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The Home
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PREVENTING VEHICLE BACKOVER INJURIES & DEATHS

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, every year over 7,000 children are hospitalized and there are over 180 deaths because a driver backing up couldn't see them (that's nearly 4 every day!). Because there are more SUVs and minivans today that are much taller than a typical car, they have a very large blind spot behind them, especially for shorter drivers where their blind spot distance may be as much as 50 feet behind the vehicle. And over 60% of all backup injuries occur with a larger vehicle.

The majority of children that are injured are between 1 and 2 years of age. These children are mobile and can move relatively quickly and may tend to follow a parent that is leaving in a vehicle. Or they may be playing behind a parked vehicle. But these incidents are very preventable.

Here are The Home Safety Guru's suggestions:

- As you are leaving your home, tell someone there that you are leaving to ensure that the child does not try to follow you out of your home. If they are outside, make certain that another adult is properly watching them and they are in full view before moving the vehicle.
- Before getting into a vehicle, you should walk all the way around the vehicle.
- Backup slowly and look in all of your mirrors. You may also need to turn the radio volume down and open a window so that you can hear what may be going on around your vehicle.
- Instruct children that they should never be in front or behind a vehicle. Also, teach them to never play inside or around a vehicle.
- Keep playthings and sports equipment away from the driveway.
- Always make certain that landscaping will not keep you from seeing behind or to the side of you, or for someone else from seeing you while backup up. If need be, trim these back.
- If buying a new vehicle, consider purchasing one that has a factory installed backup camera. For an existing vehicle, consider installing an after-market backup monitoring system. A camera is mounted around the rear license plate and a monitor is mounted on the dashboard. These can be purchased at a variety of car parts companies and also online at retailers such as Amazon.com.
- Always keep your vehicle locked, even when it is in a garage, to prevent a young child from taking a car out of park, and use your parking brake.

These incidents are preventable. All it takes is a little vigilance on the parents' part and possibly a backup camera system.

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Louie Delaware, The Home Safety Guru™, president and founder of US Safety Pros, LLC is a Certified Child & Home Safety Professional in all aspects of home safety, from childproofing to home safety, radon testing & mitigation along with fire, carbon monoxide and barrier free construction. US Safety Pros has helped safeguard over 700 homes. For more information about Louie Delaware, go to his web site, www.HomeSafetyGuru.com.

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