

SAFETY TIP

MAY 2012

Bicycle/Pedestrian safety

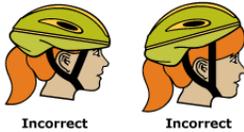
Bicycle safety

Summer is here, which means that more people are engaging in outdoor activities, like bicycling. Community members are encouraged to reacquaint themselves with bicycle safety rules that will help make their summer rides safer and more enjoyable.

- **Always Wear an Approved Bicycle Helmet:**

A bicycle helmet should sit low on the forehead, just above the eyebrows. It should fit snugly and the two side plastic pieces on the straps should fit just under the ears. The buckle should be just under the chin, with one finger's width of space between the strap and chin. The helmet must always be buckled while riding. The helmet should not move more than ½ inch in any direction.

Protect your head ... be smart!!!



- **Know and Follow the Rules of the Road:**

Know and follow the rules of the road. Remember, bicyclists must obey the same laws as drivers of motor vehicles.

- **Ride with the Flow of Traffic:**

Always follow lane markings and use appropriate hand signals. Ride single-file when in heavily congested areas.

- **Avoid Riding at Night:**

If it becomes necessary to do so, wear light-colored or reflective clothing. Make sure your bicycle is properly equipped with reflectors and a front light.

- **Be Alert While Riding:**

Watch for cars, pedestrians, and hazards in the roadway like potholes, drain grates, etc. Don't assume other people will yield to you. Be courteous and give the right-of-way to other bicycles and pedestrians.

The hazards of using cell phones while walking

Doctors and safety experts are increasingly concerned about the risk associated with distraction while walking. Preoccupied and distracted pedestrians have become common on busy city streets. This loss of situational awareness is similar to that of a distracted driver. The result can be injury or death. Several recent cases confirm the hazards associated with walking while texting, talking on cell phones, or listening to mobile devices.

- A teenage girl in New York City fell six feet through an open manhole while texting. She sustained minor injuries but was exposed to raw sewage.
- A Florida teen died from injuries received when he stepped into the path of oncoming cars as he crossed a busy city street while texting.

As these few examples indicate, walking while using electronic devices has become a common hazard that needs to be addressed.

Pedestrians, much like drivers, have always multi-tasked by doing things such as snacking or reading on the move. Researchers are trying to determine what makes distracted walking with mobile devices so different from other types of multi-tasking. A study conducted at Western Washington University noted that talking on a cell phone takes a toll on cognition and awareness. The study showed that pedestrians using their cell phones often did not notice objects or people in their path. They also found a type of preoccupation called "inattention blindness," meaning that a person can be looking at an object but fail to register it or process what it is.

Increasing public awareness of the hazards associated with distracted walking is the key to preventing these types of accidents. Programs targeting young and middle aged persons are imperative since it appears that these are the persons most affected.

Keeping in touch is important, but it is more important to be alive to get the message.

