

A Safer Prom

Most young people remember their high school prom as being a particularly important point in their lives. For many, it represents their first chance to participate in a formal event. It is also considered a chance to act as a full-fledged adult. The event involves arranging a complete evening of dining, dancing and socialization. However, not as much time is usually devoted to making the event as safe as possible.

It is almost inevitable that a prom will involve serious exposure to alcohol or other intoxicants. The evening also involves many young, inexperienced drivers who are excited about making their way to different destinations such as pre and post prom activities. Sadly, all of these factors have combined to make prom season a dangerous one. Serious traffic accidents often become the main feature of what should be a night of joy.

Potential prom-goers and their parents need to create a strategy to help make prom night both memorable and safe. Here are some tips:

- Parents should get the details of all activities, including dinner and pre and post prom events
- Confirm the night's events with school officials and other parents
- Consider arranging a safe, group post-prom activity where participants can be supervised
- Clearly lay out your expectations to your son or daughter about acceptable behavior regarding their evening
- Discuss all details about transportation, whether they are drivers or passengers
- Be sure that communications are set up. If the child does not have a cell phone available, find out the numbers where he or she can be reached during different phases of the evening
- If practical, consider arranging for a third party to handle transportation (limo or taxi service)
- Consider an amnesty arrangement. In other words, let your child know that they can contact a parent for emergency transportation should something go wrong and, for that evening, they'll be no lectures or punishments

Help your son or daughter make prom night a bright memory rather than a tragedy. Plan on making safety and fun everyone's priority.

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