



St. Lawrence County Traffic Safety Program Newsletter



Spring 2011

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Looking Ahead to Prom and Graduation

Schools have started to schedule their proms for the spring season. Teens often consider these occasions a rite of passage into adulthood. Unfortunately, this sometimes means that teens plan to include alcohol as part of their prom celebrations.

Parents sometimes dismiss concerns about underage drinking, but according to the CDC, those under 21 drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in

the US. Underage youth also tend to drink more alcohol per drinking occasion than adults. Subsequently, there were approximately 190,000 emergency room visits for injuries and other conditions related to alcohol by individuals under the legal drinking age (2008 statistics).

While the impaired driving message seems to be getting through to many young people, national statistics

from 2009 showed that 24% of the 15- to 20-year-old drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking. In St. Lawrence County, 9% of all impaired driving arrests during 2010 were under the legal drinking age.

The following tips will help parents to begin conversations about prom, graduation and beyond. By taking time to communicate with your teen, you can help make celebrations safer.



Tips for A Safe Prom Celebration

- ❖ Start well before the prom to discuss issues with your teen, including your feelings about alcohol use. Discuss situations that may arise and ways to handle them.
- ❖ Find out a complete agenda for all prom-related activities. Make sure your child lets you know where he or she will be at all times, and will let you know if there are any changes.
- ❖ Find out your school's prom policies. Communicate with your school administrators.
- ❖ Talk with other parents, especially the parents of your teen's date and friends.
- ❖ Plan for safe transportation. Make sure that your teen will not drive or ride with anyone who has been drinking. Insist that your teen wear seat belts when driving or riding in a vehicle.
- ❖ Discuss alcohol policies with the limousine company ahead of time to make sure they do not allow packages inside the limousine, and they prohibit stops where alcohol may be acquired.
- ❖ Be reachable by phone on prom night so that your teen can check in with you, or in case you need to provide a safe ride.
- ❖ Stay up to wait until your prom-goer returns, or ask your teen to wake you when arriving at home.

MOVE OVER LAW

There is a new law on the books that will help protect emergency workers who are performing their duties. As of January 1, 2011 all motorists are required to move over and slow down when encountering emergency vehicles. The law is dubbed the "Ambrose-Searles Law," named for

two police officers who were killed in the line of duty by passing motorists.

Under the new law, drivers must use due care when approaching an emergency vehicle that displays red and/or white emergency lighting. Motorists must slow down on all roads and highways. On controlled

access highways and parkways with multiple lanes, drivers must move from the lane immediately adjacent to the emergency vehicle, unless traffic or other hazards exist to prevent doing so safely.

This applies to any emergency vehicle, including

fire, ambulance, and police. Violators of the law face 2 license points, a \$275 fine, a mandatory state surcharge, and possible jail time.



NEW CAR SEAT RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to overwhelming evidence, The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has adopted new car seat recommendations for rear-facing car seats. The previous policy, while advising that it is safest for infants and toddlers to remain rear-facing to the limits of the car seat, also included a minimum age and weight of one year and 20 pounds. The AAP reported that as a result, parents often turned their children to face forward at the child's first birthday.

The AAP now advises that children should remain

rear-facing until at least the age of 2, or to the height and weight limits of the particular seat. One study showed that children under age two are 75% less likely to be killed or severely injured in a crash if they are riding rear-facing.

Most infants start out in rear-facing seat that has a base that fits in the car,



Rear-Facing Infant Seat

then use a convertible seat when the infant seat has been outgrown. The convertible seat can face forward or to the rear, depending on how it is adjusted and installed.

Advances in car seats have given consumers more options for their babies, so that there are several affordable models of infant seats that last until 30-35 pounds, and a range of convertible seats that can be used rear-facing from 35-40 pounds. Information about the size and weight limits can be found on labels that are required

to be on each seat. Some basic installation instructions are also on every car seat label. When planning to install a safety seat, consumers should read the manual that comes with the car seat, and also the child restraint information in the vehicle's owner's manual.



Rear-Facing Convertible Seat

AAP GUIDELINE SUMMARY

AGE GROUP	TYPE OF SEAT	GENERAL GUIDELINES
Infants/Toddlers	Infant Seats and Rear-Facing Convertible Seats	All Infants and toddlers should ride in a Rear-Facing Child Safety Seat until they are 2 years of age or until they reach the height and weight allowed by their car seat manufacturer.
Toddlers/Preschoolers	Convertible Seats and Forward-Facing Seats with Harnesses	After children have outgrown their rear-facing seat as above, they should ride in a forward-facing seat with harness for as long as possible up to the highest weight or height limit of the seat.
School-Aged Children	Booster Seats	After a child outgrows a seat with a harness, they should use a belt-positioning booster until the belt fits properly, typically when they reach 4'9" in height and are between 8 and 12 years old.
Older Children	Seat Belts	When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use the lap and shoulder belts for optimal protection.