

0575 OPERATION HEADWAY: A MULTIFACETED BIKE HELMET PROMOTION PROGRAM

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Operation Headway is a multi-partner program that combines enforcement of bike helmet legislation, education, rewards for wearing and economic penalty for non-wearing, that takes place in two Canadian provinces. The program also offers helmets for those who can't afford them. Partners include police, government (Health/Health Promotion, Emergency Services and Transportation) and non-government organisations – particularly injury prevention, brain injury and cycling organisations. The program has demonstrated positive results regarding increased helmet wearing and increased knowledge and awareness. The program is now being considered for national distribution by ThinkFirst Canada, one of the partners.

Program goal To reduce bike related head injuries by increasing bike helmet use among all age groups.

Objectives

- ▶ Increase awareness of provincial bike helmet legislation
- ▶ Increase compliance with helmet legislation
- ▶ Increase awareness of bike-related head injuries

Strategies

- ▶ Reward people wearing helmets when cycling
- ▶ Ticket those not wearing helmets when cycling
- ▶ Offer a 'diversion program': instead of paying the fine or going to court, offenders were offered a 2 h education program, delivered by health professionals and injury survivors, after which the ticket was voided.
- ▶ Conduct a media campaign

Results

- ▶ Increased wearing rates (pre and post intervention observations)
- ▶ Increased knowledge and commitment to wear a helmet (education session evaluation)
- ▶ Increased public awareness of the law and the effectiveness of helmets (media tracking)
- ▶ Increased positive relationship between police officers and the public, particularly children (anecdotal).