

The Six Minute Guide

Need One?

What do you expect us to say? You need your brain to work so you can skateboard, and don't just lie in bed and slobber the rest of your life. You don't know how hard pavement is until your head really hits it. If you do a wrist or an arm or a collarbone it heals, but the brain is different. Besides that, helmets may be the law in your area, and you can't use most skate parks without one.



The helmet must stay on your head. It's not a hat, just sitting there. It will fly off while you are flying through the air. So it needs a strong strap and buckle. And you need to remember to fasten it.

Skateboard helmets are mostly black or a dark color. If you want to be seen on the street, get a bright color. Most boarders don't.



What to Look For

A skateboard helmet softens the impact when the foam inside crushes. The hard shell on most skateboard helmets holds up under multi impacts. Bike helmets use thin plastic that breaks immediately the first time you hit hard.

The best interior foam for skateboard is probably Expanded PolyPropylene (EPP). It looks like bike helmet foam, but feels a little bit rubbery. Unlike bike helmet EPS foam, EPP recovers and is good for the next hit.

Standards

A sticker inside the helmet tells what standard it meets. True skateboard helmets meet ASTM F1492. Some "skate-style" helmets only meet the CPSC bicycle helmet standard. Those are bike helmets, not skateboard helmets, even if they put a skateboard on the box.



How to Buy

Some of the best skateboard helmets are "dual-certified" to both the ASTM and CPSC standards. Check our Dual Certified Helmets page at <http://www.helmets.org/dualcert.htm> for the latest list. Those helmets are designed for skateboarding *and* bicycling. But always look inside for the stickers that say they meet both CPSC and ASTM F1492 standards. Without the stickers, they don't meet both standards!



The Two Minute Summary

- You always need a helmet when you board. You will crash eventually.
- Even a low-speed fall can scramble your brains.
- Laws in some states and skateboard parks require helmets.
- Buy a skateboard helmet for skateboarding, not a bicycle helmet. You will get better coverage and protection built for skateboarding.
- Skateboard helmets should meet the ASTM F1492 skateboard helmet standard.

If you have 6 more minutes, read on!



When to Replace a Helmet?

If you really have a skateboard helmet that meets the ASTM F1492 standard you don't need to replace it every time you crash, but someday you will. Bike helmets must be replaced after every crash. Replace the buckle if it cracks or a piece breaks off.

Skate Helmets for Biking?

Do not use a skate helmet for bicycling unless it has a CPSC bicycle helmet standard sticker inside!

Consumer Reports Article

Consumer Reports published an article in June 2006 rating a few skate helmets. You can see it for free at www.consumer.org. They did not test them to the ASTM skateboard standard.



Skateboard Helmets



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