



Back to School Bike Safety

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As summer nears an end and students prepare to start a new school year, safety is a significant concern for public safety partners throughout Orange County. Many students will be riding bikes to and from school. A properly fitted helmet should be as much a priority as any school supplies. In 2017, nearly 800 bicyclists were killed across the country in crashes with motor vehicles, where 2/3rds of the fatalities were the result of head injuries.

Sadly, local statistics paint a worrisome picture for young bicyclists. In 2018, Florida Highway Patrol worked 76 crashes involving children ages 16 and under, in Orange County alone. That was a 21% increase from 2017. In 2019, FHP has already worked 20 bicycle crashes for this same age group in Orange County.

“We want to stress bike safety and remind parents and kids that it is Florida law that children under the age of 16 are required to wear a helmet while operating a bicycle,” said Amanda Day, executive director of Bike/Walk Central Florida.

The Cleveland Clinic has noted that wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of a head injury to bicyclists by as much as 85%. However, according to Safe Kids Worldwide, 47% of parents surveyed do not believe helmets are necessary, if they believe their child is an experienced rider or riding in a safe area. Children, and motorists, are unpredictable; prevention is always best where safety is concerned.

The Orange County Community Traffic Safety Team (which is comprised of police, fire rescue, traffic engineering, crossing guards and traffic safety experts) will be pushing safety messages relating to back to school traffic in coming weeks. A priority, however, is encouraging families to take every measure to protect their child with appropriate personal safety equipment, like a properly fitted bike helmet for every student riding a bike. There will be a number of back to school outreach events offering free helmets and/or helmet fittings. For additional information, please contact Bike Walk Central Florida (<https://bikewalkcentralflorida.org/>)