



NEWS

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**ILLINOIS TOLLWAY AND ILLINOIS STATE POLICE TO HOST
SEPTEMBER 23 FAMILY SAFETY FAIR IN DOWNERS GROVE**

Family fun and safety exhibits include free kids' ID cards, child safety seat inspection and installation, Jesse White Tumblers and touch-a-truck display

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway and Illinois State Police District 15 will host the 10th Annual Family Safety Fair on Saturday, September 23, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Tollway's headquarters in Downers Grove to wrap up Operation Kid 2017. The free event combines fun and safety, with family friendly activities and the opportunity for free kids' identification cards and child safety seat inspections and installations with a goal of keeping children safe and parents worry-free, every trip, every time.

The Family Safety Fair, which takes place at 2700 Ogden Avenue in Downers Grove, coincides with Child Passenger Safety Week (September 17-23) and National Seat Check Saturday, a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration campaign to remind everyone of the lifesaving effect child safety seats have in protecting children from birth through age 12.

This event concludes the Operation Kid 2017 program offered by the Illinois Tollway and Illinois State Police District 15, which featured 9 Kids Identification and Safety Seat (K.I.S.S.) events at locations around Northern Illinois. During those K.I.S.S. events, District 15 issued about 725 child IDs and inspected more than 350 child safety seats to help keep kids safe.

"The Family Safety Fair mixes safety with fun by offering programs that help parents protect their children while also providing entertaining activities for the kids," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. "Working with Illinois State Police District 15 to host this event on Seat Check Saturday demonstrates how seriously we take our responsibility to protect families."

Highlights of the Family Safety Fair include:

- Child safety seat inspections and installations and free identification cards for children ages 3 and older
- Exhibits showing the importance of wearing seat belts including the Roll 15 rollover simulator, the Convincer crash simulator and Drive for Life, a hands-on, behind-the-wheel experience that demonstrates the dangers of drinking and driving
- Touch-a-truck display offering exploration of roadway and emergency vehicles, including a Tollway H.E.L.P. truck, a 26-ton snowplow, Illinois State Police squad cars, a SWAT tactical response truck, Lisle-Woodridge Fire Protection District fire truck and ambulance and a Pace express bus
- DuPage County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management public education vehicle featuring interactive demonstrations on emergency preparedness
- Entertainment including a performance by the Jesse White Tumblers, an inflatable bounce house and face painters for kids

"Installing child safety seats and booster seats correctly can save lives or prevent serious injuries in the event of car crashes, which are a leading cause of death among children, yet we've found that about 90

percent of the seats checked by Illinois State Police have been improperly installed,” said District 15 Commander Robert Meeder. “The Family Safety Fair gives us the opportunity to help keep children safe by inspecting safety seats to ensure they are correctly installed.”

Certified child passenger safety technicians will be on hand to inspect and install child safety seats and help drivers stay up-to-date with the latest safety seat information and educational materials. Properly installed safety seats eliminate a potential distraction for drivers and significantly reduce the risk of injury or greater tragedy for children in the event of an accident.

Safety seat inspections also offer a convenient way for drivers to make sure they comply with Illinois law, which requires that whenever a person is transporting a child under age 8, the person is responsible for properly securing the child in an appropriate child restraint system. To participate, parents, grandparents and caregivers should bring child safety seats, children and the vehicle in which the child safety seats will be installed.

Specially trained professionals also will be available to take kids' photographs and fingerprints and gather vital information to include on three personal identification cards – one for home and two for a wallet or purse. Neither Illinois State Police nor the Illinois Tollway keeps this information in a database. Once the ID card is issued to the guardian, the information is deleted.

U.S. Department of Justice reports have estimated that some 340,500 children a year become temporarily separated from a parent or caregiver for at least an hour. If a child goes missing, an up-to-date, good quality photo along with descriptive information is one of the most important tools law enforcement needs to help locate the child, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited children.

Missing Child Basics

Information provided on kids ID cards can help law enforcement search and recover a missing child. That includes a description of the child's hair and eye color, height, weight, race, unique identifiers such as glasses or beauty marks, as well as date of birth, current photo and fingerprints.

The FBI suggests that parents keep their children's fingerprints, not only because fingerprints are unique but also because they don't change over time like a child's appearance. The FBI also recommends that parents update the photos of their children on ID cards at least once a year to ensure they are current.

With increased public awareness, training, laws and better technology, the recovery rate of missing children has jumped from 62 percent in 1990 to more than 97 percent today, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Child Safety Seat Basics

Illinois law requires that whenever a person is transporting a child under age 8, the person is responsible for properly securing the child in an appropriate child restraint system. The safest place for infants, toddlers and young children to ride is in the back seat with the appropriate child safety seat for their age and weight.

Infants should ride rear-facing until 2 years of age, longer if possible, to protect their developing head muscles and bones. Toddlers and young children should ride in a child safety seat with an internal harness until they reach the maximum harness limit of the child restraint. A booster seat is the most effective way to position a safety belt properly on a young child's growing body.

Safety belts are designed for adults who are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall. Until age 8, most children have not developed strong hipbones and their legs and bodies are too short for the adult safety belt to fit correctly without use of a booster seat.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for children ages 3 and up, but research has found child safety seats reduce fatal injury by up to 71 percent for infants and up to 54 percent for toddlers in passenger cars, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 292 miles of roadways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.

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