

INFORMATION UPDATE

Bicycle helmets

Don't ride without one

The problem

Over 300 cyclists are seriously injured or killed in Victoria each year. Head injuries are a major cause of death and serious injury to cyclists.

Children are not the only cyclists injured, as about 85 per cent are over 16 years of age. Bicycle crashes occur in metropolitan and country locations, on quiet streets, bike paths and busy roads – in fact any place you can ride.

Helmets work!

The foam in a helmet is designed to spread the force and absorb the energy of an impact. This reduces the risk of head injury, when your head hits an object or the road.

For information about research that show bicycle helmets reduce the risk of head injury visit vicroads.vic.gov.au/bicyclehelmets

The Law

Victorian cyclists are required by law to wear a helmet that complies with the Australian/New Zealand (AS/NZS) 2063 standard for bicycle helmets.

If the helmet is manufactured or imported from 1 July 2012, it must be marked with the symbol of a body accredited by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ), certifying compliance with AS/NZS 2063.

The helmet must be securely fitted and fastened. Any passenger carried on a bicycle must also wear a securely fitting helmet.

This law applies on roads, bicycle paths, bicycle lanes, footpaths, shared paths and separated footpaths. It also includes other public places such as recreational parks and car parks.

There is a fine for not wearing a securely fitted helmet. For more information visit vicroads.vic.gov.au/bicyclerules

Helmet fit

A bicycle helmet will only protect your head in an impact if it is the right size for your head and is fitted correctly. For these reasons it is important to try a helmet on before buying it.

Your helmet should fit snugly on your head and be comfortable to wear. Helmets currently range in size from those for infants up to a head size of 66 centimetres.

Adjustment pads provided with the helmet may help to make it fit more comfortably. If you have to put very thick pads in your helmet to make it fit firmly or comfortably, the helmet is probably too big or the wrong shape for your head.

When fitted correctly, it should **not** be possible to tilt the helmet:

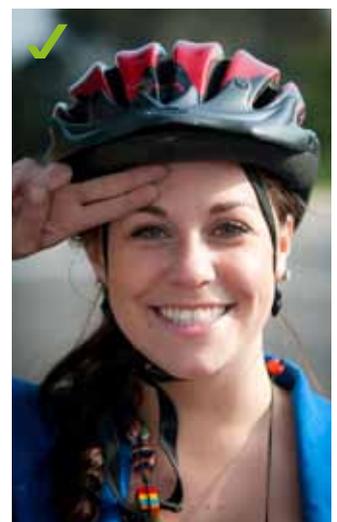
- A. backwards to uncover your forehead
- B. forwards to cover your eyes
- C. sideways to uncover the side of your head.



You may need to alter your hairstyle so that the helmet can sit properly and comfortably on your head. Try tying a pony-tail lower or removing large hair bands or clips.

Helmet position

- Your helmet should be squarely positioned on your head.
- The rim of the helmet should sit on the forehead, just above the eyebrows, and should not be tilted back to uncover the forehead.



Helmet straps

It is important that your helmet straps are adjusted according to the instructions provided with the helmet. If you have difficulty with the straps, take the helmet to a bicycle retailer for help.

Straps should:

- be adjusted so there is no slack when they are fastened
- not be twisted
- be adjusted so that the buckle is securely fastened under the chin
- be re-adjusted if they become loose
- form a "V" shape with the point just under the ear lobe.



Note: some helmets have different strap arrangements.

Bicycle retailers can advise on selecting, fitting and adjusting helmets to get maximum protection in an impact.



Maximum protection

A helmet will give you maximum protection only if:

- it is the right size and is correctly fitted
- it is correctly positioned
- the straps are correctly adjusted and the buckle is securely fastened
- it is in good condition and properly cared for.

Choosing a helmet

Make sure the helmet you choose is marked to show that it meets AS/NZS 2063. There are two types of helmets:

- Hard shell - a foam helmet with a hard plastic shell
- Micro shell - a foam helmet with a thin plastic shell.

There is a wide range of helmets to choose from today – with different looks, styles and colours available to suit all tastes.

Young riders, especially teenagers, are more likely to wear a helmet they have helped to choose.

To stay as cool as possible, choose a helmet that has good airflow through the ventilation holes.

Helmet care

Your helmet will only protect you if it is in good condition. So treat your helmet carefully and regularly check it for wear and damage. Read the helmet care information provided with the helmet.

A helmet is designed to protect your head in one impact only. If you have had a bicycle accident that involved your helmet, you must replace it, even if there is no visible damage.

Do not use a helmet if:

- the plastic shell is split, cracked or broken
- the foam is crumbling, cracked or broken away from the rim
- it has been mistreated, dropped from a height or suffered a hard impact.

Only use cleaning materials recommended by the manufacturer as certain cleaning agents can weaken the helmet.

Because damage to the foam in a helmet is not always visible, it is recommended that you do not buy a second-hand helmet.

Further information

Most bicycle shops and many other retail outlets have a range of helmets and can advise you about buying and fitting a helmet. Bicycle Network Victoria can also provide information on helmets as well as on other cycling questions.

Please call **1800 639 634** or **(03) 8376 8888**

For further information about bicycle safety visit vicroads.vic.gov.au/bicycles