

## McGruff House

A McGruff House is a temporary haven for children who find themselves in emergency or frightening situations such as being bullied, followed or hurt while walking in the neighborhood. Individuals who volunteer their homes as McGruff Houses agree to make emergency phone calls for children in trouble and watch out for neighborhood children as they go to and from school. A McGruff House is not a medical aid station, a restaurant or a public restroom. The program is not an escort service or a guarantee of safety. It is a short term interaction between an adult helper and a child needing help. It is a very effective way for communities to ensure the safety of their younger residents.



**It only takes 100 seconds to read the information here. Isn't it worth 100 seconds to keep your child safe from abduction?**

Thousands of children will be reported missing in this country this year. You will see their pictures on shopping bags, milk cartons, bus and subway posters, and television. Some children will be found and returned home. Some will not.

Child abduction is a tragedy. It devastates the parents. It touches all of us. Please, carefully read this brochure about the ways to help keep your children safe!

### You Should:

- Know where your children are at all times.
- Never leave children alone in cars.
- Establish strict procedures for picking your children up at school, at a friend's, after a movie, etc. Do not let your children accept rides from people with whom you have not made previous arrangements—even if they say they are a police officer, teacher, or friend of the family.
- Establish a family code word. Tell your children never to go with anyone who does not know the code word.
- Teach your children their full names, your full name, address, and telephone number. Teach them how to reach either you or a trusted adult and how to call for police assistance. Make sure they know how to make local and long distance telephone calls. Even a small child can be taught to dial 911 or 0 for operator for help.
- Tell your children about the abduction problem in a calm and simple way—as if you were teaching any other important coping skill.
- Listen attentively if your children talk about anyone they encounter in your absence.
- Have photographs of your children taken four times a year (especially for preschoolers). Make note of birthmarks and other distinguishing features.
- Have fingerprints taken of your children. Most local law enforcement agencies have child fingerprint programs.

## Teach Your Children:

- Never to leave the yard without your permission. Very small children should play only in the backyard or in a supervised play area.
- Not to wander off, to avoid lonely places, and not to take shortcuts through alleys or deserted areas.
- They are safer walking or playing with friends.
- Always to come straight home from school unless you have made other arrangements.
- Never to enter anyone's home without your prior approval. Exception: A Block Parent or McGruff House.
- To scream, run away, and tell you or a trusted adult if anyone attempts to touch or grab them.
- Not to give out any information on the telephone, particularly their name and address, or that they are alone.
- Never to go anywhere with anyone who does not know a family code word.
- To keep all doors locked and only admit authorized people into the house. No one else should be permitted to enter.

