

Newswise: PHAT Helmet Program Hits Slopes in '09 | [View Clip](#)
01/09/2009

Source: University of Vermont

Libraries

Life News (Social and Behavioral Sciences)

Keywords

SKIING SKI SNOWBOARD HELMET WINTER SPORTS HEAD INJURY

Contact Information

Available for logged-in reporters only

Description

The PHAT (Protect Your Head at All Times and Protect Your Head on All Terrain) program, launched in 2002 by the Vermont Snowsports Research Team, has made over 50,000 observations of skiers and snowboarders in order to understand how best to promote ski helmet use and improve safety. The campaign is being featured at 11 Vermont resorts this season.

Newswise Dr. Robert Williams knows the wisdom of protecting one's head. Involved in a serious cycling accident in 2001, Williams suffered internal injuries but stepped away with no head trauma thanks to his bike helmet. That experience inspired the doctor, an avid skier and snowboarder, to lead an effort to get more people into the helmet habit on the slopes.

PHAT (Protect Your Head at All Times and Protect Your Head on All Terrain) is a youth-oriented campaign launched in 2002 by Williams, University of Vermont (UVM) associate professor of anesthesiology and director of the Snow Sports Research Team at UVM and Fletcher Allen. Piloted at Smugglers' Notch, PHAT is currently supported by the Vermont Health Foundation. The program, which has shown great promise in making skiing safer, will be featured at 11 Vermont resorts in 2009.

The Vermont Snowsports Research Team has made over 50,000 observations of skiers and snowboarders in an effort to understand how best to promote the use of ski helmets. Some of their tips, which can also be found on the program website at www.skihelmetsafety.org, include:

- 1) Ski and snowboard as if you weren't wearing a helmet. Helmets may help reduce the chance of an injury in the event of certain types of accidents. Snow sports are safe and healthy activities but only if done responsibly. Helmets are of little help in high speed head on injuries and offer no protection against neck and other type of injuries. It is important that all skiers and boarders ride responsibly and in control at all times.
- 2) Take time for a proper fit. Ski helmets are not something to grow into. The helmet must fit properly to function safely. In addition a helmet that is an uncomfortable fit will end up not being worn.
- 3) Make certain to buy a helmet that conforms to industry standards. There are various helmet standards in place including CEN (the least rigorous standard), ASTM and Snell (far and away the most rigorous and hard to meet standard for certification). The product

literature will make it clear which standard the helmet meets.

4) Bring your child's or your goggles in when you buy your helmet. Different goggles and helmets work together differently. A well-fitting system will provide great protection for the face and forehead from cold, wind and snow and still allow adequate ventilation for the goggles.

Upcoming PHAT events at Vermont ski resorts include:

Jan. 10, 2009: Smugglers' Notch www.smuggs.com

Jan. 11, 2009: Stowe www.stowe.com

Jan. 17, 2009: Bromley www.bromley.com

Jan. 18, 2009: Okemo www.okemo.com

Jan. 25, 2009: Bolton Valley www.boltonvalley.com

Jan. 31, 2009: Mount Snow www.mountsnow.com

Feb. 1, 2009: Mad River Glen www.madriverglen.com

Feb. 7, 2009: Jay Peak www.jaypeakresort.com

Feb. 8, 2009: Stratton www.stratton.com

Feb. 22, 2009: Sugarbush www.sugarbush.com

Feb. 24, 2009: Okemo PHAT Tuesday (PHAT teaming up with Epilepsy Foundation of VT)
www.okemo.com

[Return to Top](#)