

Pennsylvania's Bicycle Helmet Law



*Compliments of
Your State Senator*

Bicycle helmets are 85 to 88 percent effective in preventing or lessening head and brain injuries.

- U. S. Dept. of Transportation

Three-fourths of fatally injured bicyclists die from head injuries.

***- Johns Hopkins Injury Prevention Center,
Baltimore, MD***

Each year, approximately 400,000 children under age 14 are treated for bike-related injuries.

***- American Academy of Pediatrics,
Pennsylvania Chapter***

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Children under age 12 must wear a helmet while riding a bicycle under state law. Pennsylvania's mandatory bicycle helmet law applies to children operating bicycles and to children who are passengers in a restraining seat or trailer.

Please read the following information to learn more about the law.

What are the requirements of the bike helmet law?

As of February 13, 1996, bicycle helmets became mandatory for any child under age 12. Helmets are also required for children who are riding in a bicycle restraining seat or in a trailer being towed by a bicycle. Children's toys known as "big wheels" are excluded.

Will the law really make my child more safe?

According to the National SAFE KIDS campaign, bike helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent and the risk of brain injury by almost 90 percent. The group's research also shows that every dollar spent on bicycle helmets saves three dollars in medical costs.

How do I get an approved bike helmet?

You should be able to buy a helmet for less than \$20 at a toy store, bike shop, department store or sporting goods store. Please make sure the helmet has a sticker certifying that it meets ANSI or Snell standards. If you can't afford a helmet, one may be available free or at reduced cost through a local community organization.

What will happen if a child under age 12 does not wear a helmet while riding a bicycle?

The bike helmet law is intended to encourage children to wear helmets. People cited for violating the law will have their citation dismissed if they buy a helmet. The maximum fine for people who don't buy a helmet is \$25.

Is Pennsylvania the only state to have this law?

No. Pennsylvania and 36 other states have similar bicycle helmet laws.

In New Jersey, bike injuries dropped by 65 percent within a year after a similar law was passed. Fatalities dropped by 65 percent. According to an Associated Press report, New Jersey's law targeted children 14 and under and saw helmet use among this group jump from 3 percent to 42 percent in one year.

