

NATIONAL
SKI AREAS
ASSOCIATION



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Helmet Usage and Safety Fact Sheet

LAKEWOOD, Colo., September 15, 2016—Helmet usage by skiers and snowboarders at U.S. ski areas once again increased during the 2015-16 ski season, according to a recent in-depth study completed by the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA). Overall, 80 percent of skiers and snowboarders wore helmets during the most recent ski season, setting yet another record for helmet usage at ski areas across the United States. These new statistics reflect another increase in overall usage from last season, when 78 percent of skiers and snowboarders wore helmets (see chart 1).

For the 14th consecutive year—since NSAA began its helmet usage research starting in the 2002-03 season—ski helmet usage has increased every season, from 25 percent of skiers and riders wearing helmets in 2002, to 80 percent of skiers and riders wearing helmets last season.

“Ski areas have done an incredible job of encouraging helmet use, and it shows in the dramatic growth we have seen in the span since NSAA began tracking helmet usage,” said Michael Berry, NSAA president. “The resorts, parents, local medical groups—even the tremendous improvements by helmet manufacturers to enhance helmet design and comfort—all these factors have helped grow helmet usage. When you think how much we have achieved organically as an industry, without government mandates requiring helmets, it’s quite impressive.” In fact, New Jersey (which has two ski areas) is the only state that mandates ski helmets, requiring those under the age of 18 to wear a helmet while skiing or snowboarding.

Even more important, the percentage of minors wearing helmets also continues to set new records. According to the NSAA helmet study, 89 percent of skiers and snowboarders aged 17 and under wore helmets during the 2015-16 season (see chart 2). Indeed, helmet use among minors has seen sizeable gains since NSAA began studying the issue—since the 2002/03 season, helmet use among minors has jumped dramatically, from 32 percent to 89 percent this past season. Moreover, 93 percent of children aged 9 and under wore helmets last season, according to the NSAA study. The NSAA study breaks down helmet usage by 11 different age groups. The age group least likely to wear helmets

includes skiers and riders between 18 and 24 years old, with 73 percent of them wearing helmets last season. However, this represents dramatic growth from the 2002-03 season, when only 18 percent of that age group wore helmets.

In some regions, the overall percentage of those wearing helmets is even higher than the national average. In the Northeast region (CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, and VT), 86 percent of all skiers and riders wore helmets, while in the Rocky Mountain region (CO, ID, MT, NM, UT, and WY), 85 percent were helmeted last season.

“As an industry, we are proud of our commitment to safety, and the efforts to promote helmet use by both ski areas and parents alike should be applauded,” Michael Berry stated. “At the same time, though, we want to stress that skiing and riding safely and responsibly—and not simply donning one piece of equipment—is the best way to prevent incidents and injuries out on the mountain.”

Increased helmet usage has proven to reduce all head injuries, especially potentially serious head injuries (PSHI). According to a recent scientific paper, researchers studied 17 seasons of ski helmet usage data from 1995 through 2012, and concluded that as helmet usage increased over that span, PSHIs dropped from 4.2 percent to 3 percent of all ski injuries over the course of the study. (See “Role of Helmets in Mitigation of Head Injuries,” Dr. Jasper Shealy, Dr. Robert Johnson, Carl Ettlinger, Dr. Irving Scher, *Skiing Trauma and Safety: 20th Volume, STP 1582, 2015*). As the study concluded, while helmet usage increased in the last 10 years, there was a dramatic improvement in the decline of potentially serious head injuries, particularly in concussions. According to the study’s authors, three quarters of all PSHI from skiing or snowboarding are mild concussions, and 90 percent of PSHIs are typically treated and released from hospitals or clinics within four hours. The study concluded that ski and snowboard helmets are extremely effective at preventing skull fractures, and have virtually eliminated scalp lacerations. To contact the lead researcher of this study, contact Dr. Jasper Shealy with the Rochester Institute of Technology, at jeseie@rit.edu, or by phone at (585) 739-4250.

The NSAA helmet study is conducted annually as part of a broader industry demographic analysis. To obtain statistically valid data, NSAA and its research partner, RRC Associates, conducted more than 46,000 in-person interviews at ski areas across the United States. People interviewed were *not* asked if they wore helmets. Rather, to avoid concerns over people feeling pressured to give perceived “acceptable” or politically correct responses, our researchers simply noted during the interviews at ski areas if the individuals were using helmets.

Parents and educators can learn more about helmet safety by visiting www.lidsonkids.org. To request free helmet safety posters from NSAA (below), contact NSAA at 303-987-1111, or email nsaa@nsaa.org.

THE NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION, LOCATED IN LAKEWOOD, COLO., IS A TRADE ASSOCIATION FORMED IN 1962 FOR SKI AREA OWNERS AND OPERATORS NATIONWIDE.

Chart 1
OVERALL SKI HELMET USE
2006/07 - 2015/16

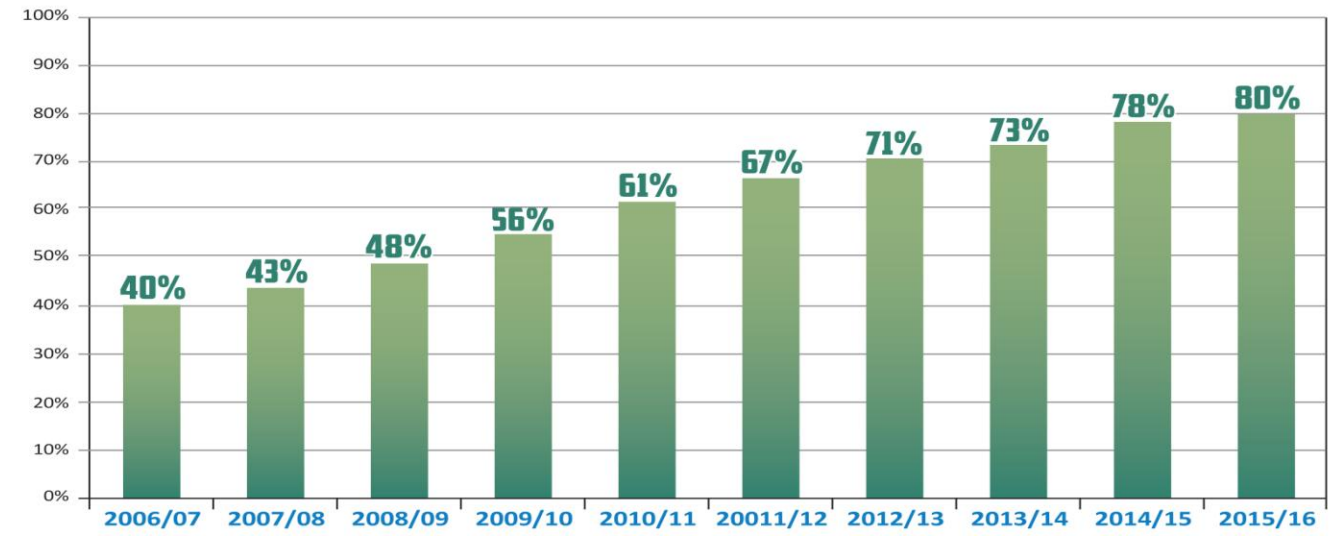
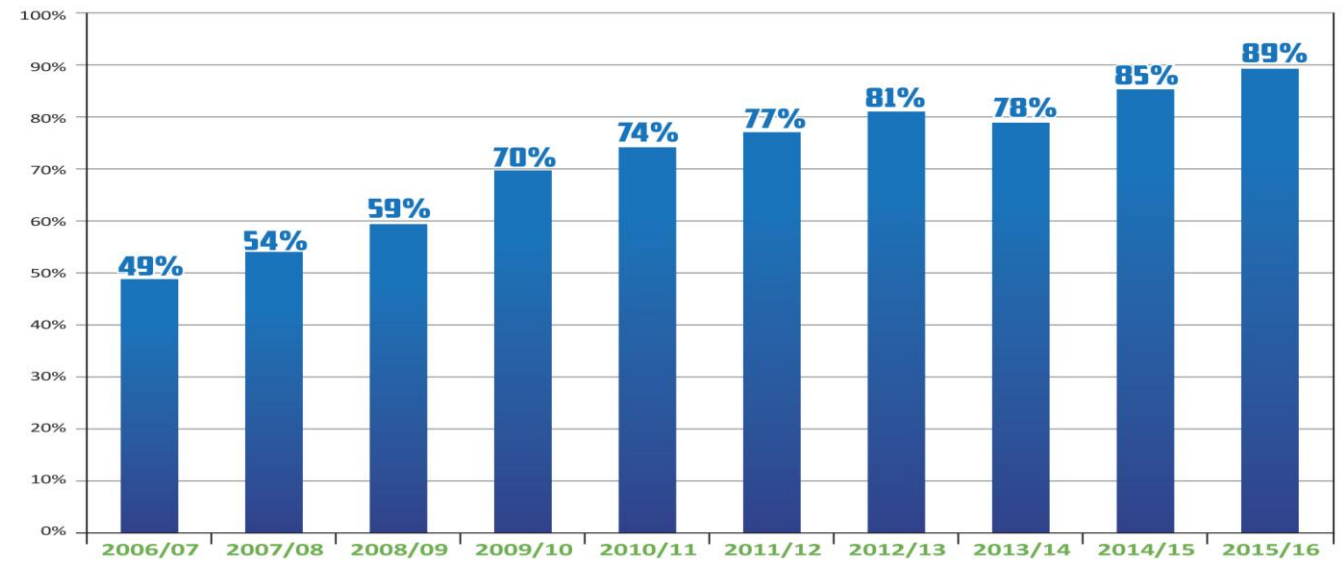


Chart 2
HELMET USE: AGE 17 AND UNDER
2006/07 - 2015/16



Posters

A HELMET IT'S A SMART IDEA

**Skiing or boarding responsibly
is your first priority.
Helmets are a second line of defense!
Be able to stop or avoid other people or objects
and follow "Your Responsibility Code."**

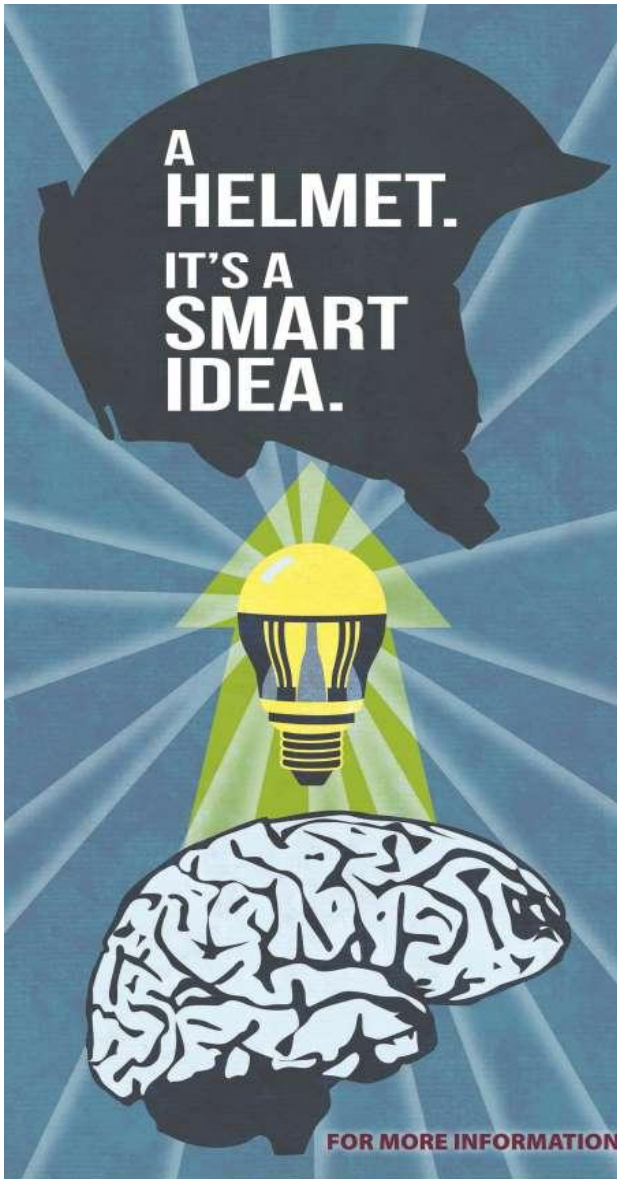
**Helmets can reduce head injuries by
30-50%, and may be the difference between a
major and minor injury.**

**Helmets do have limitations.
Helmets provide the most protection at slower
speeds—but most of us ski and snowboard faster.
Check your speed!**

**Helmets should not give you a false
sense of security and do not allow you to
take more risks. Wear a helmet, but more
importantly, ski or snowboard as if you are
not wearing one!**

**For kids, parents should ensure that the
helmet is properly fitted and the chin
strap fastened.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO WWW.LIDSONKIDS.ORG



Ski or ride
RESPONSIBLY -
 it's **PRIORITY NUMBER 1.**
 Helmets are a
 second line of defense!

Helmets can
REDUCE HEAD INJURIES
 by **30-50%.**

Wearing a helmet is
NOT A REASON
to take more risks.
 Ride as if you are not wearing one!

Helmets provide the
MOST PROTECTION
 at **SLOWER SPEEDS.**
Check your speed!

Helmets only work
 when **PROPERLY**
FITTED
 and the **CHIN STRAP**
FASTENED.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO WWW.LIDSONKIDS.ORG



I'M GONNA TRY A BLACK RUN THIS TIME.

ONE DAY I'M GONNA LAND THAT JUMP

WHEN I GROW UP I'M GOING TO WIN A GOLD MEDAL.

NEXT TIME I'M GOING DOWN THAT TRAIL WITHOUT STOPPING.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SHOW MY FRIENDS HOW WELL I SKI.

PROTECT YOUR DREAMS. WEAR A HELMET.

LIDS ON KIDS.ORG

