



## *Living and travelling safely in Iiyiyiu Aschii*

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This report is a summary of a longer paper entitled *Injuries and transportation safety*

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# Introduction

Accidents strike people in all parts of Canada, but are they more common in Iiyiyiu Aschii than elsewhere? A 2003 survey tried to find out. It asked people:

- ◆ Whether they had had any accidents in the past year
- ◆ What type of injury had resulted
- ◆ Whether they were hurt badly enough to have to see a nurse or doctor
- ◆ What caused the accident

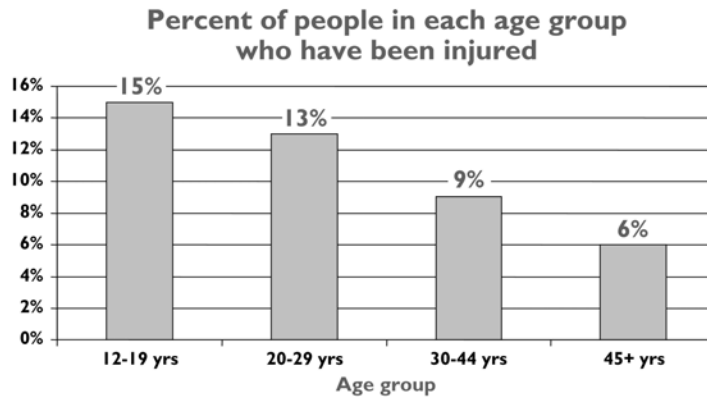
Staff at the Cree Health Board fear that car crash rates could creep upward as more and more people in Iiyiyiu Aschii drive. So the survey also took a closer look at what people are doing to stay safe in vehicles—in cars, trucks, boats, skidoos, and ATVs (four-wheelers).



## A look at injuries in Iiyiyiu Aschii

### Number of injuries

The survey found that day-to-day injuries are no more common in Iiyiyiu Aschii than in the rest of Quebec. All told, one person in ten had suffered an injury in the year before the survey. Teenagers and young adults had the highest injury rates.



### Injuries can be caused by...

- ♦ Falls
- ♦ Burns or scalds
- ♦ Car crashes
- ♦ Bicycle accidents
- ♦ Assaults
- and other things.

*Injuries range from minor (like a bruise), to serious (like a broken bone). The survey asked people to report any injury that was severe enough to make them cut back on their usual activities.*

*If someone had been injured more than once, they were asked to describe the most serious injury.*

Over half the injuries led to the person seeing a nurse or doctor. Most often (42% of the time), the person went to a hospital emergency department. The rest of the time, people who needed care visited a health centre or a doctor's office.

### What were these injuries?

- ♦ 33% of the injuries were sprains or strains
- ♦ 25% were broken bones
- ♦ 19% were cuts or bites.



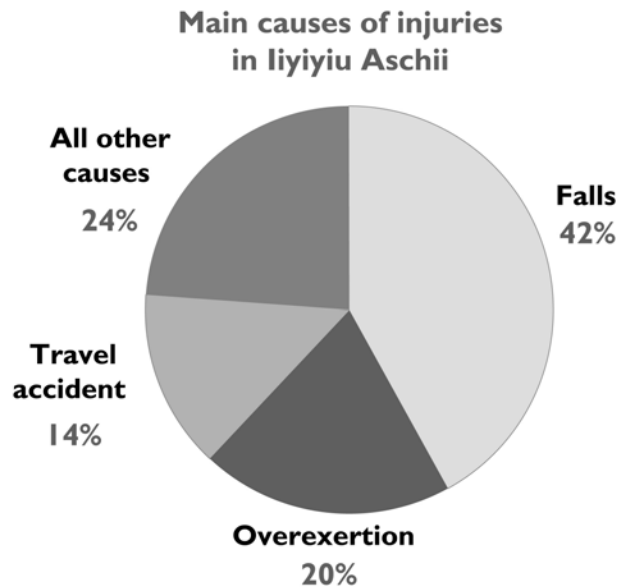


## A look at injuries in Iiyiyiu Aschii (cont'd)

### Causes of injury

Falls caused by far the greatest number of injuries. Most falls came about when people slipped on something, or tripped while walking or running. After falls, the next most frequent causes of injury were over-exertion (20%), and accidents with vehicles (17%). These top causes of injury were the same among both men and women.

Almost half the injuries happened during sports and leisure activities. The rest usually took place while people were working (20%), or doing household chores (17%).





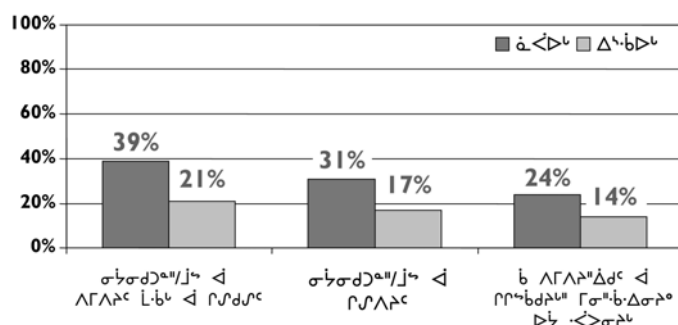
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## Travel safety in Iiyiyiu Aschii

Travel accidents may involve cars, trucks, boats, or off-road vehicles like skidoos and ATVs. They can happen to drivers, or to people riding in vehicles driven by other people. The chances of being injured during travel depend (among other things) on:

- ◆ how much a person travels, and in what kind of vehicle
- ◆ whether they take risks (like speeding)
- ◆ whether they use safety equipment like seatbelts or helmets.

### Who travels most?

Men, and young people, tend to travel more often than others. As a result, these groups are at greater risk of a crash.

People in Iiyiyiu Aschii routinely use vehicles that are rare in the South, like motorboats, ATVs and skidoos. One adult in two had ridden a motorboat or skidoo in the year before the survey, while one in four had used an ATV. Teenagers are especially likely to ride ATVs. ATVs are also heavily used in the smaller communities (Eastmain, Oujé-Bougoumou, Nemaska and Whapmagoostui).

More men than women speed, or drive when they are tired. 31% of men said that they usually drive faster than other people, while 17% of women said so. And 39% of men, versus 21% of women, admitted that they “sometimes” or “often” drive when they feel tired.

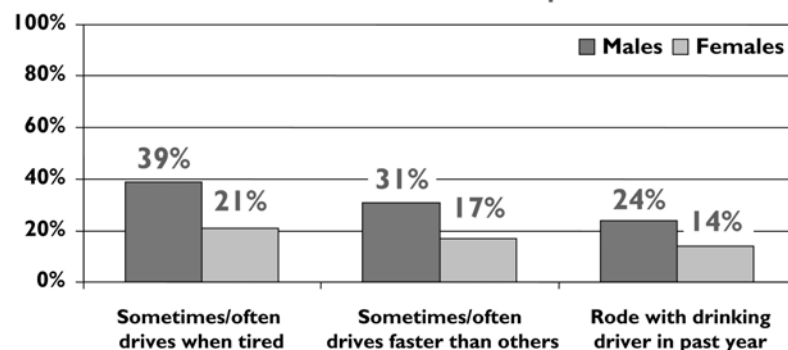
How many people drink and drive—or ride a car, ATV, skidoo or boat with someone who does? The survey asked people if, in the past year, they had travelled with a drinking driver (one who had two or more drinks in the hour before driving). That is, had they ridden with a drinking driver, or had they been drinking themselves?

Again, males seemed to take more risks than females: 24% of males, but 14% of females, said they had travelled with a drinking driver. The risk was much higher in teenagers and young adults than in older people. Almost a third (30%) of teens and young adults reported travelling in a vehicle whose driver had been drinking. In contrast, this was true of only 7% of people over age 45.

### Risky actions

Speeding, driving while tired, and drinking and driving all make a crash more likely. Drivers who do these things—and the people who ride with them—have a much higher risk of injury than others.

**Risky actions when driving**  
Males and females compared





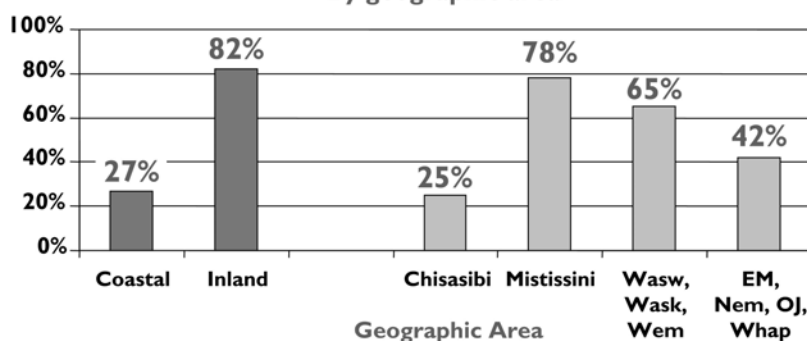
## Using seatbelts and helmets

Seatbelts reduce the risk of serious injury in a crash, but people in Iiyiyiu Aschii are much less likely than others in Quebec to use them. Just over half of all adults in Iiyiyiu Aschii (57%) usually wear a seatbelt when they drive. Even fewer wear one as a passenger. In contrast, in other parts of rural

Quebec, 89% of people wear a seatbelt. Older adults (those over 45) are more likely than younger people to wear a seatbelt regularly.

Helmet use seems to have gone up: 49% of all ATV riders now wear helmets, compared to 38% in 1991. Young adults and men often resist safety equipment, but the opposite is true for helmet use. Younger adults are more likely to wear helmets than older people, and men are more likely than women to wear them. It may be that more men use helmets because they are usually doing the driving. Or perhaps men wear helmets because they use ATVs for different activities, or on rougher ground. Whatever the reason, it is good news, since Quebec law calls for all ATV users to wear helmets.

**Percent of ATV riders who usually wear a helmet**  
By geographic area



Helmet use varies immensely across Iiyiyiu Aschii. In the inland communities, 82% of ATV users wear helmets, but in the coastal communities only 27% do. Three quarters of all ATV users in Mistassini use helmets, compared to just one quarter in Chisasibi.

Some studies suggest that ATV accidents are less frequent among people who use their ATVs for work rather than for leisure. If Cree adults are using their ATVs mostly for work, this might mean that they are at lower risk of injury. On the other hand, we see that a high percentage of teenagers ride ATVs. Perhaps this should sound a warning bell. Most ATVs carry passengers poorly, so children riding with family or friends are not very safe. Further, the rules about who can drive an ATV changed in June 2006: the law now says that a child must be at least 16 to drive one.

