Rollerblades and roller skates

What are rollerblading and roller skating?
Rollerblading and roller skating are popular recreational activities in Australia. These activities are performed by a wide range of age groups. It is more common in urban areas where there are more footpaths and designated areas.

How may a child be injured?

Falls:
- Most injuries occur from falls. This is usually the result of losing control or an inability to stop effectively on the skates. Children may fall as a result of something in their riding path or an uneven surface.

Cuts, bruises, fractures and friction burns:
- Children may sustain cuts, bruises, fractures and/or friction burns as a result of a crash/fall.

Motor vehicle accidents
- Serious injuries and fatalities can also result when children skating on the road are hit by motor vehicles.

How common are these injuries?
About one-quarter (24%) of children aged 5-14 years in Australia reported roller skating or skate boarding.\(^1\)

In 2011-12, 1,632 people over the age of 14 were admitted to hospital in Australia as a result of roller sports.\(^2\) This includes in-line skating, rollerblading, roller skating, skateboarding and scooter riding. Most rollerblading and roller skating injuries occur in children aged 10-14, the hospital admission rate could be higher when including all children.\(^3\)

There are no recent published statistics available specific to children in NSW.

The upper limb and wrist are the most common areas of injury. Other areas include elbows, knees and the head.

 Contributing factors to injuries are:
- speed
- obstacles
- being unable to stop
- steep slopes
- hard landing surfaces
- failure to wear protective equipment, such as helmets, knee pads, elbow pads, mouth guards and wrist guards.

Is there a Law or Australian Standard for rollerblades and roller skates?
There are no Australian Standards for rollerblades and roller skates. Helmets are not a legal requirement for rollerblades and roller skates, but it is highly recommended to purchase a helmet that meets the Australian Standard for bicycle helmets (AS/NZS 2063:2008).\(^4\)

Road laws for skaters
The NSW Centre for Road Safety advises that skates are best used in designated areas, such as ramps and skate parks. Skates may be used on footpaths, regardless of the age of the user, unless there are signs that say they are not to be used in those areas.

Skaters should keep to the left when on footpaths and give way to others on the path.
Skates can only be used on minor roads (those with no lane lines marked) that have a maximum speed limit of 50km during daylight hours.\(^5\)

**Effective protective equipment for roller skating and rollerblading**


**Remember:**
- Equipment should be checked for wear and tear prior to use.
- If you are using second-hand skates, make sure that they are stable and in good condition.
- Skates should be fitted correctly so that they feel comfortable but firm on the feet of the child.
- Ensure learners have a safe area to practice.
- Supervision of learners is recommended until the child is skilled to skate safely.
- Children should not be allowed to skate down steep slopes, in traffic or poor light.
- School aged or younger children should not skate on the road.
- Helmets, wrist, elbow and knee guards should always be worn.
- Young children, learners and experienced skaters performing tricks are at highest risk of injury while skating.
- Use of designated skate parks and ramps is recommended.
- Avoid skating in wet or rainy conditions.
- When riding on the footpath, watch out for pedestrians, especially the elderly.
- Check for products that have been recalled (www.recalls.gov.au) prior to buying or borrowing an item for use with your child.

**Resources**