

# Head Injury Prevention Program



**TRAFFIC SAFETY INITIATIVES**  
**HEAD INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM**  
**(BICYCLE HELMETS)**

**I. PURPOSE** The purpose of this program is to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities relating to children's operation of bicycles and other play vehicles.

**II. PROGRAM** In a mission of community policing, the Department will develop and implement a head injury prevention program. The focus of this program is to conduct enforcement activity through the use of warnings which will be in the form of a ticket. The purchase and distribution of helmets are an authorized part of this funding initiative. All members, particularly Bicycle Patrol and Community Service officers, will be responsible for the implementation of this program. The Department will distribute helmets to children in need. This program will also be used to recognize children who are properly wearing helmets. Overall, this program will use public information campaigns, community partnerships, enforcement via courtesy tickets, and helmet distribution, in order to meet the goals of the program. Various public events and gatherings will be used to promote this project. Partnerships will be cultivated with agencies such as the local hospital emergency department, EMS, survivors and victims of head injury crashes, the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, Traffic Safety Board and local businesses to carry out the various components of this program.

**III. PROCEDURES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**A. Enforcement options available to police:** under the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law, children under age 14 are required to wear helmets while riding bicycles. Children are also required to wear helmets when using other play vehicles, however, anecdotal evidence indicates that compliance levels are low. Thus, head protection for children may not be properly afforded when they are involved in certain recreational activities such as bicycling, skateboarding and skating. In order to enforce violations of the child helmet law, though, police need to witness the noncompliance when it is occurring within view of the parent/guardian, making enforcement of violations more difficult.

**B. Courtesy ticket program A:** Consistent with a community policing philosophy, and in order to increase compliance with state and local helmet laws, the Department has created a special initiative to increase compliance and enhance public safety through a courtesy ticket program. Through this program, uniformed officers (Patrol Division, Bicycle Patrol Unit and Community Service Officers) will cordially address violations of the helmet law with children using the courtesy ticket as an information campaign for

both the children and parents/guardians of those children. The ticket will have an official appearance,

but will simply be a warning. The ticket will provide information as to the legal requirement for helmet use, the penalties associated with a violation of the helmet law, and an option for the child to receive a free helmet from the police department.

**C. Development of partnerships** with various agencies, organizations and entities relating to traffic safety, child welfare, medical care, schools and news media. In an effort to make a coordinated and comprehensive approach to this problem, and to better enhance the success of this program, the Department will cultivate partnerships with other agencies to assist in the delivery of this program.

**D. Community ownership** (PBA, local restaurants, testimonials, survivors, etc.) The department will enlist assistance from organizations to assist in this program. These liaisons may be to assist in funding for additional helmets, food coupons from restaurants as reward for children observed properly wearing a helmet, and to solicit testimonials from survivors of bicycle collisions, those who have suffered a head injury due to lack of a helmet, and others who can espouse the merits of a helmet.

**E. Bicycle Patrol Unit role** - All members of the department are tasked with enforcing this program. However, the Bicycle Patrol Unit is in an ideal position to make observations and carry out this special initiative.

**1. Warning and advisement - ticket program A:** It will be an essential component of the Bicycle Patrol Unit to issue warning tickets for violations as well as issue the congratulatory tickets for bicyclists observed in compliance with the law.

**2. Positive reinforcement - ticket program B:** Members will also issue the congratulatory tickets for bicyclists observed in compliance with the law.

**F. Helmet issuance** - Members of the Department will be trained in following manufacturer guidelines for the proper fit and use of helmets. Proper sizing and adjustment are imperative.

By order of:

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Chief of Police

Appendix A: warning ticket

Appendix B: positive reinforcement ticket