



Injury Prevention Program

Spokane's Helmet Ordinance

Helmets save lives.

it's an unarguable absolute – you absolutely need one when you absolutely need one and no one knows when that moment may come. Being prepared for that moment is essential to the health and safety of our community.

AKNOWLEDGMENTS:

- ◆ City of Spokane for adopting a helmet ordinance in 2004
- ◆ City of Spokane Valley for adding a budget line item for helmets
- ◆ City of Liberty Lake for incorporating complete streets concepts into their city infrastructure
- ◆ Sheriff Community Oriented Policing Effort (SCOPE) for their commitment to bike rodeos and helmet safety
- ◆ Area public school districts for integrating bike safety education into physical activity courses and supporting Safe Route to School initiatives
- ◆ Spokane Regional Health District's Physical Activity Program and partners for promoting and implementing infrastructure improvements
- ◆ Spokane Police Department for enforcing the policy when appropriate and educating people when a citation isn't the best strategy

WHO GETS HEAD INJURIES:

- ◆ 67% are school aged, under 17 years old
- ◆ Males are more likely to suffer a head injury

KIDS ARE NOT WEARING HELMETS

According to the 2008 Healthy Youth Survey:

- ◆ 78% report never wearing a helmet when biking
- ◆ 12% report rarely wearing a helmet when biking

COSTS:

Medical expenses:

- ◆ Emergency room visit for a wheeled sport injury = \$7,400
- ◆ Hospitalization for wheeled sport injury = \$22,200

Educational expenses:

- ◆ Cost to educate a student without a head/brain injury = \$8,200.00 per year
- ◆ Cost to educate a student after a helmet preventable head/brain injury = \$29,200.00 per year

(over)



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What is needed?

POLICIES:

- ◆ City of Spokane's Helmet Ordinance
- ◆ Area school district policies requiring helmet use

ENFORCEMENT:

- ◆ Provide public education
- ◆ Widely disseminate discount coupons for helmets; reward kids for helmet use
- ◆ Citations when necessary (ability to dismiss tickets with proof of safety device possession)

EDUCATION & SKILLS TO RIDE:

- ◆ PE class integration
- ◆ Bicycle advisory board
- ◆ Spokefest
- ◆ Summer parkways
- ◆ Safe Routes to School
- ◆ Statewide efforts to integrate cyclist awareness into drivers' education programs

FREE OR REDUCED PRICE HELMETS:

- ◆ Spokane Regional Health District
- ◆ Sherriff Community Oriented Policing Effort
- ◆ Community Oriented Policing
- ◆ Big 5 coupons

INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGE:

- ◆ Regional pedestrian plan
- ◆ Regional bike plan
- ◆ City of Spokane master bike plan
- ◆ Complete streets movement
- ◆ Spokane County connectivity policy

Why an ordinance?

Research shows that adopting an ordinance increases helmet use, even without enforcement.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's research proves that, "Laws mandating helmet use supplement and reinforce the message of an educational campaign, requiring people to act on their knowledge."

Knowledge alone doesn't always move people to action.

- ◆ People know how to lose weight, yet obesity rates rise dramatically every year
- ◆ People know how to prevent gum disease, but many people do not floss every day

Some parents use "it's the law" as leverage to increase safety behavior.

- ◆ Not driving with friends (Graduate Driver's License initiative)
- ◆ Riding in a booster seat until 8 years old or 4'9

Reduce costs for everyone.

- ◆ Taxpayers bear the burden of uninsured medical costs
- ◆ Insurance pools are greatly impacted by excessive medical expenses