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MAYOR

City of Los Angeles

CYF

Commission for Children, Youth
and Their Families

Leading the way to a family-friendly city...

CHILD SAFETY GUIDE



City of Los Angeles



Commission for Children, Youth
and Their Families

Leading the way to a family-friendly city.

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April 23, 2003

Dear Parents/Caregivers and Residents:

The Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families believes that “every Los Angeles child should reach adulthood having experienced a safe, healthy and nurturing childhood which prepares him/her to become a responsible and contributing member of the community.” To make this vision a reality, the Commission has decided to focus its work for the next three years on making the City’s children, families and neighborhoods safe. The focus on child safety provides common ground for City agencies to jointly respond to the needs of families and communities.

This “Child Safety Guide” presents a comprehensive approach to child safety, with an emphasis on prevention. This guide was designed to raise public awareness about ways to help prevent child injuries, exploitation and abduction. The guide provides families with critical information and tools to keep children and youth safe in their homes, schools and communities.

The Commission looks forward to continued partnerships with public and private agencies, schools, caregivers and young people to ensure that all children in Los Angeles grow up feeling safe and secure and have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Ogawa', written in a cursive style.

Terry Ogawa
Executive Director



ANDREW K. JENSEN
MAYOR

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Safety At Home

Making Your Home Childproof

About 2-1/2 million children are injured or killed by hazards in the home each year. The good news is that many of these incidents can be prevented by using simple child safety devices on the market today. Any safety device you buy should be sturdy enough to prevent injury to your child, yet easy for you to use. It's important to follow installation instructions carefully. In addition, if you have older children in the house, be sure they resecure safety devices. Remember, too, that no device is completely childproof; determined youngsters have been known to disable them. You can childproof your home for a fraction of what it would cost to have a professional do it. And safety devices are easy to find. You can buy them at hardware stores, baby equipment shops, supermarkets, drug stores, home and linen stores, and through mail order catalogues.

The following child safety devices can help prevent many injuries to young children.

- ◆ Use **Safety Latches and Locks** for cabinets and drawers in kitchens, bathrooms, and other areas to help prevent poisonings and other injuries. Safety latches and locks on cabinets and drawers can help prevent children from gaining access to medicines and household cleaners, as well as knives and other sharp objects. Look for safety latches and locks that adults can easily install and use, but are sturdy enough to withstand pulls and tugs from children. Safety latches are not a guarantee of protection, but they can make it more difficult for children to reach dangerous substances. Even products with child-resistant packaging should be locked away, out of reach; this packaging is not childproof. Typical cost of a safety latch or lock: less than \$2.
- ◆ Use **Safety Gates** to help prevent falls down stairs and to keep children away from dangerous areas. Safety gates can help keep children away from stairs or rooms that have hazards in them. Look for safety gates that children cannot dislodge easily, but that adults can open and close without difficulty. For the top of stairs, gates that screw to the wall are more secure than "pressure gates." New safety gates that meet safety standards display a certification seal from the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA). If you have an older safety gate, be sure it doesn't have "V" shapes that are large enough for a child's head and neck to fit into. Typical cost of a safety gate: \$13 to \$40.
- ◆ Use **Door Knob Covers and Door Locks** to help prevent children from entering rooms and other areas with possible dangers. Door knob covers and door locks can help keep children away from places with hazards, including swimming pools. Be sure the door knob cover is sturdy enough not to break, but allows a door to be opened quickly by an adult in case of emergency. By restricting access to potentially hazardous rooms in the home, door knob covers could help prevent many kinds of injuries. To prevent access to swimming pools, door locks should be placed high out of reach of young children. Locks should be used in addition to fences and door alarms. Sliding glass doors, with locks that must be resecured after each use, are often not an effective barrier to pools. Typical cost of a door knob cover: \$1 and door lock: \$5 and up.
- ◆ Use **Anti-Scald Devices** for faucets and shower heads and set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water. Anti-scald devices for regulating water temperature can help prevent burns.

Consider using anti-scald devices for faucets and showerheads. A plumber may need to install these. In addition, if you live in your own home, set water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water. Typical cost of an anti-scald device: \$6 to \$30.

- ◆ Use **Smoke Detectors** on every level of your home and near bedrooms to alert you to fires. Smoke detectors are essential safety devices for protection against fire deaths and injuries. Check smoke detectors once a month to make sure they're working. If detectors are battery-operated, change batteries at least once a year or consider using 10-year batteries. Typical cost of a smoke detector: less than \$10.
- ◆ Use **Window Guards and Safety Netting** to help prevent falls from windows, balconies, decks, and landings. Window guards and safety netting for balconies and decks can help prevent serious falls. Check these safety devices frequently to make sure they are secure and properly installed and maintained. There should be no more than four inches between the bars of the window guard. If you have window guards, be sure at least one window in each room can be easily used for escape in a fire. Window screens are not effective for preventing children from falling out of windows. Typical cost of a window guard or safety netting: \$8 to \$16.
- ◆ Use **Corner and Edge Bumpers** to help prevent injuries from falls against sharp edges of furniture and fireplaces. Corner and edge bumpers can be used with furniture and fireplace hearths to help prevent injuries from falls or to soften falls against sharp or rough edges. Be sure to look for bumpers that stay securely on furniture or hearth edges. Typical cost of a corner and edge bumper: \$1 and up.
- ◆ Use **Outlet Covers and Outlet Plates** to help prevent electrocution. Outlet

covers and outlet plates can help protect children from electrical shock and possible electrocution. Be sure the outlet protectors cannot be easily removed by children and are large enough so that children cannot choke on them. Typical cost of an outlet cover: less than \$2.

- ◆ Use a **Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detector** outside bedrooms to help prevent CO poisoning. A carbon monoxide (CO) detector can help prevent CO poisoning. Consumers should install CO detectors near sleeping areas in their homes. Households that should use CO detectors include those with gas or oil heat or with attached garages. Typical cost of a carbon monoxide (CO) detector: \$30 to \$70.
- ◆ Cut **Window Blind Cords** and use **Safety Tassels** to help prevent children from strangling in blind cord loops. Window blind cord safety tassels on miniblinds and tension devices on vertical blinds and drapery cords can help prevent deaths and injuries from strangulation in the loops of cords. For older miniblinds, cut the cord loop, remove the buckle, and put safety tassels on each cord. Be sure that older vertical blinds and drapery cords have tension or tie-down devices to hold the cords tight. When buying new miniblinds, verticals, and draperies, ask for safety features to prevent child strangulation. You can get window blind cord safety tassels free by calling 1-800-506-4636.
- ◆ Use **Door Stops and Door Holders** to help prevent injuries to fingers and hands. Door stops and door holders on doors and door hinges can help prevent small fingers and hands from being pinched or crushed in doors and door hinges. Be sure any safety device for doors is easy to use and is not likely to break into small parts, which could be a choking hazard for young children. Typical cost of a door stop and door holder: less than \$4.

- ◆ Use a **Cordless Phone** to make it easier to continuously watch young children, especially when they're in bathtubs, swimming pools, or other potentially dangerous areas. Cordless phones help you watch your child continuously, without leaving the vicinity to answer a phone call. Cordless phones are especially helpful when children are in or near water, whether it's the bathtub, the swimming pool, or the beach. Typical cost of a cordless phone: \$30 and up.



Water Safety

Young children are irresistibly drawn to water, and tragically, about 350 children under age 5 drown in swimming pools each year. But even if you don't have a pool, your young children may not be safe from drowning.

"While many of us are aware of the dangers a backyard pool poses to young children, not everyone knows about other drowning hazards around the home," said Consumer Product Safety Commission Acting Chairman Thomas Moore. "CPSC is alerting parents and caregivers to drowning hazards that might not be so obvious, to help prevent these devastating losses."

Bathtubs

Children drowning in bathtubs account for about two-thirds of the 459 reported drowning deaths in the home. The majority of these bathtub deaths occur when the

caregiver is not present. In the time it takes to step out of the room to get a towel or answer the phone, a young child can drown. In at least 29 of the 292 bathtub drowning deaths reported to CPSC between 1996 and 1999, the victims were using bath seats.

Buckets

Many parents and caregivers may not realize the danger buckets pose. From 1996 through 1999, CPSC received reports of 58 children under age 5 who drowned in 5-gallon buckets. Even a small amount of liquid can be deadly. Of all buckets, the 5-gallon size presents the greatest hazard to young children because of its tall, straight sides. That, combined with the stability of these buckets, makes it nearly impossible for top-heavy infants and toddlers to free themselves when they fall into the bucket headfirst.

Toilets

Toilets can be overlooked as a drowning hazard in the home. The typical scenario involves a child under 3-years-old falling headfirst into the toilet. CPSC has received reports of 16 children under age 5 who drowned in toilets between 1996 and 1999.

Spas and Hot Tubs

Spas and hot tubs, typically located near or sometimes inside the home, pose another hazard to young children. CPSC is aware of 55 children under age 5 who drowned in spas and hot tubs between 1996 and 1999.

Other Products

Though not as frequently involved in deaths, other products around the home containing water can be drowning hazards. The most common of these are buckets with a capacity different than the 5-gallon size. Additional drowning deaths have also involved landscape ponds, sinks, and fish tanks, among other products.

Use the following tips to help prevent young children from drowning:

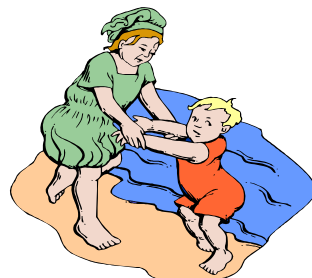
- ◆ Never leave a baby alone in a bathtub for even a second. Always keep the baby in arm's reach. Don't leave a baby in the care of another young child. Never leave to answer the phone, answer the door, to get a towel or for any other reason. If you must leave, take the baby with you.
- ◆ A baby bath seat is not a substitute for supervision. A bath seat is a bathing aid, not a safety device. Babies have slipped or climbed out of bath seats and drowned.
- ◆ Never use a baby bath seat in a non-skid, slip-resistant bathtub because the suction cups will not adhere to the bathtub surface or can detach unexpectedly.
- ◆ Never leave a bucket containing even a small amount of liquid unattended. When finished using a bucket, always empty it immediately.
- ◆ Store buckets where young children cannot reach them. Buckets, accessible to children, that are left outside to collect rainwater are a hazard.
- ◆ Always secure safety covers and barriers to prevent children from gaining access to spas or hot tubs when not in use. Some non-rigid covers, such as solar covers, can allow a small child to slip in the water and the cover would appear to still be in place.
- ◆ Keep the toilet lid down to prevent access to the water and consider using a toilet clip to stop young children from opening the lids. Consider placing a latch on the bathroom door out of reach of young children.
- ◆ Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) -- it can be a lifesaver when seconds count.

Swimming Pools

Consumers with residential pools need to be aware of all the safety tips regarding in-home hazards, and also be aware of how

to protect young children from the dangers a pool poses. The key to preventing a swimming pool tragedy is to have layers of protection. This includes placing barriers around your pool to prevent access, using door and pool alarms, closely supervising your child and being prepared in case of an emergency. CPSC offers these tips to prevent pool drowning:

- ◆ Fences and walls should be at least 4 feet high and installed completely around the pool. Fence gates should open outward from the pool and should be self-closing and self-latching. The latch should be out of a small child's reach.
- ◆ If your house forms one side of the barrier to the pool, then doors leading from the house to the pool should be protected with alarms that produce a sound when a door is unexpectedly opened.
- ◆ A power safety cover -- a motor-powered barrier that can be placed over the water area -- can be used when the pool is not in use.
- ◆ Keep rescue equipment by the pool and be sure a phone is poolside with emergency numbers posted.
- ◆ For above-ground pools, steps and ladders to the pool should be secured and locked, or removed when the pool is not in use.
- ◆ If a child is missing, always look in the pool first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.
- ◆ Pool alarms can be used as an added precaution.



Fire and Holiday Safety

Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 10,800 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees. In addition, there are 11,000 candle-related fires each year resulting in 150 deaths and 1,200 injuries annually.

Christmas trees are involved in about 400 fires annually, resulting in 20 deaths, 70 injuries and an average of more than \$15 million in property loss and damage.

Faced with fire, many children hide in a closet or under a bed leading to tragic fatalities. In fact, children under age 5 have a fire death rate more than twice the national average.

Candles

In most cases, candles caused house fires when they were left unattended, tipped over and ignited nearby combustibles. Almost half of home candle fires start in the bedroom. Mattresses or bedding are the most common items that ignite, followed by furniture (dressers, desks, and tables) and then curtains. A child playing with the candle itself or near the candle is one of the biggest contributors to candle fires. Candles are no longer used for the occasional dinner party. Only a small percent of candle fires start in dining rooms. Candle sales are booming and families are lighting candles in their living rooms, family rooms, dens and bathrooms. Fires from candles have increased dramatically, but they are preventable. Reduce the chance of a fire, by using the following safety tips.

- ◆ Keep matches, lighters and candles away from children.
- ◆ Never leave burning candles unattended.
- ◆ Keep combustible materials away from candles.
- ◆ Don't put candles in a location where

children or pets could knock them down.

- ◆ Use only non-flammable candle holders.
- ◆ Always trim the wicks before lighting.

Trees

- ◆ When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- ◆ When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- ◆ When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

Lights

- ◆ Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards. Use only lights that have fused plugs.
- ◆ Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.
- ◆ Use no more than three standard size sets of lights per single extension cord. Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use. Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.

- ◆ Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- ◆ Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).
- ◆ Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- ◆ For added electric shock protection, plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.

Decorations

- ◆ Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- ◆ Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- ◆ In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces. Avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- ◆ Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

- ◆ Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- ◆ Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

Halloween-Costumes

- ◆ When purchasing costumes, masks, beards and wigs, look for flame resistant fabrics such as nylon or polyester or look for the label "Flame Resistant." Flame resistant fabrics will resist burning and should extinguish quickly. To minimize the risk of contact with candles and other fire sources, avoid costumes made with flimsy materials and outfits with big, baggy sleeves or billowing skirts.
- ◆ Purchase or make costumes that are light, bright and clearly visible to motorists.
- ◆ For greater visibility during dusk and darkness, decorate or trim costumes with reflective tape that will glow in the beam of a car's headlights. Bags or sacks also should be light colored or decorated with reflective tape. Reflective tape is usually available in hardware, bicycle and sporting goods stores.
- ◆ Children should carry flashlights to see and be seen.
- ◆ Costumes should be well-fitted and not drag on the ground to guard against trips and falls.
- ◆ Children should wear well-fitting sturdy shoes. Oversized high heels are not a good idea.
- ◆ Tie hats and scarves securely to prevent them from slipping over children's eyes and obstructing vision.

Fireplaces

- ◆ If your child wears a mask, make sure it fits securely, provides adequate ventilation, and has eye holes large enough to allow full vision.
- ◆ Swords, knives and similar costume accessories should be made of soft, flexible material.

Halloween Treats

- ◆ Warn children not to eat any treats before an adult has examined them carefully for evidence of tampering.
- ◆ Carefully examine any toys or novelty items received by trick-or-treaters under three years of age. Do not allow young children to have any items that are small enough to present a choking hazard or that have small parts or components that could separate during use and present a choking hazard.

Halloween Decorations

- ◆ Keep candles and jack-o'-lanterns away from landings and doorsteps where costumes could brush against the flame.
- ◆ Remove obstacles from lawns, steps and porches when expecting trick-or-treaters.
- ◆ Indoors, keep candles and jack-o'-lanterns away from curtains, decorations and other combustibles that could be ignited.
- ◆ Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory. Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires or loose connections. Discard damaged sets.
- ◆ Don't overload extension cords.

Poison and Toxic Chemicals

The nation's poison control centers receive more than one million calls each year about unintentional poisonings of children under 5 years of age from medicines and household chemicals. Child-resistant packaging is not child-

proof. If a young child swallows a medicine or chemical, parents must call the poison control center immediately.

A toxic substance is any chemical or mixture that may be harmful to the environment and/or to human health if it is inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin. Did you know that some toxic substances are found in nature? There are naturally occurring toxins (poisonous substances coming from living organisms) found in certain plants like poinsettias and even some wild mushrooms and berries. However, the toxic substances contained in most everyday household products are synthetic which means they are man-made. A substance which is not toxic is called a "non-toxic" substance. Non-toxic substances are safe to use and do not harm humans and the environment.

Many of the products you find in your home may have toxic substances. These products include:

- ◆ drain cleaners
- ◆ oven cleaners
- ◆ laundry detergents
- ◆ floor or furniture polish
- ◆ paints
- ◆ pesticides.



While these products are useful at home, some of the chemicals in these products can irritate your skin, eyes, nose and throat, or can even poison you - so be careful!

- ◆ If someone splashes a household chemical in the eyes, rinse out the eyes for 15-20 minutes in the shower or under a faucet. Then call your poison control center. If you do not know that number, then call 911 or your local emergency ambulance number.
- ◆ If someone splashes a household chemical on the skin, take off the wet clothing and rinse the skin for 15-20 minutes in the shower or under a faucet. Then

call your poison control center. If you do not know that number, then call 911 or your local emergency ambulance number.

- ◆ If someone drinks a household chemical, give them half a glass of water to drink. Then call your poison control center. If you do not know that number, then call 911 or your local emergency ambulance number.
- ◆ If someone is not breathing or won't wake up, call 911 or your local emergency ambulance number.
- ◆ Keep all chemicals and medicines locked up and out of sight.
- ◆ Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container securely after each use or choosing child-resistant blister cards, which do not need to be resealed.
- ◆ Call (800) 222-1222 immediately in case of poisoning. Keep on hand a bottle of ipecac syrup but use it only if the poison center instructs you to induce vomiting.
- ◆ When products are in use, never let young children out of your sight, even if you must take them along when answering the phone or doorbell.
- ◆ Leave the original labels on all products, and read the label before using.
- ◆ Do not put decorative lamps and candles that contain lamp oil where children can reach them. Lamp oil can be very toxic if ingested by young children.
- ◆ Always leave the light on when giving or taking medicine. Check the dosage every time.
- ◆ Avoid taking medicine in front of children. Refer to medicine as "medicine," not "candy."
- ◆ Clean out the medicine cabinet periodically and safely dispose of unneeded and outdated medicines.
- ◆ Keep items in original containers.

Be prepared for any emergency in your home. Keep your local emergency number, local ambulance number and the local poison control center telephone numbers on

or next to your phone. You can usually find these numbers on the inside cover or first few pages of your telephone book.

Lawn and Garden Safety

About 230,000 people each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries relating to various lawn and garden tools.

Each year, about 75 people are killed and about 20,000 are injured on or near riding lawnmowers and garden tractors. One out of every five deaths involves a child. Most of the deaths to children occurred when a child was in the path of a moving mower.

Consumers should learn about the hazards of each piece of equipment, and take the following precautions to prevent injuries to children and themselves from lawn and garden equipment:

- ◆ Children should never be in the yard while you're mowing, and they should never ride on the mower. More than 800 young children get run over or backed over by riding mowers each year. This happens when children fall while being given rides, or when they approach the operating mower.
- ◆ Never assume children will remain where you last saw them. Be alert and turn off the mower if children enter the mowing area. Use extra care when backing up or going around corners, shrubs, trees or other obstacles.
- ◆ Many children suffer serious burns to their hands and arms when they touch the hot muffler of running or recently running engines. Keep children away from power equipment.
- ◆ Be sure you know how to operate the equipment. Know where the controls are and what they do. Make sure the equipment is in proper operating condition and guards or other safety devices have

not been removed or disabled.

- ◆ Dress appropriately for the job. This includes: sturdy shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles, long pants and long-sleeved shirts, close-fitting clothes, eye protection, heavy gloves, hearing protection when needed, and no jewelry, which can get caught in moving parts.
- ◆ Before mowing, walk around the area in which you will be working to remove any objects like sticks, glass, metal, wire, stones and string that could cause injury or damage equipment. Nails and wire are the most hazardous objects thrown by mowers, capable of killing bystanders.
- ◆ Never work with electric power tools in wet or damp conditions. For protection against electrocution, use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). GFCIs come in several models, including portable plug-in types and as part of some extension cords.
- ◆ Be sure that extension cords are in good condition, are rated for outdoor use, and are the proper gauge for the electrical current capacity of the tool.
- ◆ Before making adjustments or clearing jams near moving parts, unplug electric tools and disconnect spark plug wires on

gasoline-powered tools.

- ◆ Be sure that power tools are turned off and made inoperable if they must be left unattended. This will help prevent use by children.
- ◆ Handle gasoline carefully. Remember never to fill gas tanks while machinery is operating or when equipment is still hot. Do not fuel equipment indoors. Wipe up spills. Store gas in an approved container away from the house. Finally, never smoke or use any type of flame around gasoline.



Safety Away From Home

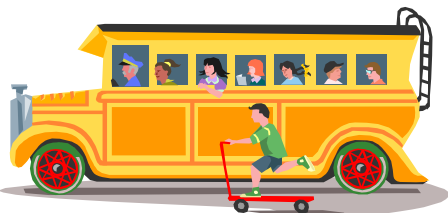
School Safety

As millions of children head back to school, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is helping parents, teachers, and caregivers look for hidden hazards to help prevent injuries and deaths to children. Take a few minutes to check your child's school, childcare facility and playground for hidden hazards we don't always think about during this busy time of year. Use the following checklist to make sure your children head back to school safely.

- ◆ **Playgrounds** - Check the surfaces around playground equipment. There should be a 12-inch depth of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or there should be mats made of safety-tested rubber or fiber material to prevent head injury when a child falls. Each year, more than 200,000 children are treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for playground-associated injuries. Most of these injuries occur when a child falls from the equipment.
- ◆ **Drawstrings on Jackets and Sweat-shirts** - Remove drawstrings on hoods

or around the neck. Cut drawstrings at the waist or bottom of jackets and sweatshirts to 3 inches. Since 1985, 22 children have died when drawstrings caught on school buses, playground equipment and other products.

- ◆ **Loops on Window Blind Cords** - If the windows in your home, childcare facilities or schools have blinds, cut the loop on two-corded horizontal blinds and attach separate tassels to prevent entanglement and strangulation in window blind cords. Vertical blinds, continuous loop systems and drapery cords use looped cords to function. Do not cut these loops. Instead, install a permanent tie-down device. To obtain free tassels and tie down devices call (800) 506-4636. About one child a month dies from strangulation with window covering cords.
- ◆ **Soccer Goals** - Anchor soccer goals into the ground to prevent them from tipping over and crushing a child. Since 1979, CPSC has received reports of 24 deaths from soccer goal tipover.
- ◆ **Recalled Products** - You and your kids can get up-to-date recall and product safety information by checking out CPSC's web site on your home or school computer. Sign up to get free recall notices by FAX, e-mail or regular mailing by calling CPSC's hotline or writing to CPSC, Washington, D.C. 20207.

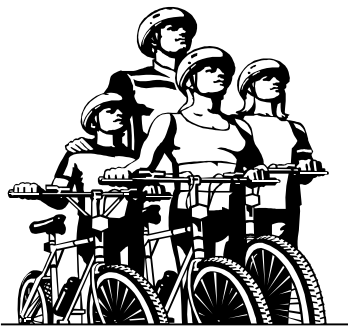


Bike Safety

Each year, there are about 900 bicycle-related deaths in the United States and another half a million bicycle-related injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms.

Along with using safety equipment, rider actions and reactions play a major role in contributing to injury-free cycling enjoyment. Below are additional safety tips to help ensure safe summer cycling.

- ◆ **Protect your head...Wear a helmet.** Since a growing number of kids are riding their bikes to school, make sure they always wear their helmet. All bike helmets manufactured or imported for sale in the United States are required to meet the new federal safety standard set by CPSC. Each year, more than 200 children are killed in bicycle-related incidents, and about 60 percent of these deaths involve a head injury. Helmet use can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent.
- ◆ **See and be seen...Wear bright fluorescent colors during the day.**
- ◆ **Avoid biking at night...If riding at night, equip your bicycle with head and tail-lights and wear reflective clothing.**
- ◆ **Stay alert...Keep a lookout for obstacles in your path.**
- ◆ **Go with the flow...Ride with traffic.**
- ◆ **Check for traffic...Be aware of traffic around you.**
- ◆ **Learn the rules of the road...Obey traffic laws.**
- ◆ **Assure bicycle readiness...Is your bicycle properly adjusted?**
- ◆ **Check brakes before riding.**
- ◆ **Check your wheels..."Quick release" wheels should be securely fastened.**



Internet Safety

Tips For Parents

By taking responsibility for your children's online computer use, parents can greatly minimize any potential risks of being online. Make it a family rule to:

- ◆ **Never give out identifying information** — home address, school name, or telephone number — in a public message such as chat or bulletin boards (newsgroup), and be sure you're dealing with someone both you and your children know and trust before giving out this information via e-mail. Think carefully before revealing any personal information such as age, marital status, or financial information. Do not post photographs of your children on web sites or in newsgroups that are available to the public. Consider using a pseudonym, avoid listing your child's name and E-mail address in any public directories and profiles, and find out about your ISP's privacy policies and exercise your options for how your personal information may be used.
- ◆ **Get to know the Internet and any services your child uses.** If you don't know how to log on, get your child to show you. Have your child show you what he or she does online, and become familiar with all the things that you can do online.
- ◆ **Never allow a child to arrange a face-to-face meeting with another computer user without parental permission.** If a meeting is arranged, make the first one in a public place, and be sure to accompany your child.
- ◆ **Never respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening, or make you feel uncomfortable.** Encourage your children to tell you if they encounter such messages. If you or your child receives a message that is harassing, of a sexual

nature, or threatening, forward a copy of the message to your ISP, and ask for their assistance. Instruct your child **not** to click on any links that are contained in e-mail from persons they don't know. Such links could lead to sexually explicit or otherwise inappropriate web sites.

If someone sends you or your children messages or images that are obscene, lewd, filthy, or indecent with the intent to harass, abuse, annoy, or threaten, or if you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography while online, immediately report this to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline at 1-800-843-5678 or www.cybertipline.com.

- ◆ **Remember that people online may not be who they seem.** Because you can't see or even hear the person it would be easy for someone to misrepresent him- or herself. Thus, someone indicating that "she" is a "12-year-old girl" could in reality be a 40-year-old man.
- ◆ **Remember that everything you read online may not be true.** Any offer that's "too good to be true" probably is. Be careful about any offers that involve you coming to a meeting, having someone visit your house, or sending money or credit-card information.



- ◆ **Set reasonable rules and guidelines for computer use by your children.** Discuss these rules and post them near the computer as a reminder. Remember to monitor your children's compliance with these rules, especially when it comes to the amount of time your children spend on the computer. A child's excessive use of online services or the Internet, especially late at night, may be a clue that there is a potential problem. Remember that personal computers and online services should not be used as electronic babysitters.
- ◆ **Check out blocking, filtering, and ratings.** Be sure to make this a family activity. Consider keeping the computer in a family room rather than the child's bedroom. Get to know their "online friends" just as you get to know all of their other friends.

Tips For Children & Teens

Basic Rules of Online Safety for Teens

The most important thing to remember is that when you're online in any kind of a public forum, you're out in public and anyone can read whatever you post. You should never post anything on the Internet that you wouldn't want known to the public at large. You should also remember that people you meet in cyberspace might not be who they seem to be.

- ◆ **KEEP YOUR IDENTITY PRIVATE** - If you're in any type of public forum, avoid giving out your full name, your mailing address, your telephone number, the name of your school, or any other information that could help someone determine your actual identity. The same applies to your family and friends. Never reveal anything about other people that could possibly get them into trouble.
- ◆ **NEVER GET TOGETHER WITH SOMEONE YOU "MEET" ONLINE** - The biggest danger to your safety is if you get together with someone you

"meet" online. Remember, you never know for certain if people you meet online are who they say they are. If you do feel it's appropriate to meet with someone, discuss it with your parents and never go to the meeting by yourself. Arrange to meet in a public place, like a coffee shop or mall that you (not just the other person) are familiar and comfortable with, and never go alone. The safest procedure is to have your parents talk with the parents of the other person and for both of you to bring your parents along on the first meeting.

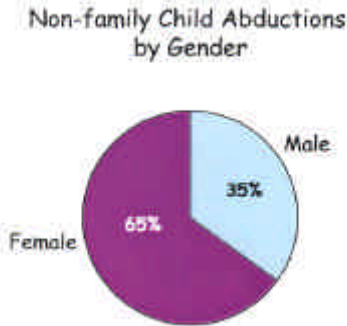
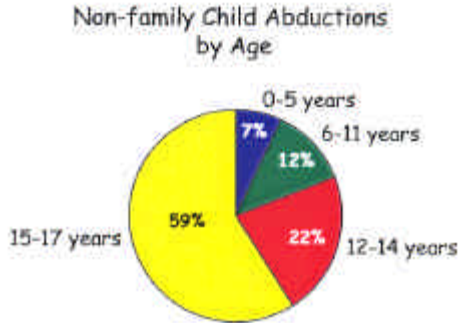
- ◆ **NEVER RESPOND TO E-MAIL, CHAT COMMENTS, OR NEWSGROUP MESSAGES THAT ARE HOSTILE, BELLIGERENT, INAPPROPRIATE, OR IN ANY WAY MAKE YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE** - It isn't your fault if you get a message that is mean or in any way makes you feel uncomfortable. If you get such a message, don't respond. Instead, show it to your parents or a trusted adult to see if there is anything you can do to make it stop. Sending a response just encourages the person.
- ◆ **TALK WITH YOUR PARENTS ABOUT THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND GROUND RULES FOR GOING ONLINE** It's important that you and your parents are on the same channel when it comes to your online activities. This includes when you can go online, how long you can stay online, and what activities you can do online. Communicating with your parents doesn't mean that you have to give up your privacy. It just means that you come to an agreement based on mutual trust and understanding. While you're at it, perhaps you can help your parents better understand the Internet, what it can be used for, and how it is helpful for teens.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS TO YOUR CHILD

facts and figures on child abductions

- Children of every age, gender, and race are vulnerable to child abduction.



Approximately 203,900 children were abducted in 1999 in “family abductions” in which a family member was trying to deprive a caretaker of custodial rights.

- 98% of these children returned home.
- None of these children were killed.

Source: National Center For Missing & Exploited Children

What you should know ...

- ◆ Most strangers grab their victims on the street or try to lure them into their vehicles
- ◆ 4 in 10 child victims of violence suffered either a forcible rape or another injury
- ◆ 94% of child rape victims under the age of 12 were abused by a family member or an acquaintance/friend
- ◆ In 80% of abductions by strangers, the first contact occurs within a quarter mile of the child's home. In many cases, the abduction does, too
- ◆ According to the Justice Department, one in two rape victims is under age 18; one in six is under age 12
- ◆ Children between the ages of 12 and 17 are beaten, raped and robbed 5 times more often than adults 35 and older
- ◆ 2/3 of all prisoners convicted of rape or sexual assault had committed their crime against a child
- ◆ 3/4 of the violent victimization of children took place in either the victim's home or the offender's home
- ◆ About 10% of violent offenders with child victims received life or death sentences and the average prison term was 11 years, somewhat shorter average sentences than received by those with adult victims
- ◆ More than 1/5 of the children reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in non-family abductions are found dead!

Sources: BJS Survey of State Prison Inmates, The Arizona Rep., U.S. Justice Dept., Smithsonian

Abduction

Safety Tips For Parents

- ◆ **Make sure you know where each of your children is at all times.** Know your children's friends and be clear with your children about the places and homes they may visit. Make it a rule that your children check in with you when they arrive at or depart from a particular location and when there is a change in plans. You should also let them know when you're running late or if your plans have changed so that they can see the rule is for safety purposes and not being used to "check up" on them.
 - ◆ **Never leave children unattended in an automobile, whether it is running or not.** Children should never be left unsupervised or allowed to spend time alone or with others in automobiles, as the potential dangers to their safety outweigh any perceived convenience or "fun." Remind children to **never** hitchhike, approach a car or engage in a conversation with anyone within a car that they do not know and trust, or go anywhere with anyone without getting your permission first.
 - ◆ **Be involved in your children's activities.** As an active participant, you'll have a better opportunity to observe how the adults in charge interact with your children. If you are concerned about anyone's behavior, take it up with the sponsoring organization.
 - ◆ **Listen to your children.** Pay attention if they tell you that they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than a personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.
 - ◆ **Notice when someone shows one or all of your children a great deal of at-**
- tention or begins giving them gifts. Take the time to talk to your children about the person and find out why the person is acting in this way.
- ◆ **Teach your children that they have the right to say NO to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touch or actions by others.** Teach them to tell you immediately if this happens. Reassure them that you're there to help and it is okay to tell you anything.
 - ◆ **Be sensitive to any changes in your children's behavior or attitude.** Encourage open communication and learn how to be an active listener. Look and listen to small cues and clues that something may be troubling your children, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings. This may be because they are concerned about your reaction to their problems. If your children do confide problems to you, strive to remain calm, noncritical, and nonjudgmental. Listen compassionately to their concern, and work with them to get the help they need to resolve the problem.
 - ◆ **Be sure to screen babysitters and caregivers.** Many states now have a public registry that allows parents to check out individuals for prior criminal records and sex offenses. Check out references with other families who have



used the caregiver or babysitter. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was, and listen carefully to the responses.

- ◆ **Practice basic safety skills with your children.** Make an outing to a mall or park a "teachable" experience in which your children can practice checking with you, using pay telephones, going to the restroom with a friend, and locating the adults who can help if they need assistance. Remember that allowing your children to wear clothing or carry items in public on which their name is displayed can bring about unwelcome attention from inappropriate people who may be looking for a way to start a conversation with your children.
- ◆ **Remember that there is no substitute for your attention and supervision.** Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.

It is also important to:

- ◆ **Keep a complete description of your child**
- ◆ **Take color photographs of your child every six months**
- ◆ **Keep copies of your child's fingerprints**
- ◆ **Keep a sample of your child's DNA**
- ◆ **Know where your child's medical records are located**
- ◆ **Have your dentist prepare and maintain dental charts for your child**



Safety Tips For Children

- ◆ Always take a friend when walking or riding your bike to and from school. Stay with a group while waiting at the bus stop. It's safer and more fun to be with your friends.
- ◆ If anyone bothers you while going to or from school, get away from that person, and tell a trusted adult like your parents or teacher.
- ◆ If an adult approaches you for help or directions, remember grownups needing help should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.
- ◆ If someone you don't know or feel comfortable with offers you a ride, say NO. If someone follows you, get away from him or her as quickly as you can. Always be sure to TELL your parents or a trusted adult what happened.
- ◆ If someone tries to take you somewhere, quickly get away and yell, "This person is trying to take me away!" or "This person is not my father (mother)!"
- ◆ If you want to change your plans after school, always CHECK FIRST with your parents. Never play in parks, malls, or video arcades by yourself.
- ◆ Always CHECK FIRST with your parents or the person in charge before you go anywhere to do anything. Be sure to CHECK IN regularly with your parents or a trusted adult when you're not with them.
- ◆ Don't be tricked by people who offer you special treats or gifts. Never accept anything from anyone without your parents' permission.
- ◆ Never go into a public restroom by yourself.

Safety Tips For Teens

- ◆ Never go alone to malls, movies, video arcades, or parks. Take a friend with you, and always **CHECK FIRST** with your parents to make sure it is okay.
- ◆ Don't panic if you feel lost. Identify the safest place to go or person to ask for help in reuniting you with your family. Never search for them on your own, and never go off alone with anyone who is trying to reunite you with your family.
- ◆ Be careful when you play. Stay away from pools, canals, and other bodies of water unless you are with an adult. Don't play near busy streets or deserted areas, and never take shortcuts unless you have your parents' permission.
- ◆ Don't wear clothes or carry items with your name on the outside, and don't be confused just because someone you don't know calls out your name.
- ◆ Don't get into a car or go near a car with someone in it unless you are with your parents or a trusted adult. Never take a ride from someone without **CHECKING FIRST** with your parents.
- ◆ Be careful playing or riding your bicycle as it gets dark. Sometimes it is difficult for people driving cars to see you. Wear reflectors and protective clothing if your parents say you can play outside after dark.



- ◆ Don't go out alone. There is safety in numbers. This rule isn't just for little kids, it applies to teens, too.
- ◆ Always tell an adult where you're going. Letting someone know where you'll be at all times is smart. If you're faced with a risky situation or get into trouble, your family and friends will know where to find you.
- ◆ Say **NO** if you feel threatened. If someone - anyone - touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, you have the right to say no. Whether it is pressure about sex, drugs, or doing something that you know is wrong, be strong and stand your ground.
- ◆ If you go home alone after school, check to see that everything is okay before you go in. Once inside, lock the door, call your parents to let them know that you are okay.
- ◆ Never tell callers that your parents aren't home. Instead say that he or she can't come to the phone and offer to take a message.
- ◆ Don't open the door for or talk to anyone who comes to your home unless that person is a trusted family friend or relative and your mom or dad has said it is okay.



Steps To Take If Your Child Is Missing

It is essential that you actively participate in the search for your child. No investigator knows the case as well as you do, and no one else has as much at stake. Below is a summary list of tips on conducting your own search.

- 1 After you file a missing person's report on your child with law enforcement and request NCIC entry, contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678), your state missing children's clearinghouse, and the nearest nonprofit missing children's organization. Seek their advice about publicizing pictures of your child.
- 2 Stay in communication with law enforcement and missing children's organizations that are investigating your case. Coordinate with them to the extent feasible.
- 3 Try to remain calm. This will help you think more clearly as you organize and conduct your search.
- 4 Be persistent but polite, and be prepared to present assurances of your right to the information you are seeking.
- 5 Because the abductor may not be using his or her real name, try different names such as the abductor's maiden name, variations of the name like first and middle names only or a former or new married name.
- 6 Consider buying a fax machine to facilitate quick, inexpensive communication between you and law enforcement, missing children's organizations, clearinghouses, the media, and others.
- 7 Consider carrying a cellular telephone or pager with caller ID so that law enforcement, missing children's organizations, and even the abductor can contact you wherever you are.
- 8 Install an answering machine with caller ID on your regular telephone line(s). This will give you a record of callers and their telephone numbers. Some local telephone companies offer this service for a monthly fee.
- 9 Start a notebook. Keep a record of everything you do and every person and agency you contact including addresses and telephone numbers. Follow up periodically with each contact, and notify all of them once you have recovered your child. Keep a copy of all your correspondence concerning the abduction and search, and make notes of all actions taken on your behalf.
- 10 Keep a chart "Key Contacts in Parental-Kidnapping Cases": Law-Enforcement Agency in your community, Prosecutor (District Attorney, State Attorney, Commonwealth Attorney, Assistant Attorney General, Solicitor), Assistant Prosecutor assigned to your case, your lawyer(s), FBI, U.S. Attorney for your district, Assistant U.S. Attorney assigned to your case, support groups.
- 11 It may help to keep a file of articles on other parental-kidnapping cases as a source of ideas to aid in your search.
- 12 If the search continues beyond six months, repeat your efforts because the abductor may have moved.
- 13 When your child is located, notify every person, agency, and organization that helped you. This will allow them to focus their energies on other cases. Thank them for their help.

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency 9-1-1

Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)

Central Division.....	(213) 485-3294
Devonshire Division.....	(818) 756-8285
Foothill Division.....	(818) 756-8861
Harbor Division.....	(310) 548-7605
Hollenbeck Division.....	(213) 485-2942
Hollywood Division.....	(213) 485-4302
Newton Division.....	(323) 846-6547
North Hollywood Division.....	(818) 623-4016
Northeast Division.....	(213) 485-2563
Pacific Division.....	(310) 202-4502
Rampart Division.....	(213) 485-4061
77 th Division.....	(213) 485-4164
Southeast Division.....	(213) 485-6914
Southwest Division.....	(213) 485-2582
Van Nuys Division.....	(818) 756-8343
West L.A. Division.....	(310) 575-8404
West Valley Division.....	(818) 756-8543
Wilshire Division.....	(213) 485-4022

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

CA Department of Justice
Parent Locator Service
916-323-5628
Missing Children's Clearinghouse
916-227-3290
1-800-222-3463 (in-state only)

Abducted, Abused and Exploited Children Child Quest Intl.
1-800-248-8020

California Missing Children Hotline
1-800-222-3463

Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-540-4000

Poison Control Hotline
1-800-876-4766





CCYF Vision:

"Every Los Angeles child should reach adulthood having experienced a safe, healthy and nurturing childhood which prepares him/her to become a responsible and contributing member of the community."

The Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families would like to acknowledge and offer special thanks to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for use of their resource information included in this guide.



To obtain additional copies of
"Child Safety Guide",
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Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families
200 N. Spring Street, 22nd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 978-1840

Also available at: www.ccyf.org