

# Diocese of San Bernardino



## SAFETY VISIONS SAFETY VISIONS



Safety - Health – Preparedness  
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A Monthly Safety Newsletter  
for the Catholic Community

### JUNE IS NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH! FOCUS IS ON “DISTRACTED DRIVING”

The Diocese of San Bernardino will join with the National Safety Council and CalOSHA in recognizing the importance of Safety in our daily lives, whether at work, home or Play.

The major theme of National Safety Month this year, is driving safety, both personal and work related. This is especially so in California this year because of several new laws that have or will become effective this year. One of the most advertised new laws (because the retail phone industry wants to sell “hands-free” devices), is the new “hands-free” cell phone requirement while driving. This law becomes effective July 1, 2008. Most Police agencies have stated they will not be giving a “grace” period or warnings. They feel we have had plenty of time to get our “hands-free” devices and learn to use them. First offense is a citation and fine of \$20 to \$102, depending on the jurisdiction.

Another new law in effect this year is the attachment of penalties to “distracted driving”. Prior to this, it was not addressed specifically and could not be charged except in conjunction with a collision or resulting violation. Under the new rules, if a policeman observes swerving, slowing down, sitting at a green light, etc..., and you are talking on a phone (hands-free doesn't matter in this instance), you can be stopped and cited up to \$250 per violation. Also, “Distracted Driving” citations will be reported to DMV as a moving violation with related fines and Traffic School.



### GAS PRICES GOT YOU DOWN?

Never in our wildest imagination did any of us ever expect to be paying \$4.50 or more for a gallon of gasoline; especially when less than five months ago we were paying around \$2.89! Although we don't want to admit it, there certainly is just not much we can do to

control the Oil/Stock Markets, which is what seems to be the villain in this recent gasoline price surge.

However, in every dark cloud there is a silver lining, of sorts. Eventually, gasoline prices will come down and stabilize, although not as low as before. In the interim, there are some steps you can take to mitigate the negative impact on your life and that of your family. First, give some serious thought to how much of your lifestyle revolves around driving. Commit to cutting back and taking a few less trips. If you like to travel throughout Southern CA in the summer, give metro-link a try. Second, park the big SUV or Truck and drive the second car that many have, or if both work, the one with the shortest commute drives the ‘guzzler’. Of course, the “coolness factor” will likely take a dramatic hit, but with these gas prices, who really cares about the cool! Third, who knows; maybe this is God's way of telling us to slow down and start spending time at home and do things close to home. Finally, you can “tweak” your car or truck to get much better gas mileage: here are some tips from the pros;



- Change the oil and air filter every three thousand miles. The air filter maybe more often.
- Inflate your tires to the maximum recommended air pressure. Personally, I run mine 2psi over! This significantly decreases tire drag resistance.
- Run you're A/C just a little less, especially when driving in heavy traffic or uphill.
- Keep your vehicle well-tuned and clean.
- Don't smoke in your vehicle; it will improve safety and the window that is down or partly open can be closed reducing pressure drag.
- Use the Cruise-Control whenever possible. This uses less fuel than your foot! Drive 65 instead of 75mph!
- When possible, don't drive during peak times.
- Go easy on the starting and stopping. Jackrabbit starts use 2X the normal amount of gas!
- Plan your vacation close to, or at home!

## SUMMER'S HERE!

Summer, along with the good and the bad it brings, is upon us. We have already entered into a few 100°+ days, which means we need to be alert to the dangers and hazards of high heat. Remember to stay hydrated by drinking a lot of water and/or electrolyte drinks. Wear a hat and protect your skin with sunblock.

Summer also has many other dangers and hazards that keep Emergency Rooms busy around the clock.

**Rattlesnakes:** Just this week on 6/11/08, in an Inglewood Park, a man was bitten twice by a Rattlesnake that he picked up!! Oh, and yes, alcohol was involved! In another incident the same week; a 3 year old girl was bitten by a small Rattlesnake in Lake Arrowhead. Snakebites seem to be on the rise throughout Southern California. The usual culprits are the "Pacific Coast Rattlesnake", "Green Mohave", or "Red Diamondback".

Nobody knows the reason for sure, but rattlesnake bites are getting more painful and potentially lethal. Add that to the increase in bites and you've got a problem. The **UC San Diego Medical Center toxicologists** report a rash of "unusually powerful snake bites and unusually extreme patient reactions." Reactions like extreme pain, nausea, diarrhea, and swelling of the mouth and throat that restricts breathing. This summer the medical school is set to conduct clinical trials for a new anti-venom for rattlesnake bites. Dr. Richard Clark, director of medical toxicology at the medical school, says the increased toxicity of snake venom may just be nature's way of fighting back against the encroachment of the snakes' turf by humans. "Perhaps only the strongest survive," Clark said.



**Swimming** is still the most popular water sport of all, and as such deserves special attention. Learning to swim is the first step in being safe around water. Never swim alone and never take unnecessary chances. Never swim beyond your ability or stamina and if at the beach, watch-out for California's notorious "rip-tides". These undertows can pull the strongest of swimmers under and out to sea. Obey the lifeguards & learn to identify standard lifeguard/beach warning flags.

## DID YOU KNOW.....

**Sun Safety Week is also in June!** Just one blistering sunburn can double a child's lifetime risk of developing skin cancer. More than 1.2 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year in the US. For children under 6 years, the Sun Safety Alliance recommends sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher. Older children should use sunscreen that is SPF 15 or higher. Prevent skin damage this season by wearing the proper sunscreen. For reasons unknown, but under research, is the fact that skin cancers are increasing at an alarming rate.

## POISON PREVENTION

### The Overdose Epidemic

Poisoning – particularly from overdoses of over-the-counter, prescription and illicit drugs – has surpassed falls to become the nation's second-leading cause of unintentional death, after motor-vehicle collisions. With and 80 percent increase from 2001 to 2006, poisoning is the fastest-rising cause of accidental death in the US.

**YOUNG CHILDREN WILL EAT AND DRINK ALMOST ANYTHING!** Each year poison control centers report nearly one million children under the age of five are exposed to potentially poisonous medicines and household chemicals. Medicines, household substances, insect sprays, kerosene, lighter fluid, some furniture polishes, turpentine, points, solvents, and products containing lye and acids are most frequently the cause of accidental poisoning among children.

### ALWAYS RETURN TO SAFE STORAGE IMMEDIATELY

- Never leave a bottle of aspirin or other pills where children can reach it Return it to a safe place immediately after using.

**MEDICINES ...** are often swallowed by young children who find medicines where the grandparents have left them. Grandparents - and all adults - should use child-resistant closures whenever young children are around. Keep medicines out of reach - and out of sight!

**HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS** - Read labels before using any household product and follow the directions carefully. Store these where children can't reach them.

**KEEP ALL PRODUCTS IN ORIGINAL CONTAINERS** - Never place kerosene, anti-freeze, paints, or solvents in cups, glasses, milk or soft-drink bottles, or other utensils customarily used for food or drinks.

**The Human Resources Dept sends best wishes for a safe and sane July 4<sup>th</sup> and a worry-free summer of enjoyment!!**