



Skateboarding Safety Tips

Skateboarding is a popular activity enjoyed by many young people. However, it's also an activity that causes many unintentional injuries.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), in 2006 there were 65,000 skateboard injuries to children younger than 15 years old. Fractures are a frequent type of injury. Deaths as a result of collisions with motor vehicles and from falls are also reported.

Irregular riding surfaces account for more than half of the skateboarding injuries caused by falls. Wrist injury is the number one injury, usually a sprain or a fracture. Skateboarders who have been skating for less than a week suffered one-third of the injuries. When experienced riders suffered injuries, it was usually from falls that were caused by rocks and other irregularities in the riding surface.

The National Safety Council offers these skateboarding tips:

The skateboard/protective gear

- There are boards with varying characteristics for different types of riding; i.e., slalom, freestyle or speed. Some boards are rated as to the weight of the intended user.
- Protective equipment, such as closed, slip-resistant shoes, **helmets** and specially designed padding, may not fully protect skateboarders from fractures, but wearing it can reduce the number and severity of cuts and scrapes.
- Padded jackets and shorts are available for skateboarders, as well as padding for hips, knees and elbows. Wrist braces and special skateboarding gloves also can help absorb the impact of a fall.
- The protective equipment currently on the market is not subject to government performance standards and careful selection is necessary.
- In a helmet, look for proper fit and a chin strap; notice whether the helmet blocks vision and hearing. If padding is too tight, it could restrict circulation and reduce the ability to move freely. Loose-fitting padding, on the other hand, could slip off or slide out of position.

How to fall

Learning how to fall may help reduce the chances of a serious injury.

- If you are losing your balance, crouch down on the skateboard so that you will not have as far to fall.

- In a fall, the idea is to land on the fleshy parts of your body.
- If you fall, try to roll rather than absorb the force with your arms.
- Even though it may be difficult during a fall, try to relax your body, rather than go stiff.

Tips for using a skateboard

- Give your board a safety check each time before you ride.
- Always wear safety gear.
- Never ride in the street.
- Obey the city laws. Observe traffic and areas where you can and cannot skate.
- Don't skate in crowds of non-skaters.
- Only one person per skateboard.
- Never hitch a ride from a car, bicycle, etc.
- Don't take chances; complicated tricks require careful practice and a specially-designated area.
- Learn to fall—practice falling on a soft surface or grass.