



Big danger in a small package

With Spring on the way, many children are ready to ride their bikes. Most parents are aware of how to keep their kids safe on a bike, but they may not be aware of a newer and more dangerous version of the bike: the pocket bike.

Pocket bikes are miniature motorcycles, but are also known as “pocket rockets,” “quick scooters” or “novelty scooters.” These vehicles are small (under 2 feet tall), have 2 wheels, have an engine under 50 cubic centimeters and can be either gas-powered or electric-powered. They are also relatively inexpensive and can reach maximum speeds of up to 40 mph.

These vehicles are unsafe for a variety of reasons. Because of their small size, the bikes are hard for motorists to see on the road. Because of their small engine size, they are not able to keep up with the flow of traffic. Importantly, some of these vehicles may lack the following essential safety features:

- ✿ Brake stop light or lights
- ✿ Brakes on both wheels
- ✿ Turn signal lights
- ✿ Rear view mirror or mirrors

These vehicles are dangerous for children AND adults. Many organizations have already recognized the danger. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is currently gathering data specifically on pocket bikes, but reports in 2003, there were 2,345 people treated in emergency rooms for injuries from motorized mini-bikes. The World Against Toys Causing Harm (WATCH) listed pocket bikes as one of their top 10 Worst Toys for 2004. The National Sheriffs Association, American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) all advise parents not to purchase pocket bikes for their children.



Finally, in Connecticut, several towns have recognized the danger this vehicle poses and have banned pocket bikes.

Information courtesy of National SAFE KIDS Campaign

COALITION CHANGE

As of January 2005, Valley Amity SAFE KIDS was terminated as a SAFE KIDS coalition by National SAFE KIDS. This area (Oxford, Beacon Falls, Bethany, Seymour, Ansonia, Derby, Woodbridge, Orange and Milford) will now be covered by Connecticut SAFE KIDS for all SAFE KIDS activities. However, Connecticut SAFE KIDS hopes to establish a chapter there soon. If you are interested in potentially joining the new chapter, please contact Karen Brock, Director of CT SAFE KIDS, at kbrock@ccmckids.org or 860-545-9977.

REPORTING ON CHILDHOOD INJURY

Bicycle injuries

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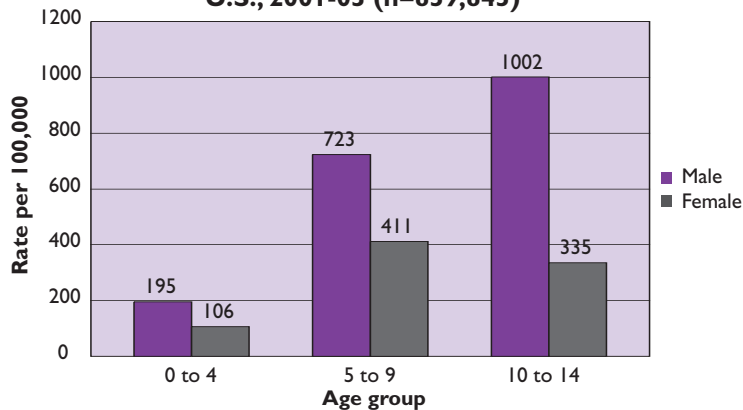


Bicycles are associated with more childhood injuries than any other consumer product except the automobile. Each year about 115 children under age 15 are killed in the U.S. and almost 287,000 require emergency department treatment.

For all age groups, boys have a higher non-fatal injury rates compared to girls and for boys 10-14 years old it is 3 times higher (see figure). Four out of five bicycle-related deaths result from head injuries. Other serious injuries include abdominal injuries from contact with handlebars, foot injuries from entanglement in bicycle spokes, and genital injuries from falling or sliding onto the top bar of the bicycle frame. Circumstances that contribute to bicyclist injuries include performing stunts or speeding, riding double, road hazards (e.g., loose gravel, road grates that catch wheels), loss of control on downhill slopes, product failure, poor bicycle maintenance, and bicyclist error or inexperience.

The importance of brain injury as a cause of death or permanent disability means that all cyclists should wear safety approved bicycle helmets. •

Nonfatal bicycle injury rates, < 15 years, U.S., 2001-03 (n=859,845)



Source: CDC, NCIPC, WISCARS, 2001-03

Interested in becoming a certified car seat technician?

Are you interested in keeping kids safe? Would you like to learn how to choose and install the proper car seat for a child and be able to provide that service to others? If so, then the four-day NHTSA Child Passenger Safety Technician Class may be for you!

There are several classes coming up this spring. For more information, please email the contact person listed with the class.

March 21st through 24th, Waterbury, contact Pat Zainc, Greater Waterbury Chapter of CT SAFE KIDS, at Belt0001@aol.com.

April 26th through 29th, New London, contact Esther Schuman, New London County SAFE KIDS at esther@community-partnerships.org.

May 16th through 20th, Enfield, contact Karen Brock, Connecticut SAFE KIDS, at kbrock@ccmckids.org

Play Safe! Be Safe! Training

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Bic's *Play Safe! Be Safe!* Fire Safety Training is coming to Connecticut! The training targets fire safety for preschoolers and we especially encourage firefighters, child care workers, nurses, EMTs and others to attend. The training will be held at Norwalk Community College on June 14, 2005 from 9:30am to 12:30pm. All participants will receive an instructor kit and a certificate of participation. Registration is first come, first serve. Please call (860) 545-9988 to RSVP. •

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or your local SAFE KIDS Coalition
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