



ILLINOIS STATE POLICE

NEWS RELEASE

Brendan F. Kelly - Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 15, 2026

CONTACT: ISP Public Information Office

ISP.PIO.Personnel@illinois.gov

Illinois State Police Promotes Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month

SPRINGFIELD – As one of the lead investigators of child deaths, the Illinois State Police (ISP) is recognizing October as Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month. Tragically, sleep suffocation is the leading cause of reported child deaths in Illinois and hundreds of infants die each year because they are placed in unsafe sleeping environments. Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) affects families of all races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

“Many times when an infant dies, Illinois State Police officers who are part of a Child Death Review Team respond and see first-hand the tragedy of a preventable death,” said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. “Witnessing these heartbreaking deaths takes a toll on our officers and families, and is why ISP is promoting Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month.”

When a child dies in Illinois, a Child Death Review Team not only reviews the facts of the case, they also help develop methods to prevent similar incidents in the future. ISP investigators serve on multiple Child Death Review Teams across the state and have found that many of these unsafe sleep-related deaths were preventable. Common unsafe sleep conditions include soft sleep surfaces, blankets and stuffed animals in the crib, unsupervised sleeping in car seats or infant swings, and co-sleeping with parents or siblings.

“We know there are steps families and caregivers can take to help prevent infant deaths, and making sure they have clear, accessible information can help save lives. IDHS’s Infant Safe Sleep website provides parents, caregivers, and childcare workers with resources and best practices for creating a safe sleep environment,” said IDHS Secretary Dulce M. Quintero. “Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month is a great opportunity to raise awareness and make sure families have the information they need to help keep babies safe.”

While safe sleep for infants is a priority all year long, this October ISP reminds parents and guardians to practice infant safe sleep practices. The safest way for a baby to sleep is alone and on their back, and in either a crib or bassinet with tightly fitted sheets and free of pillows, bumpers, blankets, or other items. Adult beds, water beds, couches, chairs, pillows, quilts and other soft materials are not appropriate or safe for sleeping infants.

For more information about safe sleep visit the Illinois Department of Human Services [website](#).

###