

Vancouver Charter on Skiing Safety

The Vancouver Charter on Skiing Safety is based on skiing and snowboarding safety, which was approved in the context of the 2006 Turin Winter Olympic Games. The original Turin Charter was prepared by a panel of experts and specialists delegated by European governments who worked under the coordination of TOROC (Turin Organizing Committee), BE.PRA.S.A. (a project co-financed by the European Commission and the health authority of the Italian region of Veneto) and the Italian National Health Institute.

The Charter is not intended to lay down new legal rights. Rather, the aim of the Charter is to promote a safe, healthy and active sporting and recreational culture, and to make its principles visible to the public, citizens and institutions. The Vancouver Charter is officially endorsed by Dr. Perry Kendall, B.C. Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Patricia Daly, Chief Medical Health Officer of Vancouver Coastal Health, and Dr. Jack Taunton, Chief Medical Officer of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Para Olympic Winter Games.

According to The Economic Burden of Injury in Canada 2009 report, all winter activities accounted for over 70,000 unintentional injuries in Canada with nearly 1,400 resulting in partial and permanent disability. These serious injuries total \$400 million dollars in direct and indirect costs to the health care system, which combined are contributing to the social and economic burden of unintentional injuries.

In Canada, it is estimated that 87.5% of skiing and snowboarding deaths have been caused by a head injury. Traumatic brain injury, which has increased in recent years, has accounted for up to 88% of all fatalities at ski resorts. Children account for 67% of all ski related deaths. Research has demonstrated that ski and snowboard helmets are effective at preventing serious head injuries. It is estimated that nearly 50% of all skiing and snowboarding head injuries could be prevented by simply wearing a helmet.

The Vancouver Charter will be publicly released at the upcoming Put a Lid on It! - Forum on Winter Helmet Safety event scheduled for the afternoon of November 20th, 2009, at the Metropolitan Hotel, Vancouver. All those invited to endorse the charter are also invited to attend this event, information about which can be found on the Safe Kids Canada website. Following the Forum on Friday, November 20th, 2009, the Charter will also be posted online at www.safekidscanada.ca