

## Bicycle helmet

### Injuries to cyclist

Out of all fatal accidents, as many as 80 % involve brain damage which results from a severe blow to the head. Also permanent disablement is a result of brain damage. With regards to adults, head injuries usually occur as one hits the road; with children, the injuries often involve slamming into a car. Damage to the limbs is even more common than damage to the head, but limb injuries are not as severe as head trauma.

Majority of the accidents involves simply falling down, and a visit to the healthcare centre is sufficient to set things right. Every tenth accident is more serious in nature.

Collisions are always serious. Two-thirds of the collisions involve a car. As a cyclist is caught in front of a car, the collision is severe even if collision speed is usually less than 50 km/h.

### Law on bicycle helmet use

The cyclist as well as the bicycle passenger must use an appropriate protective helmet during drive.

The use of helmet varies from region to region. In urban areas, helmet use is more common than in the rural areas. According to the 2005 traffic behaviour monitoring study, 29% of the cyclists used a bicycle helmet.

### Helmet use

The helmet must be of the right size and firmly secured, so that it will not fly off the head in a potential accident. The neck support keeps the helmet in the right position, in effect protecting also the forehead well and not hanging from the back of the head, either. Visibility in traffic is improved by a visible, bright-coloured helmet. It must be discarded after a serious blow or if the helmet suffers deep cuts.



### Helmet requirements

All helmets on the market must meet the European standard EN 1078.



The type approval is CE. These helmets have passed the shock absorption test, where the helmet - containing a 5 kg model head - is dropped to the ground from 1.5 metres and the acceleration to the model head is less than 250 g (g = free fall acceleration).

Without shock absorption a model head may be subject to 1,000 g acceleration, in extreme cases.

### Childrens helmets

For pre-school children there is a helmet which features the so-called emergency opening mechanism. If a child's helmet gets caught in e.g. playground equipment - and the child is left hanging from the helmet - the child's weight will automatically open the lock of the helmet.

Emergency mechanism features a green colour (standard EN 1080:97). If a child's helmet does not have a lock that opens automatically, the helmet should be taken off before e.g. climbing activities.



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