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Bike Helmets: What is the Law in Ontario?

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Cycling can be an excellent mode of transportation and a pleasant way to get some exercise for adults and children alike. However, there are a number of important safety considerations, including the importance of using an approved bicycle helmet.

A bicycle is a vehicle under the Ontario *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA). In Ontario, the law states that every cyclist under the age of eighteen must wear an approved bicycle helmet.¹ That means that anyone under the age of eighteen who rides any type of bicycle on any Ontario roads – such as a tricycle or a tandem bicycle – must wear an approved bicycle helmet. Children riding in a child carrier or a bicycle trailer are also required to wear an approved bicycle helmet.

The current total fine for bicycle riders under eighteen travelling on any public road without a helmet is \$75, which is comprised of a set fine and a Victim Surcharge fine.² If the rider is under sixteen years old, a parent or guardian is responsible for ensuring their child wears an approved helmet.³

When choosing a helmet, look for a safety standards sticker meeting the approval of safety organizations such as the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Snell, ANSI, ASTM, BSI, CPSC and SAA.⁴ Helmets from other sports such as hockey, baseball, and football are not approved helmets under the HTA, and are not recommended for cycling as they are designed and tested for different types of impact.⁵

Unfortunately, while wearing a helmet greatly reduces the risk of head injury while cycling, accidents of this type cannot be prevented altogether. If you or someone you know has been involved in an accident while cycling, you may be entitled to compensation for your injuries.

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¹ *Highway Traffic Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8, 104.

² Ontario Ministry of Transportation, *Bicycle Safety*, online: <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/bicycle-safety.shtml> [Bicycle Safety]

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Bicycle Safety, *supra*.

⁵ *Ibid.*



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