

## CTC ~ The national cyclists' organisation OFF ROAD HELMET POLICY



CTC the national cyclists' organisation has a helmet policy for on road cycling that is clear and available to the public on the website.

For off-road cycling however we consider the issues surrounding helmet use are different. Although we thoroughly recommend wearing a cycle helmet we believe that it must be down to the individual's choice. CTC recognises the following differences in helmet wearing to on-road cycling:-

1. Falls are an integral part of off-road cycling activities.
2. The low speed of the accidents incurred whilst off-road cycling may actually be within the design limitation of helmets.
3. All research around the topic of helmet use has so far only been amongst on road cycling. There is no research at all on helmets and off-road cycling.

Further advice about helmets should include a clear understanding of what the helmet is designed to accomplish. In particular no instructor or leader should ever suggest that a helmet on it's own, improves safety. If appropriate words are needed then use "can reduce injury in the event of an accident".

An emphasis on the client maintaining off road skills and judgement to reduce the risks of an accident emphasises the purpose of the training session. If helmets are worn, then they must meet BS EN 1078: 1997 European Standard. It sets out minimum requirements for helmets; you should ensure that it meets this or the more demanding Snell standard. The helmet must be a good fit and be adjusted correctly. Size fitting and adjustment can be complex issues. It is very important for helmets to be fitted properly, in fact a helmet that is not fitted properly can cause more problems than it can effectively protect against.

*The protection afforded by a helmet is very much dependent on achieving a good fit. Heads are different, especially in the position of the chin relative to the skull and a helmet that is suitable for one person may be totally unsatisfactory for someone else. Always buy a helmet from a reputable shop offering good customer service based on product knowledge and a range of choices. Check for a snug and comfortable fit around your head after making any internal adjustments. Alter the straps so that there no slack in any of them (but the chin straps should not be uncomfortably tight). Then try and slide the helmet off, it is doesn't stay firmly in place, it is unsuitable for you.*

*Keeping the straps tight in use is extremely important. Not only can loose straps significantly reduce the protection given by allowing the helmet to move on the head but this in itself can also lead to serious neck injury. Research suggests that increased neck injury due to badly fitted helmets can cancel out any reduction in other types of head injury ... if in doubt please ask your instructor for help.*

*It is a particularly serious mistake to think that wearing a helmet is at all a substitute for learning to cycle properly. The protection offered by a helmet will be negated if you compensate by riding less carefully ... Ensure that a helmet will not interfere with your head movement, vision, hearing or wearing protective or prescription glasses/sunglasses. Check also for general comfort, especially adequate ventilation. Inadequate air ventilation may impair your concentration. Many cyclists who normally wear a helmet take it off when climbing hills in hot weather which reduces overheating, maintaining your attention.*

*Helmets have a limited effective life, even with careful use damage is not always visible. It is recommended that it be replaced at least every 3 years or sooner if it is subjected to a hard drop or impact inside or out.*

I have read and understood the CTC's off road helmet policy. I agree that not wearing a helmet is entirely my own decision and indemnify the CTC as in no way liability can rest with the CTC the national cyclists' organisation.

SIGNED ..... GUARDIAN (if under 16) .....

NAME ..... GUARDIAN'S NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

GUARDIAN'S ADDRESS (if appropriate) .....