

Safety Check ✓

From the Safety Chick

Starting at the Top The Helmet

Perhaps the most important item of safety gear that a cyclist can use is the bike helmet. According to a Healthcast article from ABC Boston (2003), 900 people die in bike-related accidents each year. Over half of them from head injuries. Any research on bike helmets will lead to articles about the importance of helmets, especially for children. (Maybe brain damage to the parent is ok.) An important part of wearing a helmet is proper fit. The helmet should be worn level over the top of the head; it should not tilt backwards or forwards. The helmet should be snug with the chinstrap tight and buckled. Numerous articles are available with proper fitting instructions. One of the best is the Consumer Products Safety Commission website (www.cpsc.gov).

Another site with a tremendous amount of information is the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute (www.bhsi.org). This is a group that provides helmet information including comparisons, statistics, laws and standards. Their F.A.Q. section has an interesting group of questions and answers.

- What's the best helmet to buy?
- Is a cheap helmet as safe as an expensive one?
- Where can I find a helmet for my big head?
- What about my baldhead?

And my personal favorite, when do I need to replace a helmet?

- Did you crash it? Replace!
- Is it from the 1970's Replace!
- Is the outside just foam or cloth instead of plastic? Replace!
- Does it lack a CPSC, ASTM or Snell Sticker? Replace!
- Can you adjust it to fit correctly? Replace!
- Do you hate it? Replace!

Another website (www.bicyclesource.com) with information on helmet standards and comparisons between CPSC/ASTM/Snell B-90S/Snell B95/ANSI. Do you know which is the most stringent?

In addition to the safety information I found on helmets, I came across a nifty helmet that has a built in rear view visor. Made by Reevu (www.reevu.com) Availability seems to be in the UK so standards may not be as stringent at USA of standards but check out the rear view visor.