

August 2009



SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

INTERNET SAFETY

(PART 1)

Children and the Internet

There are no censors on the Internet, and children are learning earlier and earlier how to navigate it. Websites are directed at all age groups from the very young with Nickelodeon and LEGO to teens wanting to hook up with Facebook and Twitter.

Unfortunately, the internet can be a very dangerous place for a child. In today's world, computer skills are one of the major cornerstones throughout a child's educational career, therefore, teaching a child internet safety is a must.

There are some basic rules to help stay safe on the internet. As a parent, always monitor your child's e-mail, chat room conversations, and the websites they visit. You may also wish to invest in some software that can monitor your child's web surfing and block words, images and/or sites that may be objectionable. Encourage "kid friendly" search engines. A list can be found at: <http://its.leesummit.k12.mo.us/internet.htm>.



Teens flirting on-line with someone they don't know can be dangerous.

In addition, educate your child. Make sure they know to never give out identifying information, such as name, address, school, etc... Young children may be tempted to sign up for clubs or contests. Make sure this is only done with parental approval. You can test your child's internet savvy with the quiz at the following link: <http://www.safekids.com/quiz>

Follow up these safety measures with a contract made between you and your child. You can find both a "Kids" and "Parents" Pledge online at: <http://www.safekids.com/family-contract-for-online-safety/>.

Always remember the predators know how to manipulate and take time to "groom" the child. Therefore some additional tips for teens include:

- Think about what you post. Sharing photos or intimate details can be picked up by anyone,
- Read between the "lines."
- Don't talk about sex with strangers. Don't lead anyone on.
- Avoid in-person meetings.
- Be smart when using your cell phone. Same tips apply.

Additional Information

<http://www.safekids.com>

<http://www.stpetersmo.net/default.asp?sectionID=42&groupID=145>

<http://www.fbi.gov/kids/k5th/safety2.htm>

<http://www.mo.gov/Health/Internet/>

A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety is located at:

<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguide.htm>