



## SUV Backover Deaths: What Can Be Done?



One thing many SUV buyers like about their vehicles is the increased visibility. They feel like they can see farther down the road over the roofs

of other cars. What SUV drivers can't see is what's close behind them and, when backing out of a driveway or parking spot, it could be a person. In many cases, it's a small child.

More than 2,400 children are backed-up over every year in the United States. Of those, about 100 are killed. In most cases, those children are run over by a parent or other relative.

Julie Peck's son, Jackson, was four years old when he was killed two days before Christmas. Jackson's grandmother couldn't see the young boy running up from behind just as she was backing up the family's SUV.

According to a spokesperson for Kids and Cars, this is called the "bye-bye" syndrome. This is common because the child wants one last chance to see mommy, daddy or grandma before they leave so the child will run up behind the vehicle at the worst possible time. Small children don't realize that the driver may not be able to see them.

While most drivers are aware that there are areas behind their vehicle in which they cannot see, many don't realize how large those areas can be. The problem is worse in trucks and SUV's than in other vehicles because of their increased height and the distance between the driver and the tailgate or rear window. More and more people are buying bigger and bigger cars and the bigger the vehicle, the larger the blindspot.

David Champion of Consumer Reports illustrated this point by using 28-inch-high cones, about the height of a typical two-year old. The cone had to be 10

feet, 10 inches from the back of a Subaru Impreza sedan before it became visible in the rear-view mirror. The cone had to be a little over 18 feet to be seen from the driver's seat of a Dodge Grand Caravan minivan and it was invisible up to 25 feet from the back of a large Toyota Tundra pick-up.

From the driver's seat of a Chevrolet Suburban, a large SUV, the cone wasn't visible until it was 46 feet, nine inches away. For a shorter driver, the blind spots are even larger.

Various factors, besides just the size of the vehicle, can affect the size of blind-spots. Small windows can make blind-spots larger, for example, while high-mounted seats can make them smaller.

On big vehicles there can be up to 40 feet of blind spot behind the vehicle and that is where the backover incidents are occurring. Currently, automakers are not really addressing this issue because there is not enough data for them to come up with a solution.

Optional equipment available on trucks and SUV's can help solve this problem. Some cars and trucks are already available with sensors that sound an audible warning when something is close behind and the vehicle is in reverse. Some even have video cameras that show what is behind the vehicle.

For vehicles that don't have this equipment, there are other options that you can install yourself. Back-up video camera systems cost a few hundred dollars while radar-based sensors cost less, generally cost a couple of hundred dollars. Some of these items take just a few minutes to install.

Some worry that these systems will cause the driver to rely solely on the technology instead of always checking behind their vehicle before backing up.

The best way to combat this fear is with public education on the technology that is installed in their vehicles.

Source: CNN November 2005



## Risk Higher For Truckers in the 11th Hour



In January 2004, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration raised the limit of consecutive driving hours for truckers to eleven hours.

increased crash risk with hours of driving, particularly in the ninth, tenth and eleventh hours.

In their most recent study, the researchers also found that multi-day driving schedules, over seven days, were associated with significant crash risk increases similar in magnitude to extended driving time.

In addition, separate analyses of the records of drivers who operate trucks that have sleep compartments with those that do not have sleeping compartments show that there is a strong association of crash risk and driving time for sleeper operations, especially in the eighth, tenth and eleventh hours. Non-sleeper operations associate crash risk with multi-day driving somewhat more than driving time.

Considered as a whole, these results reveal important differences in crashes associated with two different types of trucking operations. One tentative conclusion is the rigors of sleeper operations appear to result in a greater decline in performance at extended hours than for comparable non-sleeper operations.

Source: *Trucking Info*

A newly published Penn State study found that the crash risk for truckers in the last hour of a now legal eleven-hour day behind the wheel is more than three times higher than during the first hour. The data included in this study analyzes statistics from three national trucking companies during normal operations in 2004. The study found "the crash risk is statistically similar for the first six hours of driving and then increases in significant steps thereafter. The 11th hour has a crash risk more than three times the first hour." The Penn State researchers also found that the 10th hour of driving had a crash risk 2.1 risk times the first hour of driving.

Their findings included recent data as well as data from the 1980's in order to compare the findings. The researchers found that there is a consistent pattern of

## Driving And Glare



In winter, driving and glare can be a dangerous mix. During the winter months, highly reflective snow and ice can temporarily blind motorists, endangering their safety as well as that of other drivers and pedestrians sharing the road. The Vision Council of America offers these tips to reduce the dangers caused

- ◆ Turn on headlights to counteract the poor visibility of oncoming drivers.
- ◆ Wear sunglasses at all times. Polarized lenses reduce glare, while lenses with UV protection shield eyes from damage.

For more information on safe winter driving, contact the Utah Safety Council at (801) 478-7878 or (800) 933-5943 outside the Salt Lake Metro area.

### Free Materials Available

Drive Friendly Stickers  
Road Rage Brochures  
Buckle Up For Love Posters and Brochures

To request free materials, contact Brandee Sommer at 800-933-5943 ext. 307 or through email at [bsommer@utahsafetycouncil.org](mailto:bsommer@utahsafetycouncil.org)

Source: Safety + Health  
December 2005



by winter glare:

- ◆ Drive cautiously and leave a proper distance between you and the vehicle in front of you to ensure ample reaction time.
- ◆ Lower visors to help block some of the reflected light.
- ◆ Avoid using high-gloss vinyl cleaners on dashboards.
- ◆ Always keep the windshield clean and the windshield washer fluid reservoir full.
- ◆ Choose routes lined with trees or tall buildings rather than ones with extreme exposure to the sun.

## Van Driver Safety



Many organizations mistakenly assume that van driving is no different than driving a personal car, and they expect their employees

(or volunteers) to assume van-driving responsibilities without any training. Most commercial vans are very different than passenger cars and require longer following and stopping distances. Training drivers to compensate for these differences can help keep them on the road and on the job. The Utah Safety Council is offering a Train-the-Trainer Seminar to assist organizations in training van drivers. **Registration for this course includes a complete instructor package consisting of an Instructor Guide, Video, Response Book, and a set of transparencies, etc.**

Topics addressed include:

- Van characteristics
- Pre-trip inspection

- Safety belts
- Scanning
- Blind spots
- City, highway and rural driving
- Backing

Driver Response Book, which includes:

- Self-Appraisal
- Safe Driving Situations
- Driving Environment Analyses
- Special Considerations Review
- Driver Summary
- Collision Reporting Review
- Passenger/Cargo Review

Members of the Utah Safety Council receive a discount for this training. To register for this dynamic training program, contact the Utah Safety Council at (801) 478-7878 ext. 307 or (800) 933-5943 ext. 307 outside the Salt Lake Metro area.

**Fee: Member \$400                      Date: January 30, 2006**  
**Non-Member \$500                      Time: 9:00am - 3:00 pm**

## New-Vehicle Buyers Interested in Side-Impact Airbags



Safety-related equipment, such as side-impact airbags, remains a top priority for new vehicle buyers, according to J.D. Power and Associates. The study examines 49 vehicle features in two categories: traditional and emerging. Traditional technologies are those that are well established in the market, such as anti-lock brakes, multi CD changers and all wheel

drive options. Emerging features such as active cornering headlight systems, MP3 playback capabilities and satellite radio, utilize the most up-to-date, cutting edge technology available.

Among emerging features included in the 2005 report, side impact airbags have the highest market penetration at 46 percent and the highest desirability among consumers at 82 percent. Penetration for side-impact airbags has been increasing at a constant rate and is up 8 percentage points from 2004. Demand is also high for other emerging safety-related features, including stability control, electronic traction control and run-flat tires.

Although the demand is high for safety-related features, the gap between consumers who have such features and those who desire them is very large. Consumers have expressed that they are

willing to pay generously for cutting-edge safety technologies. By increasing safety-related options on new vehicles, manufacturers will satisfy consumer demand and yield greater returns on their investments.

Six new features are examined in the 2005 report, including manually adjustable driver lumbar support; power adjustable lumbar support; power adjustable passenger lumbar support; and Sirius and XM satellite radio. Satellite radio is poised to become an integral part of audio systems in new vehicles. As this feature continues to be aggressively promoted, demand and market penetration will rapidly increase.

Among traditional features, anti-lock brakes have the highest penetration and desirability for a third consecutive year. With market penetration at 87 percent, manufacturers have essentially met consumer demand for this feature. Automatic transmission and split fold-down seats follow anti-lock brakes in penetration and desirability among traditional features.

For more information on buying a safer car or view safety ratings you can log onto [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/testing/ncap/pages/ResourcesLinksBSC.htm](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/testing/ncap/pages/ResourcesLinksBSC.htm).

Source: J.D. Power and Associates November 2005





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## NETS NEWS

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### Utah NETS

1574 West 1700 South, Suite 2A  
Salt Lake City, UT 84104

**Phone:** (801) 478-7878

**Toll Free:** (800) 933-5943

**Fax:** (801) 478-0884

**E-Mail:** [safety@utahsafetycouncil.org](mailto:safety@utahsafetycouncil.org)

**Web Site:** [www.utahsafetycouncil.org](http://www.utahsafetycouncil.org)

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1574 West 1700 South, Suite 2A  
Salt Lake City, UT 84104

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