

#23 Skateboarding Safety



Information available from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission indicates more than 90,000 youth aged five to 19 years were treated in hospitals for skateboarding injuries during 2005. The most frequent injuries were to wrists followed by arms, heads, faces, feet, and hands. Broken bones, bruises, sprains, and lacerations were the most common types of injuries. Many of these injuries could have been prevented by being aware of potential hazards and using safe skateboarding practices. The State of California has determined that performing skateboarding stunts or tricks is a “hazardous recreational activity” (Health & Safety Code, Section 115800 (d)).

Skateboarding Safety Rules and Tips

- Before using, always inspect the skateboard for damage or disrepair, including board separation, worn grip tape, sharp board edges, and nicked or cracked wheels.
- If a skateboard fails your pre-use inspection, notify your group leader, parent, or guardian. Do not use the skateboard until it has been repaired.
- The California Vehicle Code, Section 21212 (a) states that a person under 18 years of age shall not operate a skateboard unless that person is wearing a properly fitted and fastened bicycle helmet that meets the standards of either the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) or the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or standards subsequently established by those entities.
- The California Health & Safety Code, Section 115800 (a) requires riders to wear a helmet, elbow pads and knee pads when using a skateboard in a skateboard park. This is also a good safety practice for any other use of skateboards, such as on sidewalks, etc.
- Use sunscreen when skateboarding outdoors.
- Inspect the area where you intend to skateboard for holes, cracks, bumps, obstructions, wet or muddy areas, and loose surface debris.
- Never skateboard in a street or other areas where vehicle traffic is present (e.g., parking lots).
- Obey posted signs or safety warnings concerning the use or prohibition of skateboards.
- Never “surf” vehicles whereby a skateboarder holds onto the back or side of a moving vehicle. Likewise, do not use bikes or dogs to tow skateboarders.
- Skateboard on surfaces and use maneuvers that are appropriate to your skill level.
- Skateboarding at nighttime is a dangerous practice unless done at a well-lighted area designated for skateboarding.
- Do not skateboard down steps or on railings, curbs, or park benches.
- Using a ramp to perform skateboarding stunts is dangerous and can result in serious injuries.
- Using headphones or talking on a cell phone while skateboarding is considered reckless because it is distracting and interferes with the skateboarder hearing sounds that indicate imminent danger.
- Skateboarders should always pay attention to what they are doing and remain alert to their surroundings.
- If you are injured while skateboarding, notify your project leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.