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Red Cross Reminds Families to Include Safety in Their Trip to the State Fair

Springfield, IL: Simple tips can prevent personal disasters and maximize family fun at the Illinois State Fair. Every year, nationwide, more than 8,000 children ages 14 and under are treated in emergency rooms for injuries involving thrill rides at amusement parks and traveling carnivals; in an average year, four or five die. The American Red Cross recommends that you supervise your child getting on and off a ride. Make sure the child understands all announcements and posted rules. Also, don't allow children to supervise younger children on rides.

"Families should be prepared for high temperatures and big crowds at the Illinois State Fair. Drinking plenty of water and dressing appropriately increase your chances of having a fun and safe State Fair experience" said Chris Shanahan, Community Health and Safety Director for the Illinois Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross.

The American Red Cross is dedicated to helping make families and communities safer at home and around the world. Annually mobilizing relief to the victims of more than 67,000 disasters nationwide, the Red Cross also trains nearly 12 million people in vital lifesaving skills each year.

Each year, Health and Safety Volunteers for the American Red Cross staff a first aid tent at the State Fair to treat minor injuries. The American Red Cross provides basic first aid services at the Illinois State Fair at no cost. The first aid station is located in the Emerson Building Annex, across the street from the Dairy Building.

MEDIA NOTE

ON THURSDAY 530pm-930pm and SUNDAY 8am-430pm, a representative will be on hand at the first aid station to answer media questions about safety at the state fair.

The Red Cross advises you to observe the following precautions to ensure that your experience at the state fair is safe and stays enjoyable:

Weather web sites can help you avoid storms and severe heat that might limit fun. Pay attention to local media for weather updates and advice on what actions may be necessary. The National Weather Service provides severe weather warnings when necessary.

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Be sure your family is prepared. Before hitting the fair, plan your activities as well as meal and break times. It is also a good idea drink plenty of water, rest when you are tired, wear comfortable shoes that will not develop blisters and dress appropriately.

Role-model proper safety behavior. A 2005 report by Safe Kids Worldwide shows that children are more likely to follow safety rules when they see their parents doing so.

Always use the safety equipment provided. Safety belts, lap bars, chains, handrails and other safety features are there for a reason.

Never get off a moving ride. Wait until the ride comes to a complete stop. Also, if a ride stops due to a mechanical problem or safety concern, stay seated and wait for instructions.

Don't let children ride if they're too tired to comply with safety procedures. On some rides, it's important to stay upright and face forward. Also, don't pressure kids to go on a ride they're afraid of, as they're more likely to sit incorrectly or even try to get off.

Note the limitations of safety devices. Lap bars and chains are not physical restraints — their main function is to remind the occupant to stay seated. If a small child sits next to a large adult, a lap bar might not offer the child much protection.

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