

# GET A HEADS UP ON Skateboard Helmet Safety



While there is no concussion-proof helmet, a skateboard helmet can help protect your child or teen from a serious brain or head injury. The information in this handout will help you learn what to look for, and what to avoid when picking out a helmet for your child or teen.

## Start with the Right Size:

### BRING THE SKATEBOARDER

Bring your child or teen with you when buying a new helmet to make sure that you can check for a good fit.

### HEAD SIZE

To find out the size of your child's or teen's head, wrap a soft tape measure around his or her head, just above their eyebrows and ears. Make sure the tape measure stays level from front to back. (If you don't have a soft tape measure, you can use a string and then measure it against a ruler.)

### SIZES WILL VARY

Helmet sizes often will vary from brand-to-brand, so it's important to check out the helmet brand's fit and sizing charts to find out what helmet size fits your child's or teen's head size.

## Get a Good Fit:

### GENERAL FIT

A skateboard helmet should fit snugly all around, with no spaces between the foam or padding and the skateboarder's head.

### ASK

Ask your child or teen how the helmet feels on their head. While it needs to have a snug fit, a helmet that is too tight can cause headaches.

### HAIRSTYLE

Your child or teen should try on the helmet with the hairstyle he or she will wear while skateboarding. Helmet fit can change if your child's or teen's hairstyle changes. For example, a long-haired skateboarder who gets a very short haircut may need to adjust the fit of the helmet.

### COVERAGE

A skateboard helmet should not sit too high or low on their head. To check, make sure the front rim of the helmet aligns with the skateboarder's eyebrows and the back of the helmet does not touch the top of the skateboarder's neck.

### VISION

Make sure you can see your child's or teen's eyes and that he or she can see straight forward and side-to-side.

### SIDE STRAPS

The side straps should make a "V" shape under, and slightly in front of, the skateboarder's ears.

### CHIN STRAPS

The chin strap should be centered under the skateboarder's chin and fit snugly, so that no more than one or two fingers fit between the chin and the strap. Tell your child or teen to open their mouth wide...big yawn! The helmet should pull down on their head. If not, the chin strap needs to be tighter. If needed, you can pull the straps from the back of the helmet to adjust the chin straps. Once the chin strap is fastened, the helmet should not move in any direction, back-to-front or side-to-side.

## Take Care of the Helmet:

### CHECK FOR DAMAGE

DO NOT allow your skateboarder to use a cracked or broken helmet or a helmet that is missing any padding or parts.

### CLEANING

Clean the helmet often inside and out with warm water and mild detergent. DO NOT soak any part of the helmet, put it close to high heat, or use strong cleaners.

### PROTECT

DO NOT let anyone sit or lean on the helmet.

### STORAGE

Do not store a skateboard helmet in a car. The helmet should be stored in a room that does not get too hot or too cold and where the helmet is away from direct sunlight.

### DECORATION

DO NOT decorate (paint or put stickers on) the helmet without checking with the helmet manufacturer, as this may affect the safety of the helmet. This information may also be found on the instructions label or on the manufacturer's website.

## Look for the Labels:

### LOOK FOR A HELMET WITH LABELS THAT:

- Say "MEETS NOCSAE Standard®"<sup>1</sup> as certified either by the manufacturer or by the SEI<sup>2</sup>. That label means that the helmet model has been tested and meets NOCSAE performance and protection standards.
- Have the date of manufacture. This information will be helpful if the manufacturer has: specified a useful life of the helmet; specified that the helmet may not be reconditioned and recertified; or if there is ever a recall on that particular model or year.

## When to Replace a Skateboard Helmet:

Skateboard helmets are designed to withstand more than one very minor hit. However, a skateboard helmet **MUST** be replaced if it has been involved in a serious crash or is damaged.

## Multi-Use Helmets:

Some helmet companies have created multi-use helmets for biking, skateboarding, and other activities. Multi-use helmets are designed to withstand multiple very minor hits; however, a multi-use helmet **MUST** be replaced if it has been involved in a serious crash or is damaged. Before your child or teen uses a multi-use helmet for skateboarding, make sure the helmet has an ASTM label certifying it for skateboarding.



<sup>1</sup> National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment: [www.nocsae.org](http://www.nocsae.org)

<sup>2</sup> Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) is an independent and nationally