



Manitoba Coalition for Active & Safe Kids

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A. **Skateboard Safety- Overview**

Skateboard Safety is a convenient orientation guide designed for families or communities to access some of the many valuable resources available for equipment safety and injury prevention strategies for children who participate in skateboarding. Some of the prevention strategies also apply to in-line skating.

This is one of six different orientation modules designed by the Manitoba Coalition for Active and Safe Kids (MCASK). The overall aim of this program is to increase use of protective equipment among children and youth such as wrist guards and helmets, and to raise awareness about preventing injury during popular recreational activities such as cycling, wheeled sports, swimming and skating. This project is funded in part by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

For more information visit www.reconnections.com

B. PARTICIPATION STATISTICS & INJURY RATES

Recreation Related Injuries

The leading causes of sports-related emergency department visits are hockey, cycling, and skateboarding in boys, and soccer, cycling and playground injuries in girls.¹

Manitoba data suggest that half of these injuries are associated with informal recreational activities, rather than organized sporting competitions or practices.²

Who Participates in Skateboarding and Other Wheeled Activities?

An Alberta study found that 21% of youth between the ages of 12 to 15 years participate in skateboarding.³

Over half of children and youth aged 5 to 17 years participate in in-line skating.⁴

Skateboarding and In-line Skating Injuries

Together, skateboarding, roller skating and in-line skating are the leading cause of sports and recreational injury visits to BC emergency departments for youths aged 10 to 14 years, and the third leading cause visits for children aged 5 to 9 years and youths aged 15 to 19 years.¹

Consistent with gender differences in participation rates,³ the majority of skateboarding emergency department visits occur among males; whereas, the majority of roller skating and in-line skating visits occur among females.¹

The most common injuries sustained during these activities are fractures and sprains/strains to the upper limb due to falling.¹

Equipment Use

The International In-line Skating Association recommends that skaters always wear full protective gear including helmet, wrist guards, knee and elbow pads.⁵

American studies have found that children and youth participating in skateboarding, in-line skating and scooter riding wore less protective equipment than recommended⁶ and helmets were only worn in 12% (scooter riding) to 18% (in line skating) of participants.⁷

C. EVIDENCE BASED STRATEGIES FOR INJURY PREVENTION

There is biomechanical evidence to suggest that wrist guards decrease forces at the wrist and elbow and may prevent injuries associated with falls.⁸ Note that wrist guards are recommended for skateboarding and inline skating but should not be used when riding scooters and bikes, as the wrist guard can interfere with steering and handlebar control.

Suggested strategies to improve protective equipment use and decrease risk of injury are education, parent reinforcement, protective equipment policies and the provision of free helmets.^{6 7}

It has also been suggested that skate park design may be effective in reducing injury rates.⁹

The main strategies for **families** to improve skateboard and inline skating are:

- ✓ **Wear a helmet for every ride.**
- ✓ **Use wrist guards.**
- ✓ **Supervise young children.**
- ✓ **Choose a safe place to ride.**
- ✓ **Learn how to skate safely.**

The main strategies for **communities** to encourage skateboard safety and effective equipment use are:

- ✓ **Provide safe and well maintained skate parks.**
- ✓ **Supervised skate parks are preferred.**
- ✓ **Require use of helmets and wrist guards.**
- ✓ **Offer courses to learn the basics of skateboarding.**
- ✓ **Supervise young, inexperienced riders.**
- ✓ **Offer an equipment loan program to provide access to safety gear.**
- ✓ **Promote opportunities for families to purchase low-cost equipment.**

For more information on best practices for skateboarding safety, follow the link:
<http://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/item/safe-skateboarding>

D. INCENTIVES

Communities may benefit from participating in the MCASK initiative by:

- ✓ being involved in a Provincial and National commitment to active and safe play,
- ✓ creating local active and safe campaigns,
- ✓ leveraging local support through public and private partnerships,

- ✓ learning how to observe safe play behaviour and measure the impact of community injury prevention strategies, and
- ✓ learning the importance of recreation safety and the prevention of unnecessary injuries.

E. AVAILABLE RESOURCES & PROGRAMS

MCASK has provided a sample list of resources and programs below for further reading. There are many other sources available on the internet.

1. Active and Safe Kids Manitoba Resources www.reconnections.com

Resources identified and developed by a coalition of non-profit organizations with a shared objective of promoting injury prevention during recreational play and informal sport activities.

SKATEBOARD SAFETY– Family Guide: Tips and information on effective equipment use and skateboarding safety.

SKATEBOARD SAFETY– Community Guide: Informative participation and injury statistics, key safety messages, and program ideas for your community to encourage safety equipment use.

2. Parachute Canada www.parachutecanada.org

A national charitable organization dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives

For Parachute Canada’s top tips to reduce your risk of sustaining an injury while skateboarding.

3. International Inline Skating Association www.iisa.org

The International Inline Skating Association (IISA) was founded in 1991 by a group of manufacturers, retailers and skaters who chose to be proactive about enhancing the future of the sport of inline skating.

The International Inline Skating Association has an extensive list of resources about inline skating, gear, safety, and research.

4. American Academy of Pediatrics <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/>

PEDIATRICS is the official peer-reviewed journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Contributions pertinent to pediatrics are also included from related fields such as nutrition, public health, child health services, human genetics, education, sociology and

nursing.

Read the American Academy of Pediatrics skateboard and scooter injuries policy statement at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/109/3/542.full>

5. American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons www.orthoinfo.aaos.org

Founded by the Academy Board of Directors in 1997, the Association engages in health policy and advocacy activities on behalf of musculoskeletal patients and the profession of orthopaedic surgery.

For great tips on preventing skateboarding injuries, follow this link.

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=a00273>

F. Potential Funding Sources

You may contact your local government, community foundations, service clubs, businesses or recreation district to learn more about potential funding available for skateboarding or in-line skating safety.

G. Communication Strategies and Tools

Good communication is critical for the success of any project or community initiative. To be effective, key messages and how those messages are delivered need to be carefully targeted to the audience you would like to reach. Consider whether you are trying to change behaviour of the participant, or whether you are trying to influence the services and programs offered within your community.

The following key safety messages are to encourage protective equipment use and safe skateboarding and inline skating (see the Family Action Guide for more details):

- ✓ **Wear a helmet every time you skateboard or inline skate**
- ✓ **Use wrist guards**
- ✓ **Supervise young children**
- ✓ **Choose a safe place to skate**
- ✓ **Learn how to skate safely**

H. Evaluation Methods

Evaluation is important to help you determine the effectiveness of your safety

campaign. If you are promoting the use of protective equipment (such as helmets or wrist guards) a simple way to evaluate this is to count the number of people using the equipment or adhering to the behaviour before and after you implement the campaign.

The following evaluation materials are available at www.reconnections.com

- Caught You Using Your Skateboard Helmet – Short Form

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