

Highlights of the Hurt study include the finding that in multi-vehicle accidents the other vehicle (usually an automobile) violates the motorcycle right of way in 65 percent of the cases. However, a survey of accidents investigated by the Philadelphia Police Department by the author in 1976-1977 indicates that such a violation is the cause in only 45 percent of all motorcycle accidents in the city of Philadelphia. The Hurt study found the following: In 64 percent of single-vehicle motorcycle accidents, the operator was responsible for his accident. Three quarters of all motorcycle accidents involved another vehicle, however. Contact with the other vehicle took place on the front or left side of the motorcycle. The majority of accidents occurred on a clear, dry day during daylight hours. Typically the motorcycle operator had less than six months' riding experience and no formal training.

As a police officer, you are the first official representative of the government at the scene of a motorcycle accident. It is essential for you, as the reporting officer, to have a basic understanding of the operation and control of a motorcycle and to look for key evidence not normally associated with a typical automobile accident.

This manual will cover the various types of motorcycles and their operation, the examination of the motorcycle, accident scene data, operator information, helmet and related safety equipment, and state laws relating to the operation and use of the motorcycle. A thorough, detailed investigation is essential to determining the circumstances relating to a motorcycle accident. The information provided will help you understand the motorcycle's unique operational characteristics and capabilities and help you develop sound investigative techniques.

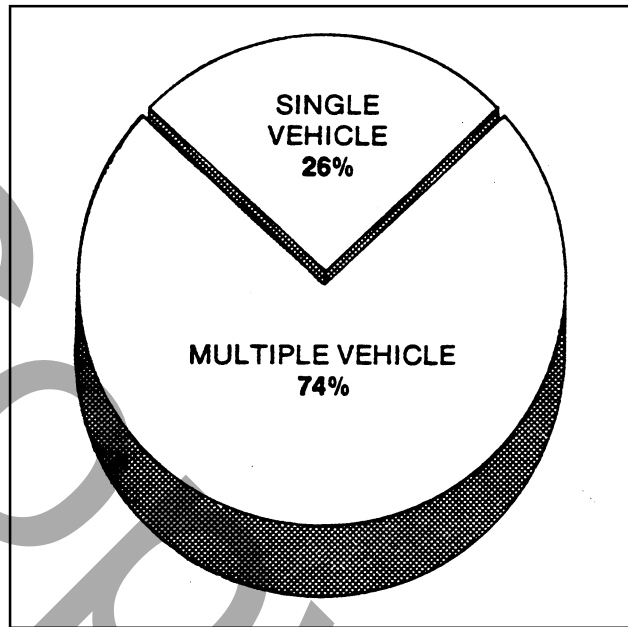


Figure 1-1 Motorcycle crash involvement
Source: Hurt Study DOT HS 5-01160

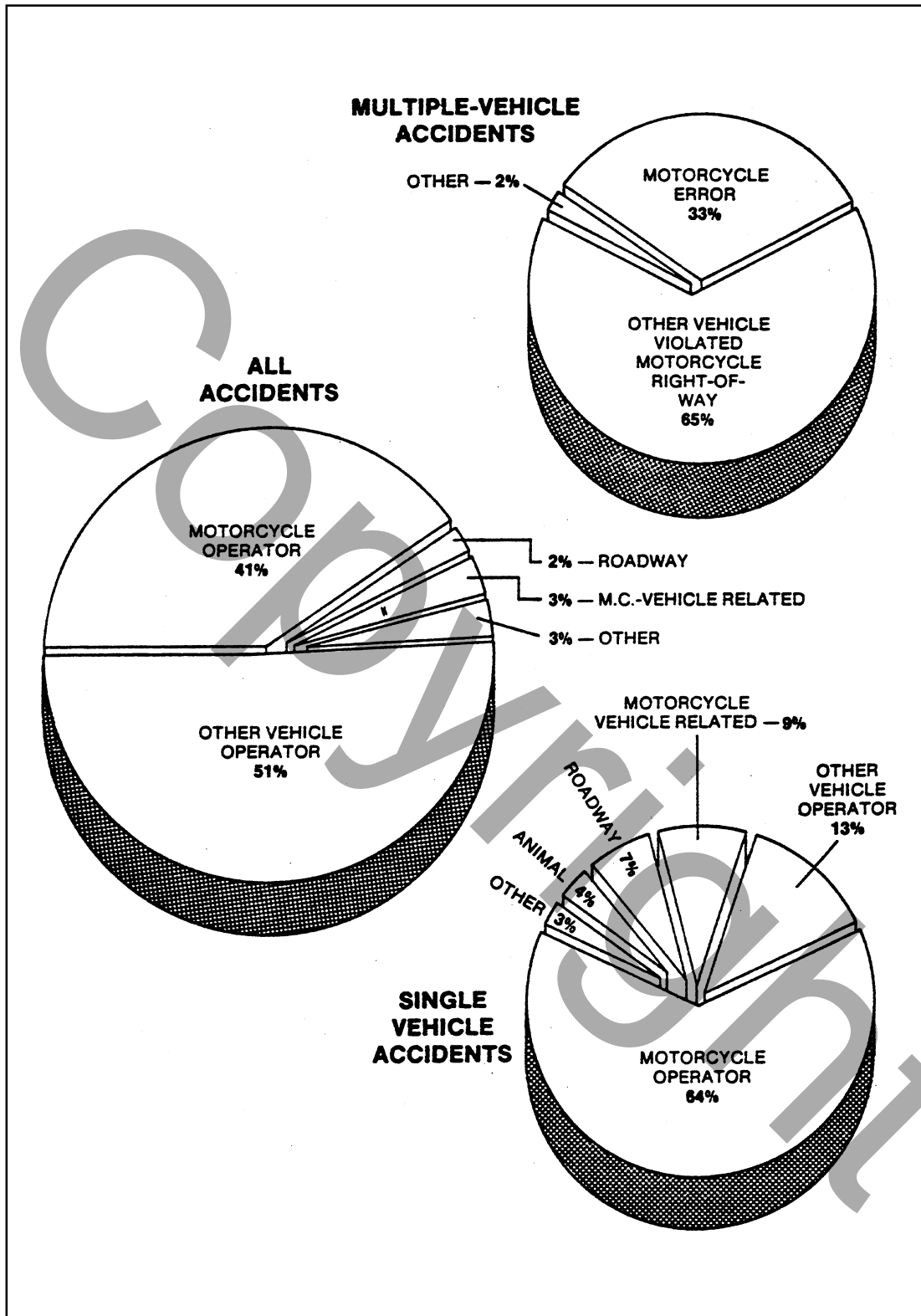


Figure 1-2 Accident precipitating factors
 Source: Hurt Study DOT HS 5-01160