

Few skaters in New York City skateboard parks wear helmets or protective gear, study finds

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With the growing popularity of skateboarding, injury rates due to falls are climbing dramatically. Yet few riders in New York City skateboard parks are taking precautions. Only 10 percent wear a helmet and an even lower number (8 percent) wear an elbow/knee pad or wrist guard. Even in skateboard parks where helmets are required, more than 80 percent still don't wear a helmet.

Falling is a frequent occurrence in skateboards. More than one quarter (25.9) percent fell while being observed. The use of an electronic device, such as headphones or earbuds substantially increased the likelihood of falling (31.3 percent vs. 23.7 percent).

These results are found in a Hunter College study directed by Sociology Professor Peter Tuckel and Urban Planning Professor William Milczarski. Professors Tuckel and Milczarski collaborated with Hunter students in the Introduction to Research Methods course and the Honors Seminar in the Department of Sociology and the Urban Data Analysis and Quantitative Approaches to Urban Analysis courses in the Department of Urban Policy and Planning.

The findings are based on 2,400 rides of skateboards in 31 parks in all five boroughs.

All observations were conducted between April 1 and May 2, 2018 and were staggered across all days of the week.

Other findings that emerged from the study:

- Of the roughly quarter of skateboarders who fell, about 10 percent sustained a minor injury and 1.4 percent incurred a more serious injury.
- Females were far more likely to wear a

helmet than males (28.8 percent vs. 8.4 percent) or to use [protective gear](#) (22 percent vs. 6.6 percent).

- Teenagers and young adults (ages 15 to 24) are the least likely to wear helmets or protective gear compared to those who are either younger or older.
- Rarely are attendants on duty to monitor the behavior of recreational skateboarders.

"In contrast to skating on the city's streets, parks were meant to be safe havens for skateboarders. By not taking precautionary measures such as wearing protective gear, skateboarders in parks are putting themselves at great risk of injury," said Professor Tuckel. "And the dangers are increased for those who wear headphones and earbuds."

"The high incidence of falling by skateboarders and the proportion who sustain an [injury](#) when they fall points to the gravity of this problem," said Professor Milczarski. "A campaign needs to be launched, especially among teenagers, to raise awareness of the risks involved in skateboarding in parks."

More information: The Behavior of Skateboard Riders in Skate Parks in New York City: [silo-public.hunter.cuny.edu/83...d-Rider-Behavior.pdf](https://public.hunter.cuny.edu/83...d-Rider-Behavior.pdf)

Provided by The City University of New York

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