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Kids and Cars – Driving Is More Hazardous When School Is In Session

By Mark Widawer

The new school year has started. That means a lot more traffic on the roads, and a lot more kids

crossing streets, parking lots and driveways. Parents drop off their children at school in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon. And little does anyone realize the dangers. With today's prevalence of SUV's, Minivans, and sedans with high back ends, visibility behind these vehicles is seriously compromised. When mom or dad puts the car into reverse, they are taking it on faith that whatever is behind the car will get out of the way.

Automobile manufacturers are dealing with this safety problem by offering (on select high-end models) a device designed to help a driver when in reverse. These little electronic marvels, often called Reversing Aids or Backup Sensors, can literally be lifesavers.

Ask Dr. Greg Gulbransen.

On October 19, 2002 Dr. Gulbransen was backing his SUV into his driveway when he ran over his 2 year old son Cameron.

If Dr. Gulbransen would have been aware that something was behind him -- whether it was something as precious as his son, or as trivial as a mailbox -- he could have stopped the car before a tragedy occurred.

If you've never seen or used a reversing aid, you might be surprised at how technically advanced they actually can be.

Reversing aids use a variety of technologies to sense an object behind the car. Some units use Doppler radar, and others use infrared sensors, but by far the most accurate method of detection is the one the U.S. Navy uses on its submarines: sonar.

Sonar can operate in any weather, including direct sunlight or rain. And it doesn't require that the car be moving in order to sense an obstruction.

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And that's when the device has to warn the driver.

Some of the least expensive models use a tone which beeps more rapidly as you get closer to an obstacle. Although you have no real indication of how far you are from an object, you can at least hear the relative distance just by listening to the beeps. Compare that to other devices which actually have LED displays on your dashboard. These are cumbersome — almost useless — because when you drive in reverse, you naturally look behind you, and you'll never see the little red lights.

That's why an audible sensor is best. But even better than a beeping indicator is one that tells you in a spoken voice exactly how far away you are. Not only do you not have to look forward at your dashboard, you'll know without guessing how much further you can safely back up. When buying a new car, ask your dealer if a backup sensor is available for your model. If a new car is not in your plans, then search Google or your favorite search engine for Backup Sensors or Reversing Aids that you can add to your car. Another valuable resource is the Technology page at

<http://www.KidsAndCars.org>

, a non-profit organization dedicated to children's safety in and around

automobiles. Janette Fennel, who runs the organization, has compiled a list of different reversing aids.

She's a big fan of these devices.

Ms. Fennel is also a champion of children's safety, and is responsible for proposing much new legislation in this area, including the recently proposed legislation H.R. 2230, the Cameron Gulbransen Kids And Cars Safety Act of 2005, which has also been supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The bill would require that the Department of Transportation establish regulations and deadlines by which light vehicles "would be equipped with a variety of safety measures, including a rear-ward visibility standard and driver notification systems", says Ms. Fennel. This type of legislation is a necessary stepping stone in order to strengthen car safety codes throughout the country.

Whether or not you have children, think carefully before backing up. When you buy a new car, ask the dealer if a reversing aid is available for your model. If not, consider adding one to your current car.

Even if you don't have kids, or if school is not in session, it's worth the peace of mind. Just ask Dr. Gulbransen.

Jerry Appleby is Manager of Public Safety and Information at American Dealer Services, exclusive distributor of Bak-Talk, reversing aid with voice indicator and sonar technology. Visit

<http://www.Bak-Talk.com>

for more information on the safety benefits and other applications for backup

sensors. = = = = =

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Golf Cars – 1001 Uses, With Imagination

By Sebastian Romero

Golf Carts, Club cars, Golf Buggies – all the same thing – have come a long way from the golf course, although they can still be found there, too.

Golf Carts were originally designed to ferry golfers and their equipment from the end of one hole on the course to the start of the next, and back to the clubhouse. Whatever happened to golf as exercise? You will now see golf carts in all kinds of places far removed from the golf course.

Golf Cars are used on university campuses and to ferry presidents around. Their other uses are only just beginning to be explored. They are used in large warehouses and factories to move around quickly, without the noise and pollution that a conventional vehicle would cause.

In many ways these compact vehicles represent a ready-made alternative to the gas-engined automobile, except they are small and go slowly. Around town they are perfect for carrying the kids to school, or going to the grocery store. These uses have not taken off because of the attitude of most drivers, who insist on speed and protective devices around them.

You can buy standard accessories like a windscreen or enclosing body, or you can go for full customization.

You may want an electric vehicle for around the farm – you can buy spray equipment to fit to most "Golf Cars". You may want a 4x4 "Golf Car" for hunting or just driving through the forest. All of these are available at reasonable cost.

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You want camouflage? You've got it. You want weapon racks? You've got them. You want a sunbrella? You've got it.

Golf Cars are used on university campuses and to ferry presidents around. Their other uses are only just beginning to be explored. Golf cars provide a quiet and environmentally acceptable mode of personal transport.

Sebastian Romero works in the security industry and drives 30,000 miles a year. Find more info at

<http://www.every-article.info>

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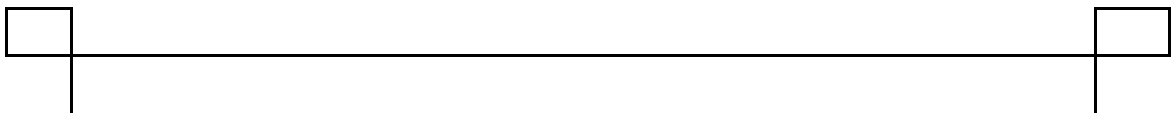
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