



USE OF HELMETS

Skate Canada strongly recommends the use of helmets for beginners of all ages. In general, a beginner would be classified as anyone who lacks good control/balance when skating forward, backward and has difficulty stopping, as well as maneuvering around obstacles on the ice. These types of skaters are at a higher risk of being unable to control a fall, regardless of their age.

Please see the following article entitled *Protecting Our Children* originally posted in *Keeping in Touch*, which was distributed to all member coaches and clubs across Canada. The article urges all Skate Canada clubs to implement a policy that requires CanSkate participants to wear a **CSA approved hockey helmet**.

There are several ways to avoid head injury, in addition to wearing a helmet. The following are some basic guidelines:

- use quality equipment - skates with good support, proper fit, laced correctly and sharpened regularly help the skater maintain control on the ice - less chance of falling
- dress appropriately - scarves, overly bulky snowsuits, or hair in the face may restrict movement, vision
- warm up and cool down appropriately - to avoid muscle strain and stress on the joints
- use skill progressions to prepare for more difficult moves; coach must ensure that beginners are taught proper way to fall and get up
- coaches must have first aid certification
- games and practice areas must be well-supervised; during skill circuits and drills, skaters should be travelling in one direction to avoid collisions
- use pylons to mark any holes or cracks on the ice
- teaching aids must be safe and appropriate for the level of skater
- ensure sufficient space between skaters while executing skills
- the number of skaters on the ice should be appropriate to the size and skill level of the skaters, the size of the ice surface and the nature of the activity
- know on-ice safety rules :
 - get up quickly after falling down
 - look in the direction of travel when skating backwards
 - no pushing, playing tag or other horse play
 - no gum, candy on the ice
 - keep rink doors closed during sessions
 - no large barrettes, baubles in the hair, large clunky earrings or jewelry
 - stops should be done a safe distance from the boards
 - keep first aid kit accessible