

# PERCEIVED vs. ACTUAL RISK

How do your perceptions of risk compare with the perceptions of others? How do all of these perceptions compare with the scientific data?

ACTIVITY/TECHNOLOGY	LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS RESPONSES	COLLEGE STUDENTS RESPONSES	SCIENTIFIC DATA
Motor vehicles	2	5	1
Smoking	4	3	2
Alcoholic beverages	6	7	3
Hand guns	3	2	4
Surgery	10	11	5
Motorcycles	5	6	6
X-rays	22	17	7
Pesticides	9	4	8
Electrical power	18	19	9
Swimming	19	30	10
Oral contraceptives	20	22	11
Private aviation	7	15	12
Heavy construction	12	14	13
Food preservatives	25	12	14
Bicycles	16	14	15
Aviation (commercial)	17	18	16
Police work	8	8	17
Firefighting	11	10	18
Railroads	24	23	19
Nuclear power	1	1	20
Food coloring	26	20	21
Home appliances	29	27	22
Hunting	13	18	23
Antibiotics	28	21	24
Vaccinations	30	29	25
Spray cans	14	13	26
High school football	23	21	27
Power mowers	27	25	28
Mountain climbing	15	22	29
Skiing	21	25	30

Source: Slovic, P., B. Frischhoff, and S. Lichtenstein (1987). Perception of risk. *Science*, 236, 280-285.