



Skateboards

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Fact sheet

U.S. Consumer
Product Safety
Commission

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Hotline:
1-800-638-2772

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 26,000 persons are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year with skateboard related injuries. Sprains, fractures, contusions and abrasions are the most common types of injuries. Deaths due to collisions with cars and from falls also are reported.

Several factors - lack of protective equipment, poor board maintenance and irregular riding surfaces - are involved in these accidents. Skateboard riding requires good balance and body control, yet many young skateboarders have not developed the necessary balance and do not react quickly enough to prevent injury.

WHO GETS INJURED

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.

Injuries to first-time skateboarders are, for the most part, due to falls. 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.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

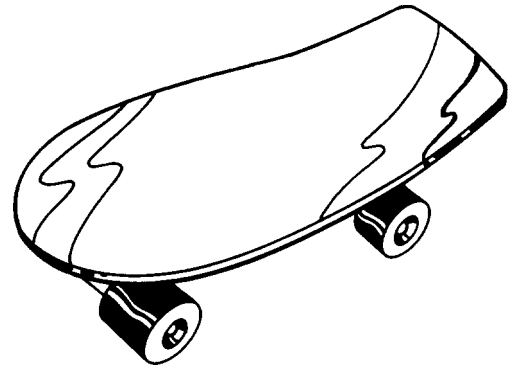
Irregular riding surfaces account for over half the skateboarding injuries due to falls.

Before riding, skateboarders should screen the area where they will be riding by checking for holes, bumps, rocks and any debris. Areas set aside especially for skateboarding generally have smoother riding surfaces.

Skateboarding in the street can result in collisions with cars causing serious injury and even death.

THE SKATEBOARD

There are boards with varying characteristics for different types of riding (i.e., slalom, freestyle, or speed). Some boards are rated as to the weight of the intended user.



Before using their boards, riders should check them for hazards, such as loose, broken, or cracked parts; sharp edges on metal boards; slippery top surface; and wheels with nicks and cracks.

Serious defects should be corrected by a qualified repairman.

PROTECTIVE GEAR

Protective gear, such as closed, slip-resistant shoes, helmets, and specially de-

signed padding, may not fully protect skateboarders from fractures, but its use is recommended as such gear that can reduce the number and severity of injuries.

Padded jackets and shorts are available, as well as padding for hips, knees, elbows, wrist braces and special skateboarding gloves. All of this protective gear will help absorb the impact of a fall. With protective gear, it is important to look for comfort, design, and function. The gear should not interfere with the skater's movement, vision, or hearing.

The protective gear currently on the market is not subject to Federal performance standards, and, therefore, careful selection is necessary. In a helmet, for example, look for proper fit and a chin strap; make sure the helmet does not block the rider's vision and hearing. Body padding should fit comfortably. If padding is too tight, it could restrict circulation and reduce the skater's ability to move freely. Loose-fitting padding, on the other hand, could slip off or slide out of position.

TIPS FOR USING A SKATEBOARD

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers the following suggestions for safe skateboarding:

- Never ride in the street.
- Don't take chances:
 - ◆ Complicated tricks require careful practice and a specially designed area
 - ◆ Only one person per skateboard
 - ◆ Never hitch a ride from a car, bus, truck, bicycle, etc.
- *Learning how to fall in case of an accident may help reduce your chances of being seriously injured.*

- ◆ If you are losing your balance, crouch down on the skateboard so that you will not have so far to fall.
- ◆ In a fall, try to land on the fleshy parts of your body.
- ◆ If you fall, try to roll rather than absorb the force with your arms.
- ◆ Even though it may be difficult, during a fall try to *relax* your body, rather than stiffen.



To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury and for information on CPSC's fax-on-demand service, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270. To order a press release through fax-on-demand, call 301-504-0051 from the handset of your fax machine and enter the release number. Consumers can obtain releases and recall information via Internet gopher services at cpsc.gov or report product hazards to info@cpsc.gov.

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