

About the Snell Memorial Foundation

Since 1957 the Snell Memorial Foundation has been a leader in helmet safety in the US and around the world. As a not-for-profit organization, Snell is unique because it exists solely to develop standards and test programs for crash helmets. Unlike other safety standards and their organizations, the Snell Standards are unique because Snell:

Maintains complete independence from helmet manufacturers and from local and national governments.

Tests all models and sizes before certification in the Snell lab and continuously tests random samples of certified helmets obtained from the market to ensure performance quality of certified helmets.

Maintains state-of-the-art testing facilities for helmet research and testing.

Snell offers free information to anyone interested in helmet safety. List of currently certified helmets by name and size, copies of various Snell Standards, brochures, buttons, posters advocating helmet safety are made available to the general public through websites and mail.



For information, please contact:
Snell Safety Education Center, Inc.
3628 Madison Avenue, Suite 11
N. Highlands, CA 95660

Tel. 916.331.5073
Fax. 916.331.0359

Web: www.smf.org
e-mail: info@smf.org





Helmet Facts and Injury Statistics

* In 2007 in the U.S. 700 bicyclists died and 43,000 were injured in traffic crashes.

US national statistics show

In bicycle crashes, 2/3 of the dead and 1/8 of the injured suffered brain injuries.

95% of bicyclists killed in 2006 reportedly were not wearing helmets.



85% of bicycle-related head and brain injuries can be prevented by a helmet.

Estimated indirect costs for injuries to unhelmeted cyclists are \$2.3 billion yearly.

Every year the estimated number of bicycling head injuries requiring hospitalization exceeds the total of all the head injury cases related to baseball, football, skateboards, kick scooters, horseback riding, snowboarding, ice hockey, in-line skating and lacrosse.



Functions of a Helmet

A good bicycle helmet is made of dense crushable material that provides extra time and space to absorb impact energy in a crash. It is the sudden stop, not the fall, which causes brain injuries. Imagine yourself in a moving bus that comes to a sudden stop. Without a seat belt, your body would keep moving forward until you hit the back of the seat in front of you or the bus windshield. A helmet acts like a good driver applying a braking force, a few taps on the brake, to slow down the bus before a full stop, giving your head and brain inside the helmet a little more time to come to a gentler stop.



When thumbtacks are used correctly, it's the wall that's pierced and not the thumb. The flat of the thumbtack spreads the force over a broad area of thumb and the point concentrates that same force against a vanishing small area of wall. The smaller contact point results in greater force and easier penetration. The same physics rule works by using a helmet to supply more space to decrease the impact energy to the head. A helmet spreads concentrated forces from a rock or any sharp impact surface over a larger area on the helmet's shell and protective liner before reaching the wearer's scalp and skull inside the helmet. Instead of slicing through flesh and bone, the forces are blunted and redirected into the strengths of the helmet's and the head's protective systems. Not wearing a helmet is comparable to misusing a thumbtack, except that hardly anyone dies of thumb injuries.



A Good Helmet

A bicycle helmet is a safety product. Helmets models carrying these Snell certification stickers meet the rigorous Snell bicycle helmet standards, the most stringent in the world. Snell continuously tests currently certified helmets in the market on a random basis to verify quality performance. But a good helmet must also be a well-fitting helmet. For best head protection, the Snell Foundation urges you to wear the Snell certified helmet that best matches your own head size and shape.



Tips for Wearing Helmets

1. Try the helmet before purchase and make sure the helmet fits your head size and shape.
2. Wear the helmet low over the forehead just above your eyebrows.
3. Adjust the chin straps one at a time independently and make sure the side buckle is placed below the earlobe on the side jaw bone.
4. Buckle snugly under the chin not over the throat and allow only two fingers to slip through the buckled strap.
5. Wear the helmet every time you ride.
6. Replace your helmet at least every five years.

