

New York State's helmet law

All bicyclists under the age of fourteen are required to wear approved bicycle helmets when they are operators or passengers on bicycles.

Children under the age of one are prohibited from being transported on a bicycle.

Child passengers one through four years of age must also ride in a specially designed child safety seat in addition to wearing a helmet.

In-line skaters under the age of 14 are required to wear approved bicycle helmets.

Any parent or guardian whose child violates the helmet law is subject to a fine of up to \$50.

It is highly recommended that all bicyclists and skaters wear helmets.



For further information:

General:

NYS Department of Health / Bureau of Injury Prevention

Empire State Plaza
Corning Tower Building
Albany, NY 12237
Phone: (518) 473-1143 Fax: (518) 473-2853

NYS Governor's Traffic Safety Committee

Ask for the "Sharing the Road Safely" brochure

Empire State Plaza
Swan Street Building, Room 414
Albany, NY 12228
Phone: (518) 474-5777 Fax: (518) 473-6946

NYS Department of Transportation

Bicycling Hotline 1 - 888 - BIKE-NYS
Pedestrian Hotline 1 - 888 - WALK-NYS

Local:

Contact your county Cornell Cooperative Extension association.

Developed by the
NYS 4-H Bicycle Safety Education Program
Department of Biological & Environmental Engineering
Riley-Robb Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
Phone: (607) 255-2498 Fax: (607) 255-4080
www.bike.cornell.edu

Funded in part by a grant from the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.



What You Want to Know about Bicycle Helmets

Why Helmets?

Bicycling is a great form of exercise and a most efficient means of transportation. Studies have shown, however, that sports injuries occur more often with bicycling than any other team or individual sport, including football, basketball, hockey or swimming.

Over a half-million people are injured in serious bicycle crashes annually in this country. Most injuries are not serious, but those involving the head are. Nearly 900 die each year with 75% of these deaths involving injury to the head. Many more sustain serious head trauma, often resulting in disabilities such as loss of hearing, vision, speech, short term or long term memory, the ability to concentrate, and paralysis.

Brain damage is often permanent, but preventable. In fact, helmets have been shown to prevent up to 88% of brain injuries. Next to improving your cycling skills, wearing a bicycle helmet is the most significant thing you can do to reduce your risks.

What to look for

Most newer helmets are made of expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam and a thin plastic outer shell. The shell helps the helmet skid easily on rough pavement to avoid jerking your neck and to prevent debris from penetrating the foam. The shell also holds the EPS together after the initial impact.

Check for a certification sticker (SNELL, and ASTM) on the inside of the helmet to verify that it meets or exceeds standards that rate impact performance and strap strength.

Avoid helmets with hard cores in the foam liner, inadequate ventilation, an extreme “aero” shape, dark colors, thin straps, and complicated adjustments.

Where to go for a helmet

Helmets are available in bicycle shops for around \$20 and up. A good shop offers valuable help in fitting, and fit is important for safety. Discount stores or mail order catalogs may be less expensive and be a good source, if you know what size helmet you need. Wherever you buy, helmets are cheap for the benefit you get, often costing less than a jersey or cyclometer. Do not wait for a sale. No one ever complains about the cost of their second bicycle helmet. Cost is no excuse to delay.

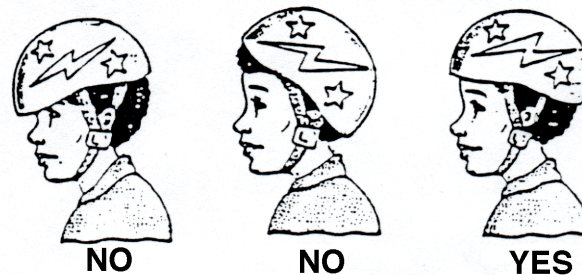
How to get a good fit

Choose a size that most closely fits your head. Select a helmet of a style and color (bright) that looks good on you.

If you're outfitting a child, let the child select the style and color.

Use the sizing pads to make minor adjustments for a custom fit. Helmets usually come with two or three sets of foam pads.

Adjust the straps so that the helmet sits level on your head and does not move more than an inch in any direction.



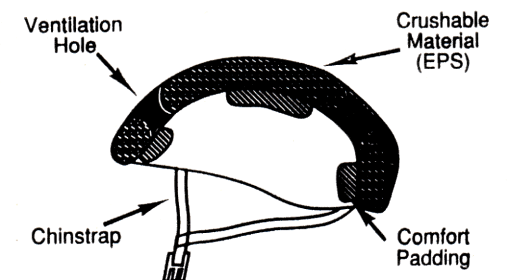
Be patient. Finding a helmet that you like and fits properly will be time well spent.



When to replace a helmet

Most manufacturers recommend that helmets be replaced every five years, depending on usage.

Replace any helmet when you crash in it. Impact crushes some of the foam, making the helmet less protective. This damage is not always visible, and because the helmet softens the blow, you may not realize you hit your head.



BICYCLE HELMET