



## NEWS RELEASE

KidsAndCars.org

<http://www.kidsandcars.org/>

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## No More Backing Blindly

*Children's Lives to be Saved by Proposed Regulation Focused on Auto Backovers*

**December 3, 2010** - KidsAndCars.org is elated to learn that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has prescribed the necessary solution to the devastating problem of children being backed over by vehicles and killed by proposing a comprehensive rear visibility standard for all passenger vehicles. There hasn't been an announcement this significant since seatbelts and airbags were added to vehicles. Drivers will no longer be backing up blindly.

Automobiles have been manufactured for over 100 years and there has *never* been a guideline or regulation about what a driver should be able to see when backing their vehicle. The ability to visually detect pedestrians behind vehicles is essential to prevent the thousands of injuries and deaths that occur every year when a vehicle backs up. People literally cannot be seen in the blindzone that exists behind all vehicles.

For over 10 years the national nonprofit organization, KidsAndCars.org, has been collecting data about vehicle related nontraffic incidents which include backovers. KidsAndCars.org has led the initiative to bring the magnitude of these tragic deaths and injuries to the national agenda. Educating policy makers, government officials and the public about the lack of visibility around vehicles by KidsAndCars.org was imperative for the passage of the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act and today's DOT announcement tha advocates for significant improvements for child and automotive safety. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is requiring that blindzones behind vehicles be eliminated to reduce the possibility of death and injury resulting from backing incidents, particularly incidents involving small children and the elderly.

"Expanding the field of vision for all passenger cars, pickup trucks, and minivans is necessary so drivers can see directly behind the vehicle when backing," said Janette Fennell, founder and president of KidsAndCars.org.

"The quality of rearview camera technology has advanced to the point where you can see if there are leaves on the ground when backing. We have the technology to prevent these deaths; and now we are going to use it" she added.

In the U.S. at least fifty (50) children are backed over by vehicles EVERY week. Forty-eight are treated in hospital emergency rooms and at least two children are fatality injured every WEEK. In over 70% of backover incidents involving children, it is a direct relative of that child who is the driver of the vehicle. Said another way; the people who love these children the most are suddenly responsible for their death.

This issue affects the very youngest of our children which is an unusually high percentage for any particular type of vehicle crash. KidsAndCars.org data reports that eighty percent (80%) of the fatalities involve children age 3 and under. Forty-three percent (43%) of those children are 1 year-old (12-23 months). Young children are impulsive and unpredictable; still have very poor judgment, and little understanding of danger. In addition, young children do not recognize boundaries such as property lines, sidewalks, driveways or parking spaces.

Toddlers establish independent mobility between the ages of 12-23 months, but the concept of personal safety is absent. Backovers are often the predictable consequence of a child following a parent out to the driveway and standing behind the vehicle without the parent's knowledge. The scenario plays out so frequently that KidsAndCars.org have dubbed this situation as the "bye-bye syndrome."

"We have had the honor of working with some of the most courageous parents in America throughout this entire process" states Janette Fennell. "These phenomenal families have somehow found the strength to tell their unthinkable stories over and over again about how a backover tragedy befell their family. They have worked in honor of their children to ensure that other families do not have to experience the devastating loss of a child when a loving relative was behind the wheel. This is a huge triumph for all American families but especially for those special and rare individuals who chose to channel their grief into policy change" she added.

### **Safety Tips from KidsAndCars.org**

- Walk around and behind a vehicle prior to moving it.
- Know where your kids are. Make children move away from your vehicle to a place where they are in full view before moving the car and know that another adult is properly supervising children before moving your vehicle.
- Teach children that "parked" vehicles might move. Let them know that they can see the vehicle; but the driver might not be able to see them.
- Consider installing cross view mirrors, audible collision detectors, rear view video camera and/or some type of back up detection device.
- Measure the size of your blind zone (area) behind the vehicle(s) you drive. A 5-foot-1-inch driver in a pickup truck can have a rear blind zone of approximately 8 feet wide by 50 feet long.
- Be aware that steep inclines and large SUV's, vans and trucks add to the difficulty of seeing behind a vehicle.
- Hold children's hand when leaving the vehicle.
- Teach your children to never play in, around or behind a vehicle and always set the emergency brake.
- Keep toys and other sports equipment off the driveway.
- Homeowners should trim landscaping around the driveway to ensure they can see the sidewalk, street and pedestrians clearly when backing out of their driveway. Pedestrians also need to be able to see a vehicle pulling out of the driveway.
- Never leave children alone in or around cars; not even for a minute.
- Keep vehicles locked at all times; even in the garage or driveway.
- Keys and/or remote openers should never be left within reach of children.
- Make sure all child passengers have left the car after it is parked.
- Be especially careful about keeping children safe in and around cars during busy times, schedule changes and periods of crisis or holidays.

For additional information visit [www.KidsAndCars.org](http://www.KidsAndCars.org)

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**About KidsAndCars.org:** Founded in 1996, KidsAndCars.org is a national nonprofit child safety organization dedicated to preventing injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles. KidAndCars.org promotes awareness among parents, caregivers and the general public about the dangers to children, including backover and frontover incidents, and heatstroke from being inadvertently left in a vehicle. The organization works to prevent tragedies through data collection, education and public awareness, policy change and survivor advocacy.