



24 August 2011

Darrell Dexter, Premier
Office of the Premier
PO Box 726
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 2T3

Dear Minister

Re: Mandatory Bike Helmet Legislation

The Halifax Cycling Coalition has over 380 members and represents cyclists in the Halifax region. The Board of Directors of the coalition unanimously supports legislation for mandatory bicycle helmet wearing for all cyclists in Nova Scotia.

Evidence, as provided attached, continues to show that those wearing bike helmets both suffer a lower rate of mortality but also a lower rate of head injuries. Head injuries leave the rider with a greatly diminished capacity to live a normal life while causing continued pain and suffering for them and their families. If helmet legislation prevented only a small percentage of now unhelmeted riders from receiving head injuries it would be worthwhile.

Anti helmet groups often suggest helmet ineffectiveness in direct impacts with motor vehicles, the rights of individuals and other pseudo science. The majority of accidents are not impacts with moving vehicles but falls from trying to avoid impacts or other accidents. In these cases the use of helmets has been shown in many sports to be effective in reducing head injuries.

Bicycles, unlike cars, do not come with built in safety devices and thus; helmets, lights and reflectors must be legislated into use. Bicycle helmet wearing reduces the cost of bicycle injuries to the health care system. Our public health care system has more important illnesses to address than the self inflicted injuries caused by cyclist's refusal to wear helmets when biking.

Board members would be pleased to address committees or other forums in support of legislation to require wearing of helmets for all cyclists in Nova Scotia.

Yours truly

Original signed by Clive MacGregor (hardcopy sent).

Clive MacGregor, Board of Directors, Halifax Cycling Coalition
Letter approved by unanimous vote of Board of Directors August 11, 2011

Halifax Cycling Coalition
PO Box 60005
5991 Spring Garden Rd.
Halifax, NS B3H 4R7

contact@cyclehalifax.ca
www.cyclehalifax.ca



The following facts are based on analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS).

Bicycle Deaths by Helmet Use 1996-2008

Year	No Helmet	Helmet	Total* Num
1996	731 (96%)	27 (4%)	761
1997	785 (97%)	23 (3%)	811
1998	741 (98%)	16 (2%)	757
1999	698 (93%)	42 (6%)	750
2000	622 (90%)	50 (7%)	689
2001	616 (84%)	60 (8%)	729
2002	589 (89%)	54 (8%)	663
2003	535 (85%)	58 (9%)	626
2004	602 (83%)	87 (12%)	722
2005	676 (86%)	77 (10%)	784
2006	730 (95%)	37 (5%)	669
2007	646 (92%)	50 (7%)	699
2008	653 (91%)	58 (8%)	714

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Total includes other and/or unknowns. *BHSI Note: cause of death may or may not have been head injury.

- **Twenty-six percent of bicyclists killed in 2008 had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) at or above 0.08 percent.**
- **Bicyclist deaths in 2008 occurred most often during August-October and between the hours of 6pm and 9pm.**
- **More than 7 times as many bicyclist deaths in 2008 were males compared with females. At every age more male than female bicyclists were killed, and the rates of bicyclist deaths per million people were higher for males than females. The highest rate of bicyclist deaths per million people occurred for 45-49 year-old males. Second highest was 13 year-old males.**
- **Many more bicyclists were killed in urban areas than in rural areas in 2008 (68 percent compared with 31 percent). In 1975, bicyclist deaths occurred equally in rural and urban areas.**
- **Thirty-eight percent of bicyclist deaths in 2008 occurred at intersections.**
- **Sixty-one percent of bicyclist deaths in 2008 occurred on major roads other than interstates and freeways, and 35 percent occurred on minor roads. Sixty percent of deaths among bicyclists younger than 16 and 31 percent of deaths among bicyclists 16 and older occurred on minor roads.**

Downloaded June 2010. For tables, graphs and more detail see the [IIHS site](#). The IIHS is consistently the best source of bicycle fatality statistics on the Web. Their picture of a "typical" bicyclist killed on our roads would be a sober male over 16 not wearing a helmet riding on a major road between intersections in an urban area on a summer evening when hit by a car.

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