

Bicycle Injury

From 2008 to 2012, there were 82 bicycle-related deaths in Washington State, 16 each year. Forty-nine (49) of these were bicycle vs. motor vehicle. The rest (33) were bicycle vs. something else or a fall over. Another 3,074 people were hospitalized for bicycle-related injuries, 615 each year.

Key Messages to Help Reduce Risks

- ◆ In 2009, 91 percent of bicyclists killed in the U.S. were not wearing helmets.
- ◆ In the U.S., direct costs of cyclists' injuries from **not** wearing helmets are estimated at \$81 million each year.
- ◆ If 85 percent of all child cyclists wore helmets in one year, the lifetime medical cost **savings** would total \$197 to \$256 million.
- ◆ In Washington State, crashes between bicycles and motor vehicles account for 60 percent of all bicycle-related deaths and 21 percent of all non-fatal bicycle-related injuries.
- ◆ Deaths and injuries also occur when bicyclists hit fixed objects, potholes, pavement debris, or animals; lose balance and fall over; click wheels with another bicycle; or are going too fast to stop or turn.
- ◆ The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) reports that the "typical" bicyclist killed on our roads is a sober male over age 16, not wearing a helmet, riding on a major road between intersections in an urban area on a summer evening, who is hit by a vehicle.
- ◆ Helmets work well in a crash when they are **fitted correctly and buckled**. Helmets provide a 66-88 percent reduction in the risk of head and brain injury for all ages.
- ◆ Those cute kids with helmets tilted back are not protected. Their big, bare foreheads are right out there ready to crack. A helmet has to be worn on every ride, be level on the head, with the chin strap fastened.
- ◆ Become a skilled rider – learn to safely operate the bicycle and practice riding in a variety of places and situations: riding in traffic, at intersections, railroad crossings, on gravel, at night, in bad weather, and learn how to carry things on the bike.
- ◆ Both bicyclists and vehicle drivers have legal rights and responsibilities on the roadways. Follow the laws to reduce the risk of crashing. All road users need to respect each other's right to use the roads, and then share the roads as safely as possible.
- ◆ Avoid alcohol and other drugs when bicycling. They can make people take risks they would not normally take, slows reaction times and thought processes, and limits ability to avoid crashes.

All roadway users have the same rights and responsibilities to make travel as safe as possible for everyone.

Information and Resources

- AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety www.aaafoundation.org
- Bicycle Alliance of Washington www.wabikes.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/ncipc
- Kids Health http://kidshealth.org/kid/watch/out/bike_safety.html
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration www.nhtsa.gov/bicycles
- Safe Kids Washington www.safekidswashington.org
- Safe Kids Worldwide www.safekids.org
- WA Traffic Safety Commission www.wtsc.wa.gov

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