

Motorcycle Helmet Usage in Illinois

June 2012 Observational Survey Results

Survey Design

The recent motorcycle helmet survey was a statistical (multi-stage random) observational survey conducted statewide during June 2012 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 1,982 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 2012 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 1,982 motorcycle riders were observed. Of those, 36.1 percent were observed wearing helmets. The city of Chicago had the highest usage rate at 49.6 percent. Cook County had the second highest helmet usage at 42.3 percent. The Collar Counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, & Will) had the third highest usage rate at 35.6 percent. Finally,

the downstate counties (Champaign, Macon, Montgomery, Peoria, Rock Island, & St. Clair) had the lowest usage rate at 32.0 percent.

Based on road type, motorcycle helmet use was the highest on U.S./Illinois Highways at 37.1 percent. Helmet use on Interstate Highways was 36.8 percent. Helmet use on residential roads was 34.8 percent. The helmet usage rate was 45.2 percent on the weekdays and on the weekends it was 32.9 percent.

Table 1
Motorcycle Helmet Usage Rates in Illinois
(JUNE 2012)

| Selected Characteristics | Total Observed (1) | Actual Usage Rate (2) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Statewide (258) | 1,982 | 36.1% |
| Regions | | |
| City of Chicago (46) | 135 | 49.6% |
| Cook County (40) | 78 | 42.3% |
| Collar Counties (118) | 1,360 | 35.6% |
| Downstate (54) | 409 | 32.0% |
| Road Type | | |
| Residential (190) | 795 | 34.8% |
| U.S./Illinois Highways (40) | 413 | 37.1% |
| Interstate Highways (28) | 774 | 36.8% |
| Day of Week | | |
| Weekends (115) | 1,466 | 32.9% |
| Weekdays (143) | 516 | 45.2% |

For more information, please contact:
Illinois Department Transportation
Division of Traffic Safety
Evaluation Unit
1340 North 9th St.
Springfield, Illinois 62702
(217) 785-1181
or TTY (217) 524-4875