

# Heads up on Helmets

Why your teenager should wear a bike helmet

## Facts:

1. Teenagers are less likely than other cyclists to wear a bike helmet.
2. Half of the teenage cyclists involved in a bike crash risked serious head injury by NOT wearing a bike helmet.\*
3. 1 in 4 teenage cyclists who end up in hospital after a bike crash suffer a head injury - a head injury can have lifelong consequences.
4. Cyclists can reduce the risk of head injury by more than 60% by wearing an approved bike helmet which is correctly fitted and fastened.

## It's the law

All bike riders must wear a helmet that complies with the Australian and New Zealand Standards (AS/NZ2063) securely fitted and fastened on their head.

Each year in NSW over 3000 young cyclists are fined for not wearing a helmet or wearing a helmet incorrectly. That's more than 60 fines a week! The fine is over \$50!

## A bike helmet will protect the head only if it is the right size and worn correctly. This means:

**Firm fit.** The helmet has a secure fit and cannot move around on the head.

**Sit square.** The helmet sits straight on the head, not tilted in any direction.

Protect forehead. The rim of the helmet sits 2 finger widths above the eyebrows.

**Closed buckle.** The buckle is securely fastened under the chin - check that no more than 2 fingers can fit between the buckle and chin.

**Snug straps.** The straps are not loose or twisted. Adjust straps regularly.



This is a joint project between Youthsafe and the NSW Centre for Road Safety, RTA.

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Encourage your teenager to wear a bike helmet correctly

## Parent attitudes do matter to teenagers

- Have a “no helmet, no bike” rule - remind your teenager about this rule on a regular basis.
- Always check to see your teenager is wearing their helmet.
- Always wear your helmet when riding a bike - lead by example.

## Discuss with your teenager why a properly fitted bike helmet is important

- Talk regularly about the benefits of bike helmets in reducing the risk of head injury.
- Discuss the possible consequences of head injury such as permanent brain damage.
- Remind them to wear their helmet correctly each time they ride their bike - bike crashes can happen anywhere.
- Talk about the law and the risk of a fine for not wearing a helmet or wearing it incorrectly.

## Get friends on board

- What friends think and do is really important to teenagers so encourage other parents to also have a “no helmet, no bike” rule.

## Buying the right helmet

- Where possible, let your teenager choose their own bike helmet.
- Make sure the helmet complies with Australian and New Zealand Standards (AS/NZ2063).
- When buying a bike helmet, ask an experienced staff member to fit the helmet and show your teenager how to adjust it correctly.

## Damaged helmets are unsafe

- Helmet damage is not always visible - buy a new helmet rather than a second-hand helmet.
- Replace your teenager’s helmet if:
  - it’s been dropped on a hard surface
  - it’s been involved in a bike crash
  - it has visible signs of damage to the shell, foam or straps
- Bike helmets don’t last forever - it’s a good idea to replace a bike helmet every 3-5 years.

**Remember... no helmet, no bike - no exceptions!**

- For safe cycling, teenagers also need to know about road rules and bike maintenance. For more details go to the RTA website: [www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au)
- For further information about youth injury prevention contact Youthsafe on (02) 9809 4615 or check the website: [www.youthsafe.org](http://www.youthsafe.org)