

Darien Safe Rides

August 25, 2011

Dear Parent(s):

Darien Safe Rides is currently accepting applications for the 2011-2012 school year. Your son or daughter has expressed interest in joining Darien Safe Rides, a youth-directed program that is sponsored by the Town of Darien's Youth Commission. Darien Safe Rides is a program designed to provide a free and confidential ride home to any student who is not in a condition to drive safely or to any student who wants to avoid being a passenger in such a situation. Darien Safe Rides is also a program which holds the potential for changing attitudes about driving while drinking; the student's concern for each other's safety leads to greater appreciation of both the risks and responsibilities associated with driving while impaired. Darien Safe Rides operates out of the Depot Teen Center.

Darien Darien Safe Rides was founded in 1982 by several Darien High School students after they witnessed a number of alcohol-related car accidents amongst their friends. Its stated purpose is to provide safe, reliable and confidential transportation for High School students from 10:00 P.M. to 1:30 A.M. on Friday and Saturday nights during the school year. It is organized and operated primarily by the students, with adult supervision, and currently has approximately 100 student volunteers fielding approximately 5-15 calls per night. It is a testament to their success that there have been no alcohol-related deaths from car accidents among Darien High School students since the program's inception.

Safe Rides participants realize that being a member means making a commitment to be drug and alcohol free when on duty (as a driver, rider or dispatcher).

Students and an adult volunteer gather at the Depot as the team responsible for giving Darien's young people a safe ride home. One student is the dispatcher, handling all incoming telephone calls as well as maintaining contact with the Darien Safe Rides cars on call. Students are sent out in pairs. Drivers use his/her family car and are accompanied by a rider. The responsibility of the rider is assisting the driver in finding the location address, assessing the situation of the pick up, and handling the phone contact with the dispatcher. Adult volunteers are on duty for the students to consult, if they need help.

Darien Safe Rides is overseen by a committee of parent volunteer coordinators who with the assistance of approximately ten student officers provide leadership for the program. Each officer is in charge of a team consisting of 10-15 participants

Parent's Role

This program requires parents to play an active role. In order for Darien Safe Rides to operate, an adult volunteer must be present to provide guidance in the event of an emergency or logistical problem. The program cannot run without an adult volunteer at all times. In the event no adult volunteer is available, the service will have to be shut down for that evening. The parents of participating students are required to spend one evening a semester (twice a year) at the Depot on a Friday or Saturday night as a Parent Volunteer.

The continued success of Safe Rides will depend upon both the commitment of its members and the attitude toward it by other students. Although parents are involved, the program's basic premise is

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that responsible young people can have a positive and meaningful impact on the problem of alcohol and other drug abuse, particularly as it relates to the inevitable risks of driving while under the influence.

Insurance

As stated on the Application/Permission Form the driver's personal automobile coverage is primary in the event of an accident. The Town of Darien insurance coverage is secondary, and the Town of Darien requires that drivers carry at least \$300,000 in liability coverage. Please provide a copy of your policy showing at least this minimum level of liability coverage, as well as the insurance card for the car to be driven. The failure to follow Safe Rides rules and policies may result in the loss of insurance coverage by the Town of Darien.

Darien Safe Rides Policies & Procedures

- Darien Safe Rides team members must keep all details of their service activities confidential.**
- All calls requesting a pick-up must come into the main Safe Rides number to the dispatcher and be logged into the dispatch log form.**
- Darien Safe Rides team members must be completely alcohol and drug free while on duty.**
- Darien Safe Rides members are expected to volunteer for a shift on a regular basis.**

In order to be approved as a driver for Safe Rides (generally seniors and second-semester juniors), a student must submit a copy of a valid drivers license and submit a copy of an auto insurance bill that discloses a minimum of \$300,000 in liability coverage. Drivers for Darien Safe Rides are exempt from the 11:00 pm curfew and passenger limitations based on a provision in the Connecticut law. The rider or dispatcher does not need a license. Adult volunteers act in an advisory capacity.

Application Requirements

Darien Safe Rides is sponsored by the Town of Darien's Youth Commission. There is a one-time fee of \$25 (check made payable to Darien Safe Rides) for all juniors (or seniors that did not pay the fee last year) to defray program costs.

Thanks for making Darien Safe Rides a continuing success,

Adult Advisors
Gray Weicker
Steve Bennett
Joe Duwan

Darien Safe Rides

Application / Parent Permission Form

Student Information

Name: _____

Address: _____ Darien, CT 06820

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: ____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Do you want to be a driver for Safe Rides? _____ Juniors are not allowed to drive until second semester. In order to be a driver, you must have a valid driver's license. All drivers and potential drivers must **attach a photocopy of your driver's license and a copy of your current automobile insurance certificate for the car to be driven and a copy of the policy bill showing a minimum of \$300,000 in liability coverage.**

Please write a very brief essay on why you want to be part of Safe Rides (use the back of this form if necessary).

I am aware that all Safe Rides information is confidential. Failure to comply will result in my dismissal from the program. I understand that failure to follow Safe Rides rules and policies may result in the loss of insurance coverage by the Town of Darien.

Student's Signature Date: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian Information (Please provide information for both parents if different addresses)

Name: _____

Address: _____ Darien, CT 06820

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

I, the undersigned, certify that I have reviewed the Safe Rides program letter and I grant permission for my child to participate in this program. I understand that my personal automobile coverage is primary in the event of an accident. I agree to attach a photocopy of my current automobile insurance certificate for the car to be driven as well as copy of policy showing a minimum of \$300,000 in liability coverage. I understand that failure to follow Safe Rides rules and policies may result in the loss of insurance coverage by the Town of Darien.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Print Parent Name

Parent Participation

Adult on Premise (AOP) In order for the program to run we **REQUIRE** the participation of a **PARENT** to supervise each night we provide service. The primary responsibility of the AOP is to provide mature guidance and assistance in the event of an emergency or logistical problem and to provide a communication link between the student Team Leader and the adult leaders of the program. **We request parents to help the students involved with Safe Rides by participating as an AOP once a semester.** It can be on any night you are available. *(it can be with your child or not, again it is your choice)* **We need your support! Thank You. If you did not sign up on Parent's information night:**

Dates to be on duty: 1st choice: _____ 2nd choice: _____ 3rd choice: _____

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Check List of requirements to be eligible to be on duty:

- Application/Parental Permission Form (including brief essay).
- Copy of student's valid drivers license.
- Copy of auto insurance certificate for the car to be driven and a copy of insurance policy bill showing \$300,000 in liability coverage.
- Check for \$25 made payable to Darien Safe Rides to defer costs for all new juniors and seniors that did not the pay fee last year. (One-time fee).
- Parents have signed up to serve as parent on duty for one night per semester - twice for the year.
- Student attended and successfully completed the Safe Rides training program. The training program is scheduled Tuesday, October 11th at 7 pm and 8pm at the Town Hall Room 119, which is near the gym (attend one of the sessions).