

## **Bicycle Helmets - Not Required in Colorado, but a Good Idea**

Bicycle accidents account for many victims each year here in Colorado. As more and more Coloradans recognize the benefits of living an active life and performing physical activities regularly, they embrace cycling as a method of transportation which is clean, healthy, accessible and fun. Unfortunately, drivers have more distractions than ever from GPS navigation to smart phones and often consider the “3 feet to pass” rule a mere suggestion rather than the law.

One of the most significant sources of injuries in bicycle accidents is head and brain trauma. Statistics are terrifying: from 1994 to 2000, 1,131 Colorado residents were hospitalized or died from a bicycle-related traumatic brain injury. Many victims seek a personal injury claim and with the assistance of a bicycle accident lawyer, they receive compensation for their medical expenses and other damages.

In many cases of bicycle accidents, the cyclist was not wearing a helmet. In some states, laws require the use of helmets when riding a bicycle. In the state of Colorado, helmets are not required, but are still a good idea.

This lack of regulation regarding helmets is quite controversial among Coloradans. Some defend this stance, while others tout the statistics showing that wearing a helmet reduces the risk of suffering head and brain trauma. Many bicycle lawyers have noticed that damages are usually dramatically higher in bike accidents where the victims were not wearing a helmet. These cases often result in serious injuries and sometimes death. Many studies have established that wearing a helmet while riding significantly reduces the amount of injuries suffered to the brain. Helmets reduce trauma to the skull and brain by absorbing the force of the impact.

Detractors of mandatory helmet laws claim that these requirements will lead to decreased participation in cycling. They also claim that helmets do little to prevent serious injuries to the inner side of the brain; scientific studies have shown the opposite. Opponents have also claimed that helmet laws burden the cyclist to mitigate risks created by drivers. As a bicycle lawyer in Denver, I’ve seen cases where the defense attempted to portray the victim as “reckless” because he was not wearing a helmet and that his injuries would have been less severe had he been wearing one. Keep in mind that not wearing a helmet at the time of an accident does not disqualify you from a personal injury claim. Regardless of your side on this debate, wearing a helmet on the bicycle is always a good idea. When properly worn, they provide cyclists with a level of protection that is worth the cost of the helmet. The most expensive cycling helmet on the market is still many orders of magnitude less costly than a CAT scan.