



AMHERST POLICE DEPARTMENT

21 ACADIA STREET • AMHERST, NOVA SCOTIA • B4H 4W3 • (902) 667-7227 • FAX: (902) 667-0268

Did you know that each year, more than 500 Canadian children are hospitalized for head injuries from bike crashes alone? Bicycle helmets are known to reduce the risk of head injury by 63% and reduce the loss of consciousness by 86%.

The laws of Nova Scotia require all bicyclists, skateboarders and scooter riders to wear a helmet regardless of age. Some argue requiring helmets for all ages' leads to a decline in the number of riders, however studies have shown this is not the case. The studies did note that children are less likely to wear their helmets if the law doesn't apply to adults.

In order for a helmet to be effective it is essential that it is specifically fitted for the rider. When checking to see if a helmet fits properly, use the "2V1" rule. Two fingers should rest between your eyebrow and the edge of the helmet, the strap should form a "V" under the ear and one finger should fit between the chin and the strap. A certified helmet should last about 3-5 years depending on its usage. If the helmet has been involved in a crash or is damaged in anyway, it needs to be replaced.

The helmet must also be used for the purpose for which it was designed. Bicycle helmets are designed to afford protection to injuries related to bike riding and skateboard helmets are designed for injuries that are often sustained from failed attempts at completing jumps and other risky manoeuvres. Children who wear a helmet not designed for the activity they are participating in are exposed to greater risk of injury.

From my personal observations, I feel that helmet usage in Amherst is quite good but there are still people who do not wear helmets. We must continue our efforts to promote the use of helmets through public education, promotional initiatives and enforcement of the helmet laws.

Again this summer, the Amherst Police Department is running the "Heads Up, Helmets On" program. The purpose of the program is to promote helmet usage of riders of bicycles, skateboards, scooters and in line skates. The program will include enforcement, rewards and education. Enforcement will include written warnings, temporary seizure of bicycles, skateboards, and scooters and issuing of tickets.

Riders issued a ticket may be provided with an opportunity to avoid the ticket when the circumstances are appropriate, if they agree to, and attend, an education session on helmet safety hosted by the department.

Our department recognizes the sensitivity of our interaction with young children. Children under 12 will be dealt with by officers contacting the parents. The parents of children between the ages of 12 and 15 will also be contacted, however the bicycle, skateboard or scooter could be temporarily seized and the child may be required to attend the education session.

Our officers will be giving rewards to some riders who they observe wearing a helmet. This will be done randomly at the discretion of the officer. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the local Dairy Queen and MacDonald's Restaurants for their support by providing the rewards for this year's program.

As part of this year's campaign APD will be providing helmets to adults and children that don't have adequate headgear and are not in a position to buy a new helmet. To arrange for a helmet please contact our department at 667-8600 and ask for Cst. Tom Wood or Cst. Derek Hebert.

Together we can reduce head injuries related to helmet issues. I wish everyone a summer of safe riding.