

New York State School Safety Group 491

Safe Schools Agenda

____ School Business Off.
____ Athletic Director
____ Supt. Bldgs/Grounds
____ Site Administrators
____ Transportation Dir.
____ Lunch Director
____ Classroom Teachers

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A monthly service provided to help you with your efforts to make your school safe for students, staff and the public

Teen Drivers Are Vulnerable on Weekday Afternoons, Too

A new analysis of crash data conducted by AAA reveals that teenagers are at just about as much risk driving home from school as they are on Friday and Saturday nights. Between 2002 and 2005, 1,100 16 and 17 year-old drivers were involved in fatal crashes between 3 and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, compared to 1,237 on Friday and Saturday nights between 9 p.m. and 2 a.m.

AAA recommends that parents:

1. Set very clear driving rules. See a sample parent-driver agreement at <http://www.aaa.com/publicaffairs>.
2. Prohibit new teen drivers from carrying passengers during at least the first three months of driving. Limit passengers to one for the first year. Crash rates increase dramatically when young drivers take on passengers.
3. Do not permit your teen to drive with a new teen driver.
4. Ban the cell phone
5. Require your teen to wear a seat belt every time he rides in a car. Teens have the lowest seat belt use rate of any age group - and the highest crash rates.
6. Make the rules known to other adults in your teen's life.
7. Be a positive role model.

Workers' Compensation Fraud is a National Problem

Insurance fraud is a \$300 billion national problem according to Director Michael McRaith of the Illinois State Insurance Department. Fraud raises the cost of workers' compensation insurance premiums. Fraud costs both employers and employees when workers falsify injuries. The penalties for falsification of injuries, both civil and criminal, are significant. Some examples of recently reported fraud cases:

- ☞ A Long Island business owner was sentenced to six months in jail for underreporting the number of employees on his payroll. He owed the New York State Insurance Fund \$113,000 more for his insurance premium but ended up with a bill for \$89,000 and the jail term.
- ☞ A New York cement subcontractor issued a forged NYSIF certificate as proof of having workers' compensation insurance. The contractor who accepted the certificate suffered a financial loss. (Good reason to check the NYSIF electronic certificate of insurance system on all contractors and subcontractors working for the district.)
- ☞ An Ohio woman received a five year probation sentence and was ordered to repay the Bureau of Workers' Compensation \$18,540 as a result of her conviction on fraud. When she was injured on the job, an investigation revealed that she was already receiving benefits from a previous employer while currently working for four different companies.

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School Bus Safety Activities from NTSB

School Bus Safety Week was celebrated in October, but these suggestions from the National Transportation Safety Board are worth following at any time. *Note the involvement of all members of the school community in assisting the bus driver to make bus riding safe.*

- ☞ Have local law enforcement agencies conduct special patrols to increase compliance with state laws requiring vehicles to stop for school buses loading and unloading students. Be sure to include the media.
- ☞ Work with the PTA and other parent-teacher organizations to encourage parents to walk their children to the school bus. Encourage parents to discuss with their children the route they should use, where they should stand, and how they should behave as they wait for the school bus.
- ☞ Conduct a school assembly to discuss proper behavior on the school bus and how it relates to passenger safety. Include role playing; have the school bus driver play the student role and the student play the school bus driver role.
- ☞ Have each teacher discuss handrail snagging with students. Hold the discussion on a school bus for a hands-on experience. Students should take their book bags to use as props.
- ☞ Check all school buses for defective handrails. Refer to NTSB brochure “This Could Save Your Child’s Life”. If they are defective, take them out of service until they are fixed.
- ☞ Work with school and community organizations to encourage parents to review school bus safety with their children. They should discuss how to travel safely to and from the school bus stop, the rules for getting on and off the school bus, and proper behavior when riding on the school bus.
- ☞ Hold a school bus emergency evacuation drill. Involve the local police, emergency medical service, and rescue agency.
- ☞ Contact your local or state Director of Pupil Transportation to find out what safety programs they sponsor.
- ☞ Sponsor School Bus Driver Appreciation Day.
- ☞ Host Switch Roles Day. Invite school bus drivers to “become” students by attending classes with their passengers. Give students the opportunity to “become” a school bus driver. Let them sit in the driver’s seat, look in the mirrors, and see what the school bus driver sees.
- ☞ Have students draw maps of the routes they walk to the school bus, including where they stand to wait for the school bus. Discuss the safety issues that the maps display (crossing a busy intersection, where to wait for the school bus, etc.)
- ☞ Produce a television or radio news segment on school bus safety using children from the community as reporters.

NTSB Has Help for Walker Safety, Too

NTSB has a program called “Safe Routes to Schools”. The program is designed to improve the health of students and the community by making walking and bicycling to school safer, easier and more enjoyable. See www.saferoutesinfo.org.

**HAVE A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE
HOLIDAY SEASON!**