



Tailgate Safety Talk

Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries

Most of our safety tips focus on preventing your own injuries. This one asks you to think about another kind of misfortune. If you are involved in an crash in which a child is injured, your personal pain can be more than physical. The effect on your life can be tragic.

Three *very good* reasons for taking extra precautions when driving in a school zone, or when children are likely to be present along a street or highway, are:

- An injury could mean great pain and possible death or disfigurement to the child and unbearable sorrow to his or her family.
- Feelings of guilt and remorse for injuring or killing a child could last for the rest of your life.
- A vehicle crash such as this could result in prolonged litigation, high legal expenses and possible loss of your job if the crash was due to your carelessness.

So, which is the most important reason for driving carefully? There is no need to make a choice! They are *all* critically good reasons for staying alert as the school year begins and daylight hours get shorter. Every time you step into your company or personal vehicle, keep the following things in mind. These are reasons why children may *not* be paying attention to their safety and why *you* should:

- Making a good catch when a friend tosses a ball or another object can take a higher priority than watching out for traffic.
- Keeping an eye on that "special" classmate may take a young person's eyes off the road and distract them from oncoming vehicles.
- Even the most skilled of skateboarders, in-line skaters or bicyclists can lose control sometimes and fall or roll into the line of traffic.
- Small children can be difficult to see when light fades in the autumn and winter months and they don't always remember to "look both ways."
- Children of all ages, if they are dashing from home to catch a school bus, may take short cuts and fail to see oncoming cars in their haste.
- Many children have been injured or killed when vehicles backed over them, so always be certain the area is clear when backing out of a driveway or parking space. Even if your truck or vehicle has a back up alarm, children don't always heed them.

What other reasons can you think of for being particularly alert when driving near playgrounds, schools, or areas where young people gather? Consider them all!

Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.