

THE GLOBE AND MAIL 

In Vancouver skating classes, only a certified helmet will do

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VANCOUVER— From Monday's Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Feb. 05, 2012 7:53PM EST

Last updated Sunday, Feb. 05, 2012 7:56PM EST

Four-year-old Kyra Samardziski glided carefully across the rink in her pink skates and matching helmet, ready to start her ice-skating lesson, when she was escorted back to the sidelines by her instructor. Her bicycle helmet, the instructor explained, was no longer acceptable as headwear for skating lessons in Vancouver.

As of Feb. 1, anyone enrolled in a skating class must now wear a CSA-certified hockey or snowboarding helmet. The Sunset rink hung a few posters to notify skaters of the new change.

“It’s a little bit annoying,” Krya’s father, Garon, said. “Those helmets are more expensive because they’re certified.”

According to Constance Barnes of the Vancouver Park Board, each Vancouver rink will have 100 CSA-approved hockey helmets available for skaters who don’t have their own.

The policy change in Vancouver, similar to changes made in Burnaby and Richmond, is the result of a new helmet rule at Skate Canada, said Ms. Barnes. “The number one thing is safety,” Ms. Barnes said. “What we don’t want to do is to put that pressure on a family financially.”

Skate Canada had no official helmet policy until last summer, said Jeff Partrick, director of coaching and skating programs with the national organization.

“In conversations with the parents and other stakeholders in our organization, we felt it was time to put something more formal in place to try to protect our members,” Mr. Partrick said.

Vancouver registers roughly 18,000 skating lessons annually, according to the city website.

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