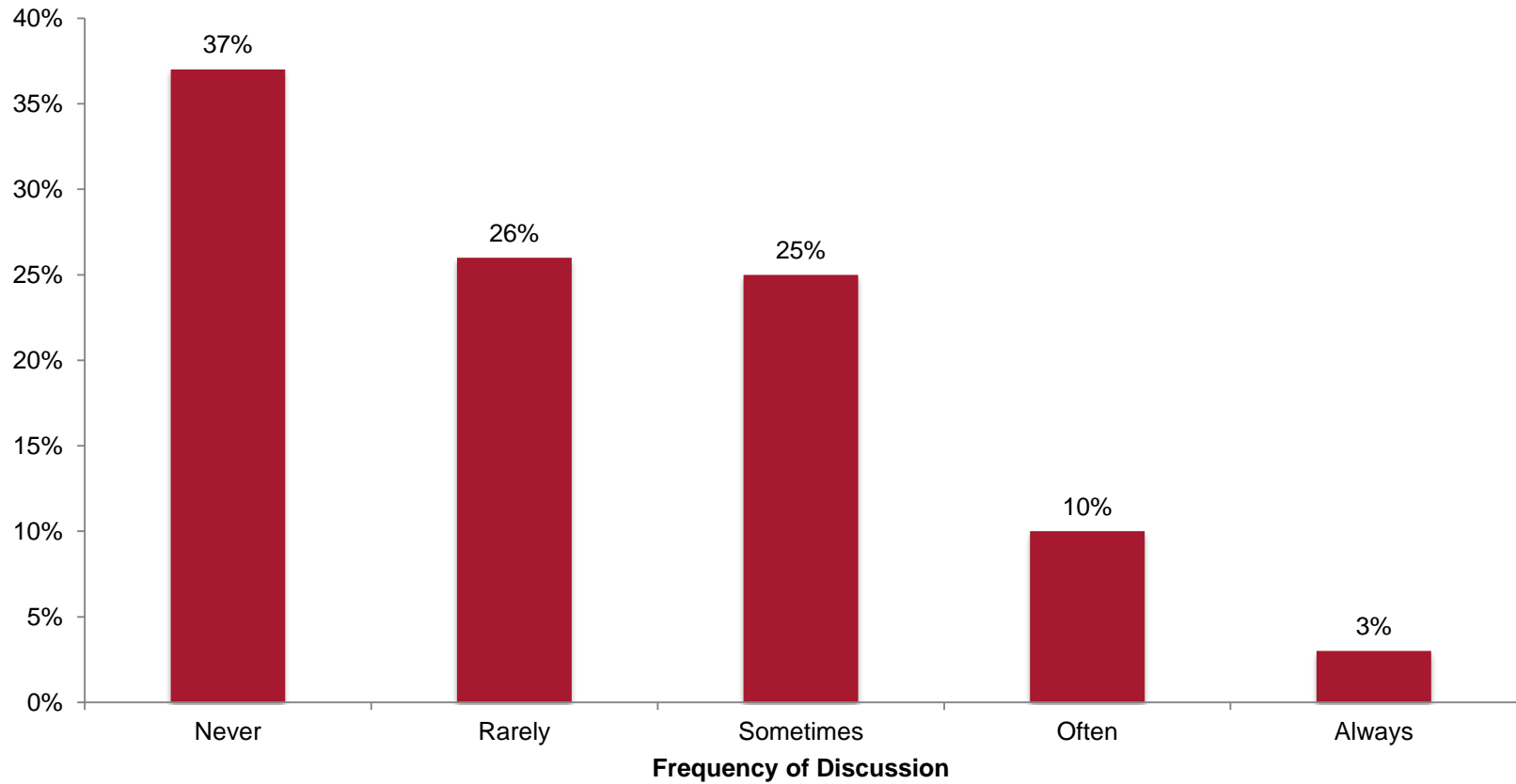
- 39.% (N=177) of employers agreed that their company would benefit from more resources from WorkSafeBC in handling driving impairment

Does your company have programs and/or policies in place to address work-related driver impairment?



Selected Key Findings: Survey

Driver Impairment Discussion at Work



Key Findings: Interviews

6 Key Themes

(1) Barriers and Challenges

Legal and Administrative

“A lot of supervisors, especially now with the privacy act and human rights act, or whatever, they’re just scared to do anything...they don’t want to get accused of harassment, discrimination or whatever” (Medium-sized service employer)

Dichotomies between Management and Direct Supervisors

“...supervisors and the people that work with [their] employees on a daily basis aren’t adequately trained in understanding and recognizing an impairment and don’t know how to deal with it appropriately” (Large-sized construction employer).

Dichotomies between Small and Medium to Large Employers

“No...not really, it’s more general, like if we are noticing an issue with somebody, we’ll have a conversation with them, but we don’t just, like as part of our safety meetings or toolbox meetings, lunch box meetings, that’s never really been a topic of discussion” (Small-sized construction employer)

Key Findings: Interviews

(2) Covert Issue

“I think we are probably touching the tip of the iceberg with this problem, I think it’s huge, I think it’s much bigger than we think and that’s a concern” (Medium-sized construction employer).

(3) Deviant Symptomatic Behaviour

“Usually impairment masks underlying problems, I don’t think workers mean to do drugs and come to work high or whatever, but usually it’s because they have issues at home or other problems...we aren’t trying to punish employees for wrong doings, a lot of the time it isn’t malicious but it’s cause of home issues, like fights at home or addiction” (Large-sized manufacturing employer).

Key Findings: Interviews

(4) Trust Sustains a Culture of Safety

“...employees are usually more compliant when you treat them with respect” (large-sized manufacturing employer)

(5) Enforcement and Prevention must Work in Tandem with Regulations

“there is a role for regulations, but they have to be able to be enforced” (large-sized transportation employer)

(6) A Societal Problem

“...driver impairment at work is definitely a problem, it doesn't happen often, but when it does, it's devastating and it changes lives...I've had a personal experience myself, my close friend died from a drunk driver so I think you have a moral obligation as an employer above everything to your worker and their families” (Large-sized manufacturing employer)

SUMMARY

- Most employers view occupational driver impairment as a problem in BC workplaces
- Need for tools
 - Smaller organizations are less likely to (1) have programs and policies in place and (2) less likely to address the issue during meetings
- Need for interdisciplinary collaboration
- Need for awareness
- Barriers make it challenging to address

Policy Options

1. Employer toolkit
2. Public education and awareness campaign
3. Increase WorkSafeBC Board Officer presence
4. Regulatory amendments

Policy Analysis

Table 9-1. Scoring summary of options analysis

		POLICY OPTIONS			
CRITERIA		Employer Toolkit	Public Education and Awareness Campaign	Increase WorkSafeBC Board Officer Presence	Regulatory Amendments
Effectiveness (X2)		4	4	6	2
Healthy Workplace	Cultivates a culture of trust among employers and workers	0	1	1	0
	Fosters a safety culture	1	0	1	1
Anticipated Stakeholder Collaboration		1	1	1	1
Implementation Complexity		3	3	2	1
TOTAL SCORE		9	9	11	5

Policy Recommendations

1. Increase WorkSafeBC Board Officer presence
1. Develop an occupational driver impairment employer-toolkit
1. Partner with ICBC and law-enforcement to deliver a public education and awareness campaign



Need for evaluation

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research



- Need for evaluation
- No singular recommendation - multi-pronged approach
- Ultimately requires altering societal norms - upstream factors
- Trust and collaboration are paramount
- Amendment of data collection practices is crucial for evidence-based decision making

Limitations

- Master's thesis (limited time, scope and resources)
- Broad brush approach
- Current data deficiencies
- Transportation sector was underrepresented (3% of overall respondents)
- Relied on self reported data (respondent bias)

Thank You 😊

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Questions?

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview Profile

Participant	Role	Industry	Organization Size
1	Owner	Construction	Large
2	Owner	Construction	Medium
3	Owner	Construction	Medium
4	Owner	Construction	Small
5	Owner	Construction	Small
6	Management	Construction	Small
7	Management	Manufacturing	Large
8	Owner	Services	Large
9	Management	Services	Medium
10	Management	Services	Small
11	Owner	Services	Small
12	Management	Services	Small
13	Management	Services	Small
14	Management	Transportation	Large
15	Management	Transportation	Large
16	Management	Transportation	Large
17	Owner	Transportation	Medium
Total 17			

Appendix 2

Policy Analysis

Criterion	Description	Measure	Methodology
Effectiveness	Reducing the % of workers who drive while impaired	<p>(3): Highly effective, estimated to reduce the % of workers who drive impaired by >20%</p> <p>(2): Moderately estimated to reduce the % of workers who drive impaired by 10%- 20%</p> <p>(1): Ineffective estimated to reduce the % of workers who drive impaired by > 10%</p>	Academic literature and studies, survey results, qualitative interviews with employers
Healthy Workplace	Does the option cultivate a culture of trust among employers and workers?	<p>(1) High trust – employers have a familiarity with workforce</p> <p>(0) No trust – employers have no familiarity with workforce</p>	Survey results Academic literature Grey literature Qualitative interviews with employers
	Does the option cultivate a safety culture?	<p>Are there safety reporting systems or mandatory training for workers and supervisors?</p> <p>(1) Yes these features are present</p> <p>(0) No these features are not present</p>	
Anticipated Stakeholder Collaboration	Does the option involve stakeholder collaboration	<p>(1) Yes – policy likely to involve stakeholder collaboration</p> <p>(0) No – policy likely to not involve stakeholder collaboration</p>	Qualitative interviews with employers Academic literature and studies
Implementation Complexity	Is the option difficult to implement?	<p>(3) Least difficult</p> <p>(2) Moderately difficult</p> <p>(1) Highly difficult</p>	Qualitative interviews with employers Academic literature and studies