

# Motorcycle Helmet Usage in Illinois

## June 2005 Observational Survey Results

### Survey Design

The recent motorcycle helmet survey was a statistical (multi-stage random) observational survey conducted statewide during June 2005 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 1,236 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 2005 are summarized in **Table 1**.

**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 1,236 motorcycle riders were observed. Of those, 31.6 percent were observed wearing helmets. The Collar Counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will) and Downstate Counties (Champaign, Macon, Montgomery, Peoria, Rock Island, and St.Clair) had the highest usage rate at 32.4 percent. The City of Chicago had the second highest usage

rate at 29.8 percent, while Cook County had the lowest usage rate at 25.0 percent.

Based on road type, motorcycle helmet use was the highest on Interstate highways at 39.1 percent. The helmet usage rate on Illinois/U.S. highways was 34.4 percent, while the lowest helmet usage rate occurred on residential roads at 25.6 percent. The helmet usage rate was 32.5 percent on the weekends and on the weekdays it was 29.7 percent.

**Table 1**  
**Motorcycle Helmet Usage Rates in Illinois**  
**(JUNE 2005)**

| Selected Characteristics    | Total Observed (1) | Actual Usage Rate (2) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Statewide (258)</b>      | <b>1,236</b>       | <b>31.6%</b>          |
| <b>Regions</b>              |                    |                       |
| City of Chicago (46)        | 94                 | 29.8%                 |
| Cook County (40)            | 88                 | 25.0%                 |
| Collar Counties (118)       | 748                | 32.4%                 |
| Downstate (54)              | 306                | 32.4%                 |
| <b>Road Type</b>            |                    |                       |
| Residential (190)           | 570                | 25.6%                 |
| U.S./Illinois Highways (40) | 326                | 34.4%                 |
| Interstate Highways (28)    | 340                | 39.1%                 |
| <b>Day of Week</b>          |                    |                       |
| Weekends (115)              | 846                | 32.5%                 |
| Weekdays (143)              | 390                | 29.7%                 |

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