

New amendment strengthens City child safety ordinance

Leaving children unattended in public places, such as libraries, parks, pools or parking lots, is prohibited

A new amendment to Dearborn city ordinance has been made to help strengthen child safety rules.

The new amendment expanded an existing City ordinance that prohibited leaving children under the age of six unattended in a vehicle. Passed at the June 19 meeting of the Dearborn City Council, the amendment also prohibits anyone from leaving children under six unattended in any public place, such as a street, sidewalk, park, pool or library.

The ordinance requires that children under six in public places be supervised at all times by a person who is at least 13 years old.

“We know that most people recognize the fact that leaving a very young child unsupervised in a public place is not a good idea,” said Mayor Michael A. Guido. “This change in the ordinance will just help reinforce that principle, and help prevent this type of situation.

“It also reminds people that they need to be responsible for their children, when they take them to a library or a pool,” the Mayor added. “They shouldn’t just be dropped off and left.”

Violation of the ordinance is a misdemeanor, which carries a penalty of up to 93 days in jail or a fine of up to \$500 upon conviction.

There has been an increase in the number of children left unattended by their parents at Dearborn's public libraries, said Library Director Maryanne Bartles.

"Children are always welcomed and encouraged to visit the library," Bartles said, "but when they are left unattended, their safety and conduct can become issues of concern."

Providing young children with adequate supervision at all times is important to protecting their safety: for example, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported 171 heat-related vehicle deaths of children in the United States from 1995-2002.