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Arenas Protect Nova Scotia Families with Helmet Policies

Health and Wellness
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NOTE: A list of Nova Scotia arenas with mandatory helmet policies follows this release.

Nova Scotia families will be safer when skating now that more arenas are voluntarily adopting helmet policies for all on-ice activities.

Children and adults must now wear helmets at many arenas across the province. Community partners, including Canadian Tire and the Capital District Health Authority neurosurgery division, are promoting the policies to help prevent head injuries.

"Nova Scotia already has the most aggressive helmet laws in the country for cycling and other activities on wheels, as well as for downhill skiing and snowboarding," said Health and Wellness Minister David Wilson. "It's great to see arenas adopting helmet policies, and to have community partners encouraging this positive culture change for safer physical activity on the ice."

Canadian Tire is encouraging injury prevention by giving \$5,000 in gift certificates to the first 10 arenas in Nova Scotia that adopted helmet policies. The money will help with equipment donations to children or arena upgrades. The company plans to recognize 10 more arenas next year.

"Canadian Tire is happy to help promote all-age helmet policies at local arenas and communities throughout Nova Scotia," said Frank Macleod, manager of the Forest Hills Parkway store in Dartmouth. "Injury prevention is critical to an active lifestyle, whether it's enjoying an open skate as a family, or playing a recreational hockey game."

Helmets are common for ice sports such as hockey, but less so for others like skating. Skating injury rates are significant because it is hard to break a fall with arms on a slippery surface.

"We know helmets provide protection for brains of all ages, and we know the tragic costs and consequences of brain injury," said Dr. David Clarke, interim head of neurosurgery and director of neurotrauma and injury prevention programs at the Capital District Health Authority. "Collectively, arenas that adopt an all-age helmet policy are making a difference for improving brain health for all."

Over the past five years, the Department of Health and Wellness has invested nearly \$216,000 to distribute about 16,600 helmets across the province for young Nova Scotians to use at arenas and for other sports. The department also supports helmet promotion by Child Safety Link and other organizations.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

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Canadian Tire is encouraging injury prevention by giving 5-thousand dollars in gift certificates to the first 10 arenas in Nova Scotia that adopted helmet policies. The money will help with equipment donations to children or arena upgrades.

Over the past five years, the Department of Health and Wellness has invested almost 220-thousand dollars to distribute more than 16-thousand helmets across the province for young Nova Scotians to use at arenas and for other sports.

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Media Contact: Tony Kiritsis
Health and Wellness
902-424-0585
tony.kiritsis@gov.ns.ca

Canadian Tire is recognizing the first 10 arenas in Nova Scotia to adopt helmet policies:

- Dalhousie University Arena, Halifax
- Rath Eastlink Community Centre, Truro
- Mabou and District Athletic Centre, Inverness
- Glooscap District Arena, Canning
- BMO Centre, Bedford
- Hants Exhibition Arena, Windsor
- Shannon Park Arena, Dartmouth
- Parrsboro Lions Recreation Centre, Parrsboro
- BAYplex, Glace Bay
- Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre, Port Hawkesbury

There are three other arenas in Nova Scotia with helmet policies that will be recognized by Canadian Tire next year, along with others that adopt policies:

- Shearwater Arena, Dartmouth
- Al McInnis Sports Centre, Port Hood
- Dr. Bernie MacLean Recreation Centre, Inverness