

THE COMMUNITY AGAINST  
**preventable**  
INJURIES

*For immediate release*  
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## **Before you think you won't need a helmet today, have a word with yourself**

*Preventable challenges skiers and snowboarders to think about what could go wrong*

**Vancouver, BC** – With snow-capped mountains packed with fresh powder and the thrill of the chill air, skiers and snowboarders are hitting the slopes in droves to carve some fresh tracks. With as many as 4.3 million Canadians skiing or snowboarding across the country, Preventable, in partnership with Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), is bringing back its winter “Have a word with yourself” campaign to raise awareness and help people prevent head or neck injuries during this ski season. IBC is one of the founding partners of Preventable.ca and has led many initiatives across the country to promote helmet use.

Throughout December, the Preventable snow team will tackle more than just bunny hills, making the rounds at Mount Seymour, Big White and Silver Star with its “Have a word with yourself” activity, encouraging skiers and snowboarders to don a helmet. Wearing jackets and using snowboards with the slogan, “before you think you won't need a helmet today, have a word with yourself,” the team will also shred around the mountains and strategically place these snowboards around several ski areas as a reminder for people to think about helmet safety.

“IBC is delighted to work with Preventable again, on this great initiative. We have, for many years now, advocated the use of helmets through our Be Smart. Be Safe. program. We know that the best way to deliver these types of messages is through one-on-one interaction and that's why we continue to work on this innovative campaign”, says Lindsay Olson, vice-president for IBC's Pacific region.

“Traumatic head and neck injuries are the leading causes of death for skiers and snowboarders. Our goal is to get into the heads of skiers and snowboarders and consider their attitude to risk,” says Dr. Ian Pike, spokesperson for Preventable. “Many of the head and neck injuries sustained can be prevented by wearing a proper helmet.”

### **Consider these statistics:**

- Helmets have been linked to a **35 per cent reduction** in head injuries for skiers and snowboarders (*Russell et al., 2010*)
- Helmets reduce the risk of traumatic brain injury by as much as 60% (*Cusimano & Kwok, 2010*)
- There are more than **700 skiing and snowboarding injuries**, among all ages, that require hospitalization annually (*BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit*)
- Each year, BC Children's Hospital has about 75 visits to its emergency department because of snowboarding injuries, and more than 50 visits related to downhill skiing for those aged 17 and under (*BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit, 2011*)
- Over 25 tobogganing injuries are seen at the BC Children's Emergency Department among those aged under 17 years (*BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit, 2011*)

- The Canadian Ski Council reports that BC has the lowest helmet usage in Canada at only 66 percent. In addition, only 59 per cent of Canadian skiers and snowboarders between the ages of 25 – 34 wear helmets.
- It is estimated that each dollar invested in a helmet saves \$30 in social costs (thinkfirst.ca)

As part of this campaign, the Preventable snow team will offer skiers and snowboarders without helmets at Mount Seymour, Big White and Silverstar a voucher for a \$40 discount on on-site helmet purchase.

To learn more about helmet safety on the slopes and preventable injuries, visit [www.preventable.ca](http://www.preventable.ca).

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#### **Notes to editor:**

\*Snowboard activity dates are as follows:

Mount Seymour – December 26-27

Big White – December 28

Silver Star – December 29

Preventable collaborates with partner organizations for each campaign. IBC is one of the founding partners of Preventable.ca and has been a strong advocate for the use of helmets through its Be Smart. Be Safe. program.

Preventable's campaigns are planned to raise awareness about attitudes towards injuries during the months that these injuries are most prevalent. In the summer of 2011, Preventable partnered with Red Cross and BC Hydro to raise awareness about drowning/boating safety. In September 2011, Preventable and the BCAA Road Safety Foundation installed a digital speed billboard in Burnaby and Surrey, to challenge attitudes and behaviours about road safety, and in November 2011, Preventable and London Drugs collaborated to highlight the issue of mixing medications.

#### **About Preventable**

Preventable (also known as The Community Against Preventable Injuries) is a province-wide, multi-partner organization raising awareness, transforming attitudes, and ultimately changing behaviours. The goal of the organization and its partners is to significantly reduce the number and severity of preventable injuries in BC.

Preventable's strategy is based on two years of extensive research to develop a comprehensive understanding of how and why preventable injuries occur throughout the Province. Preventable's work is made possible through the financial and in-kind support of a variety of organizations that continue to sign on as partners in fighting the epidemic of preventable injuries in BC. Now in its 3rd year of activity, the "have a word with yourself" campaign is an evolution in Preventable's ongoing discussion with British Columbians about the epidemic proportions of preventable injuries. [www.preventable.ca](http://www.preventable.ca)

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