

skateboards, and roller and in-line skates

How many skateboard, and roller and in-line skate accidents happen each year?

Nationally, there were 26,000 skateboard injuries, 5,000 roller skating injuries and 9,000 in-line skating injuries in 2002, the latest year for which data are available.

Buying and owning skateboards, roller skates or in-line skates – general tips

- Think safety as well as fun. When buying a skateboard, roller skates or in-line skates, buy the safety equipment along with the item itself
- Choose a skateboard with a good grip tape
- Choose roller or in-line skates that are the right size, durable and provide proper ankle support
- Take care of your equipment and check it for damage, as well as being safer and less likely to injure you or someone else, it will also last longer

Safety equipment you need

- A helmet will protect against serious and life-threatening head injuries – fasten it tightly so that it does not come off in an accident
- Wrist guards reduce the risk of breaking your wrist
- Knee and elbow pads will prevent painful cuts and abrasions

Using skateboards – special tips

- Wear shoes that are durable and sturdy, not sandals, high heels or shoes with long laces that could get caught
- Only one person should use a skateboard at a time
- Jump off before any chance of a fall

Using in-line skates – special tips

- Always control speed and turns, and learn how to stop quickly
- Keep your balance by bending your knees so that you can adjust your stance and stay in control
- If skating in a group – skate single file, do not swing arms and legs wildly and warn others that you are passing in a friendly manner

Using skateboards or in-line skates – general tips

- Choose a safe place to ride – away from traffic and pedestrians, and on smooth paved surfaces - preferably in a park, playground or designated area. Always keep a look out for other people
- Keep within your ability – don't push yourself too far too fast
- Avoid steep slopes and hills unless you are really skilled, you may not be able to stop safely.
- Slow down when approaching corners
- If you find yourself losing your balance or going too fast, touch your kneepads with your fingertips – it will help you regain your posture
- Learning how to fall in case of an accident may help reduce your chances of being seriously hurt
- Never hold on to moving vehicles
- Avoid skateboarding or skating in the rain or in icy conditions
- Do not skate after dark – you may not be able to see potholes and obstructions easily
- Sign up for some lessons from an expert – it will reduce your chance of being injured and will make it more fun. A good coach can teach you how to carry out tricks and improve skills such as braking, balance and control
- Read 'Arrive Alive' – The Highway Code for Young Road Users

Further information

The statistics used in this factsheet are drawn from a number of sources. The government's Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System that has collected information throughout the UK since 1978 was closed down in May 2003. Enquiries should now be directed to Information Centre, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, Edgbaston Park, 353 Bristol Road, Birmingham B5 7ST, email: infocentre@rospa.com, fax: 0121 248 2001, tel: 0121 248 2066.

Factsheets on other child injury issues above can be found on the Child Accident Prevention Trust website www.capt.org.uk. Additional factsheets can also be posted on receipt of a stamped address envelope and a list of the subjects you require.

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