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Helmet safety

Stay Smart. Wear a Helmet!

In Ontario, it is mandatory for anyone under the age of 18 to wear a certified helmet while riding a bicycle (Highway Traffic Act).

It is also mandatory for children aged 10 and under or weak skaters of any age, to wear a certified multi-impact helmet at all city of Ottawa public skating sessions at indoor arenas.

Helmets are recommended for all ages while taking part in recreational activities like skateboarding, rollerblading, biking, sledding, skating, skiing and snowboarding.

How helmets protect your head

Helmets prevent serious brain and head injuries by absorbing the force from a fall or hit to the head. There are many types of helmets. Most helmets fit into one of the following categories:

- **Single Impact** (example: bicycle helmets) – designed to protect against ONE impact; Must be replaced after a crash or hard hit, even if it does not appear to have any damage
- **Multi Impact** (example: hockey helmets) – designed to protect against more than one impact; Must be replaced when you see damage
- **Multi Sport** – does not mean multi impact but that the helmet is approved for more than one activity. Check the manufacturer's label for the list of activities for which the helmet can be worn safely

What to look for, when buying a helmet

- Check for the certification sticker – found on the inside or outside of the helmet
- Buy a helmet that fits now not one to grow into
- Never buy a used helmet

Choosing the right helmet

| Activity | Recommended Helmet | Type of Protection | Certification (Canadian, US, European) |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Bicycling & Non-motorized scooters | Bicycle helmet | Single impact | CSA, CPSC, ASTM or Snell |
| In-line skating | Bicycle helmet/in-line skating or skateboard helmet | Mostly single impact | CSA, CPSC, ASTM or Snell |
| BMX cycling | BMX helmet | Multi impact | ASTM F-1492 |
| Skateboarding | Skateboard or select bicycle helmet | Single/Multi impact | ASTM F-1492, Snell-94, CEN, CSA, CPSC,ASTM or Snell |
| Ice hockey/ skating | Hockey helmet | Multi impact | CSA |
| Skiing & Snowboarding | Ski helmet | Single impact | Snell or CPSC |
| Sledding/tobogganing | Hockey or ski helmet | Hockey helmet – multi impact Ski helmet – single impact | CSA, CPSC or Snell |

How to fit a helmet

Bicycle helmets

Put the helmet on so that it is not tilting backward or forward. Then check the following:

Two fingers distance from helmet to eyebrow



V-shape straps around each ear



One finger between chin and fastened strap



Shake your head up and down, and side to side. Your helmet should stay in place and feel comfortably snug.

Hockey helmets

Put the helmet on so that it is not tilting backward or forward. Then check the following:

One finger between the chinstrap and chin



One finger distance from helmet to eyebrow



Helmet does not move



Shake your head up and down, and side to side. Your helmet should stay in place and feel comfortably snug.

Other sport helmets

- Make sure the helmet is level on the head and not leaning forward or backward
- Adjust side and chin straps according to the manufacturer instructions
- Shake your head up and down and side to side. Your helmet should stay in place and feel comfortably snug

When should I replace my helmet?

- After a crash or large impact
- When it does not fit anymore
- Helmets with cracks, dents or frayed and torn straps should be replaced
- Every five years after the manufacturing date for bicycle helmets

Instructions and illustrations provided by [Thinkfirst](#).

