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SAFE KIDS IN THE NEWS

Survey Finds New Yorkers Not Adequately Protected from Silent Killer (PR Newswire, New York) | [TOP](#)

February 17

New Law Requires Carbon Monoxide Alarms in Most Homes





MEBANE, N.C., Feb. 17 /PRNewswire/ -- As the effective date for "Amanda's Law" nears, a new survey on behalf of Kidde shows that many New York homes are underprotected from carbon monoxide (CO), an odorless, tasteless and poisonous gas that kills 400 people annually. Kidde, a leading manufacturer of fire safety products, is part of UTC Fire & Security and a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp. (UTX).

Conducted in October 2009 by Brown Yardley and DecisionAnalyst, the survey found that more than half of respondents may not be safe from CO because they either do not have a carbon monoxide alarm or do not have enough alarms for the size of their home. Three-fourths of New York homeowners live in a multilevel home, yet 37% of them have only one CO alarm installed. Kidde and safety officials recommend placing a CO alarm on each floor and near sleeping areas.

"The only safe way to detect carbon monoxide in your home is with a working CO alarm," said Rosemarie Ennis, coordinator for Safe Kids New York State, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing childhood injuries. "Families need to place an alarm on every floor so that they can hear it when it sounds."

Named after 16-year-old CO victim, Amanda Hansen, "Amanda's Law" goes into effect on February 22, and requires the installation of a CO alarm in all new and existing one and two-family dwellings, multifamily dwellings and rentals with a fuel-burning appliance, system or attached garage.

"Amanda's Law expands upon our state's previous law, which only required CO alarms in new homes or when a home was sold," said Paul D. Martin, chief of New York State's Bureau of Fire Prevention. "Now, thousands of families will be better protected from this silent killer."

Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in America, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State health records show that from 2000-2006, 870 New York residents were hospitalized due to unintentional non-fire related CO poisoning. US Census data shows that nearly all (90.5%) of New York housing uses some form of fossil-fuel burning heat source (gas, fuel oil, or kerosene), which can generate carbon monoxide.

The survey found that most homeowners recognize potential household CO sources, such as a furnace, water heater, fireplace, or a generator, but 83% didn't know when to replace a CO alarm.

"CO alarms monitor your home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are designed to provide accurate readings throughout the device's lifetime," said Chris Rovenstine, director of marketing and sales for Kidde. "However, they don't last forever, and in general should be replaced every five years. Kidde CO alarms have a lifetime of seven years. If you don't know how old your alarm is, don't take a chance; replace it today."

A carbon monoxide alarm with a digital display will show the level of CO present, while battery backup will protect families during a power outage. Homeowners should also have their furnaces and fireplaces



inspected annually and not use un-vented gasoline or kerosene space heaters or generators inside the home.

For more information on CO safety, visit www.kidde.com.

About Kidde

As the world's largest manufacturer of fire safety products, Kidde's mission is to provide solutions that protect people and property from the effects of fire and its related hazards. For more than 90 years, industry leaders, the military, airlines and firefighters have relied on Kidde to deliver superior fire detection and suppression. Consumers will find that same advanced fire safety technology in Kidde's residential and commercial smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, fire extinguishers and other life safety products.

Based in Mebane, NC, Kidde is part of UTC Fire and Security, which provides fire safety and security solutions to more than one million customers worldwide. Headquartered in Connecticut, UTC Fire & Security is a business unit of United Technologies Corp., which provides high technology products and services to the building and aerospace industries worldwide. More information can be found at www.utcfireandsecurity.com.

SOURCE Kidde

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/survey-finds-new-yorkers-not-adequately-protected-from-silent-killer-84582167.html>

Kids Safety 101: Tips for Childproofing Your Home (IdahoStatesman.com, Idaho) | [TOP](#)

February 16 / Alissa McKinley, Special to the Idaho Statesman

Approximately 2,096 children in the United States, ages 14 and under, die from accidental injuries in the home each year and 3 million kids are treated in emergency rooms for accidental injuries occurring at home. Young children are particularly at risk. For instance, nearly 80 percent of those deaths in 2004 were among children ages 4 and under. Most fatal injuries at home are caused by fire, suffocation, drowning, choking, falls, poisoning or firearms discharged unintentionally.

Safe Kids Treasure Valley urges parents and caregivers to check their homes for basic safety precautions. There's no substitute for active supervision, but here are some measures you can take:

® **Look at every room as your child would.** Ask yourself what looks interesting and what can be reached. Get down on your hands and knees, and check for small things children can choke on such as





jewelry, coins, small toy parts, buttons, pins, nails, batteries and stones. Be sure to keep all plastic bags out of reach and cover electrical outlets that are not in use.

® **Always supervise children while they're in the bathroom** and follow other important safety guidelines. Set your water heater at 120 degrees and test the bathwater with your wrist or elbow before putting your child in it. Keep toilet lids closed and locked, and doors to bathrooms and utility rooms closed. When not in use, put razors, curling irons, and hair dryers out of reach. Never leave young children alone in the bathtub - a child can drown in a matter of seconds.

® **Always supervise young children while they're eating.** To avoid choking, don't allow children under age 3 to eat small, round or hard foods, including hot dogs, hard candy, nuts, grapes and popcorn.

® **Prevent serious falls.** Keep furniture away from windows, install guards or stops on windows that are not emergency exits, install safety gates at the top and the bottom of stairs, never use baby walkers and use protective surfaces beneath playground equipment.

® **Avoid exposing children to potential poisons.** Lock up potential poisons out of children's reach, including cleaning supplies, pet food, medicine, vitamins, beer, wine and liquor. Read labels and follow directions when giving medicine to children. Know which houseplants are poisonous and keep them where children can't reach them.

® **Keep emergency numbers by every telephone.** Call 911 if a child is choking, collapses, can't breathe or is having a seizure. If you suspect a child has been poisoned, call 1-800-222-1222.

® **Safety comes first, even if it means making your home a little less convenient for adults.** Safety gates and cabinet locks are a small price to pay to keep a child out of the emergency room. For more information about kitchen safety, window blinds, cribs, windows, furniture and other hazards around the home, visit www.usa.safekids.org.

® **Keep guns locked, unloaded and where kids can't reach them.** And lock up ammunition in a separate place.

® **Install a self-closing and self-latching gate around the home swimming pool.** Make sure the fence surrounds the entire pool.

® **Test your smoke alarms every month:** Make sure you have working smoke alarms in every level of your home, outside each sleeping area and in every bedroom. Also, check for fire hazards such as frayed electrical wires or flammable materials near heating appliances.





® **Install carbon monoxide detectors** in every sleeping area and test them every month. This invisible, odorless gas can be fatal. Make sure heating systems are vented outside and checked every year.

® **Check your first aid kit** to make sure it is fully stocked. Make sure babysitters know where to find first aid supplies and how to handle an emergency.

Alissa McKinley is the Safe Kids coordinator at St. Luke's Children's Hospital and a certified car passenger safety technician. Safe Kids works to prevent accidental injuries to children in the Treasure Valley.

<http://www.idahostatesman.com/life/story/1081687.html>

RISK AREA NEWS

Legislators Hear Plea for Stricter Car-Seat Law (TribStar.com, Indiana) [| TOP](#)

February 13 / Brian M. Boyce, The Tribune-Star

TERRE HAUTE — Current state law is insufficient regarding adults who fail to place children in car-seats, a local grandparent told legislators Saturday morning.

James Wallace addressed participants in that morning's legislative crackerbarrel session inside the Vigo County Public Library as he relayed the story of his 5-year-old, 35-pound granddaughter's involvement in a car wreck this December that left her paralyzed and an inpatient at Riley Hospital for Children. The adult driving the car, he said, did not place her in a car-seat, but used a lap-style seatbelt.

The penalty for failing to use a car-seat amounts to what Wallace described as a "\$25 fine."

"We're seeking mandatory jail time," he said of his family's desire to see legislation created. Wallace said local prosecutors were "stunned" that while legislation is in effect requiring children of a specific size to be in the seats, there is little penalty for those who break the law.

Rep. Clyde Kersey (D-Terre Haute) acknowledged receiving information from Wallace in his endeavor, and both he and Sen. Tim Skinner (D-Terre Haute) said they would work with him on producing something to that end, although it probably won't make it through this session.

Swamped with ongoing money woes, area legislators said finances are heavy on everyone's mind.

"This session is going by very fast," Rep. Nancy Michael (D-Greencastle) said, referring to many bills which are "dying on the vine" as a result.





The problem of jobless Hoosiers has Indiana more than \$1 billion in debt to the federal government as it struggles to pay out unemployment benefits, and officials said the result of that will be far from pretty.

Kersey said the legislature is struggling to enact bills passed last year to handle it as businesses oppose tax hikes and the unemployed want more benefits. The result, he warned, could be the federal government "taking over" the state's unemployment system and managing it in a way no one likes if progress isn't made.

Meanwhile, the impact of Gov. Mitch Daniels' \$300 million cut in the education budget has schools laying off teachers and slashing programs, a trend all involved warned could worsen.

Rep. Vern Tincher (D-Riley) and Skinner said state revenue is about \$75 million lower than initially projected, compounding on prior years' deficits and adding to the number of programs already cut.

Tincher reiterated his opposition to placing property tax caps in the state's constitution as he blamed them for some of the revenue shortfalls while forcing counties to offset the cuts elsewhere. Clay County, he said, has established local option income taxes which have negated any possible benefit the property tax cuts could have had. Also, about 82 percent of Vigo County homeowners will never benefit from the caps as their assessed value makes it unreachable, he said.

Meanwhile, Rep. Bruce Borders (R-Jasonville) said he will continue to fight for legislation to prevent the "cash cow" that is unnecessary hysterectomies.

Borders said he has become passionate about the problem of women being led, and in some cases, almost tricked, into getting hysterectomies in cases where the procedure wasn't medically needed. The procedure is so profitable, he said, it's a "cash cow" for doctors and hospitals who don't care about the long-term ramifications to the woman's health.

While undergoing treatment for other issues, women are often told "while they're in there" the doctor might as well perform the hysterectomy if she isn't going to have any more children.

"This is no different than telling a man they might as well take out his testicles if he isn't going to have any more children," Borders said, referring to the process as high-profit castration. After undergoing a hysterectomy however, a woman's bone mass deteriorates and her chance for heart disease sky-rockets, he said.

Louise Anderson of the Indiana State Nurses' Association said the problem of unnecessary surgical procedures extends beyond hysterectomies and into nearly every realm of the body because doctors and hospitals make more money per surgical procedure.

"We pay, in this country, by the procedure," she said, calling the problem a huge part of the health care





issue in America.

Borders agreed, describing insurance billing practices where the physicians are reimbursed per "organ or part taken out."

"They're ripped up unnecessarily in many cases," he said.

http://www.tribstar.com/news/local_story_044210500.html

Police Aim to Make Crosswalks Safer (The Gainesville Sun, Florida) [TOP](#)

February 14 / Karen Voyles, Staff Writer

Drivers in and around Gainesville are being given a choice. They can begin paying attention to pedestrians in crosswalks, or they can pay a \$154 fine. The choice for pedestrians will be to use crosswalks or pay a \$52 fine for jaywalking.

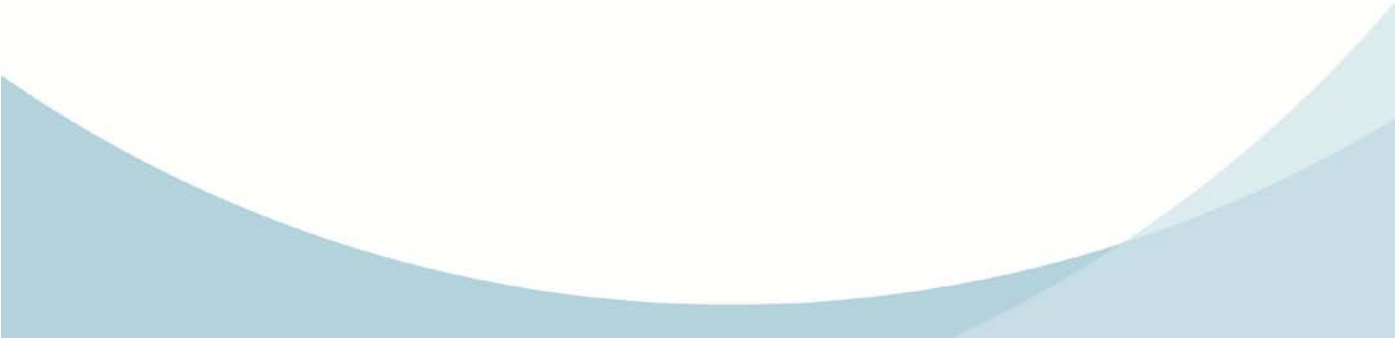
Gainesville and University of Florida police, along with the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, have begun a yearlong crackdown to improve pedestrian safety. The motivation for the campaign was this local statistic: nearly three traffic crashes per week involve a pedestrian. Gainesville Police Sgt. Joe Raulerson said the campaign is probably overdue in a city the size of Gainesville.

"What we want to do is to increase the yield rate by drivers for pedestrians to at least 60 percent," Raulerson said. "I think education is going to be a key to that."

Raulerson and others with extensive traffic enforcement experience said they frequently encounter drivers - and pedestrians - who are unclear or unaware of the state laws involved.

In Florida, drivers are required to yield to pedestrians who have entered crosswalks and must stop when necessary to let a pedestrian cross the street, Raulerson said. While many crosswalks are marked, Raulerson said drivers must also yield or stop for pedestrians at intersections without pavement markings.

To help drivers be more aware of crosswalks, the city applied for and received a \$94,000 federal grant and help from J.E. Louis Malenfant, an educational psychologist who wrote his doctoral dissertation on crosswalk safety.





Malenfant is considered the guru of pedestrian safety in many parts of Florida for his work training officers in 80 Florida municipalities and helping many cities and towns develop formal pedestrian safety programs.

On Malenfant's advice, local officials began the safety campaign about 10 days ago by handing out warnings instead of citations to encourage drivers and pedestrians to follow state laws. The next phase of the campaign will include the fines.

"Citations annoy drivers when they are for things that have not previously been enforced," Malenfant said. "You need to give the public fair warning - you want to use a persuasive approach to encourage them to change their behavior."

To determine how visible an issue pedestrian safety is around Gainesville, the three local agencies conducted a study in January that found slightly more than 20 percent of drivers in the city have been yielding to pedestrians at crosswalks. In a news release about the study, officials said many pedestrians were seen getting caught in the middle of the street while crossing.

To ensure that drivers recognize places where they likely are to encounter pedestrians, the city's Public Works Department used some of the \$94,000 National Traffic Safety Administration grant to repaint crosswalks, paint yield markings on pavement ahead of crosswalks and install additional signs at crosswalks. Some of the grant money also was used to send thousands of brochures and electronic messages to area schools, UF and other groups that likely include a number of pedestrians.

Raulerson said 4-foot-by-8-foot green signs with white letters will be put up in a few places around the city to remind motorists and pedestrians of the progress being made during the campaign.


The signs will state "Gainesville drivers yielding to pedestrians" and then list the percentage who yielded during the previous week and the record high number of drivers who yielded during the campaign.

<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20100214/ARTICLES/2141013/1002?tc=ar>

Bill Requires Helmets for Scooters, Mo-Peds (Delmarvanow.com, Maryland) | [TOP](#)

February 14 / Greg Latshaw

If passed, Maryland legislation would mandate safety precaution for children





SALISBURY -- Dr. Julius Zant, a Salisbury neurosurgeon, has treated enough cracked skulls and brain contusions to know the importance of wearing a helmet.

"With bicycles, we have a (state) helmet law. With motorcycles, there's a helmet law. On mo-peds and scooters, folks don't have to wear a helmet," Zant said.

Zant wants to close the gap in the state law. He said he wholeheartedly supports a bill sponsored by Delegates Jim Mathias and Donald B. Elliott that would require minors to wear a helmet when riding scooters, mo-peds and bicycles. Under the bill, the helmet requirement would apply to anyone younger than 18, rather than the current standard for bicycles, which is 16 years of age. The bill also requires that a rider's helmet meet certain quality standards.

"Very simply put, the bill reduces injury. It reduces medical costs," said Mathias, D-38B-Worcester.

In Ocean City, a resort town where Mathias served as the mayor for a decade, the streets swell with people riding bikes and scooters during the summer months. Mathias said he has spoken to scooter rental companies and adults who use scooters and mo-peds for transportation. He said many of them have told him that they support the legislation.

"Some scooter rental folks in Ocean City who had been wary of regulations in the past were supportive of this bill," Mathias said.

Mike Levy, a spokesman for the Ocean City police, said the department has seen accidents involving scooters and mo-peds.

"We support any legislation that makes people safer. And certainly wearing a helmet on a scooter makes you safer," Levy said.

The Bike Helmet Safety Institute reports that 45-88 percent of brain injuries could be prevented with helmet usage. The institute estimates that head injuries result in \$81 million in direct, injury-related costs.

The Maryland Department of Legislative Services said the bill could result in "significant savings" to the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The cost savings would come in the form of fewer head injury patients needing treatment at state facilities. For example, each person enrolled in the Medicaid program for treatment costs about \$120,000 per year, according to the Department of Legislative Services.

The Department of Legislative Services said because states define motor scooters in different ways, it is difficult to determine how many states have helmet laws for scooters.





On Feb. 2, the House of Delegates Environmental Matters Committee held a hearing on the bill, House Bill 140. Mathias said the meeting went "very well" and that no delegates objected to the bill.

Last year, Delegate Elliott, a Republican from Carroll County, introduced a similar helmet bill, which did not pass. Mathias said the bill's chances might be better this year because of expert testimony from Dr. Zant and also because of an ordinance the Ocean City Town Council passed in August.

In Ocean City, anyone renting a mo-ped or scooter must wear a helmet and shoes. The helmet law does not apply to a person who owns a scooter.

However, Ocean City cannot enforce its law on Coastal Highway, which is a state roadway. The bill backed by Mathias would apply the helmet regulations to Coastal Highway, but not to the area where Ocean City's law is now enforced. Ocean City's existing regulations would remain in effect there.

Zant said more stringent helmet regulations are needed as scooters and mo-peds continue to grow in popularity. He expects more children to ride them, especially as the Eastern Shore's population continues to grow.

"If we can prevent a single death or a single injury, then that bill would certainly do its job," Zant said.

<http://www.delmarvanow.com/article/20100214/NEWS01/2140308/1002/Bill-requires-helmets-for-scooters--mo-peds>

Poison Death Rate is High (The Salt Lake Tribune, Utah) [TOP](#)


February 15 / Mike Stark, The Associated Press

Utahns die of poisoning at twice the national rate, according to experts.

Whether it's an overdose of pain medications or being overcome by toxic fumes, Utah residents die at twice the national rate of poisonings, according to new state figures.

The Utah Department of Health reports 21.3 deaths from poisoning each year per 100,000 residents. The national average is 11 per 100,000 people, the department said.

Many of Utah's poison deaths go relatively unnoticed, but the state has had several high-profile cases in recent weeks.





Those include the deaths of 4-year-old Rebecca Toone and her 15-month-old sister, Rachel, last week. Investigators believe they died after fumes from rodent poison pellets placed in their yard seeped into their house.

Last month, 30-year-old Mauricio Lacayo, of Saratoga Springs, died after reporting he had been exposed to a hazardous substance at his job.

The most common exposures reported at the Utah Poison Control Center are analgesics, household cleaning products and cosmetics and personal care products.

For the first time, pesticides also are on the center's top 10 list.

"They've crept up. Now they're No. 7," said Marty Malheiro, an outreach coordinator at the poison center, which fielded more than 56,000 calls last year.

Overall, the Salt Lake County area has the highest rates of poisoning deaths in the state. Summit County had the lowest.

Those between the ages of 45 and 54 were the most likely to die of poisoning, according to state officials.

They said poisoning deaths among children have dropped in recent years, mostly because of safer packaging and poison control hot lines.

Many poisoning deaths in Utah are linked to prescription drug overdoses, though it's often difficult to tell whether the overdoses were intentional, according to health officials.

Between 1999 and 2007, the number of deaths attributed to prescription pain medications rose more than 500 percent, according to the health department.

"There are a lot of people working on this issue to figure out why," said Jenny Johnson, who works with the state's violence and injury-prevention program, which released the latest figures.

In recent years, much focus has been on the state's steady increase in drug deaths, which make up the largest single category of cases -- roughly 20 to 25 percent -- at the state medical examiner's office.

Fatal overdoses from prescription drugs happen at nearly three times the rate of those from illicit drugs, according to Todd Grey, the state's chief medical examiner.





There are likely several factors at work, health officials said, such as an increase in the number of prescriptions, including narcotics. While new and better medicines provide benefits to many patients, there is an increased risk of those same drugs being abused, said Robert Rolfs, the state epidemiologist.

The latest U.S. Health and Human Services survey ranked Utah fourth in the nation for non-medical use of pain relievers.

Other reasons for the ranking include misuse of medications and abuse by those stealing them from medicine cabinets.

State officials say they've also seen more drug deaths in which it's unclear whether people intended to kill themselves.

Utah lawmakers this year are considering several bills to address the problem, including one that would notify doctors of a patient's DUI conviction if it was caused by prescription medication and another requiring any physician licensed to prescribe medicine to register with a controlled-substance database and learn how to use it.

Health officials have also launched public awareness campaigns about prescription drug use.

"It's a solvable problem but it's complex," Rolfs said.

Salt Lake Tribune staff contributed to this report.

http://www.sltrib.com/News/ci_14401198

