

## **International helmet expert travels to Vietnam to eliminate low quality helmets**

*June 10, 2012 - Hanoi*

International helmet expert and road safety specialist Dr. Terry Smith will visit Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City from June 10 to 17 to monitor and advise Vietnamese helmet testing laboratories. Dr. Smith will also consult with the National Traffic Safety Committee (NTSC) on ways and means to eliminate poor quality and fake helmets from the Vietnamese market. In 2000, Dr. Smith and Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation assisted the government with the development of the new national helmet standard (TVCN 5756).

As a member of AIP Foundation's Advisory Board, Dr. Smith works with the Vietnam-based NGO to reduce the frequency and severity of traffic crash fatalities and injuries in Vietnam and the developing world. AIP Foundation owns the nonprofit Protec Tropical Helmet Factory, which includes one of Vietnam's four helmet testing laboratories. This laboratory allows Protec to test its own helmets as well as those of other manufacturers, to ensure that they meet QCVN2:2008/BKHCN and will adequately protect users in the event of a crash.

Dr. Smith conducts annual assessments of Protec's helmet testing lab equipment to ensure optimal performance and to compare Protec's helmet testing lab equipment to other international ISO 17025 accredited helmet test laboratories. The three other helmet testing laboratories in Vietnam are government owned, and Dr. Smith will also meet with these laboratories as part of an Inter-Laboratory Comparison (ILC) program.

"Low quality and fake helmets are everywhere on the Vietnamese market – in some regions they make up as much as 80% of all helmets used, according to the W.H.O.," said Dr. Terry Smith. "Buyers of these helmets may not understand that wearing such unqualified products is extremely dangerous, or they may simply be trying to avoid being fined. No matter the reason, these people are not adequately protecting themselves or their children.

Dr. Smith has been independently testing various manufacturers' helmets since 1987. In 2003 he established the DRI Impact Test Laboratory which performs helmet impact testing and product certification for a large number of helmet manufacturers and regulatory agencies. His laboratory is accredited to ISO 17025 and is currently one of only a few testing laboratories qualified to perform bicycle helmet testing under the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA). His background in helmet design and head injury biomechanics has led to his participating as a technical advisor to many International Standard Agencies. He has also assisted in establishing helmet testing facilities in Canada, USA, Thailand and Vietnam, and has recently worked with the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative to introduce new helmet standards in Uganda and Tanzania

"Based on Dr. Smith's experience, we are eager to meet with him about our plans to ensure that all helmets produced, bought and sold in Vietnam are of high and standardized quality," said Mr.

Nguyen Hoang Hiep, Vice Chairman of the NTSC. “Vietnam is proud to be one of the few countries in the world with a helmet standard specifically developed for the environment and climate of Vietnam, and specifically developed to include child helmets. There is a reason for this: Motorcycles represent 95% of all motorized vehicles in Vietnam.

Protecting Vietnam’s children on the road is one of NTSC’s reasons for collaborating with AIP Foundation, the Ministry of Education and Training and the Road and Rail Traffic Police Department on a campaign called “Children also need a helmet” which focuses on child helmet use. A televised public service announcement will be aired in 63 cities and provinces throughout the country. It follows months of community engagement, educational workshops, and multifaceted communications campaigns in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Danang.

"Parents must understand the danger they expose their children to by not putting a child sized helmet on their heads," said Mr. Greig Craft – President of AIP Foundation. “Many believe that helmets are dangerous for children. This myth must stop. It is illogical, dangerous and untrue. Helmets are scientifically and medically proven that helmets protect the brain. And parents must remember - there is no medicine or cure anywhere in the world for brain damage. Once it happens, it is irreversible".

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**About AIP Foundation**

The Asia Injury Prevention Foundation (AIP Foundation) is a U.S. registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that uses public-private partnerships, public awareness education, and school-based programs to reduce the rate of traffic injuries and fatalities in developing countries. AIP Foundation has offices in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; and Bangkok, Thailand. In 2001, AIP Foundation built a non-profit helmet assembly plant which manufactures Protec Tropical Helmets. These helmets offer an environmentally appropriate, safe and affordable option for motorbike and bicycle users.

In 2009, AIP Foundation, in collaboration with the FIA Foundation and the World Bank, launched the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative (GHVI), an international coalition with the objective of “putting a helmet on every head in the ‘Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).”

For more information about AIP Foundation, visit [www.asiainjury.org](http://www.asiainjury.org).