



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING  
February 5, 1998  
4330 East West Highway  
Bethesda, Maryland

The February 5, 1998, meeting of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission was convened in open session by Chairman Ann Brown. Commissioner Mary Sheila Gall and Commissioner Thomas H. Moore were present.

Agenda Item: Final Safety Standard for Bicycle Helmets

The Commission considered a draft final safety standard that would require, pursuant to the Children's Bicycle Helmet Safety Act of 1994, all bicycle helmets to meet impact-attenuation and other requirements, including requirements specifically applicable to children's helmets and to prevent helmets from coming off during an incident. At the Commission meeting of January 21, 1998, the Commission was briefed by staff on the final rule recommended by staff. (Ref: Staff briefing package dated December 24, 1997.) The Commission also received supplemental material from the staff, dated January 30, 1998, regarding comments received January 20, 1998, from Jim Sundahl, Senior Engineer, Bell Sports, on testing helmets for children ages 1-5 years.

On motion of Chairman Brown, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the final safety standard on bicycle helmets as presented in the Federal Register notice in the December 24, 1997, briefing package, with an amendment to Section 1203.34, Product Certification and Labeling by Manufacturers (including importers), to insert "U.S." before "CPSC" in each instance where the term is used in the certification label; and the Office of the General Counsel is authorized to make all appropriate changes in the preamble and other areas of the text of the rule to reflect the Commission's decision.

Chairman Brown, Commissioner Gall, and Commissioner Moore filed separate statements on the issuance of a final safety standard for bicycle helmets, copies attached.

There being no further business on the agenda, Chairman Brown adjourned the meeting.

For the Commission:

Sadye E. Dunn, Secretary

Attachments



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**Statement of  
Chairman Ann Brown  
Commission Vote on Bike Helmet Rule  
February 5, 1998**

Before I read my formal statement I would like to introduce two very important people -- Gail and Joseph Friedmann -- who have come from Almont, Michigan to be here for the Commission's vote. Their 11-year old daughter, Jaci, died on June 7, 1995 when her bicycle was struck by a school bus at an intersection near her home.

You see, Jaci, was like a lot of girls her age. She hopped on her bike without grabbing her helmet.

So today, I want to dedicate my vote in honor of Jaci -- and other children who have been killed, so their deaths will not have been in vain.

I also want to commend Gail and Joseph for their initiative in working with the police in establishing bike safety rodeos in their hometown of Almont and in other places. Their efforts are making a difference.

In fact, Gail appeared with me on Good Morning America this morning to help us get our safety message out to the American people.

Every time the Commission does a project so important, I come back to the very mission of this agency: to protect consumers against death and injury from consumer products. I voted for a final Federal safety standard for bicycle helmets because I believe a new and improved safety standard helps accomplish this mission.

Last year, over 900 people were killed on bicycles, and more than a half million people were treated in hospital emergency rooms. Sixty percent of all bicycle-related deaths involve head injuries. Yet, research shows that helmets can reduce the risk of these deaths and injuries by as much as 85 percent.

This is the first ever Federal mandated bike helmet safety standard. It will reassure consumers that every bike helmet for sale in every store will provide the same excellent head protection for bicyclists. Just as important, the new standard will reduce the confusion of consumers confronted by an alphabet soup of standards and standards labeling.

Because of this new standard, families will know that the helmets they buy meet stringent Federal requirements aimed at preventing head injuries.

The new standard includes two important new provisions that will help provide greater protection for bicyclists -- especially children: additional head coverage for children up to age five to protect the child's brain and skull; and chin strap stability to prevent the helmet from coming off in a crash.

Assuring consumers of a superior helmet is only half the battle. Research shows that only 18 percent of all bicycle riders in the U.S. wear bike helmets all or most of the time. CPSC has already taken steps to urge all bicyclists to wear helmets, but much more must be done.

There is no safety rule more important than making sure you wear a helmet every time you ride a bike. It is the one important action you can take to protect yourself in a crash. Most important, children should wear a helmet every time they go for a ride -- even in the neighborhood.

Today's unanimous vote is a victory for consumers and a testament to common-sense government.



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**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MARY SHEILA GALL  
ON APPROVAL OF MANDATORY BICYCLE HELMET STANDARDS**

Bicycle helmets save the lives of and prevent serious head injuries to the riders who wear them. The voluntary bicycle helmet standards developed by the industry have done a good job protecting riders for many years. Today's action is necessary to carry out the statutory mandate to promulgate mandatory standards for bicycle helmets.

The work of the Commission staff, industry and other interested parties has led to a unified helmet standard, providing better protection. Parents, and adults in general, must set an example to children by wearing helmets, and by insisting that children not ride without helmets. Only then will we see a reduction in the number of head injuries and deaths from bicycle riding.



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**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER THOMAS H. MOORE  
FINAL RULE: SAFETY STANDARD FOR BICYCLE HELMETS**

Today, along with my colleagues, I have voted to issue a new federal mandatory standard for bicycle helmets. I am enthusiastic about this new standard because, among other benefits, it will encourage uniformity and simplicity in the marketplace for both consumers and industry. Of greater importance is our response, at least in part, to data showing that very young bike riders incur a higher proportion of head injuries: the new standard will require that future bicycle helmets provide additional head protection for children under the age of five years.

Our staff should be congratulated for the strong and consistent effort reflected throughout the process that has resulted in this final rule. That process also included serious input from a wide range of outside interest groups consisting of manufacturers, consumers groups, testing and research laboratories, and medical care professionals. Working together with our staff, this collection of interested and knowledgeable parties provided an invaluable substantive input. The result is this comprehensive and thoroughly reviewed single-standard helmet safety approach to reducing a bicycle rider's risk of injury.

We have taken an important step today toward a potential for further reducing the risk of head injury to bicyclists, especially young cyclists. However this step, of itself, is not likely to lead to the substantial reduction in injuries that we seek. Research shows that only about 18 percent of all bicyclists wear a helmet all or most of the time. There must be a wider use of bicycle helmets!

All of us involved in this process, from the Congress, to the States, to grassroots consumer interest groups, must now commit ourselves to encouraging an increased use of approved bicycle helmets. No one can dispute that the best designed helmet is of little utility unless it finds its way onto the heads of more bicyclists. That is the end we must all now pursue.