

Motorcycle Helmet Usage in Illinois

June 2009 Observational Survey Results

Survey Design

The recent motorcycle helmet survey was a statistical (multi-stage random) observational survey conducted statewide during June 2009 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 interstate highways, freeways, county roads, state highways and a random sample of residential streets within selected areas.

There were 1,186 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 2009 are summarized in **Table 1**. Column (1) shows the total number of motorcycle operators and passengers observed. Column (2) shows the percentage of motorcycle riders who were observed using helmets. The categories listed on the left side of the table indicate the region where each survey was conducted (with the number of survey sites for each region in parentheses), road type, and day of week.

A total of 1,186 motorcycle riders were observed. Of those, 32.1 percent were observed wearing helmets. Cook County had the highest usage rate at 48.1 percent. The city of Chicago had the second highest usage rate at 33.3 percent. The collar counties (DuPage,

Kane, Lake, McHenry, & Will) had the third highest usage rate at 31.8 percent. The downstate counties (Champaign, Macon, Montgomery, Peoria, Rock Island, & St.Clair) had the lowest usage rate at 31.6 percent.

Based on road type, motorcycle helmet use was the highest on Interstate highways at 36.3 percent. Helmet use on U.S./Illinois Highways was 30.1. Residential roads had the lowest helmet usage at 30.0 percent. The helmet usage rate was 45.7 percent on the weekdays and on the weekends it was 29.4 percent.

Table 1
Motorcycle Helmet Usage Rates in Illinois
(JUNE 2009)

Selected Characteristics	Total Observed (1)	Actual Usage Rate (2)
Statewide (258)	1,186	32.1%
Regions		
City of Chicago (46)	30	33.3%
Cook County (40)	27	48.1%
Collar Counties (118)	806	31.8%
Downstate (54)	323	31.6%
Road Type		
Residential (190)	423	30.0%
U.S./Illinois Highways (40)	369	30.1%
Interstate Highways (28)	394	36.3%
Day of Week		
Weekends (115)	987	29.4%
Weekdays (143)	199	45.7%

For more information, please contact:
 Illinois Department Transportation
 Division of Traffic Safety
 3215 Executive Park Drive
 P.O. Box 19245
 Springfield, Illinois 62794-9245
 (217) 785-1181
 or TTY (217) 524-4875

