

RAC Motorcycling Survey 2017

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Abstract

The rate at which motorcyclists are being killed or seriously injured on Western Australian roads is growing. To better understand how the safety of motorcyclists can be supported, RAC conducted a survey of Western Australian drivers and motorcyclists, which was exploratory in nature with the overall aim of understanding usage, riding behavior, attitude and perceptions of road users about motorcycling behavior and challenges. As well as showing that there are differences related to rider age, type of vehicle and usage, the survey results identified a number of initiatives which could improve the safety of motorcyclists.

Background

With growing number of Western Australians riding motorcycles for transport the rate of serious motorcyclist crashes is increasing and in 2016, 20% of people killed (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport, and Regional Economics, 2017) and 25% of people seriously injured in traffic crashes were riding motorcycles (Road Safety Commission, 2017).

In June 2017 RAC conducted a survey with the overall aim of better understanding motorcycle use and riding behaviour; attitudes and perceptions of WA road users about motorcycling behaviours and challenges; awareness of motorcycle safety technology and related products; level of compliance to road rules; and interaction on the road between drivers and riders.

Method

The online survey was completed by 2,731 male and female motorcyclists (n=2,317) and drivers (n=424) aged over 18 from across WA. Age, gender and location sampling quotas were applied and data has been weighted to be representative of the WA population.

Results and Discussion

A number of initiatives to improve the safety of motorcyclists were identified from responses on the topic of type of vehicle, usage, protective gear and equipment, vehicle safety features, crash and near miss history and post-license training.

Clarification of laws and sharing the road

Clarification of the law in relation to motorcyclist's lane splitting and lane filtering was identified by both motorcyclists (72%) and drivers (63%) as an important initiative in improving the safety of motorcyclists.

Approximately 6 per cent of surveyed motorcyclists reported having been involved in at least one crash and more than half (55 per cent) reported having had at least one "near miss" in the previous 12 months.

Motorcycle safety features

The absence of safety features on many motorcycles in WA may be an obstacle to improving the safety of motorcyclists; ABS and Traction Control are fitted to only 43% and 18% respectively and 20% of WA motorcycles have no safety features fitted at all.

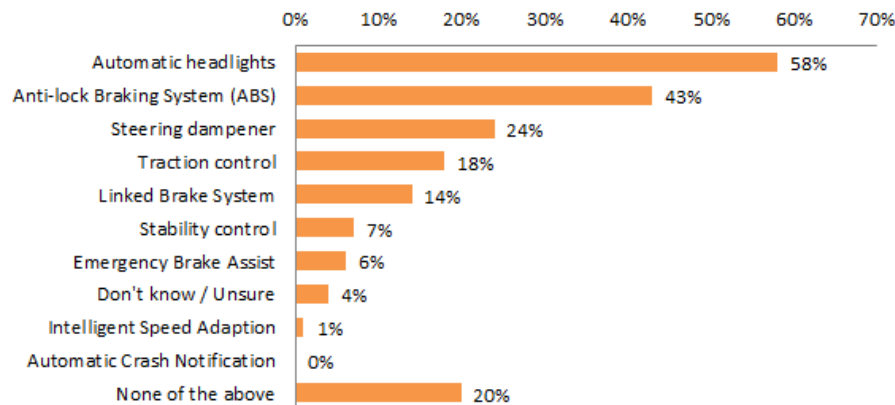


Figure 1. Proportion of WA motorcycles fitted with safety features

Star rating system for motorcycle specific clothing

Most riders indicated that their purchases of motorcycle specific clothing would be governed by a safety rating system. The introduction of a star rating system for helmets and protective clothing would allow motorcyclists to make the safest possible choices.

Road maintenance and design

Almost half of motorcyclists surveyed (47%) consider the design and condition of the roads they use to be the single greatest threat to their safety. Other road infrastructure related challenges included the presence of road debris (27%) and intersection design (19%). Consideration of motorcyclists in the design and maintenance of roads, intersections and surrounding infrastructure could reduce the risk of motorcyclist crashes occurring and their severity where they do occur (Austroads, 2016).

References

- Austroads (2016). "Infrastructure improvements to reduce motorcycle casualties". Research Report AP-R515-16
- Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport, and Regional Economics (2017), "Australian road deaths database"
- Road Safety Commission (2017), "Preliminary fatal and critical injuries on Western Australian roads 2016".