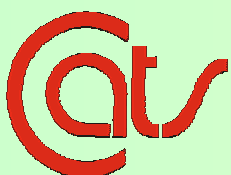


Project Summary

Traffic Safety Analysis for Northeastern Illinois

July 2005



Chicago Area Transportation Study

Motor vehicle crashes are an important public safety issue for everyone. Every year thousands of Illinois residents are injured or killed on the state's roadways as a result of vehicle collisions. The Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) analyzed crash data in Illinois from 2002, the most recent data available, to better understand the nature and causes of motor vehicle crashes and to determine the relative safety of the six-county northeastern Illinois region. This summary highlights a few of the analysis findings.

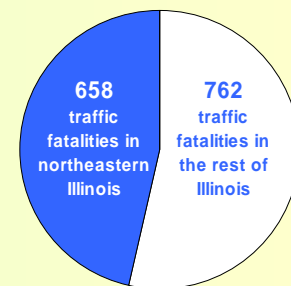


Crashes, Injuries and Fatalities

There were nearly 439,000 motor vehicle crashes in the state of Illinois in 2002 and 70% of them occurred in northeastern Illinois. This actually reflected a decline of more than 21,000 crashes in the state between 2000 and 2002. Almost all of the decrease was a result of fewer collisions occurring in northeastern Illinois.

Motor vehicle crashes result in different combinations of injuries to people and damage to property. Thankfully, the vast majority of motor vehicle crashes throughout Illinois (80%) resulted in property damage only, no injuries. The two most serious injury categories (fatalities and incapacitating injuries) represented less than 4% of the collisions in the state.

In 2002 vehicle crashes resulted in 658 fatalities in northeastern Illinois and 762 fatalities in the rest of the state. Fatality rates are used to compare the relative traffic safety of different areas. These measures showed a lower fatality rate for northeastern Illinois than for the rest of the state, indicating it was a relatively safer area in terms of traffic fatalities.



On the other hand, injuries from vehicle collisions were more prevalent in northeastern Illinois than in the rest of the state. There were over 85,000 traffic-related injuries in northeastern Illinois in 2002, twice as many as in the rest of Illinois. Injury rates were lower for the rest of the state, showing that residents of northeastern Illinois were slightly more likely to be injured in a motor vehicle crash.

Northeastern Illinois has Relatively Low Fatality Rates ...

The Illinois Department of Transportation is currently developing a statewide plan for improving traffic safety with the stated goal of reducing the traffic fatality rate in the state to 1.00 fatality per 100 million vehicle miles traveled over the next few years. During 2002 the rate for the entire state was 1.34, while the rate for northeastern Illinois was 1.13. Two areas in the region, DuPage County and Cook County outside the City of Chicago, both had fatality rates below this target rate in 2002.



Every year more than 1,350 people in Illinois die as a result of motor vehicle collisions, and over 125,000 people suffer injuries from those crashes.

The Illinois Department of Public Health identified motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of death in the state for residents ages 5 to 24 during 2002.

Including Pedestrian Fatality Rates

The highest pedestrian fatality rates in the region were experienced in Cook County (219 fatalities per 10 million residents). Since Cook is a highly urbanized area, it was compared to the 20 most densely populated counties in the country. Eight of the counties had a pedestrian fatality rate higher than Cook's. The average pedestrian fatality rate for these 20 counties was 222 fatalities per 10 million residents, which was slightly higher than for Cook County, revealing that Cook County was no more dangerous for pedestrians than the average highly urban county.

The City of Chicago was also found to be a relatively safe large city for pedestrians. The National Center for Statistics and Analysis analyzed pedestrian fatalities between 1998 and 2000 in the 245 cities in the US with more than 100,000 residents and found the following:

Pedestrian fatality rates (per 10 million people)	
268	– 10 largest cities
255	– cities with at least ½ million people
254	– City of Chicago

When Collisions Tend to Occur

The distribution of vehicle crashes in northeastern Illinois was compared to traffic volumes throughout the week. Nonfatal crashes followed the same trend as traffic volumes: the number of these crashes increased during the morning and afternoon peak driving periods, and decreased during the nighttime/early morning hours. Fatal crashes showed a different trend: these collisions were most prevalent during periods of lower traffic volumes. The most lethal times of the week were the late night/early morning hours of Friday-Saturday and Saturday-Sunday.

Much More to Discover

This traffic safety analysis contains much more detail on these subjects and covers a host of other topics including:

- a look at fatalities and injuries by gender;
- where the drivers involved in collisions in northeastern Illinois live;
- a focus on motorcycle crashes and rollover crashes; and
- how much more likely one is to be killed depending on the types of vehicles involved in a collision.





The entire traffic safety analysis
is available at
<http://catsmpo.com/reports.htm>.

Regional Safety Initiatives

The safety of the traveling public is a key concern for transportation officials. Here are highlights of some safety initiatives currently underway or soon to begin in northeastern Illinois:

- CATS staff is developing *Soles and Spokes: The Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan for Chicago Area Transportation*, which will recommend policies and strategies to improve the safety, convenience and frequency of walking and cycling throughout the region.
- CATS will also be sponsoring *Walkable Communities Workshops* as part of the Palatine-Willow Corridor Study in Cook County. The Workshops will focus on community and regional activities to improve the safety of walking and cycling.
- The CATS *Pedestrian Safety Initiative*, set to begin soon, will include: establishing pedestrian safety review procedures as part of the preliminary engineering process for roadway projects; implementing concentrated pedestrian safety enforcement, education, and engineering efforts in selected communities; and promoting and making available pre-packaged pedestrian safety programs regionwide. This effort will also be coordinated with federal resources.
- The City of Chicago will soon begin work on a *Pedestrian Safety Plan*, which will collect and analyze data, identify deficiencies in current data collection efforts, and help prioritize locations for safety improvements.
- IDOT is working on the first-ever statewide *Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan* to provide a more coordinated effort in reducing traffic fatalities.

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