

Hövding Sverige AB

Submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Economics on Personal choice and community impacts

Bicycle helmet laws (term d)

Introduction

Cycling is a crucial mode of transport in the challenge of making transport sustainable: cycling is energy efficient, environmentally friendly and very suitable for short distances.

Unfortunately, urban cyclists are vulnerable road users and suffer an important part of all road fatalities. Every year, 35 thousand road injuries have to be treated in Australian hospitals and 16% of them are related with pedal cyclists, resulting in about 50 cyclists killed and more than 5 000 injured each year. Bearing this figures in mind, it is obvious that there is a clear lack of safety concerning this transportation sub-segment.

Traditional bicycle helmets

Despite the huge advances in safety experienced by other means of transport over the past decade, such as airbags for cars or resilient and connected helmets for motorbikes, cyclists safety have not evolved significantly for the past decades. Currently, the most effective and unique way to overcome injuries with cyclist accidents is the use of light and non-integral helmets. Despite they allow to reduce risk of head injury, it's scientifically proven that these helmets leave the users highly unprotected in case of serious accidents such as crashes at high speed or against other vehicles. In fact, mandatory impact tests for bicycle helmets performed in type tests, allow a shock absorbance of 250g or higher which is alarmingly high and can lead to severe (and even fatal) consequences in case of accident.

What is also relevant is that bike helmets are not widely accepted by urban cyclists. According to consumer surveys, urban cyclists do not wear bike helmets because they are uncomfortable, cumbersome to carry around, look hideous, and make sweat or ruin hair and personal style. Some of these arguments can be considered trivial but if vanity is keeping people from protecting themselves in traffic, it is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Hövding – Airbag for cyclists

At Hövding we propose a new helmet standard to overcome these limitations. Hövding represents a head protection unlike any other product on the market – an airbag for cyclists. Compared with traditional helmets, Hövding provides more than three times better shock absorption, can withstand multiple impacts in one accident, reduce rotational acceleration in oblique impacts, provides much larger protection area and stabilizes head and neck in an accident.



Hövding – Airbag for Cyclists



Hövding is easy to fold and bring in a bag, is discrete and works with a hat. Hövding has been on the European market since 2011. Please, see more on our video link below.

Regulatory

The Hövding – Airbag for Cyclists is CE-marked by compliance to the EU directive 89/686/EEC for Personal Protective Equipment (which the bicycle helmet standard EN 1078 is in compliance to). This is a legal requirement for CE certification and for marketing and supplying the Hövding as a bicycle helmet on the European market.

A test method, developed by SP Technical Research Institute of Sweden (Swedish notified body for bicycle helmet certification), has been used for CE certification of Hövding. The test method is based on relevant parts of EN 1078, with Hövding specific additions (accident detection, positioning time etc.).

Conclusion

The current Australian law prevents the use of the Hövding as a bicycle helmet in Australia. Helmet laws have to be extended to include CE certified bicycle helmets/bicycle head protection to enable Australian cyclists to take advantage of this new invention and state of the art head protection. By only allowing helmets certified to the EN 1078 standard does not make the Hövding a legal option. This may also prevent the use of other new inventions that offer even higher safety in the future. We therefore propose to only add requirement for CE marked bicycle helmet or bicycle head protection in Australian bicycle helmet laws.

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References:

<https://youtu.be/wbaZflgU>

http://www.folksam.se/polopoly_fs/1.139790!/Folksam%20bicycle%20helmet%20test%202015.pdf

