

Motorcycle Helmet Usage in Illinois

June 2011 Observational Survey Results

Survey Design

The recent motorcycle helmet survey was a statistical (multi-stage random) observational survey conducted statewide during June 2011 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 1,408 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 2011 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 1,408 motorcycle riders were observed. Of those, 35.7 percent were observed wearing helmets. The city of Chicago had the highest usage rate at 52.2 percent. The Collar Counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, & Will) had the second highest usage rate at 37.0 percent. Cook County had a usage rate of 33.3 percent. Finally, the downstate counties

(Champaign, Macon, Montgomery, Peoria, Rock Island, & St. Clair) had the lowest usage rate at 30.1 percent.

Based on road type, motorcycle helmet use was the highest on Interstate Highways at 44.2 percent. The usage rate on U.S./Illinois Highways was 33.3 percent. Helmet use on residential roads was 31.3 percent. The helmet usage rate was 44.3 percent on the weekdays and on the weekends it was 31.5 percent.

Table 1
Motorcycle Helmet Usage Rates in Illinois
(JUNE 2011)

Selected Characteristics	Total Observed (1)	Actual Usage Rate (2)
Statewide (258)	1,408	35.7%
Regions		
City of Chicago (46)	115	52.2%
Cook County (40)	72	33.3%
Collar Counties (118)	746	37.0%
Downstate (54)	475	30.1%
Road Type		
Residential (190)	684	31.3%
U.S./Illinois Highways (40)	285	33.3%
Interstate Highways (28)	439	44.2%
Day of Week		
Weekends (115)	948	31.5%
Weekdays (143)	460	44.3%

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