

Comment from Anonymous

Posted by the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** on Apr 24, 2023

This comment responds to the Washington Area Bicyclist Association's request to have NHTSA correct statements about the effectiveness of helmet safety.

First, I have to point out that the issue of neck injuries and helmets is unclear to me as a reader. The WABA asserts that helmets increase the risk of neck injuries, which skews the data for head injuries. Is this reference to "neck injuries" in the context of bicycle accidents/crashes or mere undisturbed correct usage of bicycle helmets? I think this point begs for clarification before diving into argument, as the WABA request does.

Second, I am not sure that NHTSA's statements realistically have an impact on helmet usage amongst cyclists. As someone who rarely rides a bicycle, perhaps I am uninformed. But as a matter of common sense, it seems unlikely to me that cyclists hop on the internet to check NHTSA data before deciding whether or not they should throw on a helmet. However, I do understand the concern of statistical error if the consequence is proposed legislation to mandate helmet usage. In that scenario, I can agree with the WABA's point that accurate data is crucial. Legislation that (arguably) restricts the freedom of the average "cycling" American should have a foundation in clear and accurate data. Any legislation passed in light of "trumped-up" data is problematic for several reasons in any category.