

The facts

- Driveway run overs are entirely preventable.
- Most occur at the child's home, or in the driveway of friends or relatives, where we tend to feel that the child is safe. Some also occur in backyards or car parks.
- In most cases, the driver is a parent, relative or friend of the family.
- Generally run overs involve young children under 5 years of age, but most are under 2 years of age.
- The majority of vehicles involved are 4WD's, utes, trucks, and vans, due to 'blind spots' and poor visibility, especially when reversing. However, sedans have also been involved.
- In Australia, two thirds of driveway run overs resulting in death have occurred in country areas.
- Most driveway run overs occur during the day, particularly late afternoons between 3pm and 6pm. The most vulnerable period is late in the week – approaching and including the weekends.
- Most run overs occur in fine weather and sunny conditions.

All too often we hear the tragic news about a young child, usually a toddler, being run over in the driveway of their own home, or that of relatives or friends. What is so sad and horrifying is that usually it is a family member or friend who has run over the child. This can have a devastating effect on families and the long term grief is immeasurable.

We don't often consider that young children might be in danger in such a familiar environment, but they are.

Toddlers are old enough to be mobile, they often move quickly, but are too small to be easily seen from the driver's seat when they are close to the car. A common scenario is that a young child follows an adult out to say goodbye, or to see what a parent is doing, but the child isn't seen until it is too late.

A slow moving vehicle reversing out of, or going into, a driveway can crush a small child, often causing the child to die or have life-threatening injuries. Children who survive are often left with severe long-term disabilities.

Tips for staying safe

Around motor vehicles, young children must always be constantly supervised by an adult. This is the best precaution.

Ensure visibility of young children at all times

- Never leave a young child alone to play, especially near parked or moving vehicles.
- It is vital to be able to see a young child constantly whilst the car is being moved; or to have a second adult hold their hand to ensure there is a clear passage for the vehicle to move.
- If there is only one adult at home, and there is a need to move the vehicle, even for a small distance, ensure young children are placed securely in the vehicle with the adult, whilst the vehicle is being moved.
- The driver should check that the car windows and mirrors are clean, and mirrors are positioned correctly for the driver's height.
- Devices recommended for reducing the risk of driveway run overs use a combination of functioning proximity sensors and video cameras. Even when these are used it may be difficult to notice a small child until it is too late. It is important not to become complacent when using these devices. Nothing adequately replaces supervision by a responsible adult.

Provide barriers between the vehicle and a young child

- Fencing, security doors, or gates can be used as barriers to reduce the risk of a young child getting to the driveway from the house.
- In addition to providing barriers, some farming properties build a second driveway away from the house for farm vehicles to travel on.

Safety behaviours are important

- Do not let a young child use the driveway as a play area. Create a safe play area away from the driveway.
- Children learn mostly by observation and imitation. Examples set by parents and others can influence their behaviour.
- Drivers should get into the habit of walking around their vehicle before getting into it when leaving an area where a young child is present.

For more information, contact:

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