

# City of Streetsboro

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## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***Winter Hazards Alert***

#### **STREETSBORO, OHIO, January 7, 2010**

The Streetsboro Service Department and Streetsboro Fire Department remind residents of the dangers present with snow piles. With the recent onslaught of snow, roadside and cul-de-sac snow piles are getting bigger, but should remain **off limits** to children.

Children like to dig tunnels or build forts in piles of snow created by snow plows, but children risk becoming trapped by collapsing snow forts or crushed by other snow removal equipment. Unstable walls and tunnels may collapse, trapping a child inside and unseen children can be killed by the blade of a snow plow or the bucket of a front end loader used to clear cul-de-sac snow piles. Fortunately there have been no injuries or deaths in connection with any roadside snow forts or tunnels, but local officials remain concerned.

According to Streetsboro Service Director Bill Miller, ***“A plow pushing snow off the road can easily bury a child who cannot be seen by the plow driver. To avoid a catastrophic event, parents must never let a child play in or around snow piles along the roadway or in a cul-de-sac”***.

Streetsboro Service Department employees are trained to watch for children playing in areas where snow is being plowed. When children are playing around piles of snow near the street, drivers will ask the children to move away to ensure their safety. Additionally, Service Director Miller requests that children walking to school be aware of the snow plows while they are on the road and asks that you wear brightly colored clothes so the drivers can see you, especially during times of poor visibility. The vehicles used to plow snow cannot stop quickly. A person who cannot be seen risks being hit by the plow blade or the truck itself.

A child buried under snow may not be able to survive for long. According to Streetsboro Fire Department Inspector and Public Information officer Kevin Grimm, ***“The weight of snow collapsing on top of a child can hinder their breathing, making it difficult for them to call for help, virtually eliminating their chances of self rescue”***. Newly fallen snow weighs between 4.4 and 9.4 pounds per cubic foot, depending on the overall moisture content. But this increases rapidly once snow is on the ground and it begins to compact due to wind, the addition of liquid water and its own weight (*source: The Weather Doctor, www.islandnet.com*).

Children playing in snow forts or tunnels at the roadside can be crushed by a snowplow moving newly fallen snow off the road. Also, Service Department crews will often use a front end loader to clear large snow piles from cul-de-sac streets. Severe crushing injuries are likely for anyone caught by a plow blade or front end loader. Not being able to see the child in the first place makes the risk of danger even greater since medical treatment will be long delayed.

So what do the professionals recommend? Miller says, ***“The best place for kids to play in the snow is in the safety of their own yards under close adult supervision. If they have to be near the road for any reason, be sure to wear brightly colored clothing”***. Grimm adds, ***“Keeping your children away from and out of street-side snow piles is decision you cannot regret. We have not yet had to deal with this type of tragedy and would prefer to keep it that way”***.