

Safety Sentinel

Back to School
Special Edition 2010

Fond du Lac County Safety Committee Mission Statement

It is the Fond du Lac County Safety Committee's mission to provide safety awareness, education, and advocacy to all Fond du Lac County employees, while recognizing it is both the employer and employee's responsibility to maintain a safe work environment.

Back to School Safety Tips

You can help protect your children from the most frequent kinds of school-related injuries by following these practical, proven tips.

Traveling to School

When parents talk about school safety these days, they're usually referring to the surge in violence at schools. But research shows that school-age children are actually nine times more likely to sustain an unintentional injury -- whether on the playground or in school -- than to be the victim of violence while at school. In fact, an estimated 2.2 million children ages 14 and under are injured in school-related accidents each year, according to the National SAFE KIDS Campaign.

Accidents can be prevented if parents are on the lookout for potential hazards. To help you keep your kids free from harm, here are some safety tips from SAFE KIDS, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Traveling to and from School

- Plan a walking route to school or the bus stop. Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossings and, if possible, with intersections that have crossing guards.
- Walk the route with your child beforehand. Tell him or her to stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there aren't many people around.
- Teach your child never to talk to strangers or accept rides or gifts from strangers. Remember, a stranger is anyone you or your children don't know well or don't trust.
- Be sure your child walks to and from school with a sibling, friend, or neighbor.
- Teach your kids -- whether walking, biking, or riding the bus to school -- to obey all traffic signals, signs and traffic officers. Remind them to be extra careful in bad weather.
- When driving kids, deliver and pick them up as close to the school as possible. Don't leave until they are in the schoolyard or building.

- If your child bikes to school, make sure he wears a helmet that meets one of the safety standards (U.S. CPSC, Snell, ANSI, ASTM, or Canadian). Research indicates that a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent.
- If your child rides a scooter to school, make sure she wears sturdy shoes, a helmet, kneepads and elbow pads. Children under age 12 should not ride motorized scooters, according to recent recommendations from the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Teach children to arrive at the bus stop early, stay out of the street, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the street, watch for cars and avoid the driver's blind spot.
- Remind your children to stay seated at all times and keep their heads and arms inside the bus while riding. When exiting the bus, children should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, exit from the front using the handrail to avoid falls and cross the street at least 10 feet (or 10 giant steps) in front of the bus.
- Tell your child not to bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes or pick up objects, as the driver may not see him before starting to move.
- Be sure that your child knows his or her home phone number and address, your work number, the number of another trusted adult and how to call 911 for emergencies.

On the Playground

- Check the playground equipment at your child's school. Look for hazards such as rusted or broken equipment and dangerous surfaces. The surface around the equipment should be covered with wood chips, mulch, sand, pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or fiber material to prevent head injury when a child falls. Report any hazards to the school.
- Avoid any drawstrings on the hood or around the neck of jackets and sweatshirts. Drawstrings at the waist or bottom of jackets should extend no more than three inches long to prevent catching in car and school bus doors or getting caught on playground equipment. (Continued on Pg 3)

Neighborhood Watch Program

The Fond du Lac County Sheriff's Department and City Police Department request your participation in the "Fond du Lac Watches" program, a citizens' organization devoted to crime and vandalism prevention within a neighborhood – the eyes and ears of the Sheriff's & Police Department.

Neighborhood Watch Tips:

- Get to know your neighbors. Areas of low crime are areas where neighbors interact frequently.
- Keep an eye on the neighborhood children and ask your neighbors to keep an eye on yours.
- Join or start a Neighborhood Watch.
- If your neighbor is on vacation, make arrangements with them to have their mail and newspaper picked up.
- Keep each other alert and informed. A neighbor's garage door left open, keys left in a car, someone snooping around homes with no apparent reason, a stranger stopping to talk to a child or senior citizen are all opportunities for a crime to happen.
- Make sure neighborhood teens have positive places to go and constructive options to keep themselves occupied.
- Make sure your neighborhood is as "crime proof" as your home.
- Visit a neighbor who has been a victim. Be supportive and offer help with babysitting, getting to court or locating victim assistance services.

Source: Fond du Lac City Police



Helpful Advice on Beating Back to School Anxiety

The transition into a new school year can be a time of excitement . . . and stress. Children and adults can become anxious, irritable or depressed by this major change. The trick to fighting the back-to-school anxiety is to start preparing well ahead of the first day of school, Dr. Dan Jolivet, a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Vice President of Clinical Services with Magellan Behavioral Health, shares how:

Kindergarten through fifth grade - kids need to talk

- **Talk about it** — Talk with your elementary age children about their excitement, stressing the benefits (seeing their friends, playing sports, etc.).
- **Give them some control** — Be firm that they do have to go to school, but give them control over some simple choices, like buying or bringing lunch or riding the bus or riding their bike to school.

Teens want you to listen

- **Keep communication lines open** — Teens want you to listen to their back-to-school concerns— but not judge. Do everything possible to keep the lines of communication open at this critical age.
- **Look for patterns** — A wild new hairdo? No problem. Purple hair AND scary new friends AND a drop in grades? Now it's time to worry.

Adult students need encouragement, too

- **Focus on your goals** — Remind yourself why you are going back to school (better job, more money, etc.).
- **Remember that you're not alone**— Remind yourself that other "non-traditional students" have made it through this, and that it's normal to be a little anxious or fearful.

This document is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to provide any reader with specific authority, advice or recommendations. This information is provided to you in conjunction with our EAP vendor, Magellan Behavioral Health.

© 2002 Magellan Behavioral Health, Inc.

Vehicles Must Stop for School Buses Displaying Flashing Red Lights



Drivers must be extremely cautious when approaching school buses and obey laws designed to protect students- especially young children

who are hard to see and may dart into traffic unexpectedly while going to or from the bus.

According to Wisconsin law, when approaching a school bus from the front or rear, drivers must stop at least 20 feet from the bus when it is stopped and displaying high-mounted flashing red warning lights. Drivers may not proceed until after the bus resumes its route or turns off the flashing red warning lights.

The stop arm on a bus is an added warning to drivers. But the lack of an extended stop arm is not a reason to pass a stopped bus with flashing high-mounted red warning lights. Drivers also may not pass a stopped school bus in order to make a right turn in front of it.

Drivers on the other side of a divided roadway separated by a median or other physical barrier are not required to stop for a school bus. However, motorists should always watch for children in the vicinity of a school bus.

In some urban areas with curb and sidewalks on both sides of the road, school buses may activate their yellow or red "hazard" lights when picking up and

dropping off passengers. In these circumstances, motorists legally may pass a school bus with flashing yellow or red hazard lights but should proceed cautiously because children could be loading or unloading.

A citation for failure of a vehicle to stop for a school bus costs \$326.50 with four demerit points. A citation for an illegal right turn in front of a stopped school bus costs \$326.50 and three demerit points. If reported by a school bus driver, the vehicle owner's liability for the illegal passing of a bus costs \$326.50 with no demerit points.

Source: FDL County Sheriff's Dept.

Traffic Safety Awareness

"A Community Committed to Keeping Kids Safe"

Please keep our kids safe by following these top ten safety tips when nearing or entering a school zone:



- Slow down
- Be alert
- Be patient
- Stay off cell phones
- Know your specific school rules
- Walk or bike to school
- Follow bike safety rules
- Cross at crosswalks
- Stop car when loading and unloading
- Enjoy this time with your child

Safety Tips – continued from Pg 1

- Make sure that the school's athletic director or a custodian anchors soccer goals into the ground so they won't tip over and crush a child.
- Teach children proper playground behavior: no pushing, shoving, or crowding.
- Give your child some strategies for coping with bullies. He should not give in to a bully's demands, but should simply walk away or tell the bully to stop. If the bullying continues, talk to the teacher.
- Make sure your child's school has up-to-date information on recalled toys and children's products. Schools, daycare providers and parents can receive recall information by fax, email, or in the regular mail free of charge by calling the Consumer Product Safety Commission hotline at 800-638-2772, or visiting the organization's website - www.cpsc.gov.

By Christine Many, From Reader's Digest

----- Cut on line and return inter-office mail marked "Safety Suggestion Box" or give to a Safety Committee Member -----

Safety Suggestion

Date: _____

Please share any safety concern or suggestion:

Name (optional) _____