



**BLANK CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL**
IOWA HEALTH SYSTEM



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Iowa SAFE KIDS Reminds Truck Owners to Protect Their Children

As fall approaches, the Iowa SAFE KIDS Coalition encourages farmers to keep their children safe in trucks during the harvest season. “For many in Iowa, farming is a family affair,” says Lisa Roth, coordinator of the Iowa SAFE KIDS Coalition. “Children often think it’s fun to ride in the bed of the pick-up truck when the family heads out to the field or along country roads. But, parents need to realize that with Iowa’s new Child Passenger Safety Law, having children ride in the bed of a truck is illegal, not to mention extremely dangerous.”

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the risk of death to occupants in the cargo area of a pick-up truck is eight times more likely than for those restrained in the cab. Nationally in 1997, 161 deaths of occupants in the cargo area were reported, almost half of which (48 percent) were children under the age of 20. The most significant hazard, ejection from the vehicle, can happen in both crash and non-crash events, such as sudden stops, turns and swerves, loss of balance and intentional or unintentional jumps or falls. According to the AAP, from 1987 to 1996, almost one-third of all deaths among occupants of the cargo area were a result of non-crash events.

The Iowa SAFE KIDS Coalition offers these precautions to keep you and your family safe:

- Children of *any age* should **NEVER** ride in the cargo area of a pick-up truck.
- According to Iowa’s new Child Passenger Safety Law, children must ride:
 - Rear-facing until one year of age and at least 20 pounds.
 - In a child safety seat or booster seat through the age of 5.
 - In a booster seat or seat belt between the ages of 6 and 11.
- Child safety seats should **NEVER** be used in a side-facing jump seat or on a rear bench seat where less than 80 percent of the safety seat’s base is on the vehicle seat.
- Rear-facing infant seats should **NEVER** be used in a front passenger seat equipped with an airbag.
- If a rear- or forward-facing child safety seat must be used in the front seat of a pick-up truck, the passenger-side airbag should be turned off.

“Rural areas have higher crash incidence and death rates than urban areas,” says Roth. “And most crashes occur within 25 miles of home on roads with posted speed limits of 40 mph or less. Parents really need to be vigilant when it comes to protecting their children on rural roads this fall.”

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The Iowa SAFE KIDS Coalition is part of SAFE KIDS Worldwide, the first and only national nonprofit organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injury — the number one killer of children ages 14 and under. More than 300 state and local SAFE KIDS coalitions in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico make up the Campaign. Blank Children’s Hospital serves as the lead organization for the Iowa SAFE KIDS Coalition. For more information regarding SAFE KIDS Worldwide, or to find a SAFE KIDS Coalition near you, visit www.safekids.org or contact Jennifer Perry, Blank Children’s Hospital, 515-241-5283 or cell 515-205-6090, or email perryja@ihs.com.