

MSU-ES Dawg Tracks



November, 2008 **PARENTS: BACKOVER SAFETY**



Children getting backed over by cars is becoming an all too common event. It always causes an injury and sometimes death. Statistics show that in the United States one child per week gets backed over by the family car or SUV. And in most cases this is in their own driveway.

Why is this happening? Probably because the parents aren't looking in their mirrors or looking behind them before they enter their car. Also, today's large SUVs, minivans and pickup trucks have a very large blind spot behind them. If you think that this isn't a problem, as a test, have your young child stand behind your car or SUV. Check to see if his or her head reaches up to the bottom of the rear window. If not, it is obvious then that you can't see them in your rear view mirror.

CONSUMER REPORTS magazine reports that this blind spot can extend from 13 to 50 feet behind a car, depending upon the type of vehicle and the height of the driver. This test was done by using a 28-inch traffic cone behind the car, and then moving it further and further back until it could be seen. Since the average pre-schooler who might run behind a car is going to be much taller than that 28 inches, this might not seem very tall. But if this same pre--school age child is sitting down or playing in the driveway, then he or she might not be seen. It's not the child that is playing 10 or 15 feet behind the car that you worry about, but the one that is directly behind the car that you may not see.

Consider that the top of the tailgate may be 4 feet or more off the ground in a large SUV, it is easy to understand why you can't see a child that is 4 or 5 years old that is standing or running right behind you as you are backing up.

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Excerpts: <http://pediatrics.about.com/od/safety>

PREVENTING BACK OVER INJURIES:

One of the best ways to prevent back over injuries is to simply make sure that your kids are not around when you start to back out. When you start out, make sure that everyone is out of the way and the kids that are outside are supervised. It is also a good investment to child-proof the doors to prevent smaller kids from getting out unsupervised.

If you change your routine of leaving or have an unexpected situation to arise and have to return to the house, watch extra carefully for the location of your kids that they haven't slipped outside, thinking that the "coast" is clear.

There are times, that no matter how careful we are, a child could get behind your car without you knowing it. There are devices on the market now that will sound an alarm as you are backing up if an object or obstruction is in your path. There are video cameras available that will let you see a child in a blind spot. If you are planning a new car purchase, you might look or ask about these options on the vehicle. There is a cheaper option available, which is a **REAR VIEW SAFETY LENS**, which can be installed on a SUV or minivan to increase your rear view.

Consumer Reports magazine states that the rear view camera system is the best option to prevent a back over incident.

If you still aren't convinced that you might back over your child or that this is a big problem, consider that during 2000 and 2003, an estimated 7,475 children (2,492 per year) between the ages of 1 and 14 years (most under 4) were treated in emergencies rooms for nonfatal motor vehicle back over injuries. This is in addition to the 91 Children and Kids reports that were backed over and killed in 2003.

**HUG YOUR KIDS AT HOME
AND
ALWAYS CHECK
BEHIND THE CARS!!!**