

# Motorcycle and Scooter crashes Recorded by NSW Police from January to December 2011

Data supplied by the Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW

Analysis completed by the Survive The Ride Association of NSW  
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## Introduction

The crash data for the period January 1 to December 31 2011 was supplied by the Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW, in December 2012.

In the calendar year of 2011, there were 2,803 crashes recorded by Police that involved powered 2 wheel vehicles.

- This included 44 crashes that involved mopeds and 5 crashes with mini bikes.
- Only 2 of the moped crashes are included in this summary as they also involved a motorbike.
- The mini bike crashes are not included as they did not involve another motorbike or scooter.

Several crashes include unknown elements such as age of the rider and the speed zone where the crash occurred. As a result there are minor discrepancies between the totals in each category reported.

It should be remembered that many more motorcycle and scooter crashes occurred but were not recorded by Police. The main reasons for Police not recording these crashes include:

- Emergency services were not called and the crash was not reported.
- No-one was treated at the scene by an Ambulance officer and a vehicle was not towed from the scene, or, if it was it was then the crash was not reported.
- The rider and their bike were removed from the scene by friends and/or relatives and the crash was not reported.

In 2011 there were 483,662 current motorcycle rider licences.

A total of 2,772 riders were involved in crashes in 2011:

- The rider was at fault in 1,727 of these crashes.
- A total of 47 riders and 4 pillion passengers were killed.
- Another 2,420 riders and 101 pillion passengers were injured.
- Riders were at fault in crashes that injured 36 pedestrians and 7 pedal cycle riders.
- Riders were at fault in the death of 2 pedestrians.

## The crash details

As riders we often complain about how bad drivers are. This argument denies the reality that in 2011 the rider was at fault in 65% of crashes where we were injured and 80% of crashes where one of us was killed.

Overall, the motorcycle or scooter rider was at fault in 54% of all crashes (1,725 out of 2,756 crashes).

Nearly half (44%) of all scooter and motorcycles crashes involved ONLY the scooter or motorcycle:

- 52 scooters crashed on their own.
- 1,147 motorcycles crashed on their own.

In 40% of all motorcycle or scooter crashes (1,114 crashes) the rider simply lost control of their machine:

- In 537 crashes the rider lost control on a straight road and either ran off the road or slid down the road.
- In 577 crashes the rider lost control on a curve or a bend and either ran off the road or slid down the road.

Exceeding the posted speeding limit was a factor in only 600 of the 2,756 crashes where the motorcycle or scooter rider was at fault and 16 crashes where the other vehicle driver was at fault. The extent of the over-speed is not known.

There are fewer scooter crashes than motorcycle crashes. This is due mainly to there being fewer scooters on the road. In summary:

- 155 scooters crashed. In 68 of these crashes the scooter riders were NOT at-fault. However, the scooter rider was at fault in:
  - 52 crashes involving only the scooter (single vehicle crash).
  - 29 crashes involving another vehicle.
  - 6 crashes involving a pedestrian.
- 2,663 motorcycles crashed. In 1,027 of these crashes the motorcycle riders were NOT at-fault. However, the rider was at-fault in:
  - 1,147 crashes involving only the motorcycle (single vehicle crash).
  - 423 crashes involving another vehicle.
  - 38 crashes with a pedestrian.
  - 2 crashes with a pedal cyclist.
  - 28 crashes with another motorcycle.
- 2 sidecar outfits crashed. Both crashes were the riders' fault.

If we examine only crashes between a motorcycle or scooter and other vehicles, the argument that drivers are more at fault is actually correct.

In multi-vehicle crashes, riders are at fault in only 32% of the crashes.

- In the 98 scooter crashes with another vehicle, only 29 crashes (30%) were the fault of the rider.
- In the 1,415 motorcycle crashes with another vehicle, only 449 crashes (32%) were the fault of the rider.

### Who is crashing and getting injured in crashes?

Riders from all age groups are injured in crashes. The following 3 charts show the number of riders and pillions injured by age group.

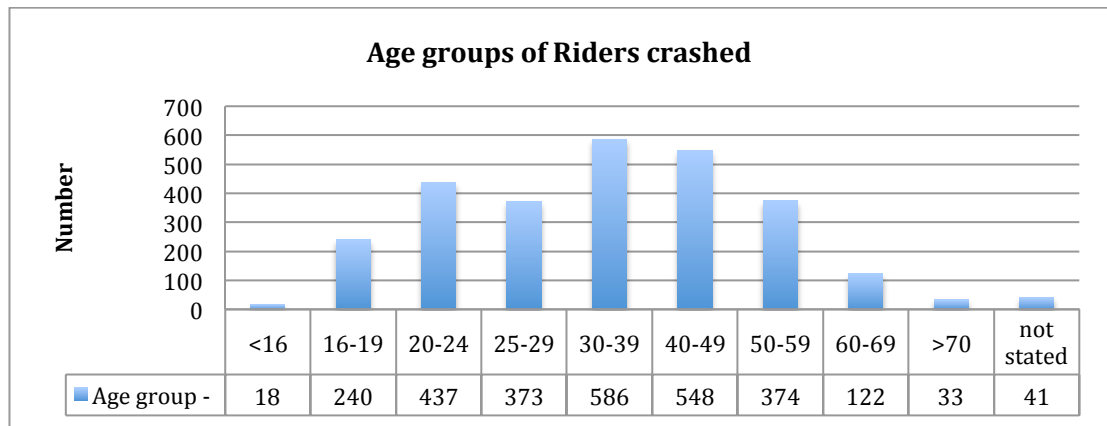


Chart 1

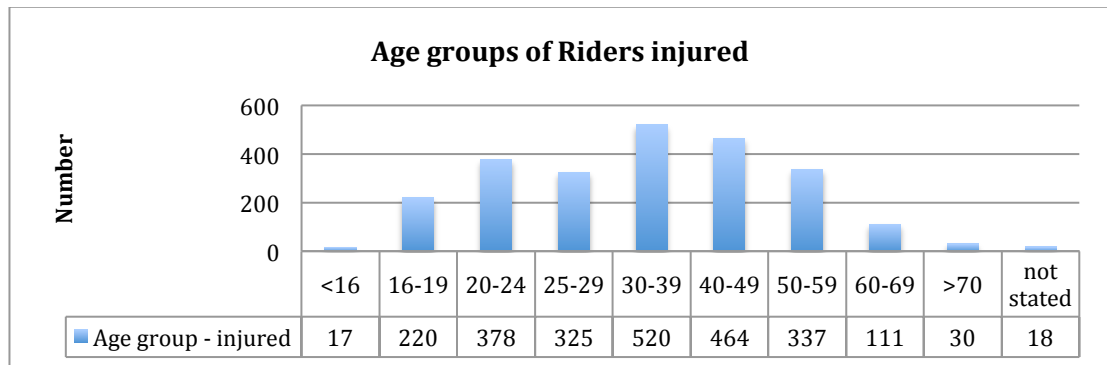


Chart 2

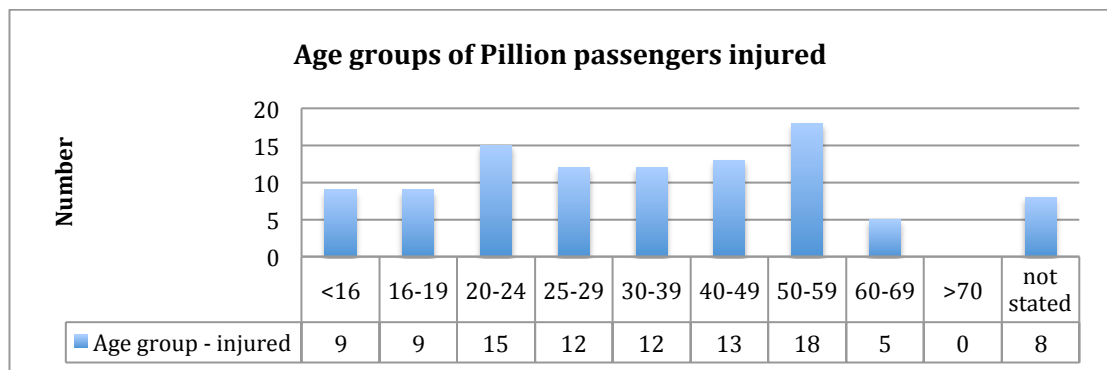


Chart 3

## Where do we crash?

Examining the speed zones where the crashes occurred we find the vast majority of crashes with other vehicles are occurring in suburban areas. 76% of crashes (2,104) with motorcycles and scooters occurred in a residential or urban area with a speed limit up to 70 kph.

Two key points should be remembered:

- In suburban areas with speed limits up to 70 kph;
  - 56% of all crashes with other vehicles were the fault of the motorcycle or scooter rider.
  - 36% of all motorcycle or scooter crashes in these urban areas were single vehicle crashes (involved only the motorcycle or scooter).
- In 80-110 kph speed zones:
  - 85% of crashes were caused by the rider.
  - 69% of all crashes involved only the motorcycle or scooter.
  - Only 15% of crashes were caused by another driver.

The following chart shows the details

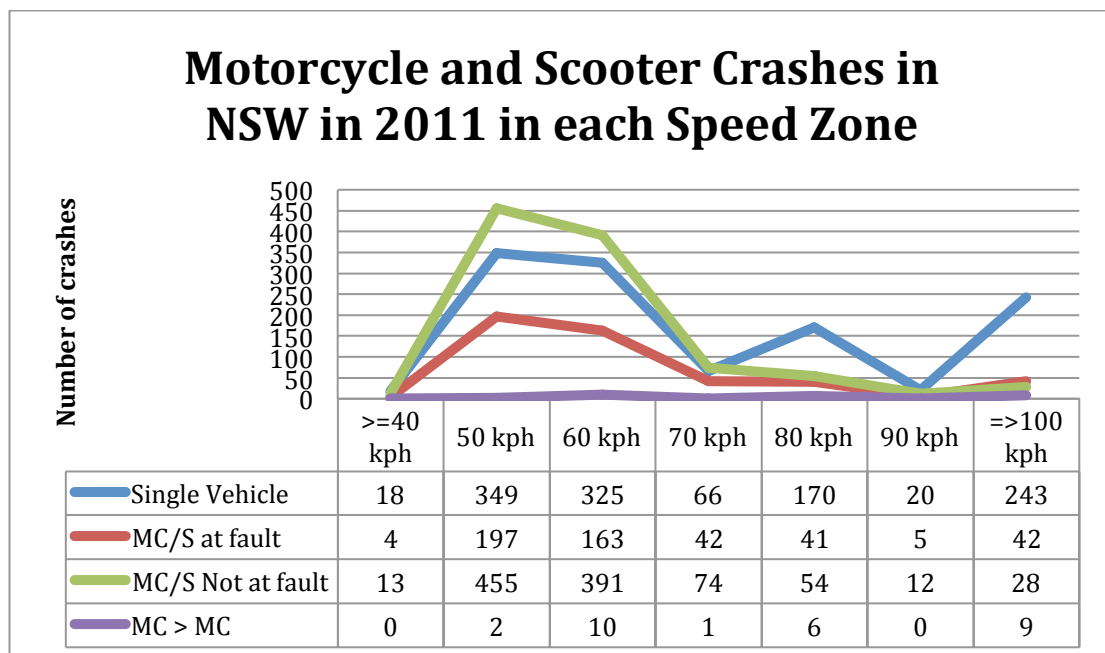


Chart 4 Legend

- Single vehicle = only the scooter or motorcycle recorded as being involved in the crash.
- MC/S at fault = a motorcycle or scooter rider caused the crash.
- MC/S Not at fault = crash was caused by another vehicle driver, a pedestrian or a pedal cyclist.
- MC > MC = one motorcycle crashed into another motorcycle.

## **What risks do riders need to be aware of in urban areas?**

The most common crash involving only the motorcycle or scooter in speed zones up to 70 kph is when the rider simply lost control. The results were that they slid down the road, or, veered to the left or the right, often into a parked vehicle or solid object such as a tree, pole or a wall. It is interesting to note that:

- 418 of these single vehicle crashes were on a straight road.
- 323 single vehicle crashes were on a curve, a corner or a bend.

It is a common argument for riders to blame these crashes on road conditions. While some specific crashes are indeed affected by road conditions, there is no data to support this as a general conclusion. It should be remembered that riders are responsible for their decisions in regards to how they respond to varying road conditions.

Most multi vehicle crashes occurred at intersections:

- Vehicle drivers turning out of side-streets caused 75% of the crashes (207 out of 277 crashes). However, motorcycle and scooter riders were at fault in 70 of these intersection crashes.
- In crashes where an oncoming vehicle turned right across the path of a motorcycle or scooter, 97% of crashes (254 out of 262 crashes) of these crashes occurred on roads with a speed limit of up to 70 kph. Vehicle drivers were at fault in 90% of these crashes.

A common crash in traffic is a side-swipe during a lane change or attempting a turn from the wrong lane. There were 222 crashes of this type that involved a motorcycle or scooter. 80% of these crashes (187 crashes) were the fault of the other driver.

Sideswipe crashes present a high crash risk for motorcycle and scooter riders as drivers fail to check blind spots and riders continue to position themselves within the driver's blind spot.

The most common crash for all vehicles in general (cars, 4WDs, etc) is a rear end crash. This is also a common crash for motorcycle and scooters. There were 179 rear-end type crashes with motorcycles and scooter in urban areas. 49% of these crashes (88 crashes) occurred when the motorcycle or scooter ran up the back of the other vehicle.

## **What risks do riders need to be aware of in rural areas?**

Where a motorcycle or scooter was involved in a crash in speed zones from 80 to 110 kph, 58% of the crashes (371 out of 636 crashes) involved only the motorcycle or scooter. In these single vehicle crashes:

- In 248 crashes the rider lost control on a corner.
- In 123 of the crashes the rider lost control on a straight road.

Another 32 crashes were head-on with another vehicle where the vehicles were not overtaking. These may have been a simple loss of control as described in the previous paragraph, except unfortunately, another vehicle was coming from the opposite direction. 75% of these crashes (24) were the fault of the motorcycle or scooter rider.

The common rear end crash for all vehicles in general is also a problem for motorcycle and scooter riders on the higher speed roads. 72% of these rear end type crashes (49 out of 68 crashes) involving a motorcycle or scooter were caused by the rider. All but 4 of these crashes resulted in an injured rider.

Sideswipe crashes are an issue as the speeds involved can lead to serious injuries. 80% of the sideswipe and lane change type crashes (28 of the 35 crashes) with a motorcycle or scooter were caused by the other vehicle.

### **Summary**

Motorcycle and scooter riders continue to demonstrate the need to improve their skills in both machine control skills and hazard awareness and response skills. This is clearly demonstrated by the large number of single vehicle crashes - 36% of all motorcycle and scooter crashes in speed zones up to 70 kph and 69% of all motorcycle and scooter crashes in 80 - 110 kph speed zones.

In crashes at intersections drivers of the other vehicles are most often at fault where a motorcycle or scooter is involved. It should be remembered that crashes at intersections between all types of vehicles are one of the most common types of crashes in Australia.