



Effect of Michigan's Helmet Law Repeal

Michigan's universal helmet law was partially repealed in April 2012. In a recently published study of motorcycle crash data, the University of Michigan Injury Center found that the partial repeal of the helmet law resulted in a **25% decline in statewide helmet use** and a **14% increase in head injuries requiring trauma center treatment**.¹

Introduction

SB 291 allowed riders 21 years and older to ride without wearing a helmet if they met the following requirements: 1) they carried first party medical insurance of \$20,000 or more, and 2) passed a motorcycle safety course or held a motorcycle endorsement for at least two years.²

Impact of the repeal on helmet use

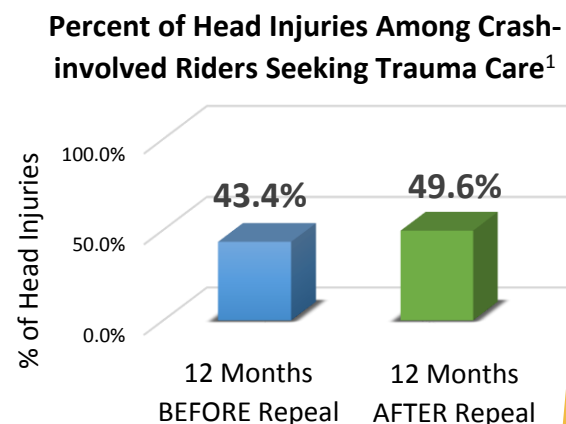
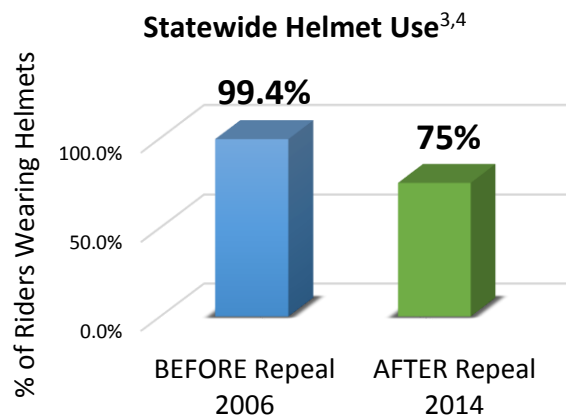
- Overall helmet use among riders in the state declined from **99.4% to 75%** following the repeal.^{3,4}
- Among hospitalized riders involved in a crash, **helmet use also declined 27%** following the repeal.¹
- **Lowest rates of helmet use** among crash-involved riders were observed among those who were **intoxicated (44.7%)**.¹

Impact of the repeal on head injuries and fatalities

- While fatalities did not change overall, **head injuries** among hospitalized, crash-involved motorcyclists **increased 14%** following the repeal, affecting nearly 50% of all crash-involved riders seeking trauma care.¹
- Among those with head injuries, a **greater percentage were attributable to skull fractures** following the repeal, with fewer injuries occurring as a result of minor concussions.¹
- The need for **invasive neurosurgical procedures** (e.g., cranial surgery) **nearly doubled following the repeal** (3.7% to 6.5%).¹
- Overall, among motorcyclists involved in a crash, not wearing a helmet **doubled the odds of a head injury and doubled the odds of a fatality**.¹

Financial implications of the repeal

- According to national data, **1 out of 3** motorcycle riders involved in crashes have **public insurance (e.g., Medicaid), are self-payers, or are uninsured**.⁵
- The average acute care cost for non-helmeted riders who are hospitalized after a crash is about **\$33,000**, which is **35% higher** than the cost for helmeted riders.⁶
- While motorcyclists represent 2% of all assessments paid into the Michigan Catastrophic Claims Association, they account for a **disproportionate share** of money paid out of the MCCA –8% of all claims reported.⁷





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References

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