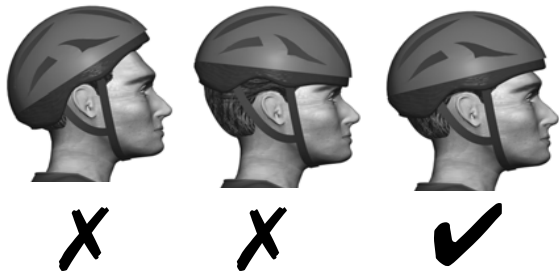


## Wearing the Proper Helmet

Bike safety helmets are designed and safety-tested for the types of falls that cyclists have.

DO NOT use football, hockey or other sport helmets. They are NOT designed to protect your head in a bike crash.

- The safety helmet should cover the top of your forehead. If it's tipped too far forward or back, it won't protect you properly.



- The straps should be snug without pinching. They should be easy to fasten and release.
- The safety helmet should be a ring, one-size-fits-all helmet, or have front and rear (nape) straps, for easy adjusting.

## Caring for your Helmet

Take care of your safety helmet so it can take care of you.

Your safety helmet should be replaced if you have been in a high-impact collision. It may look okay, but there may be damage you can't see. Helmets are disposable; heads are not.

Some paint and stickers can damage your safety helmet by eating into the shell. They may look good, but you won't be protected.

Use only paints or stickers that came with the helmet when you bought it, or use Lycra helmet covers instead. They come in many colours and patterns.

Treat your safety helmet with respect. Keep it clean with mild soap and warm water. Some cleaners contain solvents that can damage the shell.

Above all, WEAR your safety helmet, even if you are only cycling to the corner store. It won't protect you if it's sitting in the closet! Crashes aren't particular about where they happen.

## Shopping for a Helmet

Buy your safety helmet at a store where the staff know about fitting bike helmets. When you shop for a safety helmet, remember to: *Try It!* before *You Buy It!*

**Be sure that it fits properly.**

Follow these rules to find a safe helmet:

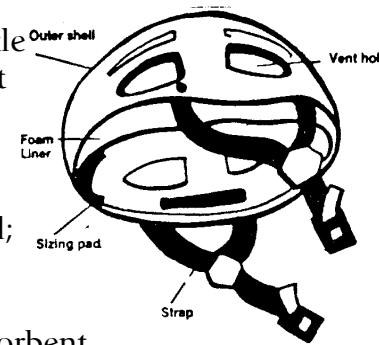
1. Look for the safety approval stickers inside the helmet.
2. Try it on for fit and comfort.
3. Adjust the straps. Don't forget to make them snug.
4. Try to slide the helmet off. If it doesn't come off with a good tug, then it shouldn't come off in an crash.
5. The safety helmet should fit snugly on your head. It shouldn't be so tight that it hurts, and shouldn't tilt backward or slide down over your eyes.
6. Velcro-attached foam pads help give you a custom fit. They also absorb perspiration and can be washed.
7. Bright colours are best, especially yellow or white, so that drivers can see you clearly from a distance.

Helmets cost from \$15 to \$100 – money that can save your life!

## Helpful Helmet Hints

A good bicycle safety helmet should have:

- a hard outer shell;
- an inner liner of shock-absorbent material;
- foam pads inside the helmet which can be adjusted to ensure proper fit; and



- an adjustable chin strap which should always be kept fastened.

Make sure the safety helmet fits properly. Don't store it in a closet. Attach it to the bicycle so that it is always ready to wear.

## Helmet Facts

When your head hits the road, a car bumper, the sidewalk, or anything hard, your brain bounces around inside your skull. Bumping can cause brain injury. Your brain is like a raw egg inside its shell, so a good crack on your head may leave your brain – well – scrambled!

A safety helmet cushions your head and can prevent brain injury. When your safety helmet hits something hard, the outer shell spreads the force of the bump through the entire helmet. Then, the styrofoam crushes and absorbs the shock of hits and falls.

Biking can be fun and safe, but every year, cyclists are killed or suffer serious brain damage because they don't wear helmets.

Your bike is not a toy – it's a vehicle, just like a car, and just as collisions can happen to the best car driver, they can happen to you.

## Advice for Parents

Be a role model! Children follow your example so wear a safety helmet yourself, it's the law!

When cycling with your children, think about how upset they would be seeing you with a head injury because you didn't wear a safety helmet.

Children carried as passengers on a bicycle carrier should wear helmets. Look for Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Snell Memorial Foundation, or American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) stickers on lightweight, soft shell safety helmets designed for young children. Only children over age 1 and weighing under 18 kilograms (40 pounds) should be carried on a bicycle carrier. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for installation and weight requirements.

## Questions and Answers

- Q. *When does the mandatory bike safety helmet law go into effect?*  
A. The law is effective as of July 5, 2003.
- Q. *Who has to wear a safety helmet?*  
A. Anyone riding a bicycle, regardless of age, whether a cyclist or a passenger, must wear an approved bicycle safety helmet.
- Q. *Does a child in a trailer, pulled by a bicycle, require a safety helmet?*  
A. The law is for riders and passengers. A child in a trailer is considered a passenger and must wear an approved safety helmet.

- Q. *Who pays the fine?*  
A. Parents are responsible for children under the age of 16 who ride without an approved bicycle helmet. Adults aged 16 and older who ride without an approved helmet could be fined.
- Q. *How much is the fine?*  
A. The fine is \$50 to \$100.
- Q. *How often should my safety helmet be replaced?*  
A. After any high-impact collision or if the safety helmet is damaged.
- Q. *Should I wear a safety helmet even on my own property?*  
A. Yes, you should wear a safety helmet every time you are on a bicycle.
- Q. *How do I know if I have an approved safety helmet?*  
A. Helmets should have a label located on the inside of the helmet with one of the following approvals: Snell, CSA, or ASTM.
- Q. *Where do most bicycle injuries occur?*  
A. Most bicycle injuries occur only a short distance from home, and can happen on bicycle trails, paths, and roadways. The majority of injuries occur when a cyclist runs into a post, a pedestrian, another bike, or rides over a pothole.
- Q. *Does the law require that a safety helmet be worn when riding a tricycle?*  
A. The new helmet law is only in effect for bicycles. However, it is recommended that a safety helmet be worn for additional protection when riding a

tricycle, as it will establish good safety habits at an early age.

- Q. *Should I buy a safety helmet that's big so my child will "grow into it"?*  
A. No, the effectiveness of the helmet is reduced if the helmet is not properly fitted.
- Q. *Where can I purchase a safety helmet?*  
A. Any sporting goods/major department store.
- Q. *What does a safety helmet cost?*  
A. Helmets range in price from \$15 and up.
- Q. *How do I know what type of helmet to buy?*  
A. Helmets fit according to a person's head size. There are three types of helmets: Child, Youth and Adult.
- Q. *Am I required to wear my safety helmet on the Confederation Trail?*  
A. Yes, you are now required by law to wear your safety helmet on the Confederation Trail.

This pamphlet is for informational purposes only. The exact wording of the law may be found in the *Highway Traffic Act and Regulations*. For further assistance on the bicycle safety helmet law, please contact Highway Safety at (902) 368-5230.



Transportation  
and Public Works  
Highway Safety  
Division

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## *Wearing Bicycle Safety Helmets is the Law*



Approximately 80% of all bicycle-related deaths are from head injuries. Contrary to popular belief, most bicycle crashes are from falls, not collisions. Crashes can happen anywhere. They happen in driveways, parks, and bicycle paths.

Each type of helmet is tested for the frequency and intensity of falls that happen when participating in the activity for which they are designed. For example, bike helmets are tested and approved for one-time, high impact collisions.

The shape of the helmet is also designed to protect the user from the most common types of falls that occur while participating in the specific activity. For example, bicyclists tend to fall forward or to the side and that is where the helmets are designed to protect. In-line skaters tend to fall backwards and that is why helmets approved for in-line skating go over the back of the head.