

Motorcycle Helmet Usage in Illinois

June 2004 Observational Survey Results

Survey Design

The recent motorcycle helmet survey was a statistical (multi-stage random) observational survey conducted statewide during June 2004 on both high volume state highways and low volume local roads and residential streets. The survey design was based on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's requirements and had two characteristics.

1. The survey was conducted between 7:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. when the light was adequate for observation.
2. The survey sites included all interstate highways and freeways and a random sample of residential streets within selected areas.

There were 527 operators and passengers of motorcycles observed at 258 locations statewide. The survey provided a statistically representative sample of the state as a whole. For more information on survey design, refer to the original report entitled "Design of the New Safety Belt Usage Survey in Illinois", Division of Traffic Safety, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), January 1994.

Summary of Findings

Results of the motorcycle survey conducted at 258 sites in June 2004 are summarized in Table 1. The first data column indicates the total number of motorcycle operators and passengers observed. Column 2 presents usage rates per 100 motorcycle riders. The categories listed on the left side of the table indicate the various regions of the state where the survey was conducted (with the number of survey sites in each region in parenthesis), road types, time of day the survey was conducted, and a breakdown of weekdays and weekends.

A total of 527 motorcycle riders were observed. Of those, 36.1 percent were wearing helmets. The City of Chicago had the highest usage rate of 40.7 percent. The Collar Counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will) had a usage rate of 37.6 percent. The Downstate Counties (Champaign, Macon, Montgomery, Peoria, Rock Island, and St.Clair) and Cook County had

usage rates of 29.3 percent and 29.4 percent respectively.

There were slight differences among the different road types' usage rates. U.S. and Illinois marked highways had the highest usage rate of 44.8 percent. Interstate highways had a usage rate of 35.2 percent and residential roads had a usage rate of 33.3 percent. On the weekdays motorcyclists used helmets 39.1 percent of the time, while motorcyclists on the weekends had a helmet usage rate of 35.8 percent.

Table 1		
Motorcycle Helmet Usage Rates in Illinois		
(JUNE 2004)		
	Total Observed	Actual Usage Rate
	(1)	(2)
Statewide (258)	527	36.1%
Regions		
City of Chicago (46)	27	40.7%
Cook County (40)	34	29.4%
Collar Counties (118)	391	37.6%
Downstate (54)	75	29.3%
Road Type		
Residential (190)	207	33.3%
U.S./Illinois Highways (40)	87	44.8%
Interstate Highways (28)	233	35.2%
Day of Week		
Weekends (115)	481	35.8%
Weekdays (143)	46	39.1%

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