



Graham Fire & Rescue

USE YOUR HEAD, WEAR A HELMET

As the sun comes out, so does every kid in the neighborhood-on trikes, bikes, and all kinds of wheels. Unfortunately, what brings hours of enjoyment for youngsters could also bring serious injury, long-term disability or even death unless we use our heads.

Whenever your child heads out the door to go biking, rollerblading, or skateboarding, make sure he/she has a helmet with him. Helmets cushion the blow of a fall, hit or other impact on the head. A study conducted by the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center found that bike helmets reduced the risk of serious head injury by 85 percent and brain injury by 88 percent.

Fitting a Helmet

- ✓ **Get the Right Fit:** The helmet fits correctly when the fit pads hold it firmly, but comfortably in place. Most helmets come with fit pads in a variety of thicknesses so you can adjust to the proper fit. Try any combination of the different thicknesses until the right fit is found.
- ✓ **Wear it in the Proper Position:** The helmet should be worn level on the head about two finger widths above the eyebrows. A helmet that sits too far back on the crown does not provide adequate protection to the forehead.
- ✓ **Adjust the Straps:** The front and rear straps should join at a point slightly below and in front of the ears. If the helmet is tilted back on the crown (more than two finger widths above the eyebrows), shorten the front strap and lengthen the back strap. If the helmet sits too far forward, lengthen the front strap and shorten the back strap. Adjust the chinstrap so that it is snug, but not uncomfortable. Make sure your child ALWAYS has the chinstrap buckle fastened and the strap pulled tight.

Six Ways to Get Your Kids to Wear Helmets:

1. **Make it a policy.** Be consistent. If you allow your children to occasionally go without their helmets, they won't believe that helmet use really is important. In Pierce County, kids are required to wear a helmet while bicycling by law.

2. Make it a habit. Have your children start wearing helmets at a young age, as soon as they are old enough to ride a trike or skate.
3. Wear a helmet yourself to set a good example.
4. Talk to your children about why you want them to protect their heads. Stress that: you love them and want them to be safe; they can be badly hurt for life or even die from a head injury; and most athletes wear helmets when playing sports.
5. Reward them with praise or a special treat or privilege when they wear their helmets without having to be told.
6. Encourage your children's friends to wear helmets.