

2004 Motorcycling in North Carolina Survey Results

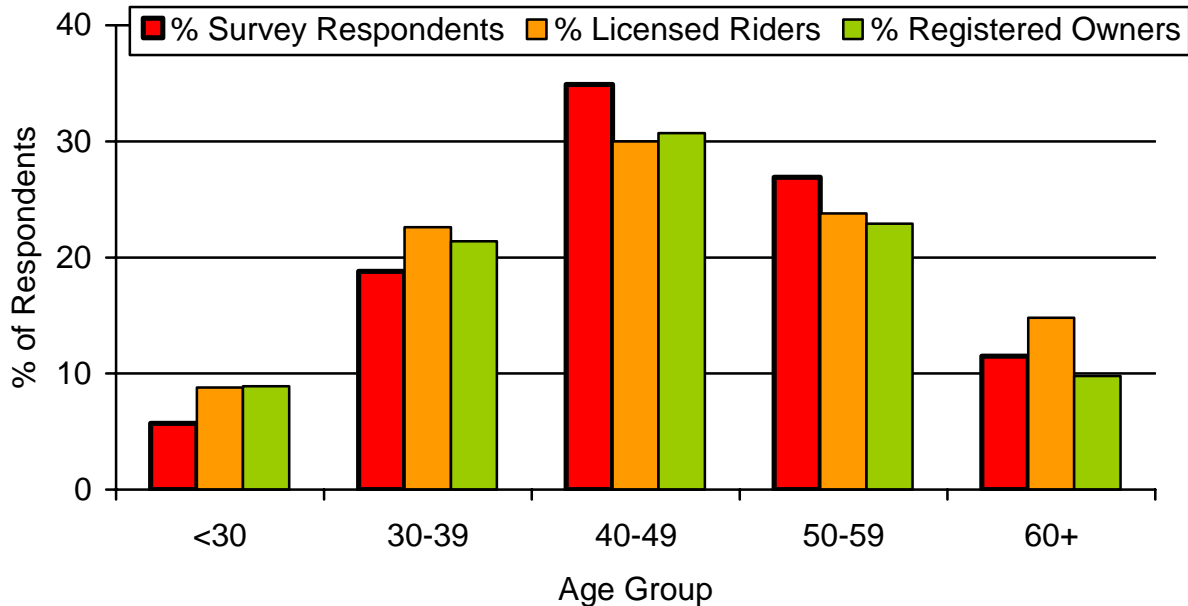
Survey Background

- The North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program mailed copies of the 2004 Motorcycling in North Carolina Survey to a statewide sample of 3,000 registered motorcycle owners in July 2004. There was an over-sampling of riders living in more rural counties of the state.
- Completed mailed surveys were received from 1,444 persons for a response rate of 48%.
- The following findings are based on all 1,444 returned surveys, unadjusted for county of residence.



Photo Credit: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

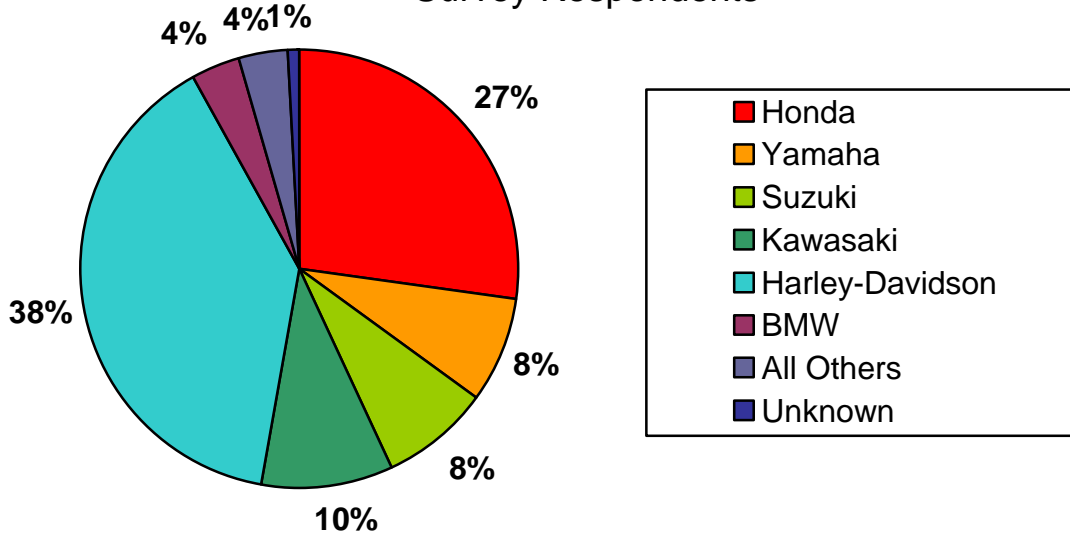
North Carolina Motorcyclist Demographic Characteristics



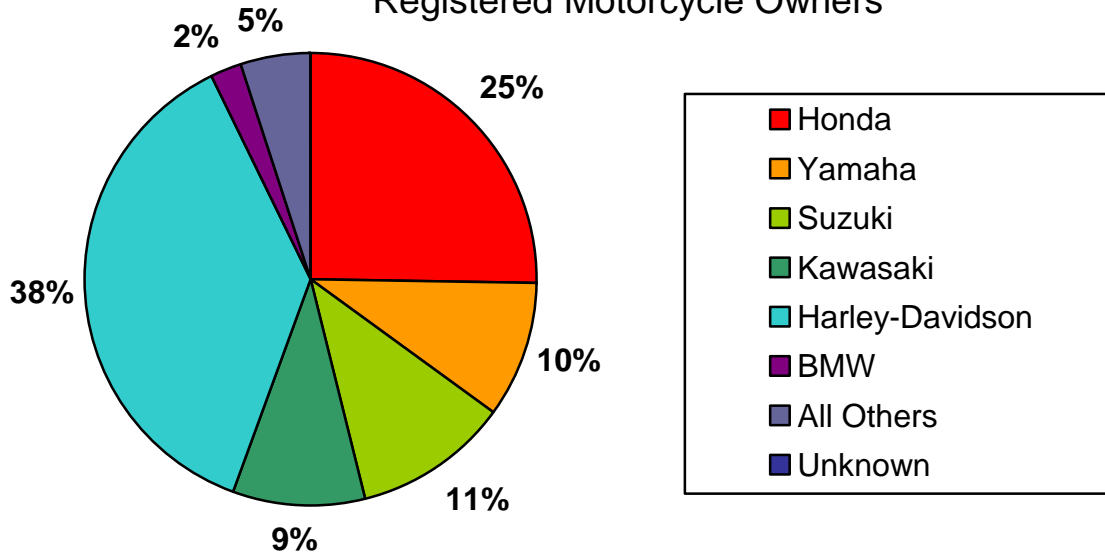
- The ages of the survey respondents ranged from 19 to 82 years old with a mean age of 47 years ($SD = 11$ years). Age was not reported by 32 (2%) of the respondents.
- Compared to the percentages of licensed motorcyclists and percentages of registered motorcycle owners in each age group, there was a slight overrepresentation of survey respondents in the 40 to 49 and 50 to 59 year-old age groups.
- Less than 10% of North Carolina licensed motorcyclists and registered motorcycle owners are under the age of 30.
- Even though there is some variation by age, the majority of survey respondents (88%), licensed motorcyclists (92%), and registered owners (89%) in each age group are men.
- Fewer riders younger than age 30 (87%) and those in their 30's (91%) reported having motorcycle endorsements on their licenses allowing them to ride legally than those in the older age groups (all 95% or higher), particularly the respondents age 60 and older (98%).

North Carolina Motorcycle Characteristics I

Survey Respondents

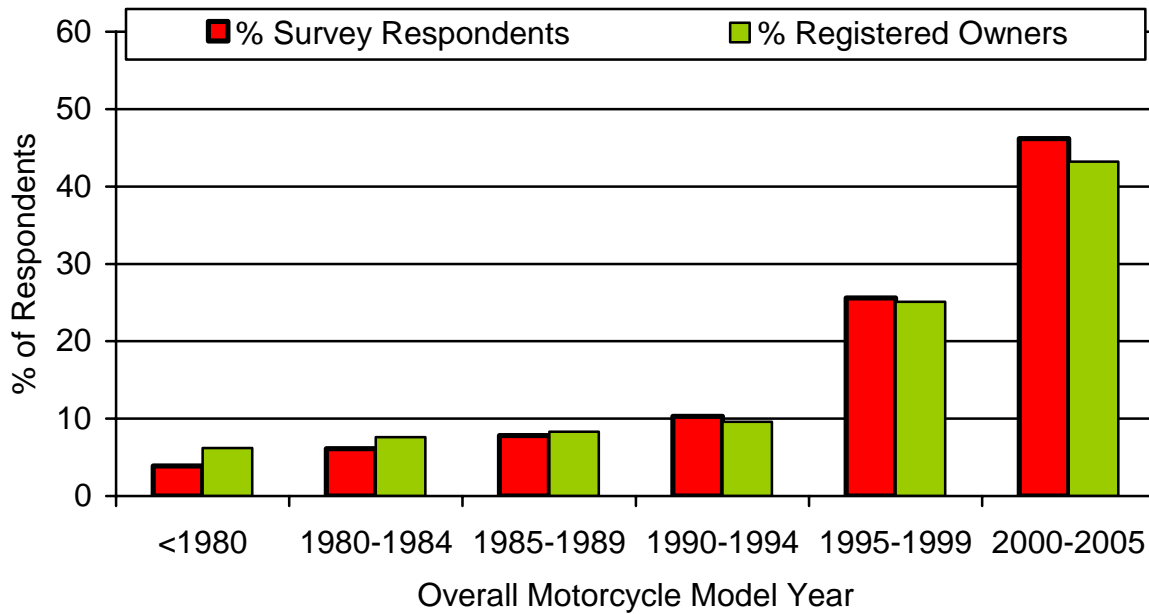


Registered Motorcycle Owners



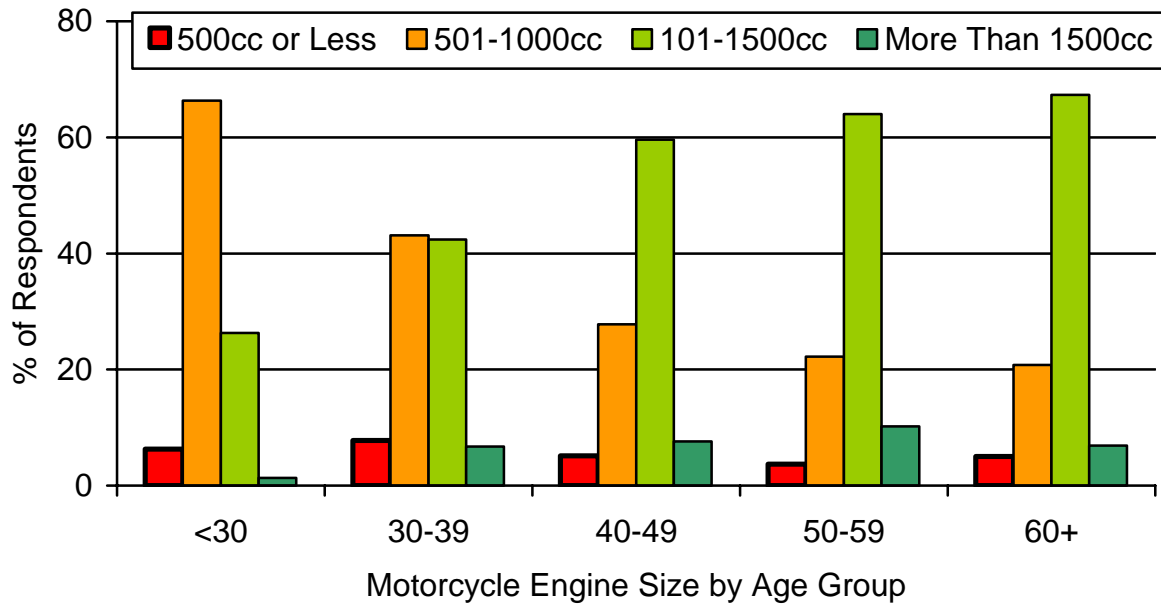
- Overall, the most common motorcycle makes represented in the survey were Harley-Davidson (39%) and Honda (27%), which mirrored statewide motorcycle registrations.
- A high percentage of riders age 60 or older owned Hondas (42%), while those in their 40's and 50's tended to own Harley-Davidson motorcycles (44% and 47%, respectively).
- Riders younger than 30 (20%) or in their 30's (30%) were less likely to own Harley-Davidson motorcycles than older riders. They were also more likely than older motorcyclists to ride Suzuki motorcycles (23% and 13%, respectively).

North Carolina Motorcycle Characteristics II



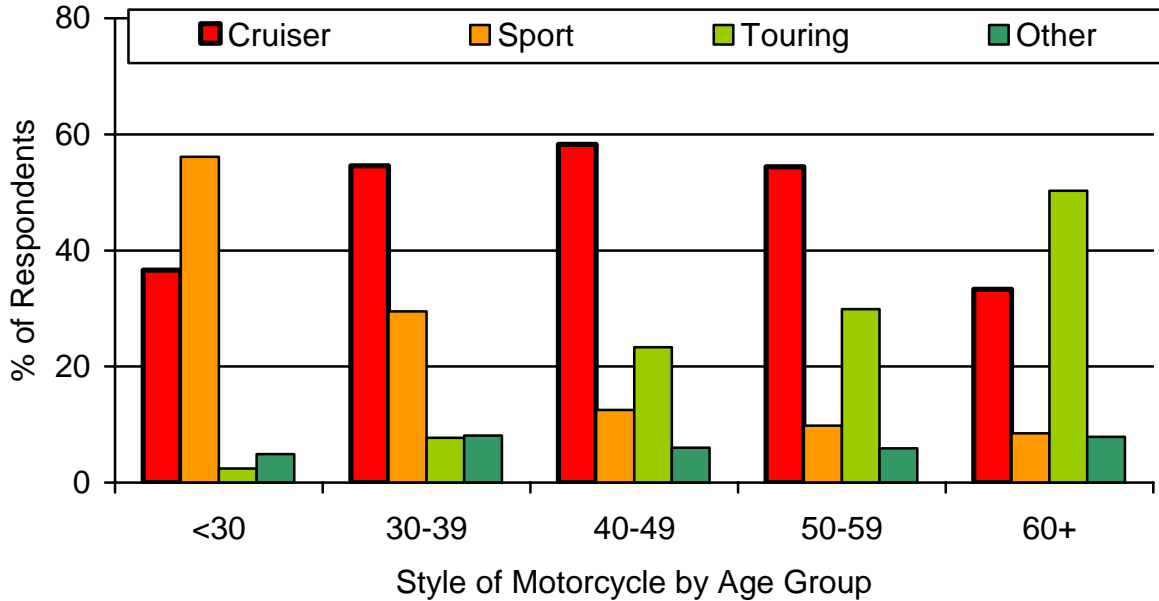
- The model years of motorcycles owned by survey respondents ranged from 1960 to 2005. Survey respondents were somewhat more likely than all registered owners in the state to own more recent model year motorcycles.
- Motorcyclists younger than age 30 and those in their 30's were more likely to own a model year 2000 or newer bike (59% and 53%, respectively), and those in their 40's and age 60 or older were less likely to own a newer bike (42% and 38%, respectively).

North Carolina Motorcycle Characteristics III



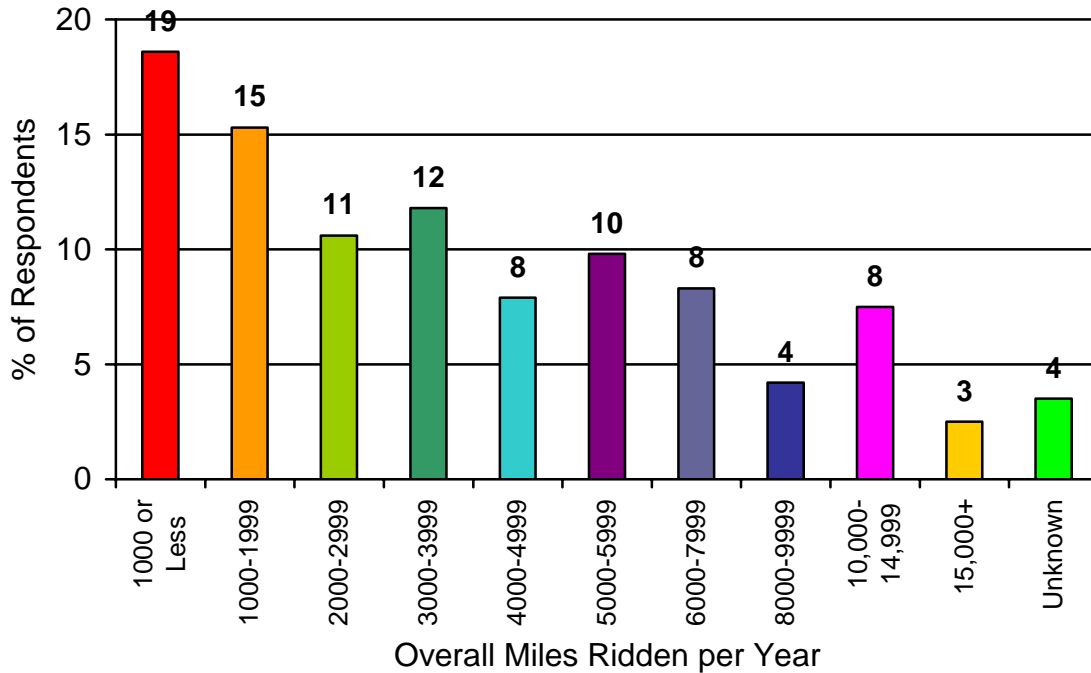
- The reported engine sizes ranged from a low of 50cc (cubic centimeters of displacement) to a high of 2000cc.
- There was a general tendency for riders younger than 40 to own lower-powered motorcycles under 1100cc and those age 40 or older to own higher-powered bikes.

North Carolina Motorcycle Characteristics IV



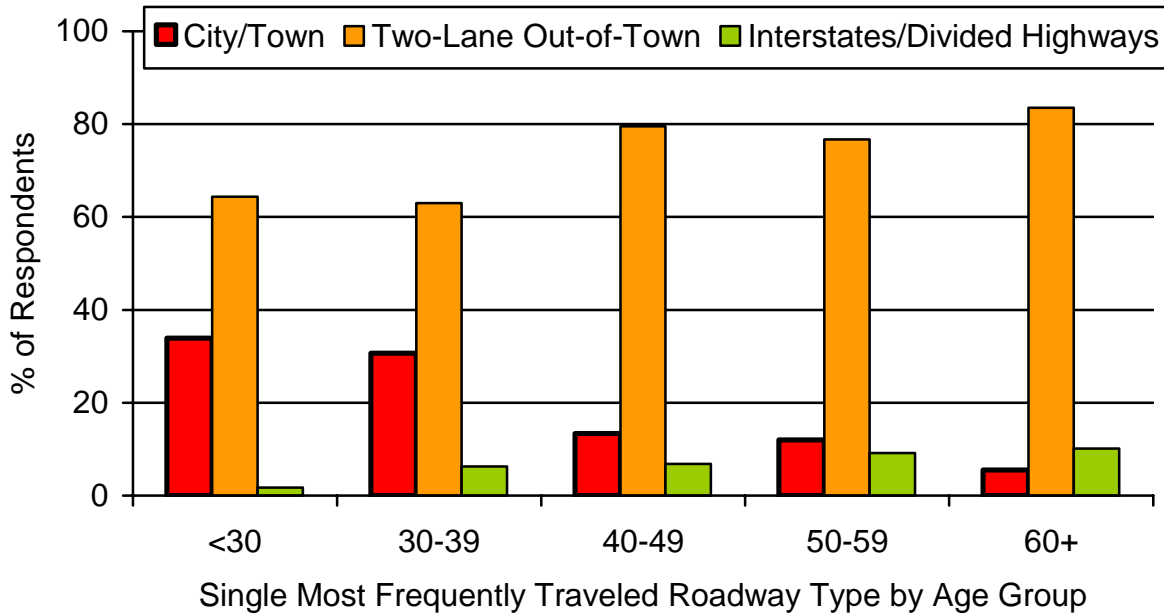
- The most popular style of motorcycle overall was cruiser (52%), followed by touring (24%) and sport (17%).
- Motorcyclists under age 30 and those in their 30's were more likely to own sport bikes (56% and 30%, respectively) and less likely to own touring bikes (2% and 8%) compared to older motorcyclists. Those under age 30 were also less likely to own a cruiser (37%).
- Motorcyclists in their 40's were more likely to own cruisers (58%) and touring bikes (23%) than sport bikes (13%), as were those in their 50's (54% and 30% vs. 10%).
- Riders age 60 or older were more likely to own touring bikes (50%) compared with cruisers (33%) and sport bikes (9%).

Riding Exposure I



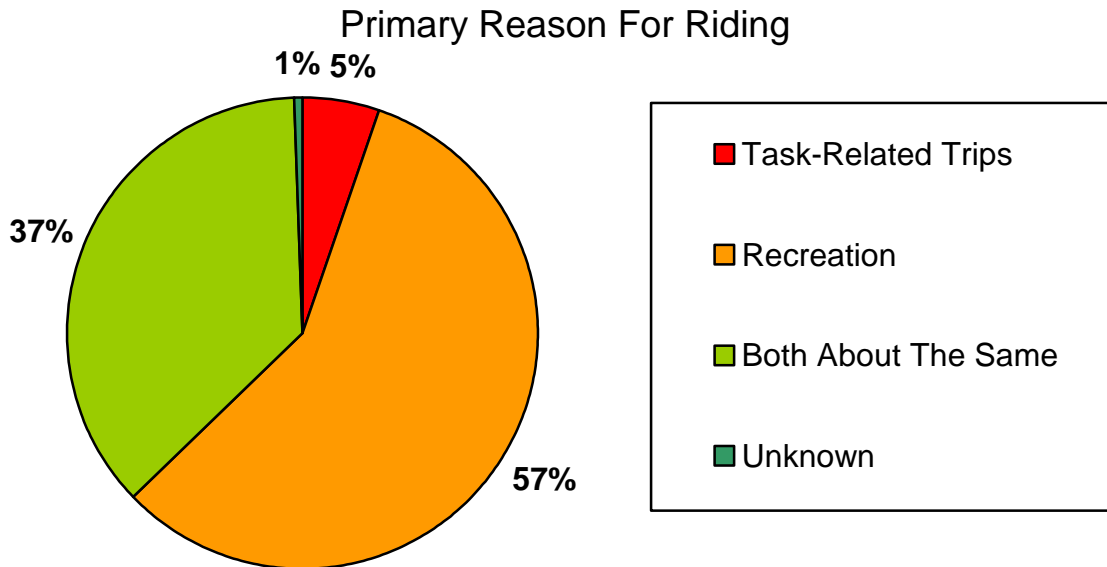
- The motorcyclists reported riding anywhere from 0 to 32,000 miles in the past 12 months, with a median of 3,000 miles.
- Over half of all the respondents (56%) reported riding fewer than 5,000 miles per year. Ten percent reported riding 10,000 or more miles per year.
- There was some suggestion that the motorcyclists under age 40 tended to ride fewer miles annually (< 6000) than those riders age 40 or older.
- 81% of the motorcyclists reported riding more than 6 months out of the year (median = 10 months), though riders under 40 again appeared to have less exposure.
- Regarding the frequency of riding during the months they rode, 9.1% indicated that they rode daily or almost daily. A majority (67%) indicated that they rode either several times a week (31%) or once or twice a week (36%).

Riding Exposure II



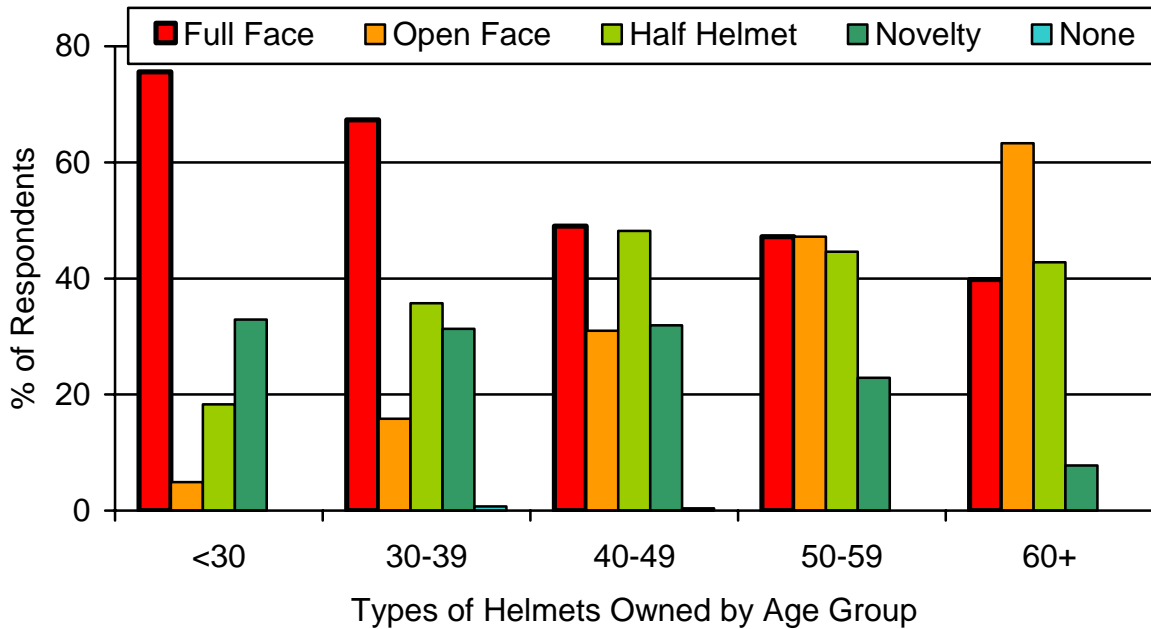
- The most frequently traveled roadways indicated by the motorcyclists were two-lane roadways outside of towns and cities (81%), followed by city/town streets (35%), and interstates/divided highways (26%).
- Higher percentages of riders under age 30 (48%) and those in their 30's (47%) reported riding on city streets in towns than was the case for older motorcyclists.
- The age differences illustrated in the figure include only those respondents who indicated that they rode on a single type of road the most frequently. Excluded from the figure are 208 (14%) riders who chose two road types as most frequently traveled, and another 208 riders who chose all three road types.

Riding Exposure III



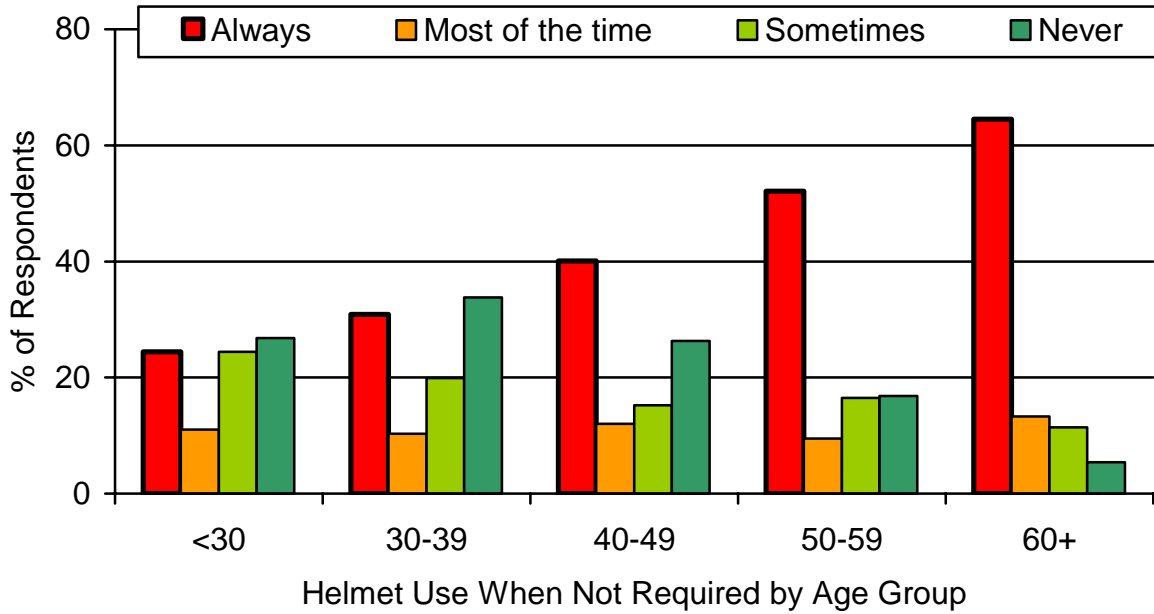
- Motorcyclists under age 30 (40%) and those in their 30's (51%) reported riding less for recreation, whereas higher percentages of those in their 50's (66%) and age 60 or older (68%) reported riding primarily for recreational purposes.
- Long trips of 50 or more miles were common for 46% of the motorcyclists, and occasional occurrences for another 43%. Again, riders under age 30 (31%) and those in their 30's (36%) were less likely to report long trips than older riders, particularly those in their 50's, of whom 54% reported often taking trips of 50 miles or longer.
- In terms of carrying passengers on their trips, 39% overall indicated that they never or almost never carried passengers, 41% occasionally carried passengers, and 19% often did so. No clear age differences existed in passenger transportation among the age groups.

Helmet Ownership and Usage I



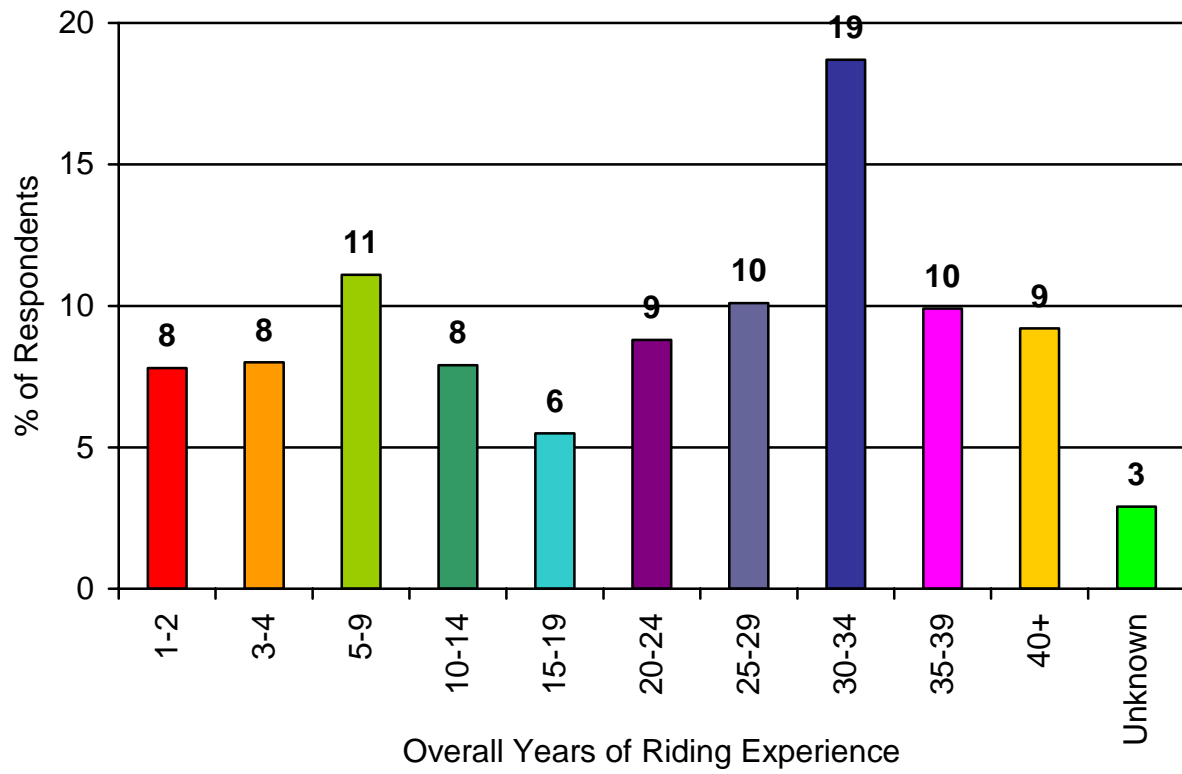
- Motorcycle owners were asked about the types of helmets they owned and their frequency of helmet use *when riding in states without a mandatory helmet law*. (North Carolina requires motorcyclists of all ages to wear a helmet while riding.)
- Almost all the respondents (98%) owned at least one type of helmet, 27% owned two different types, and 15% owned three types.
- The most commonly owned helmet types were full face (52%) and half helmets (42%). About a quarter (27%) of the respondents owned one or more novelty type helmets.
- Motorcyclists younger than age 30 and those in their 30's were less likely to own more than one type of helmet than older riders. Among the 59% of respondents who only owned a single helmet type, higher percentages of motorcyclists under age 30 (81%) and those in their 30's (62%) owned a full face helmet.
- Single helmet motorcyclists in their 50's (33%) and age 60 or older (48%) were more likely to own an open face helmet, while those in their 40's had higher percentages of half helmets (25%) and novelty helmets (19%).

Helmet Ownership and Usage II



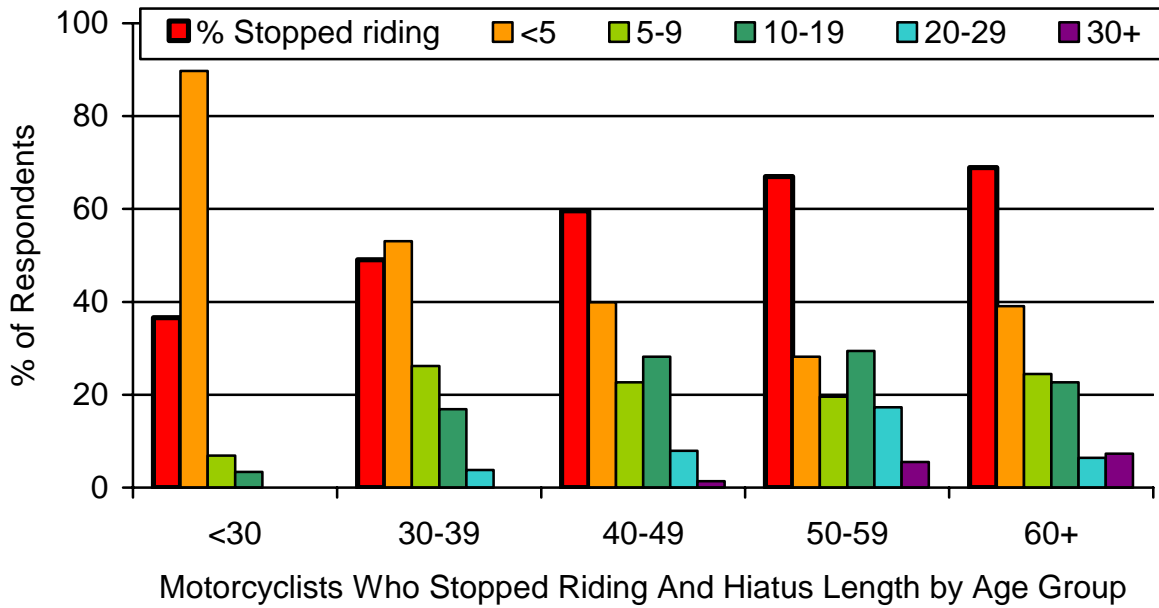
- Overall, 43% of riders said they always wore a helmet when riding in states where they were not required to do so, while 22% responded that they never wore a helmet when doing so was not required.
- The likelihood of *a*lways wearing a helmet in states not requiring it increased with the age of the motorcyclist.

Riding Experience I



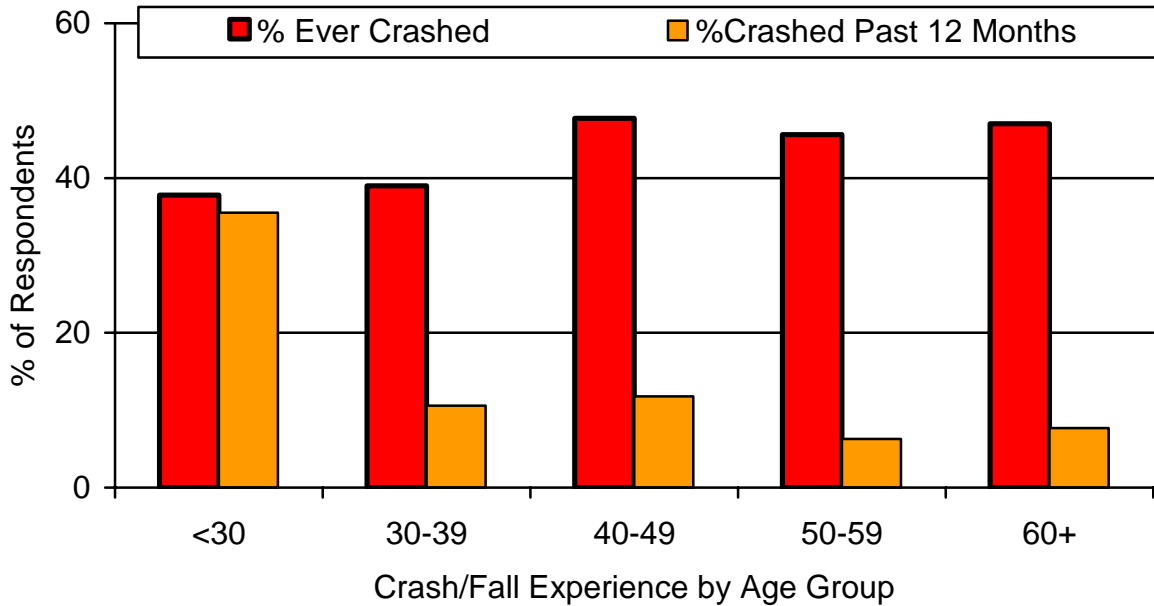
- The riding experience of the respondents varied from 1 to 68 years (median = 24), with 70% overall of the motorcyclists having 10 or more years of experience.
- Not surprisingly, years of experience tended to increase as a function of motorcyclist age. For riders under age 30, 55% had 4 or fewer years of riding experience.
- On the other side of the age spectrum, 40% of motorcyclists in their 40's, 57% of those in their 50's, and 70% of those age 60 or older had 30 or more years of riding experience.

Riding Experience II



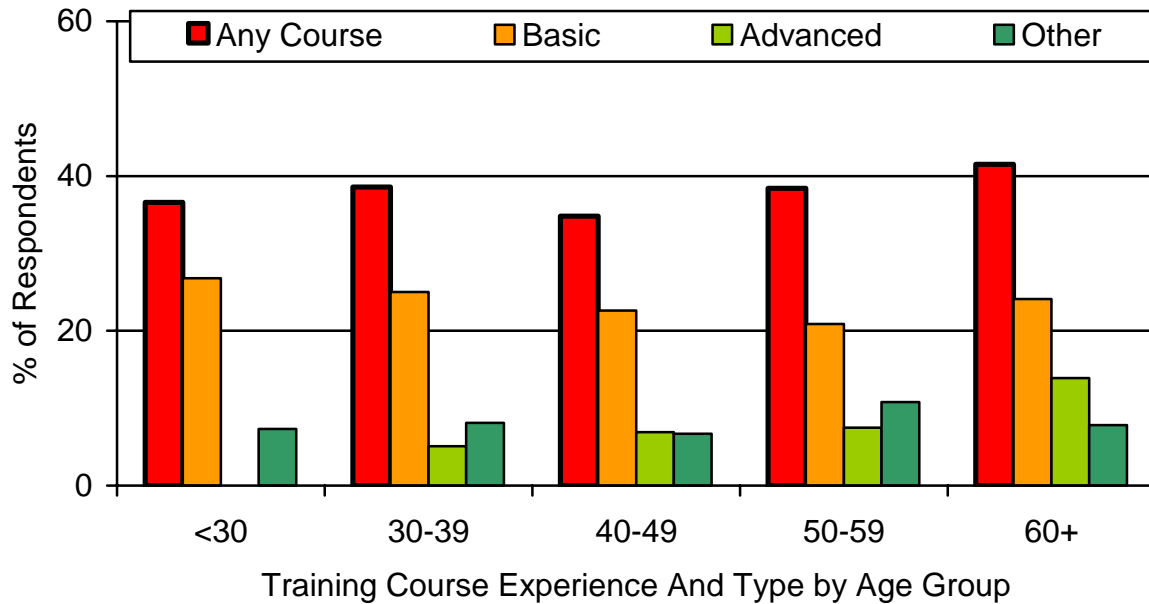
- Over half (58%) of the respondents indicated that they had stopped riding for some period of time in the past. This percentage increased as a function of the motorcyclist age.
- For those who had stopped riding, the median hiatus time was for 6 years.

Crash Experience



- Overall, 45% of the motorcyclists indicated that they had ever crashed or fallen while the motorcycle was moving.
- Of those who had a prior crash, 45% indicated that medical treatment was required as a result.
- When limited to the past 12 months, 11% responded that they had been involved in a crash during that time period.
- Among those who had ever crashed or fallen, a higher percentage of those less than age 30 (36%) and a lower percentage of those in their 50's (6%) had experienced a crash or fall in the prior 12 months.

Training Experience



- 40% of the respondents reported ever having taken some type of motorcycle safety course. Age was not a factor in whether riders had taken some type of motorcycle safety course.
- Younger motorcyclists were no more likely to have taken the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's (MSF) basic rider course than older motorcyclists, the percentage ranging from 21% to 27% across the age groups.
- Riders age 60 or older (14%) were more likely than those in other age groups to have taken the MSF experienced rider course.
- A majority of the respondents overall (79%) thought that it was very important for beginning riders to take a motorcycle safety course, though a smaller percentage of those under age 30 (57%) thought a beginning course was very important.
- Only 25% of all the respondents thought it was important for experienced riders to take an advanced training course.

Advice to Other Motorcyclists

Below is a sampling of the advice survey respondents had for others on how to avoid being injured in a crash:

- Always be aware of cars; ride like they are trying to kill you.
- 1. Stay alert 2. Ride in groups 3. Attend MSF courses 4. Avoid riding in cities, especially at rush hour 5. Know your limits.
- Always assume that the other vehicle is going to pull out in front of you. And always have an escape route.
- 1. Don't ride beside another vehicle or in their blind spot. 2. Don't ride in the center of travel lane due to oil in center of all lanes, always ride to the right. 3. Don't follow too close because you can't stop like a car. 4. Don't ride in rain, ice, or snow.
- Always look ahead and anticipate that other drivers do not see you. Always burn headlights, & high beams in daytime. Ride in groups until you've gained experience as a solo rider. Easier to see groups. Don't tailgate or make swift lane changes. Avoid loose roadway surfaces.
- Do not follow too closely. Wear bright colors. Use hand & arm signals along with using signals on the bike. While riding, scan all surroundings.
- I always ride 10 times more alert than in a car. Ride no more than 1-2 hours without a rest stop and the thought that everyone out there is out to get me.
- Ride in formation. Use hand signals and turn signals. Avoid riding at night. Watch out for everybody else.
- No matter your amount of confidence and skills, it can never compensate for others' ignorance and stupidity. The second you think highly of your skills and luck is the same second you eat asphalt or die. Motorists don't drive with motorcyclists in mind.
- Take rider education course. Don't ride drunk, stoned, or stupid.

- 1. Be aware of those vehicles around you 2. maintain your distance safely behind the vehicles in front of you. If possible, allow tailgaters to pass (this is a real problem - tailgating). When coming to an intersection check to see that all traffic has stop.
- Always expect others to do something stupid and plan for it. Visualize different crash scenarios and how you would best deal with them.
- Pay attention. Wear long pants and good shoes
- 1. Get formal (MSF) training to become proficient at identifying the risk factors associated with motorcycling on the street. 2. Dress in adequate protective gear every time you ride. You never know. 3. Be aware that car/truck/SUV drivers are not trained to see you.
- Turn on lights, and be three times more alert.
- Expect everybody to pull out in front of you, *most will*, most consider you a trespasser on their road.
- 1. Take MC safety riding class & road riding training. 2. Never ride w/o helmet & proper clothing. 3. Inspect bike and tires before every ride. 4. Always maintain minimum 2-second spacing between vehicles.
- Stay alert, don't ride tired or sleepy, and never ride after drinking.
- 1. Trust your tires, not your brakes. Braking in a turn often causes the crash. 2. When you do fall, throw the bike away. You don't need it anymore (the idea being to get away from the bike before impact if you're already sliding).
- Do not daydream. Pay strict attention to your riding and to other vehicles in all directions. Do not assume anything about other drivers. Be prepared to take evasive action in a split second. Don't try to beat caution lights and never practice jackrabbit.
- Take riders' course. Don't drink and ride a MC. Don't ride above your abilities.