



COMMUNITY  
Safety  
Net™

Community Safety Net presents

# SKATEBOARDING

## Safety for Kids



This educational resource is available exclusively to our Partners In Safety.™

Smart choices for **LIFE**



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**Skateboarding Safety for Kids**

## **GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTING THIS MATERIAL**

**Parts I - III** are designed to provide parents and instructors with basic information on skateboard safety. Kids should be encouraged to take the pages home for their parents to read. Depending on the age/level of the students, these sections can be given as handouts for student reading, as well. For younger kids, the information should be distilled by an instructor, and presented in smaller, more manageable pieces.



**Parts IV & V** are intended for both kids and parents. The lists can be covered in a class setting, taken home by all students, and also reproduced on a large wall chart for regular reference.

**Part VI** is a quiz designed for kids of all ages. It may be taken before the material has been covered, then again after it has been studied, to measure the learning that has taken place. The quiz can be done individually or in a group setting.

**Parts VII** is intended as a group exercise. It's designed to get kids to think for themselves about skateboarding safety and the consequences of unsafe practices. It will allow them to voice their individual opinions and express concerns about skateboard safety. Try to ensure that everyone contributes. This activity is estimated to take about 30 minutes, but may last longer in larger groups.

**Part VIII** is for further reference.



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## **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION**

**S**kateboarding is a fun activity that has become extremely popular in recent years — especially among young people. But like many sports and forms of recreation, skateboarding can be very dangerous if proper safety precautions are not taken.

This program is intended to provide an overview of the most common safety concerns related to skateboarding. You may be familiar with many of them already. Even so, it's a good idea to reacquaint yourself with the basics to ensure that your skating experiences are as fun and safe as possible!

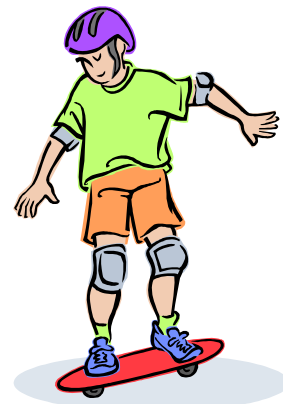


## **PART TWO: PROTECTIVE GEAR**

**E**ach year, nearly 40,000 skateboarders are injured seriously enough to require medical attention. Of the injuries, nearly two-thirds take the form of fractures, dislocations, sprains, strains, and tears. Wrist injuries are more common than any other type.

Despite the fact that wearing pads has been shown to greatly reduce injuries, many skateboarders and in-line skaters choose not to wear them.

While most beginning skaters wear protective gear, far too many stop wearing helmets and pads as they gain more experience. Considering that more than 60% of injured





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skaters were wearing no protection when they crashed, it would seem that giving up on safety gear — no matter how good a skater you are — is not a very smart decision.

### **HELMETS THAT FIT**

Your head is one of the most fragile parts of your body. Since head injuries can be fatal, and since helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of serious injury, it's very important to wear a helmet when skating.

Be sure to get a helmet that fits right. If it doesn't fit properly, it won't be able to offer the protection it should. The helmet should fit snugly (but not uncomfortably) on the top of your head. If it tips back or slides forward, it's too large. Remember: it's important that the helmet doesn't obstruct your vision or hearing.

It's best to get a helmet that has been specially designed for skateboarding or one that is approved for various sports, including skating. However, it's better to wear any certified helmet — like a bicycle helmet — than none at all.

### **SAFETY PADDING**

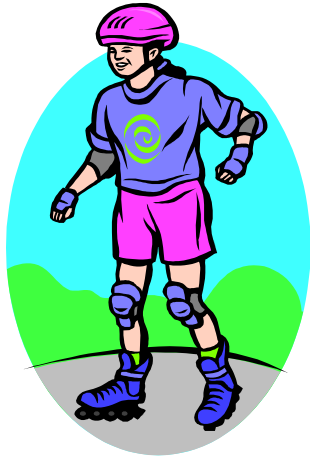
In addition to helmets, other padding is recommended to help skaters avoid or reduce injuries. Is it worthwhile? Well, consider this: pads can reduce wrist and elbow injuries by about 85 percent and knee injuries by 32 percent.

So when it comes to skateboarding, the more body coverage, the better. Covered-toe shoes with good grip provide protection against slippage, while long sleeves and pants can help prevent cuts and scrapes.





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Padded jackets and shorts are available, too, and you can get padding for hips, knees and elbows, as well. Wrist braces and special skateboarding gloves also can help absorb the impact of a fall.

When it comes to protective gear, look for comfort, design, and function. Body padding should fit comfortably. If it's too tight, it could affect circulation and movement. Too loose, and it could slip off or out of position. Overall, it's important to

make sure that the safety equipment doesn't interfere with the skater's movement, vision, or hearing.

### **SAFETY AND PEER PRESSURE**

One study showed that attitudes about safety equipment are linked to peer pressure. It was found that kids followed the choices of their friends. For example, either everyone in the group wore helmets or none did.

Of course, no one wants to learn importance of safety gear the hard way. So why take a risk? If you're part of a peer group that doesn't fully appreciate the merits of helmets and padding while skating, try to use your influence in a positive way. Lead by example and show your friends that there's nothing cool about serious injuries.

## **PART THREE: AVOIDING & REDUCING INJURIES**

**B**ecause falls are a common hazard associated with skateboarding, the potential for injury is always present. That's why it's important to take as many safety precautions as possible. In addition to wearing protective gear (as described in the previous section), there are other ways to avoid or reduce skateboarding-related injuries.



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According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the factors most commonly associated with skateboarding injuries include lack of protective equipment, poor board maintenance, and irregular riding surfaces.

### **SKATEBOARDS**

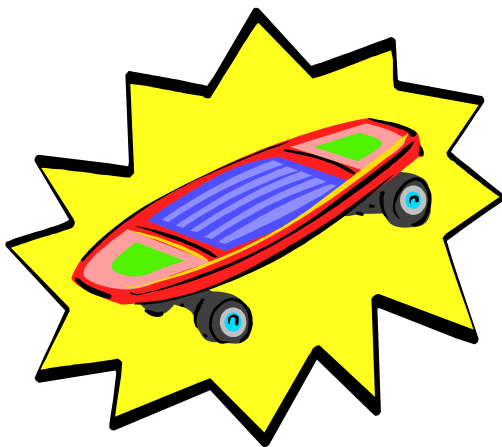
As most skateboarders know, there are different types of boards with varying characteristics designed for several types of riding (such as slalom, freestyle, etc.). Boards also come in different sizes, intended for users of different weights.



It's a good idea to check your board for hazards before using it. Watch out for loose, broken, or cracked parts; wheels with nicks and cracks; a slippery top surface; and sharp edges. Any serious defects should be repaired by someone who's qualified to do so.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS**

More than half of skateboarding injuries due to falls can be traced to irregular riding surfaces. That's why it's a good idea to check for bumps, holes, stones, and any other debris where you plan to be skating.



Areas that have been specially designated for skateboarding, on the other hand, usually have smoother riding surfaces.

When you consider that skateboarding in the street can result in collisions with cars causing serious injury and even death, it makes even more sense to skate in areas specially set aside for that purpose. Of course, young children should never skateboard in the street, and no one should ever ride near traffic.



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### **FALLING CORRECTLY**

Skateboarding requires good balance and body control. But many young skateboarders lack the necessary balance and reflexes required to prevent injury.

That's why it's a good idea to learn how to fall, before you start skateboarding. Learning how to fall "correctly" can help reduce your chances of serious injury.

Here are some tips on the best way to fall:

- ☞ Crouch down on the skateboard so that you will not have so far to fall.
- ☞ Try to land on the fleshy parts of your body.
- ☞ Try to roll rather than absorb the force with your arms.
- ☞ Try to relax your body, rather than stiffen.
- ☞ Practice falling on a soft surface or grass.



### **GOOD JUDGEMENT REQUIRED**

By its very nature, skateboarding is a sport that involves risk of injury. Protective padding can help reduce the potential seriousness of an injury, but it is no substitute for experience and common sense.

Neat tricks and jumps account for much of the sport's appeal, but require patience, skill, and experience to perform. Remember, there's no rush! New skateboarders should learn to master the basics, before attempting fancy maneuvers.

Skateboarding with caution, knowing one's own limits, and exercising good judgement will go a long way towards preventing injury, without removing the fun from the activity.



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## **PART FOUR: SAFE RIDING SUGGESTIONS**

- ☞ Before you ride, "safety check" wheels, ball bearings, trucks, etc.
- ☞ Always wear proper fitting protective gear: helmet, knee and elbow pads, wrist guards and gloves. Also wear shoes.
- ☞ Children ages 8 and younger should not use skateboards or in-line skates without close adult supervision.
- ☞ Do not skateboard or skate at night.
- ☞ Never ride in the street. Ride on smooth, paved surfaces free of traffic.
- ☞ Ride in skateboard parks or in areas away from vehicles and pedestrians. Always respect private and public property.
- ☞ Watch out for pebbles, sand, cracks or debris that might jam your wheels.



- ☞ Use caution when skateboarding or skating downhill. If the hill is steep, step off and walk to the bottom of the hill.
- ☞ Do not "hitch" rides behind vehicles or bicycles.
- ☞ Only one person per skateboard.
- ☞ Avoid other "boarders" — collisions are painful and dangerous.



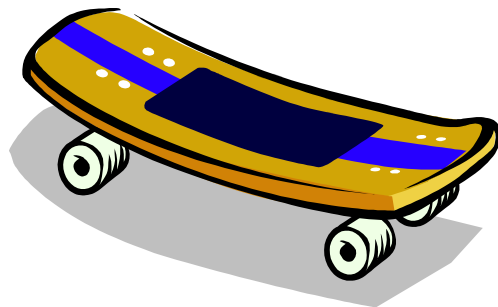
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- ☞ Go slow! Skateboards don't have brakes.
- ☞ Don't jump ramps or do tricks without training and supervision.
- ☞ Don't take chances; complicated tricks require careful practice and a specially designated area.
- ☞ Learn to fall — practice falling on a soft surface or grass.
- ☞ "Park" your board on its end, where no one will trip on it.
- ☞ Obey all laws and regulations related to skateboarding.



### **PART FIVE: DID YOU KNOW?**

- ☞ Each year, nearly 40,000 seek emergency treatment for skateboarding injuries..
- ☞ Most skateboarding injuries occur when skaters lose control, skate over an obstacle, skate too fast, or perform a trick.
- ☞ Many injuries can be prevented if skaters wear proper safety gear and avoid risky skating behavior.
- ☞ More than one-third of skating injuries are to the wrist area, most of which are fractures and dislocations.





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- ☞ Six out of every 10 skateboard injuries are to children under 15 years of age.
- ☞ Skateboarders who have been skating for less than a week suffer one-third of the injuries; riders with a year or more of experience have the next highest number of injuries.
- ☞ Experienced riders mainly suffer injuries when they fall after their skateboards strike rocks and other irregularities in the riding surface or when they attempt difficult stunts.
- ☞ About 90% of skateboarders injured are male.
- ☞ Injuries almost always result from falls; accidental falls due to loss of balance are the most common.
- ☞ Head injuries account for a much higher portion of all injuries in skaters under 10 years of age.
- ☞ Skating deaths are almost exclusively due to auto-related accidents.





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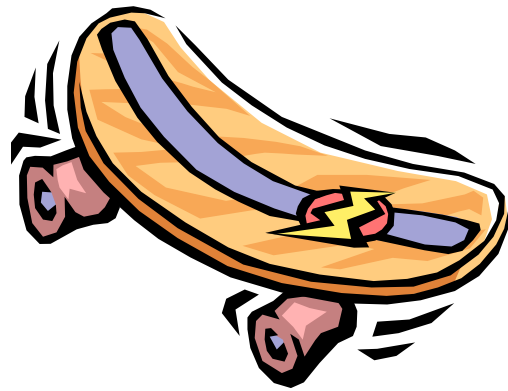
## **PART SIX: SKATEBOARDING SAFETY QUIZ**

### **1) Which body part is most commonly injured while skateboarding?**

- a) Head
- b) Wrist
- c) Shoulder

### **2) A proper-fitting helmet should:**

- a) Sit snugly on top of the head
- b) Slip down the front or back of the head
- c) Be tight enough to give you a headache



### **3) What should you do before you get on a skateboard?**

- a) Say a prayer.
- b) Put on protective gear.
- c) Check the board for defects.
- d) Both b and c.

### **4) Why is it a good idea to wear safety padding when skateboarding?**

- a) Extra padding will keep you warm on cold days.
- b) It looks cool, and that's all that matters.
- c) Because doing so greatly reduces your chances of wrist, ankle, and knee injury.

### **5) Where is the best place to skateboard?**

- a) In the house
- b) In crowded outdoor areas with lots of people
- c) Areas that have been specially designated for skateboarding
- d) Streets with heavy traffic

### **6) Why should you practice falling "correctly" before skateboarding?**

- a) It can help reduce injuries when you take a spill.
- b) If you're gonna fall, you may as well do a good job.
- c) It will be good experience for an eventual career in physical comedy.



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**7) Why is skateboarding in the street a bad idea?**

- a) There is potential for a collision with a car.
- b) Road surfaces often have cracks, rocks, and other debris that could cause a fall.
- c) Many jurisdictions have regulations against it.
- d) All of the above

**8) In addition to safety gear, what can help prevent skateboarding injuries?**

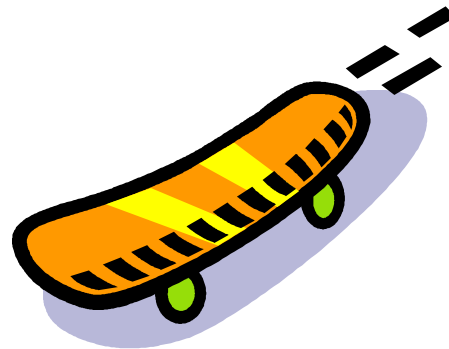
- a) Good judgement
- b) Blind luck
- c) Closing your eyes

**9) What's the most common cause of skateboarding-related injury?**

- a) Collisions with cars
- b) Falls
- c) Being hit by a flying skateboard
- d) Being knocked out by the odor of other boarders' socks

**10) The number of people who require medical treatment each year for skateboarding-related injuries is approximately:**

- a) 2,000
- b) 14,000
- c) 40,000
- d) 230,000





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**Answers to quiz:**

1) b 2) a 3) d 4) c 5) c 6) a 7) d 8) a 9) b 10) c

**PART SEVEN: DISCUSSION STARTERS**

- 👉 Why is it so important to wear a helmet when skateboarding?
- 👉 If you were an experienced skateboarder, what type of safety advice would you offer to someone who's just getting started in the sport?
- 👉 How could you convince a group of skateboarders that they should wear protective padding?
- 👉 List the things you can think of that might cause you to fall off your skateboard.
- 👉 Why do you think it's a bad idea to skateboard in the street?
- 👉 How can skateboarders show others that they care about safety?
- 👉 Why do you think some people choose not to wear protective gear, despite the proven benefits?
- 👉 If you saw your friend boarding without a helmet, what would you say? How would you convince him or her to wear a helmet while skateboarding?





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## **PART EIGHT: SOURCES & MORE INFORMATION**

The following sources were referenced in the writing of this resource:

- 👉 Center for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov/safeusa/sports/skates.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/safeusa/sports/skates.htm))
- 👉 National Safety Council ([www.nsc.org/library/facts/sktebord.htm](http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/sktebord.htm))
- 👉 kidsource.com ([www.kidsource.com/cpsc2/skateboard.safety.html](http://www.kidsource.com/cpsc2/skateboard.safety.html))
- 👉 Automobile Club of Southern California
- 👉 U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Publication #93

For more information on bicycle safety for kids, please visit the Web sites listed above, as well as the following:

- 👉 [www.skateboard.com/frontside/101/newbies/safety.asp](http://www.skateboard.com/frontside/101/newbies/safety.asp)
- 👉 [www.kidzworld.com/site/p1318.htm](http://www.kidzworld.com/site/p1318.htm)
- 👉 [www.mysafefamily.com/safety.asp?pm=sd&sid=160](http://www.mysafefamily.com/safety.asp?pm=sd&sid=160)
- 👉 [www.nsc.org/library/facts/sktebord.htm](http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/sktebord.htm)
- 👉 [www.lrcentralhigh.org/skateboardingsafety.htm](http://www.lrcentralhigh.org/skateboardingsafety.htm)
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