

Bicycle Safety Fact Sheet

Virginia 2009

Bicycling is a fun, healthy activity for children and adults. When done safely, bicycling can provide hours of enjoyment. Wearing a bicycle helmet and following the rules of the road on every bike ride could prevent many injuries and fatalities.

Bicycle-Related Injuries in Virginia, 2009

- There were 10 bicycle-related deaths in 2009. Four of the 10 deaths involved motor vehicle traffic.
- All bicycle-related deaths in 2009 were among adults.
- There were a total of 414 bicycle-related injury hospitalizations in 2009. Motor vehicle traffic was involved on 22% of these hospitalizations.
- The median charge per episode of care was \$19,850, and the average length of stay was 3.5 days.
- Over 12 million dollars were billed due to bicycle-related hospitalizations.
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) occurred in 30% of the cases.
- 22% of those hospitalized were between the ages of 5 and 14. Another 22% of those hospitalized were between the ages of 45 and 54.

SAFETY TIPS:

A bicycle is considered a vehicle. Learn the rules of the road and obey all traffic laws:

- Ride on the right side of the road with traffic.
- Use the appropriate hand signals to indicate a turn.
- Respect all traffic signals.
- Stop at all stop signs.
- Always look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT before entering a street.

Always wear a properly fitted bicycle helmet! A properly fitted bicycle helmet reduces the risk of serious head and brain injury by almost 90%

- A bicycle helmet should fit comfortably and snugly.
- The helmet should sit level on the head about two finger widths above the eyebrows.
- The side adjuster buckles should form a “V” directly under the ear lobe.
- Buckle the chin strap so that no more than one or two fingers can fit between the chin and the strap.
- Helmets should be labeled as meeting the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standard for bicycle helmets.
- Always replace a helmet after a crash even if you cannot see a crack; it has done its job!
- Look for the sticker with the helmet manufacturer date, and replace helmets that are over 5 years old.
- Never wear a helmet when playing on playground equipment or when climbing trees. The straps can get caught on poles or branches and restrict breathing.

RESOURCES

Virginia Department of Transportation
www.virginiadot.org/programs/bk-laws.asp
1-800-367-ROAD

SAFE KIDS USA
www.safekids.org

Bike Walk Virginia
www.bikewalkvirginia.org

Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute
www.bhsi.org



Injury and Violence Prevention Program
Virginia Department of Health
1-800-732-8333
www.vahealth.org/injury