STUDENT SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

NOVEMBER | 2026

November is a time to prepare for the busy holiday season! With more travel, cooking, and family gatherings, safety is especially important. This month, we're highlighting holiday travel, pedestrian and wheeled sports winter safety, and fire prevention safety tips to help families enjoy a safe and happy holiday season.

Holiday Travel Car Seat and Booster Checks

Before heading out for holiday travel, take a few minutes to check your child's car seat or booster for proper installation and harness fit, especially when switching vehicles.

LATCH and Tether Basics

- LATCH: Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children is a system used to install car seats without the vehicle seat belt.
- Lower Anchors: Can be used for rear-facing and forward-facing car seats within manufacturer weight limits. Some boosters also allow the use of lower anchors to hold the booster in place when not in use.
- Seat Belts: Are just as safe as lower anchors when used correctly and may be needed as children grow.
- Top Tether: Always use for forward-facing harnessed seats when required by the manufacturer to reduce head movement in a crash.
- Check Both Manuals: Not all seating positions allow lower anchors. Follow both the vehicle and car seat instructions.



Be Ready — Signs of Wrong Installation

Common car seat mistakes include loose installation (more than one inch of movement at the belt path), twisted harness straps, an incorrectly positioned chest clip, or a missing top tether on a forward-facing seat. Always follow the car seat manual and visit a local car seat inspection station for help.

Winter Reminder: Bulky coats and snowsuits should NEVER be worn under a car seat harness, as they can prevent a snug fit. Instead, place a coat or blanket over your child after buckling them in.

SAFE KIDS GRAND FORKS

BUCKLE UP

Altru

Altru Health System is proud to serve as the lead agency for Safe Kids Grand Forks. For more information on this and other childhood injury prevention topics, visit safekidsgf.com, call us at 701.780.1489 or email safekid@altru.org.

KEEPING KIDS SAFE AT HOME, AT SCHOOL, AT PLAY, AND ON THE WAY!!!

THIS INFORMATION IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY SAFE KIDS GRAND FORKS & OUR PARTNERS AT BUCKLE UP MN

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Heads Up — The Regional Danger Zone

Regional statistics show that 1 in 4 rail-related injuries involve youth under 19. In rural Minnesota, harvest season brings added risks as teen drivers share crossings with large farm equipment. Stay alert and remember:

- **Trains Can't Stop Quickly:** A freight train traveling 55 mph can take a mile or more to stop.
- **Tracks Aren't Shortcuts:** Walking on railroad tracks is dangerous. Trains can approach faster and more quietly than expected.
- **Boys at Higher Risk:** National statistics indicate teenage boys are nearly three times more likely than girls to suffer fatal rail-related injuries.

Helmet Fit — The Beanie Blunder

Cold weather can affect how your bike helmet fits. Stay safe with these tips:

- **Skip Bulky Hats:** Thick hats or hoods under helmets can cause a loose, unsafe fit.
- **Two-Finger Check:** If wearing a thin thermal cap, make sure your helmet sits no more than two finger widths above your eyebrows.
- **Adjust the Straps:** Side straps should form a "Y" just below each ear, even with winter layers.

A properly fitted helmet is essential for every ride!

Learn more:
safekidsgf.com/BikeSafety.html#FitHelmet

Water Safety — The Ice That Lies

Neighborhood retention ponds may look frozen, but the ice can be dangerous! Keep these safety tips in mind:

- **Hidden Currents:** Moving water beneath the ice can create unsafe conditions.
- **Watch for Drainage Pipes:** Ice near pipes and water openings can be especially weak.
- **Choose Safe Rinks:** Skate and play hockey only at designated, maintained ice rinks.

Stay off retention pond ice, even when it looks solid!

At Home — Avoiding Burns And Breaks

The kitchen is a common place for burns and fires. Stay safe with these tips:

- **Stay Alert:** Never leave cooking food unattended.
- **Watch for Heat:** Keep away from hot burners, steam, and boiling liquids.
- **Know Your Escape Plan:** Recognize smoke alarms and know how to get out safely.
- **Cool Burns Quickly**: Use cool running water for 20 minutes.
- **Tell an Adult:** Report burns, spills, or fires immediately.

Be Ready - Holiday Safety Seat Ready

Holiday travel often means busy schedules, packed vehicles, and extra time on the road. Before heading out, make sure your child's car seat or booster seat is properly installed and fits them correctly. A quick car seat check can help keep your little ones safe wherever your holiday travels take you!
Find a car seat and booster checkup event or certified technician near you at BuckleUpMN.org.

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