

Motorcycle Helmet Usage in Illinois

July 2001 Observational Survey Results

Survey Design

The recent motorcycle helmet survey was a statistical (multi-stage random) observational survey conducted statewide during July 2001 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 819 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 July 2001 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

Motorcycle Helmet Usage Rates in Illinois (JULY 2001)		
	Total Observed	Actual Usage Rate
	(1)	(2)
Statewide (258)	819	22.0
Regions		
City of Chicago (46)	98	18.4
Cook County (40)	41	12.2
Collar Counties (118)	429	22.1
Downstate (54)	251	24.7
Road Type		
Residential (190)	367	17.7
U.S./Illinois Highways (40)	178	14.6
Interstate Highways (28)	274	32.5
Time of Day		
Morning Rush Hours (55)	104	34.6
Noon Rush Hours (45)	164	15.9
Evening Rush Hours (23)	107	13.1
Non-Rush Hours (135)	444	23.4
Day of Week		
Weekends (115)	617	18.3
Weekdays (143)	202	33.2

of 819 motorcycle riders were observed. Of those, 22.0 percent were wearing helmets. The downstate counties of Champaign, Macon, Rock Island, St. Clair, Montgomery and Peoria had the highest usage rate at 24.7 percent. The collar counties (DuPage, Will, Kane, McHenry, and Lake) had a usage rate of 22.1 percent, followed by the City of Chicago at 18.4 percent. Finally, Cook County (excluding the City of Chicago) had the lowest usage rate at 12.2 percent.

Interstate highways had the highest usage rate at 32.5 percent while U.S. and Illinois marked

Table 1

highways had the lowest usage rate at 14.6 percent. Residential roads had a usage rate of 17.7 percent. The morning rush hours (7:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.) had the highest usage rate at 34.6 percent. The second highest usage rate was during non-rush hours at 23.4 percent. The noon rush hour (11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.) and evening rush hour (4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.) had pretty low usage rates at 15.9 percent and 13.1 percent respectively.

There was quite a difference in the usage rates on weekdays verses weekends. On the weekdays motorcyclists used helmets 33.2 percent of the time, while on weekends there was a usage rate of only 18.3 percent.

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