

## NSAA Helmet Usage Fact Sheet

**September 13, 2009** - According to the 2008/09 NSAA National Demographic Study, helmet usage by skiers and snowboarders nationwide increased 12 percent over the previous season. As a result of industry safety and educational initiatives, helmet usage in the United States has continually increased over the past several seasons. Other findings from the most recent Demographic Study show that:

- 48 percent of U.S. skiers and boarders overall wear helmets, up from 43 percent from the year before; in comparison, only 25 percent of skiers and boarders wore helmets during the 2002/03 season;
- 77 percent of children 9 years old or younger wear ski helmets;
- 66 percent of children between 10 and 14 wear ski helmets;
- 63 percent of adults over the age of 65 wear ski helmets;
- Helmet usage by skiers and boarders aged 18 to 24 is currently 32 percent, representing a 78 percent increase in usage for this age group since the 2002/03 season, when only 18 percent wore helmets.
- Overall ski helmet sales (adults and kids) have increased 43 percent over the past two years, dating back to the 2006/07 ski season. Sales of adult ski helmets alone increased 50 percent since the 2006/07 season, according to the Snowsports Industries of America (SIA) annual Retail Audit.
- Notably, helmet usage increases with the skier's ability level. Twenty-six percent of beginners wear helmets, 38 percent of intermediates wear helmets while 55 percent of advanced skiers and riders wear helmets. In comparison, the National Traffic Safety Administration reports only 20 to 25 percent of bike riders in the U.S. wear helmets.

This fall, NSAA will be launching a new initiative designed to encourage all kids 14 and under to wear ski helmets. NSAA has set a goal of near-universal helmet usage for all children by 2012. It's an aggressive goal, but it's also an important one. Look for our new campaign this fall!

Furthermore, NSAA promotes the use of helmets. We urge skiers and riders to wear a helmet – but to ski or ride as if they are not wearing a helmet. NSAA views skiing and boarding in a controlled and responsible manner – not helmets only – as the primary safety consideration for all skiers and boarders. *A skier's behavior has as much or more to do with the safety of the sport as does any piece of equipment.*

The key safety message that NSAA and its member resorts communicate to skiers and boarders is adherence to "Your Responsibility Code," a widely known and accepted code of conduct for the slopes that has been in use by ski areas for approximately 30 years. One of the main tenets of "The Code" is always stay in control. NSAA considers responsible and safe skiing and riding as the number one priority and helmet use as an important priority.

In 2002, NSAA launched the "Lids on Kids" interactive website ([www.lidsonkids.org](http://www.lidsonkids.org)) in an effort to educate kids and parents about helmet use on the slopes. The central message of the website is that helmets are a "smart idea," but guests should ski and ride as if they are not wearing one. Information on helmets is provided extensively in related safety websites and signage at resorts through the Smart Style, Get Smart, Heads Up, A.S.A.P. (Avalanche Safety Awareness Program) and Winter Kids programs. The newly issued Terrain Park User's Guide, [terrainparksafety.org](http://terrainparksafety.org) and terrain park signage also include key safety messages on helmets. Visit [www.nsaa.org](http://www.nsaa.org) for information on all of these safety programs.

NSAA supported and actively participated in the American Society of Testing & Materials (ASTM's) development of the F-2040 ski/snowboard helmet standard. On behalf of the ski industry, NSAA has also supported, and expended significant resources on, scientific research on alpine sports-related injuries, including head injuries.