

# SAFETY MEMO

May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – Bicycle Helmet Safety

## History of Cycling Helmets

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, bicyclists began to use helmets made from a ring of leather wrapped around the head with a wool ring above it<sup>1</sup>. The first device used as a modern-day helmet was developed in Bell, California, in 1954 to mitigate the consequences of risk activities for high-speed driving<sup>2</sup>. In 1994 the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) developed a standard for children's bicycle helmets called the Children's Bicycle Helmet Safety act which was added to the Code of Federal Regulations in March of 1995<sup>3</sup>.

## Choosing a Helmet

For the helmet to be effective and offer appropriate protection, choose a helmet that is appropriate to the type of cycling you will be doing (road, mountain biking, BMX, e-cycles). Be sure to try the helmet on and pay attention to these following points:

- It should not wobble side to side, or tilt front to back,
- It should not move when you shake your head in any direction,
- It should stay level across your forehead,
- The straps are equally tight, and the chin strap feels snug when you open your mouth,
- You should be able to slip one finger between the strap and your chin,
- It has a sticker showing it is safety-approved by the relevant safety regulators.

## To Keep Your Helmet in Good Working Order

- Wash it occasionally with water and mild soap.
- Keep it in a temperate place, away from high or low temperatures.
- Store the helmet in a cloth bag or in its original packaging.

## Applicable Standards

The following standards are applicable in North America for bicycle helmets: ASTM F1447, ASTM F1898, Snell B-90A, B-95, N-94, CPSC, CAN/CSA D113.2-M89.

In Europe, the NF EN 1078+A1 (February 2013) standard applies to users of bicycles, while the NF EN 1080 (April 2013) standard applies to helmets for young children<sup>4</sup>.

## Did You Know?

- In Canada and the United States of America, municipal, provincial, and state governments' mandate who is required to wear bicycle helmets
  - Some laws apply to every age group, while other laws are specifically targeted to people aged 18 and under.
  - In some jurisdictions, there are no legal mandates in place for helmets.
- In France, according to Decree #2016-1800, wearing a helmet is mandatory for children under the age of 15.<sup>5</sup>
- Australia was the first country in the world to mandate bike helmets for every age in every part of the country.<sup>6</sup>
- Helmets are good for one hard collision or severe fall.
- The CPSC recommends that you replace your helmet every 3 to 5 years.
- If you're unsure about the integrity of the helmet, replace it.



<sup>1</sup> Davison. (May 14, 2013). History Tuesday: The Bicycle Helmet. Retrieved from <https://www.davison.com/blog/history-tuesday-the-bicycle-helmet/>

<sup>2</sup> Bell Sports. (2020). A legacy of champion and confidence. Retrieved from <https://www.bellhelmets.com/company-info/about-us.html>

<sup>3</sup> Helmets.org. (October 26, 2020). CPSC's Announcement of its Bicycle Helmet Standard. Retrieved from <https://helmets.org/cpscanno.htm>

<sup>4</sup>26in (2018). Les normes des casques VTT : décryptage [https://www.26in.fr/news/49019-les-normes-des-casques-vtt-decrypt.html#:~:text=CE%20EN1078%2BA1%20\(2013\),et%20de%20patins%20%20roulettes.&text=C'est%20la%20norme%20europ%C3%A9enne,tous%20les%20casques%20de%20v%C3%A9lo](https://www.26in.fr/news/49019-les-normes-des-casques-vtt-decrypt.html#:~:text=CE%20EN1078%2BA1%20(2013),et%20de%20patins%20%20roulettes.&text=C'est%20la%20norme%20europ%C3%A9enne,tous%20les%20casques%20de%20v%C3%A9lo)

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000033665805/>

<sup>5</sup> Legifrance. (2016). Decree on the obligation to wear a helmet for drivers and passengers under 12 years of age. Retrieve from <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000033665805/>

<sup>6</sup> New South Wales Government. (2020). Helmets and safety gear. Retrieved from <https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/stayingsafe/bicycle-riders/helmets-gear.html>