



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY AND ILLINOIS STATE POLICE TO HOST FAMILY SAFETY FAIR ON SEPTEMBER 21 IN DOWNERS GROVE

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway and Illinois State Police District 15 will host the 12th annual Family Safety Fair on Saturday, September 21, 2019, in Downers Grove. The event features fun and safety exhibits including a performance by the Jesse White Tumblers and free seat checks and kids ID cards.

The fair coincides with Child Passenger Safety Week (September 15-21) and National Seat Check Saturday, part of a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration effort to educate parents and caregivers to ensure their children are secured in the correct car seat for the child's age, height and weight.

"The Family Safety Fair is a great place for families to come together to learn how to be safe on the roads and have fun," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. "The free event allows parents, grandparents and caregivers to get their child safety seats checked, pick up free ID cards for their kids and enjoy other fun activities."

This event from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Tollway headquarters, 2700 Ogden Avenue in Downers Grove, is part of the Operation Kid 2019 program offered by the Illinois Tollway and Illinois State Police District 15, which includes 10 Kids Identification and Safety Seat (K.I.S.S.) events at locations around Northern Illinois.

Highlights of the Family Safety Fair include:

- Performance by the Jesse White Tumblers at 1:15 p.m.
- 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 Pace bus.
- Interactive 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.
- Exhibits from the DuPage Children's Museum and Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and an appearance by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois Blue Bear.

"The Family Safety Fair provides a convenient way for drivers to make sure they're complying with Illinois law and learn about driving safety," said District 15 Acting Commander Dominic Chiappini. "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."

Certified child passenger safety technicians will inspect child safety seats and help parents and caregivers with proper installation. Some of the more common problems District 15 inspectors pinpoint include child facing the wrong direction, too much slack in harness straps, not properly securing the car seat, improper child restraint for the child's weight and the need for booster seats for older children.

Illinois law requires that all children under age 8 must be properly secured in an appropriate child restraint system when riding in a vehicle with family or other caregivers. In addition, as of January 1, 2019, children under age 2 years are required by Illinois law to ride rear-facing, unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds or is 40 or more inches tall, to protect their developing muscles and bones.

Properly installed child safety seats save lives and significantly reduce injuries in the event of a crash. Yet, Illinois State Police find that more than 90 percent of child safety seats they inspect are improperly installed. 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 take photographs and fingerprints of children 3 and older and gather vital information to include on an ID card that parents and caregivers can reference in an emergency. If a child gets lost, an up-to-date, good-quality photo along with fingerprints and descriptive information can help law enforcement locate the child. 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.

Child Safety Seat Basics

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. Rear-facing child safety seats protect a growing baby's head, neck and back in an accident. Toddlers and young children should ride in a child safety seat with an internal harness until age 8 or 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 hip bones and their legs and bodies are too short for the adult safety belt to fit correctly without use of a booster seat.

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.

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.

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 294 miles of roadways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the 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.