



## Important information about Helmet Safety:

Helmets are used by individuals as a protective device. They are used as a medical safeguard or as a behavior management technique to reduce injuries due to maladaptive behaviors.

**HELMETS ARE RESTRICTIVE DEVICES WHICH CAN CAUSE DISCOMFORT, INJURY OR DEATH IF NOT USED PROPERLY. THE PURPOSE OF THIS ALERT IS TO HELP YOU MANAGE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF HELMETS.**

The use of helmets is to be avoided; however, if there is a need for an individual to use one, the following practices are recommended:

- A risk assessment should be completed; including consideration of benefits of the helmet use as well as possible health risk.
- The least restrictive and most appropriate helmet should be used.
- The helmet's use should be specified in the plan of services.
- The helmet should be ordered by a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner or dentist.
- The program planning team, including a health care professional and the individual and his or her family member, advocate and/or guardian, should review its use for appropriateness at least every six months.
- The helmet must fit properly with enough padding/space to prevent pressure areas. The helmet must be frequently checked (at least every 30 minutes) to ensure that it is safe, comfortable and clean. If staff observe skin irritation, reddened areas or any signs of discomfort caused by the helmet, they must alert appropriate management staff or a health care professional.
- All care providers should be trained in the helmet's use. A schedule should be established and implemented for regular removal of the helmet. (The standard for such a schedule is that the helmet be removed for 10 minutes every two hours.)
- The helmet should be used only for the person for whom it is ordered.
- There may be other safety considerations depending on individual characteristics of the individual using the helmet.

**WHENEVER A HELMET IS PROPOSED TO BE USED FOR BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT, THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL PRACTICES ARE RECOMMENDED:**

- The plan of services specifies the reason for the use of the helmet and provides a program for reducing reliance on the helmet.



- The plan is approved by the facility's behavior management committee, and the individual and/or the family or advocate, where applicable.

**ALWAYS remove a helmet when an individual is sleeping or lying down.**

**AVOID using a helmet when an individual is eating.**

**AVOID using a helmet during a SCIP-R intervention in which the individual is taken down to the floor.**

**ALWAYS consider what options might be used in lieu of a helmet.**



**Statewide Committee on Incident Review (SCIR)**

NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities  
44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, NY 12229

[scir.opwdd@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:scir.opwdd@opwdd.ny.gov)

OPWDD Information Line: 1-866-946-9733