



## Policy Statement

**cyclehelmets.org** is administered by the [Bicycle Helmet Research Foundation \(BHRF\)](#), an incorporated body with an international membership, to undertake, encourage, and spread the scientific study of the use of bicycle helmets.

The purpose of **cyclehelmets.org** is to provide a resource of best-available factual information to assist the understanding of a complex subject, and one where some of the reasoning may conflict with received opinion. In particular we seek to provide access to a wider range of information than is commonly made available by some governments and other bodies that take a strong helmet promotion stance. It is hoped that this will assist informed judgements about the pros and cons of cycle helmets.

The topic of cycle helmets has for many years been a controversial one, with strongly held opinions often dominated by emotion and expressed with exaggeration. Dramatic claims have been made for the potential of helmets to reduce injuries to cyclists, which has convinced many people that cycle helmets are an effective and necessary safety aid. Many people associated with **BHRF** were previously themselves so minded.

However, closer investigation has revealed serious flaws in the evidence most frequently cited in favour of helmet effectiveness. Moreover, it has become increasingly clear that real-world data, from independent sources and based on large populations where helmet use has become common, do not support these claims. Most disturbing of all, there are sources of evidence to suggest that increased helmet use has sometimes been associated with an increase in the number or severity of head injuries to cyclists.

See: [Contradictory evidence about the effectiveness of cycle helmets](#)

Many countries now have policies to encourage cycling, in order to address problems of congestion, pollution and the health and fitness of their populations. Obesity and heart disease are the western world's big killers, which cycling has considerable potential to address. **BHRF** and **cyclehelmets.org** are pro-cycling and pro-health, and therefore concerned that helmet laws have led almost universally to large declines in the number of people who cycle, at a time when illnesses due to inactivity are reaching epidemic levels. No group is more likely to abandon cycling and be adversely affected than children and teenagers.

We are concerned that the current unremitting focus on cycle helmets - sometimes as the principal or only intervention proposed - is a serious distraction. This has diverted road safety, transport and health practitioners from other strategies with much more successful track records in improving cycling safety, such as reducing danger on the road and the availability and promotion of good quality cycle training.

An inevitable consequence of the promotion of cycle helmets has been to brand cycling as an inherently hazardous activity, which in itself may have led many people not to cycle. **BHRF** has undertaken detailed analyses of the real risks of cycling. This and other research has provided convincing evidence that cycling is a very safe and low risk activity, and gives a yardstick with which to view the likelihood of head injury when cycling in perspective. We are concerned that so many people now have a greatly exaggerated perception of the risk of head injury when cycling.

**cyclehelmets.org** attempts to bring together sources of information in response to these questions:

- What are the real risks of cycling?
- How likely is head injury when cycling?
- What impact has there been on injury trends where cycle helmet use has become significant?
- What has been the effect of helmet promotion and helmet laws on cycle use?

Whilst **cyclehelmets.org** strives to be objective in its selection of information for presentation, there is more helmet-sceptic material on this web site than that supportive of helmets. This is in part a matter of copyright (we provide references to journals but cannot generally give direct access), but largely because there is a far wider range of arguments and sources that cast doubt upon one or more aspects of helmet efficacy. **cyclehelmets.org** is



not helmet-sceptic on principle, but because pro-helmet predictions are so often contradicted by real-world experience.

Material published on **cyclehelmets.org** is vetted by an [Editorial Board](#) and subjected to multi-disciplinary peer review. In this way we seek to ensure that not only is the information as accurate as practicable, but also that related issues and consequences are also taken into account. Despite best endeavours, errors and other shortcomings will occur, and **BHRF** welcomes [feedback](#) to improve the accuracy of this resource. We also welcome people to register as [supporters](#) of the work of **BHRF**, and to assist if they are able.

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The Bicycle Helmet Research Foundation (BHRF), an incorporated body with an international membership, exists to undertake, encourage and spread the scientific study of the use of bicycle helmets. Also to consider the effect of the promotion and use of helmets on the perception of cycling in terms of risk and the achievement of wider public health and societal goals.

BHRF strives to provide a resource of best-available factual information to assist the understanding of a complex subject, and one where some of the reasoning may conflict with received opinion. In particular BHRF seeks to provide access to a wider range of information than is commonly made available by those that take a strong helmet promotion stance. It is hoped that this will assist informed judgements about the pros and cons of cycle helmets.

For more information, please visit [www.cyclehelmets.org](http://www.cyclehelmets.org).

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