

Father's Day/ Spring Media Release

Driveway Run Overs: Are your children at risk this Spring?

Spring is an exciting time for Kiwi families. With the cold winter months a fading memory, parents are eager to get the kids out of the house to enjoy the warmer days—and do some spring cleaning indoors and out.



Spring however brings with it a number of injury risks, and one of the most serious is the risk of Driveway Run Over injury.

“Every two weeks a child is hospitalised with serious injuries received from a vehicle driving on a private driveway in New Zealand. A further five children are killed annually, on average. Children at risk are aged between 1 and 3 years old. Sadly fathers are most often at the wheel,” said Ann Weaver, Director of Safekids New Zealand.

Child Driveway Run Overs are however preventable. This spring and in celebration of Father's Day, Safekids asks parents to be aware of the risks by identifying the signs of a risky driveway, and know what home improvements you can make to prevent run overs from happening.

Danger signs:

- A long driveway
- A driveway in a quiet road or cul-de-sac
- A driveway that also provides pedestrian access to house (no separate pedestrian pathway)
- A driveway leading to lots of parking— cars need to be moved around to make room or allow vehicles to leave
- No physical barrier (i.e. fence) between driveway and outdoor play area.

What you can do: CHECK, SUPERVISE and SEPARATE.

CHECK:

- ✓ Count the kids before you manoeuvre. Make sure they are belted safely in the car or in a safe place with an adult.
- ✓ Understand how big the blind zones are around your car. Driveway run overs can happen driving forward and reversing.
- ✓ Keep cars locked and don't let children use driveways as play areas.

SUPERVISE:

- ✓ Ensure a responsible person (not a group of kids) is actively supervising toddlers and young children.
- ✓ Late afternoon and early evening are particularly risky times. Special efforts are needed then to make sure children are safe.

SEPARATE:

- ✓ Consider how to separate children from all areas used for driving. You might need to install a childproof gate at doors or exits that lead to driveways.
- ✓ Infants and toddlers should have safe, fenced play spaces.
- ✓ If you're visiting someone's house, park on the road instead of the driveway.
- ✓ If you're expecting visitors, ask them to park on the road or put up a barrier to stop them parking in the drive.



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About Safekids New Zealand

Safekids New Zealand is the injury prevention service of Starship Children's Health and a member of Safe Kids Worldwide. Our mission is to reduce the incidence and severity of unintentional injuries to New Zealand's children aged 0 - 14 years. For more information, contact Anthony Rola at anthonyr@adhb.govt.nz, visit www.safekids.org.nz or call 09 631 0717.