

**Application for redesignation of
Mariestad as a
Safe Community**



**MARIESTADS
KOMMUN**



**VÄSTRA
GÖTALANDSREGIONEN**

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Mariestad, a safe community

Introduction

Injuries caused by accidents or violence are the primary cause of death among children, teenagers and young adults in Sweden. This means that injuries still are a public health issue, even though child mortality due to accidents is low in Sweden compared to the rest of the world. The number of injuries caused by accidents or intentional actions has decreased over the last decades and causes about five percent of all deaths in Sweden (1).

Systematic injury prevention programs are necessary to decrease the health care costs and to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering among individuals. The idea of an injury prevention program in the municipality of Mariestad started in 1989. In the beginning the injury prevention program was primarily aimed at children and seniors. In 1992 a cross-sectional coordination group was formed and more workgroups included in the injury prevention program. A few years later the municipal council decided that Mariestad should apply for the designation as a safe community and in 1999 Mariestad was awarded the Safe Community designation.

Description of Mariestad

History and demographics

Mariestad was founded in 1583 and is located next to the lake *Vänern*. Cobblestones and charming wooden houses in the old part of the town are remnants from Mariestads early years. Mariestad also has one of the oldest and best maintained provincial theatre buildings in Sweden.

Almost 24 000 people live in Mariestad municipality and 67 percent reside in central Mariestad, the rest live in smaller neighborhoods or in the countryside. The age distribution in Mariestad is similar to the national average except for the oldest age group, which is larger in Mariestad.

Age group	Mariestad	National average
0-14 yrs	16 %	17 %
15-24 yrs	12 %	13 %
25-64 yrs	51 %	53 %
65+	21 %	17 %

Source: Statistics Sweden (2007-12-31)

Population prognoses estimate that the proportion of older inhabitants in Mariestad will increase more than the proportion of younger inhabitants (2). The total population is however expected to stay the same.

Schools and education

The school system in Mariestad consists of twenty pre-schools (one adapted to highly allergic children), fifteen junior compulsory schools and three middle compulsory schools. The municipality provides school busses to 7-9th grade students from the smaller neighborhoods or

the countryside to the three centrally located middle compulsory schools. There is also an upper secondary school in Mariestad that offers a wide range of educational programs.

Dacapo is a crafts college with educational programs and independent courses in garden design, landscaping and building crafts. Dacapo is a part of the science faculty at Gothenburg University.

The educational level among the adult population in Mariestad is lower than the national average. Higher education is however more common among women than men (3).

Health care

The hospital in Mariestad serves about 45 000 people from Mariestad and neighboring municipalities. The hospital has several specialized departments such as internal medicine, pediatric medicine and orthopedic medicine. The hospital building also hosts two primary health care centers, physical therapy and rehabilitation clinics as well as preventive clinics focusing assisting people in need of lifestyle changes.

Trade and industry

International corporations such as Electrolux, Metsä tissue and SCA packaging are located in Mariestad but there are also several small to medium sized businesses within the municipality borders. Manufacturing and production provides about 25 percent of all job opportunities in Mariestad. Health care, commerce and communication employ approximately 15 percent each. Education and research or the public provide approximately 10 percent each of all job opportunities.

Leisure and recreation

The recreational conditions in Mariestad are very good due to the nature and the archipelago. During the summer months the small island in the archipelago Mariestad are popular destinations for daytrips. The water around Mariestad is also great for fishing. There are also several hiking and biking routes in the municipality.

Vision and goals

Public health objective

The public health agenda, including the injury prevention program, are based on a vision of the public health council: *“Healthy and safe inhabitants with the best quality of life”*.

Goals

At the time of the designation of Mariestad as a safe community in 1999 the goal was to *decrease the number of accidents as well as their medical, social, mental and economic consequences by the year 2008*. The main objective was to decrease the number of accidents among vulnerable groups and in order to achieve this; an action program was produced for the period 1998-2008. The action program was never revised; instead it was replaced with a long-term public health plan in 2007.

The main objective for the injury prevention program in Mariestad is still to decrease the amount of injuries among all age groups and all situations. The goal is to continue to develop preventive measures as well as to continue to raise public awareness.

Indicators for Safe Communities

The Safe Community concept was launched in 1989 based on a Swedish initiative. The Safe Community network is now an important part of the World Health Organizations injury prevention program.

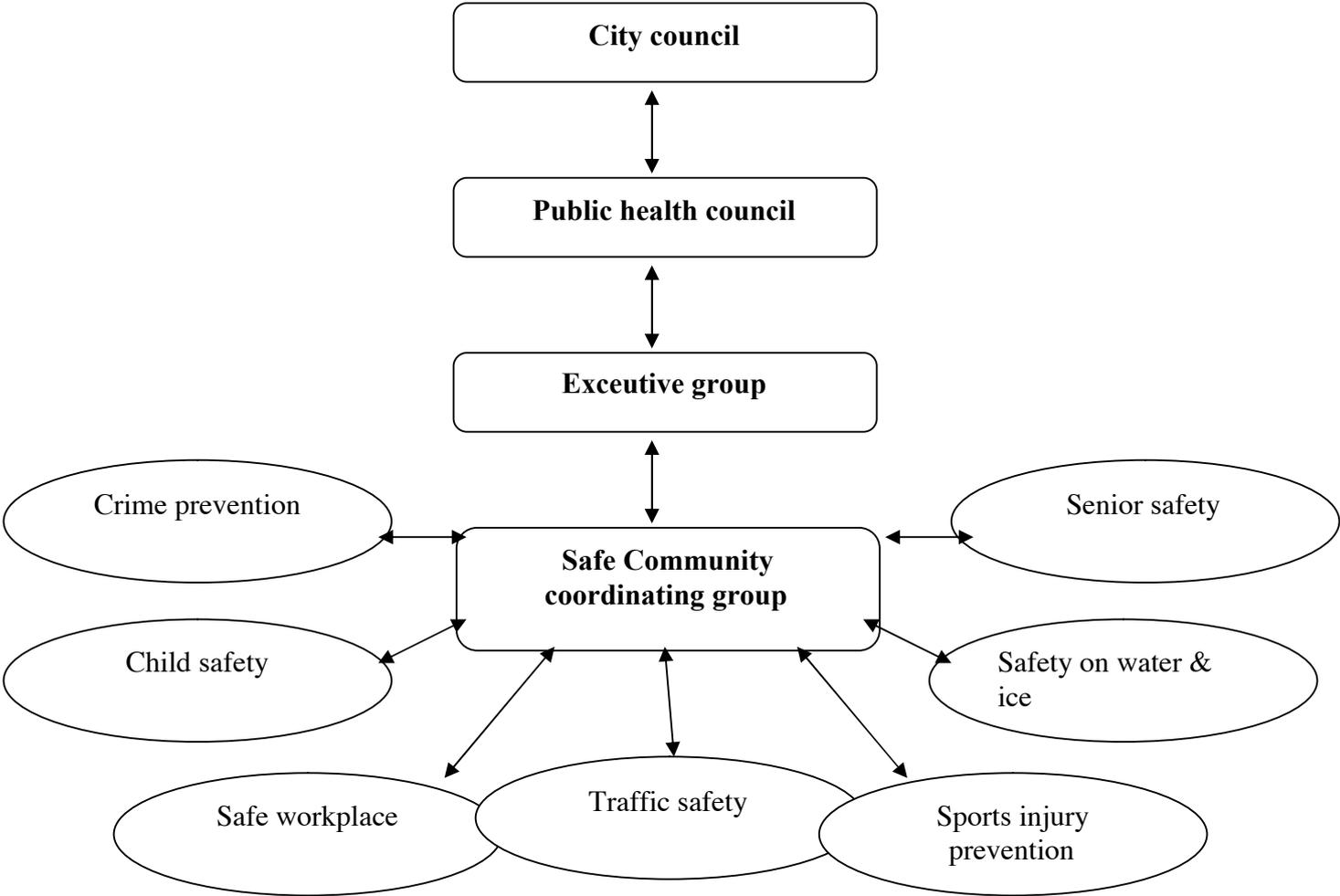
Criteria's for Safe communities:

1. An infrastructure based on partnerships and collaborations, governed by a cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in the community.
2. Long-term, sustainable programs covering both genders and all ages, environments, and situations.
3. Programs that target high-risk groups and environments, and programs that promote safety for vulnerable groups
4. Programs that document the frequency and causes of injuries
5. Evaluation measures to assess their programs, processes and the effects of change
6. Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Communities networks

An infrastructure based on partnerships and collaborations, governed by a cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in the community.

The injury prevention and safety promotion program in Mariestad is integrated in the public health agenda. The public health issues in Mariestad are governed by a local public health council. The public health council consists of seven politicians and the public health coordinator. The role of the public health council is to advice the city council on issues related to public health. The public health council also governs questions related to crime prevention. There is also a cross-sectional executive group, who follows up and carries out the political decisions related to public health issues. The public health coordinator reports to the executive group and to the public health council on a regular basis.

Since the fall of 1992 the injury prevention and safety promotion program is coordinated by a cross-sectional group consisting of representatives from different municipal administrations, the primary health care system, the police department and the fire and rescue department. The preventive program is based upon seven workgroups, which initiate and follow up interventions and activities. Some preventive efforts in Mariestad are already integrated in the municipal system.



Part of the activities performed within the injury preventive programs are financed by means from the public health council, others are financed by other municipal administrations or by the health care system. The injury preventive strategies are based on engaging people from different networks and involving people from the community through information, education and other activities.

Keys to success in the workgroups as well as in the coordinating group have been the representation and involvement from a wide variety of stakeholders. Involvement from associations and other non-profit organizations have help gain approval from the community. However, teenagers and young adults are still difficult to reach, and some of the workgroups are looking for alternate ways of involving them in the future. A more detailed description of the different workgroups is provided under the heading *long-term and sustainable programs targeting both genders and all ages, environments and situations*.

Longterm and sustainable programs targeting both genders and all ages, environments, and situations.

The injury prevention and safety promotion program in Mariestad is based upon seven workgroups. Some of the preventive efforts are already integrated in the municipal structure, others are more actively run and managed by the workgroups. The description of the seven workgroups along with the summary of their work focus on the period from the designation in 1999 until 2007.

Child safety

The child safety group consist of representatives from the primary health care system, the school health services and the educational administration. Parental associations and non-profit organisations such as the *Red cross* and *Save the children* were earlier more actively involved in the child safety program but when the driving forces from these associations resigned from their positions no substitutes were appointed.

The child safety group focuses primarily on preventing injuries among small children through consultation and parental education. The goal is to reach all children and their parents through the different professions working in the Family Health Clinic. Nurses from the Family Health Clinic make home visits on two occasions, when the baby is newly born and when the baby is eight months old. During the home visits the nurses talk about how to prevent accidents. They also demonstrate different safety products and provide information about where to buy them. When the babies are eight months old the parents also receive a helmet prescription, which means that the parents can buy a baby bicycle helmet at a reduced price. The child safety group cooperates with the *Red cross* and offers CPR and first aid training at the Family Health Clinic.

Above and beyond the integrated preventive work performed at the Family Health Clinic, the child safety group has since the designation as a Safe Community in 1999 tried to raise awareness among politicians and municipal executives in issues related to swimming lessons during schools hours and safetybelts in school buses. The child safety group has also provided information about home safety to the public through different exhibits. One member of the group also contributed to the planning of "Farming play", a preventiv strategy aimed at children living on farms.

Every year members from the child safety group are involved in arranging a safety day for students in the 5th grade. For nearly ten years the safety day focused on promoting the use of bicycle helmets and local sporting goods stores sponsored the activity by selling helmets at a reduced price. A bicycle helmet law in 2005, which requires children under the age of 15 to wear a helmet, put an end to the sponsored bicycle helmets since the store owners didn't see the point in sponsoring something that is madatory for all children. The safety day still emphasize the importance of wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle and the students receive information on traffic rules and proper traffic behavior, but the day also focus on other safety issues. During the safety day the students participate in fire drills and practice to put out a fire in a cooking pot or in a burning doll. They also receive information on water safety and they practice basic first aid skills. Before the safety day the teachers receive study materials that are used in the classroom to prepare the students.



5th grade students practicing putting out a fire in a burning doll during the safety day.

The child safety group initiated an inventory of well- and sewer drain lids in Mariestad. The inventory was performed to prevent accidents caused by curious children exploring the mysteries of a malfunctioning lid.

Lid inventory	1993	2003
Number of lids inspected	6 450	8 000
Number of lids with safety flaws	391	26



Flawed lid – hazardous to children

The Family Health Clinic is a very important stakeholder when it comes to reach young children and their families. It is however more difficult to reach and involve immigrant families and the Family Health Clinic has therefore started to focus more on how to reach different minority groups.

In the near future, the child safety group plan to develop "safety walks" in and outside the home and in the schools. The safety walks will be performed by family groups or students and teachers but the child safety group will provide materials and support. The groups are also planning to work with students in 7-9th grade to increase the proportion of students that obey the law and wear bicycle helmets until they are at least 15 years old..

Crime prevention

Crime prevention activities in Mariestad are directed by a cross sectional workgroup consisting of representatives from the police authorities, social services, school administration, correctional system and various associations representing homeowners, landlord and local businesses. The main activities within the crime prevention program are Neighborhood Watch, preventing car theft/break-ins, alcohol- and drug prevention, lighting and senior security.

The Neighborhood Watch program was introduced in Mariestad in 1995. In the beginning the program was administered by the police authorities but in 2001 it became part of the crime prevention workgroup. Over time more and more households have joined the Neighborhood Watch program and the total amount of members at the end of 2007 was approximately 3 500. The local Neighborhood Watch representatives receive crime statistics summaries three times per year, and these reports are sent to all members. The crime prevention workgroup arranges a lecture or a seminar every other year for the representatives to keep them updated and to maintain their interest in preventing crime.

In the beginning of the new millennium auto theft and break-ins were rather common in Mariestad. The crime prevention workgroup therefore initiated a number of campaigns to raise public awareness and to decrease the number of thefts/break-ins. The campaigns are carried out every year before and during the summer vacation period and before and during the Christmas holiday season. The campaign message is not to leave any items visible in the car when going to the beach or shopping. The crime prevention workgroup has also tried to decrease the number of car thefts and break-ins by promoting the use of steering wheel locks. During 2006 steering wheel locks were sold by the workgroup at a very low cost and the tenants in central Mariestad were offered to borrow locks while renting an apartment from the municipality's building property.

Some crimes are related to the use of alcohol and drugs and therefore the workgroup has been cooperating with the person in charge of coordinating local alcohol- and drug prevention activities. The crime prevention workgroup has also contributed to the local alcohol- and drug prevention program and other preventive efforts aimed at reducing availability and accessibility of alcohol to minors.

The crime prevention workgroup was assigned by the public health council to perform an inventory of street lighting in Mariestad. The inventory resulted in a lighting action plan, where both aesthetic and crime prevention properties were considered. The plan contains a list of areas with improper lighting and suggestions on how to improve lighting in these areas.

The crime prevention workgroup initiated the concept "safety walks" in different neighborhoods. The purpose of the safety walks is to increase the feeling of safety and security by inviting residents to a walking meeting where unsafe areas are identified. Inadequate lighting in parks, parking lots or along small streets often contribute to a feeling of unsafety but littering, unkept trees and bushes and maintenance of apartment buildings are

other factors that can affect peoples sense of safety in their neighborhood. The purpose of the safety walks is also to identify the positive attributes of that particular neighborhood in order to ensure that these are maintained. During the walks representatives from the crime prevention workgroup try to present an objective picture of the crime rate in that area as well as information about other relevant social factors. The goal is to perform 3-4 security walks per year (in different neighborhoods each time).

Due to the large proportion of senior residents in Mariestad the crime prevention workgroup initiated an educational program for senior citizens in 2005. The program is organized as a study circles where a group of five to ten seniors meet once a week for five weeks. Each session is based around a short movie segment where some form of safety or security issue, relevant to the age group, is addressed. The participants discuss the movie and receive information and advice on how to minimize the risk of being a victim. The purpose of the senior educational program is to paint a correct picture of the risks in today's society with an emphasis on issues that seniors in particular are worried about. The study circles have been very popular and the program has therefore continued during 2006-2008.

The crime prevention workgroup has since the safe community designation in 1999 had a difficult time finding active teenage representatives. Meeting invitations and meeting protocols are always sent to the "youth council" in Mariestad but they usually fail to attend meetings, safety walks etc. During 2007 the workgroup will try a different approach in order to attract some high school students to actively participate in the crime prevention activities.

The group's primary goal for the next five years is to maintain the interest for the Neighborhood Watch program in addition to arranging other activities that encourage community members to participate in measures that can reduce the risk of being a victim of crime in the home, in the car or in leisure time situations. Continued resources in terms of personal, time and money are important in order achieve this goal.

Sports injury prevention

Mariestad municipality has many very active leisure time associations and many children and teenagers are members in a sports club. The number of children and teenagers that are injured while playing sports is higher in Mariestad compared to the neighboring municipalities. The sports injury prevention group has tried to increase awareness and reduce the number of sports injuries through lectures and educational programs. The group has also presented the injury statistics to key sports clubs in order to increase the interest for prevention.

In 2006 the sport injury prevention group decided to initiate a more systematic injury prevention program through a "safe sports club certification program" tried in other Swedish safe communities. At the end of 2006 the political council in charge of culture and leisure decided to approve the certification program, which meant that 5-8 sports clubs would receive additional economic grants if they participated in and completed the pilot certification program during 2007.

Seven local sports clubs were interested in becoming a certified "safe sport club" and signed up for the pilot program. The participating sports clubs received a checklist identifying ten safety issues that the clubs were supposed to address. The checklist includes questions about the facilities, fire safety, first aid and CPR, safety equipment, leadership, insurance, traveling, alcohol/tobacco/doping etc. Some of the issues require that the sports clubs have written

policies and some sort of communication plan to ensure that all leaders and members are aware of, and know the policies. The work group support the associations involved in the certifying process by arranging relevant seminars, work shops and educations. The goal for the next five years is that a majority of the local sport associations or clubs wants to become certified as a safe sports club, and that the council of culture and leisure take this preventive work into consideration when approving economic grants to local sports associations.

Traffic safety

The traffic safety group consists of members from Mariestad municipality, the Police department, the Highway authority, driving schools, commercial transport and non-profit organizations. The group tries to increase traffic safety in Mariestad and their work is based on the local traffic safety program. The local traffic safety program focuses primarily on unprotected road users and reconstruction of accident prone intersections or roads.

The traffic safety group arranges some form of traffic awareness day each year. The purpose is to provide information about safety measures such as reflectors, bicycle helmets, car seats for children, seat belts and traffic and parking regulations. The group has also tried to increase the acceptance for lower speed limits in certain areas (30 km/h) by demonstrating the effects of an accident involving a car and a pedestrian, or a car and a bicyclist, when the car travels 30 km/h and then 50 km/h.

To reinforce the message about the 30 km/h speed limit, portable speed monitors have at different times been mounted outside local schools to remind community members to drive slowly in that particular area. The group also tries to inform the public about traffic changes or new rules through the Mariestad municipality newsletter. The group produces and distributes folders each year with information about snow clearance and sanding as well as rules and regulations for maintenance of hedges and bushes close to intersections.

Bicycle paths are important to increase the safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Increasing and improving the network of bicycle paths within Mariestad municipality is therefore an ongoing task for the technical department, and the traffic safety group serves as a consultative body when it comes to questions regarding new bicycle paths. The group also tries to improve traffic safety by advocating an increased lighting on bicycle paths and walkways.

Representatives from the traffic safety group have in co-operation with the public health council and the energy advisors arranged a "healthy travel challenge" to encourage community members to walk, ride bicycles or take the bus to work instead of driving. The challenge was first arranged in 2001 and has since then been arranged every year during the period of April – October. The aim is to decrease environmental impact and to increase traffic safety by reducing the number of short distance trips by automobiles. In addition to positive effects on the environment and the local traffic situation the participant also receives several health benefits. Sometimes the challenge has given extra rewards to people using bicycle helmets.

During 2007 a new local traffic safety program and an action plan will be made. This revised program will serve as a base for the preventive activities related to traffic situations in Mariestad during the period 2008-2011. Most likely the program will focus on new solutions to increase the safety around pre- and elementary schools.

Safety on water and ice

Safety on water and ice is an important issue in Mariestad due to the close proximity to the lake Vänern. The work to ensure safety on the water and on the ice is collaboration between the department of fire and rescue and several water sport clubs/associations as well as local business that operate in and around water. The group representatives meet twice a year and discuss questions relevant to safety in or near water. The representatives from the water sport clubs/associations help convey information to their members and to the public. They also provide relevant educational programs every year.

Every year the group performs an annual inventory of bridge decks, piers, beaches and other frequently visited areas by the water and they report any hazards to the property owner. The group has also produced a map that identifies areas where the ice during the winter months may be unsafe to walk or skate on. This ice map is available on the community web site during the winter season.



Recreational fisherman with the proper ice safety equipment around his neck.

The department of fire and rescue also contribute to the local injury prevention and safety promotion program by providing intern positions to 9th grade students. The interns are obligated to share their experiences with their peers as well as educating other students on how they should act if a fire breaks out in the school or at home. There are plans on increasing the obligations of the interns so that they also help educate younger students on what to do in an emergency situation. If these plans become reality, fire safety will be a reoccurring event throughout the entire elementary school period (1st -9th grade) since the department of fire and rescue participate in the annual safety day for 5th grade students.

During the summer months the public can turn to the department of fire and rescue if they temporarily need to borrow life vests.

Safe workplace

The work group focusing on safe workplaces consists of representatives from the major local businesses such as Electrolux, Metsä Tissue and SCA Packaging. The long-term goal for this group is to create a well functioning network based on partnership and co-operation from employers and unions with the purpose of promoting health and safety in the workplace.

The members alternate hosting the meetings, which means that the meetings also serve as study visits where the members share information on routines or technical solutions that have been taken into practice in order to reduce the risk of injuries. At the meetings the representatives also review recent reports of work injuries.

For several years the work group has arranged seminars for the local businesses in Mariestad. The seminars usually focus on work related health issues but sometimes other topics have been the focus of these presentations. The purpose of these lectures or seminars is to encourage the management to focus more on healthy leadership, health consequence analysis etc.

In the next five years the safe workplace group is planning on trying to involve smaller businesses in their efforts to reduce the number of work related injuries. The group also needs to focus more on women and their needs, since this has been a neglected target group. The group also plan on increasing awareness of issues related to work injures among local politicians.

Senior safety

A systematic prevention program to reduce the number of fall accidents among the elderly has proven to be beneficial for the individual as well as for society as a whole. In Mariestad there is a cross sectional work group consisting of representatives from the municipal geriatric care, the primary health care and senior associations, who work together to reduce the number of fall accidents and hip fractures. Their primary objective is to alter the environment by removing obstacles such as thresholds, loose electrical cords, high curb sides etc. The group therefore checks the environment inside and outside of geriatric homes or centers. A written notice of possible risks or hazardous environments is given to the property owner.

The social welfare department has since the safe community designation in 1999 developed their work around risk assessment, fall injury reporting and fall injury prevention. The nurses in charge of geriatric care in each district are obligated to perform risk assessments of all care takers to determine if there is an increased risk of falling. (Strategies and interventions aimed at reducing the number of fall accidents are described in more detail later on.)

The senior safety group also provides information to the community on how to prevent falls. In the beginning of the winter season the senior safety group provides information about protective equipment such as spike shoe clip-ons at the local pharmacy. During this time the spike clip-ons are sold at a reduced price.

An important role for the senior association representatives in the work group is to share and provide information about health and injury prevention to their members. In the spring of 2007 the senior safety group arranged a senior fair in co-operation with a large number of local health services, non-profit organizations and municipal departments.

The purpose was to provide information about health, self care and safety as well as creating a social venue for senior citizens with food and entertainment. At the fair the social welfare department also provided information about their senior citizen services.



Information about traffic safety and traffic educational programs for seniors

The goal for the senior safety group the next five years is to continue to improve the outside environment around geriatric homes and centers. The group can also assist the social welfare department to improve and develop their work around risk assessment and fall injury prevention. However, the most important task for the senior safety group is to ensure that the municipal geriatric healthcare and the primary healthcare systems continue to increase their efforts to reduce the number of fall accidents.

Olycksfällan

Olycksfällan ("injury trap") is a phone number where public can report dangerous environments or situations in the community. The information is followed up and if possible fixed. There are however situations when the technical department in Mariestad can't do anything but inform private property owner about the risk and suggest a solution to the problem.



A majority of the phone calls to Olycksfällan concerns the traffic situation such as pot holes, cracked side walks and poor or broken street lighting. Unkept vegetation is also a frequent complaint and an effort to prevent this, the traffic safety group provides information about rules and recommendations about hedges etc. to property owners every year.



One of the most frequently reported hazards reported to Olycksfällan are trees or hedges that obscure visibility.

Programs that target high-risk groups and environments, and programs that promotes safety for vulnerable groups

In addition to the long term programs aimed at all ages, environments and situations there are a few preventive programs aimed at high risk groups. Most of this work is integrated in the ordinary activities but the different work groups have somewhat of a co-ordination role. In Mariestad the high risk efforts are primarily aimed at children, alcohol and drug prevention and fall injury prevention.

Mental health, self-afflicted injuries and suicide prevention

All schools in Mariestad try to prevent bullying through anti-bullying teams or bullying-stoppers. These teams or groups consist of student representatives, teachers and student health care, who meet approximately one a month. In addition to the anti-bullying teams the school nurses also receive information about student's well-being when administering student health check-ups.

In 2005 the child safety group paid for continuing education for the school nurses and counselors. Four nurses attended a workshop about depression, eating disorders and self-afflicted injuries and five counselors participated in a seminar about signs and symptoms of self-destructive behavior in girls. Both programs contained information about causes of poor mental health and self-destructive behavior such as self-afflicted injuries and suicide. The idea of providing continuing education about mental health issues for school nurses and counselors was to support efforts within the school system to organize some form of suicide prevention program. A systematic suicide prevention program was never created but random efforts are made from time to time if there is an increased need to address issues related to mental health.

The safe community co-coordinating group has discussed the area of suicide prevention with an expert from the West Sweden region. The result of these discussions was that a suicide prevention program in Mariestad should have a wide focus, meaning that the program should try to improve mental health in general and not just focus on reducing the number of suicides since the suicide rate in Mariestad is relatively low. Ideas exist on trying to merge a suicide prevention program with an on-going project in the schools that focus on providing help to children/teenagers in need of special support from the school system and the social welfare department.

Alcohol and crime prevention

The alcohol prevention coordinator has together with the social welfare department and a couple non-profit organizations implemented a preventive program for children and teenagers living in families with a history of substance abuse. In the “forgotten children” program children of similar ages can talk about and share their thoughts and experiences in a supportive group environment, consisting of children with similar experiences as well as professional social workers or counselors. Growing up in a family where there is substance abuse is regarded as a risk factor for future substance abuse and violent behavior. The “forgotten children” program focus on both of these issues and tries to empower the children to choose a different way of life.

The crime prevention group work has partnered with the alcohol and prevention coordinator and the alcohol license administrator to reduce the level of intoxication and violence at bars and restaurants. They have arranged short educational programs for restaurant owners, staff and security personal that focuses on the alcohol license regulations, levels of intoxication, the harmful effects of alcohol, conflict management etc. The aim of the educational program is to decrease violence in and outside bars and restaurants as well as to reduce the level of intoxication by improving the control of serving alcohol to minors. The aim is also to develop a positive cooperation between restaurant owners and the local authorities.

There are also efforts in place to reduce drinking and driving. Two examples are the national “don’t drink and drive campaign” aimed at high school students and poster campaigns at local bars and restaurants. Approximately 1 600 students in Marietad have seen the movie associated with the “don’t drink and drive campaign” and participated in the classroom discussions after watching the movie. In 2005 the campaign also contained bumper stickers with the don’t drink and drive message and these stickers could be seen on a large number of emergency vehicles, taxis as well as other cars or trucks.

Fall injury prevention and senior safety

In September 2005 the social welfare department initiated a two year project with a special home assistance service for senior citizens. The project was evaluated after two years and a political decision made this a permanent service for seniors over the age of 67. The home assistance service has proven to be an effective method to reduce the number of fall accidents in private homes. Any senior citizen over the age of 67 can call the special home assistance number and schedule a time when a social service attendant will come to the home and help out with simple chores that usually require using a ladder such as changing old light bulbs, putting up new curtains etc.

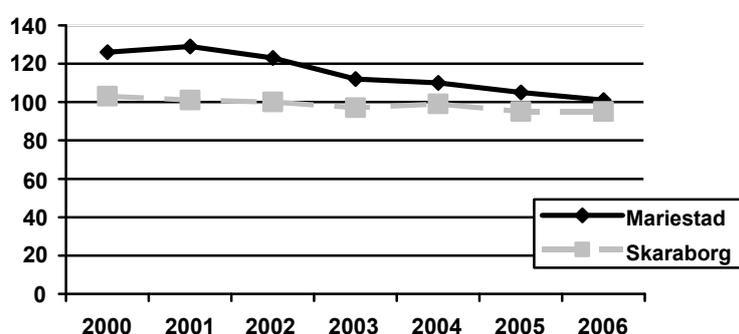
The social welfare department also provides home visits to all seniors the year they turn 78. The home visits are executed by a district nurse and a social service administrator and they inform about available services and welfare assistance. They also talk about injury prevention and demonstrate various aids.

Another important measure to reduce the number of fall accidents is to review the type and the number of medications prescribed to seniors. This is generally done when prescriptions needs to be renewed. However, the municipal geriatric nurses only come in contact with seniors living in geriatric homes, or seniors still living at home but that receives geriatric assistance.

Programs that document the frequency and causes of injuries

Having access to reliable data helps in the planning and evaluation process of any injury prevention program. Mariestad has since 1998 received relevant data from the local health care administration. The data consists of injury statistics from primary health care centers, hospitals, emergency clinics and public dental clinics. In addition to reporting the absolute number of accidents each year the statistics also provides information about age, gender, where, when and the type of injury. The data is used by the workgroups to identify high risk groups and to plan new interventions or activities.

The local injury statistics indicate that the number of reported injuries in Mariestad has decreased during the period 2000-2006. The decrease has been greater in Mariestad compared to the average for the neighboring municipalities (Skaraborg). The numbers represent the number of reported injuries per 1 000 inhabitants.



The number of reported injuries per 1000 citizens in Mariestad compared to the average for the neighboring municipalities year 2000-2006.

Source: Injury registration report, West Sweden's health care administrative office

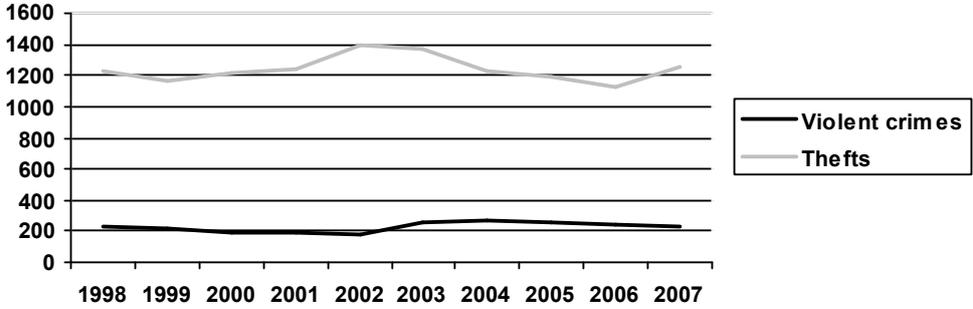
In 1999 when Mariestad was recognized as a safe community the goal was to decrease the number of injuries in the following areas/situations:

- In the home/residential areas
- Sport activities/facilities
- Traffic and transport
- Workplace
- Schools and other public facilities
- Water and ice

The development of the injury rates in these areas are shown below. The numbers represents the number of reported cases per 1000 inhabitants (regardless of age or gender).

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Home/residential areas	49	46	42	40	40	40
Sport activities/facilities	19	20	19	18	18	17
Transport	17	19	20	18	18	16
Traffic accidents	10	9	10	9	9	9
Workplace	14	16	15	13	11	11
Schools, public facilities	12	13	12	10	11	11
Other	15	15	15	13	13	11

Annual statistic reports from the Police department are used when planning activities related to crime prevention. Sometime the increase seems to be quite dramatic when comparing one year to another, or when only looking at a specific offence, due to small numbers. The crime prevention work group therefore tries to focus on long-term trends when planning or evaluating crime prevention activities.



The number of reported violent crimes (black line) and the number of thefts (grey line) in Mariestad 1998-2007. Source: Police department

Evaluation measures to assess programs, processes and the effects of change

The annual public health report is an important tool for the evaluation process of Mariestads injury prevention and public health program. Some areas within the injury prevention program are also presented every other year in a local public health statistics report. The work groups also perform small scale evaluations or progress reports of some kind.

Child safety

The child safety group participated in a local survey pediatric health care survey (*"minikupp"*) that showed that parents would like more information about accidents and injury prevention. The schools follow up the safety day for 5th grade students every year through a survey.

Crime prevention

The crime prevention work group reviews the most recent crime statistic report at their meetings. Specific evaluations related to certain activities have been performed on a couple of occasions. One example is the evaluation of the auto-theft campaigns during the summer and winter in 2003 and 2004. Both years the number of auto breaks-ins decreased during the time the campaign ran. In 2004 the number of auto theft or break-ins decreased by 24 percent, which is equal to 109 cases less. If the decrease is an effect of the campaigns and other prevention efforts or a result of improved protective devices from the manufacturers is difficult to say. Most likely the result is a combination of both factors.

An activity such as "Show id" is related to the crime prevention program. The purpose of the "show id" collaboration is to prevent the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors. Each year there are controls to determine if the vendors are checking ids before selling alcohol or tobacco to persons believed to be under the age of 25.

Sports injuries

The statistics indicate that a large proportion of the injuries for boys and girls, 13-19 years old, occur during leisure time activities while engaging in some form of sporting activity. This is the reason the sports club certification program was initiated but it's yet too soon to determine the effects of this effort. One important aspect of the certification program is however that the clubs themselves start collecting, recording and reporting injuries in order to discover situations where accidents frequently occur.

Traffic safety

Speed monitors are often used when trying to determine the need of speed reducing measures on a particular street, or in a certain area. The speed is generally measured before and after the construction, before to determine if there is a need to alter the road or the surrounding environment and after to determine the effect of the construction.

The injury rate on municipal roads/streets in Mariestad has decreased significantly over time. Larger roads around Mariestad owned by the national government are continually reconstructed in order to improve safety. Local streets are also altered to reduce speed, but the measures usually differ from the ones performed on the larger roads.

The amount of traffic in Mariestad has increased over time. The increase in the number of bicyclist is approximately 15 percent, but only 5 percent of all bicyclists wear bicycle helmets. Automotive traffic has also increased and the table shows the number of cars per day at the two major entrances roads to Mariestad city center.

Traffic count	Year 2000	Year 2005	Year 2006
“Stockholmsvägen”	7012 vehicles/day	8742 vehicles/day	-
“Göteborgsvägen”	9651 vehicles/day	-	14115 vehicles/day

The use of car seat belts is monitored on a regular basis. The results indicate an increase in the use of seat belts in the last decade. In 1997, 65 percent of all drivers wore seat belts during the time of the seat belt count. In 2003, 84 percent wore seat belts and in 2006 this number had increased to 94 percent.

Safety on water and ice

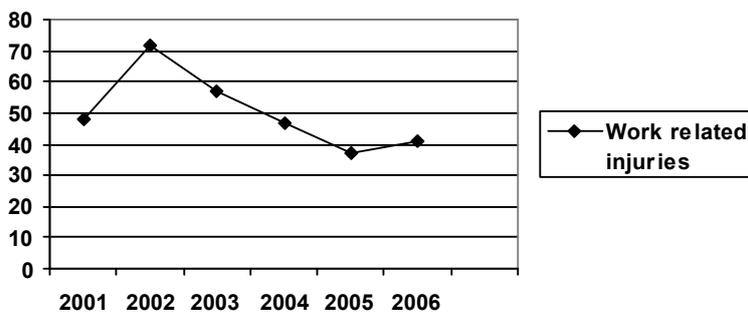
The primary goal of the safety on water and ice group is to reduce the number of accidents on or by the water. In order to reduce the number of fatal accidents the group has agreed on the goal that all 5th grade students should be able to swim (standard set by the national life-saving association).

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Proportion of 5 th grade students that know how to swim	95,3 %	95,3 %	95 %	94,6 %



Safe workplace

The different workplaces represented in the group are obligated by law to follow up on work related injuries. These numbers are also presented annually in the safe workplace group but the group does not perform a joint follow up since the preventive measures and routines vary slightly between the different workplaces. The graph show the number of reported work injuries in Mariestad municipality during 2001-2006. Mold at one of the geriatric homes caused a lot of work related illness among the staff, which explains the high number of work related injuries in 2002.



Number of work related injuries in Mariestad municipality, year 2001-2006.

Senior safety

Fall injury reports are routinely presented and discussed during staff meetings at the geriatric homes. A summary of the fall injury reports are also given to the social welfare council each year. In 2007 there was a national report comparing different parameters related to geriatric health care. In the report the numbers for Mariestad was 66 falls per 1000 inhabitants (80+ years). The report also rank all Swedish municipalities based on different variables. In the fall injury ranking Mariestad placed as number 24 (out of 290), which means that Mariestad is one of the best municipalities in Sweden in terms of low fall injury rates.

The evaluation of the home assistance service was based on the number of home visits during September 2005 through May 2007. The number of visits has increased significantly over time and the number of visits depends of the time of the year. November 2006 a total of 106 visits were performed, but 50-90 visits per month are more typical. The injury statistics from the health care administration was also used to evaluate the effectiveness of the home assistance service program. The numbers indicate that the amount of reported injuries, in the age group 80 years or older, decreased from a total of 150 year 2004 to a total of 137 year 2006. The same data also shows that the number of fall injuries was reduced by 12 cases.

Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Community networks

National networks

The public health planner and representatives from the coordinating group participate in biannual national safe community network meetings. Twice a year representatives from Mariestad also participate in the regional safe community network's meetings. Representatives from the coordinating group or members of the work groups also participate on a regular basis in national injury or crime prevention conferences.

In 2000 a number of safe community representatives from Mariestad attended the designation ceremonies in Nacka and Katrineholm. Representatives from Mariestad also attended the redesignation ceremonies in Lidköping 2003 and Falköping 2004.

International contacts

Mariestads municipality has had a continuous exchange with their sister town Pakruojis, Lithuania as well as with other Baltic countries. In the year 2000 Mariestad demonstrated their injury prevention program to visitors from Lithuania and Russia. During their stay they visited one of the geriatric homes, the day activity center for seniors and the emergency center. The senior safety group arranged a similar field trip for visitors from Korea in 2003. During the visits the Family Health Center was also shown along with a presentation of the injury prevention program aimed at children, age 0-6 years.

In the fall of 2002 seven Safe Communities in the west of Sweden arranged a traveling seminar for their sister towns. The visitors came from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The conference took place in the Mariestad region and lasted for one week. During this week the visitors listened to presentations on the injury prevention programs in the region. Information about goals and strategies were alternated with field trips to the different safe communities. At the end of the week the hosting municipalities and their sister towns tried to help them set goals related to a systematic injury prevention program (based on the Safe Community criteria's).

Mariestad's sister town Pakruojis in Lithuania has created a injury registration program similar to the one administered by the health care administration in West Sweden. The injury prevention program in Pakruojis is primarily aimed towards children and seniors.

In May 2005 Mariestads municipality and Töreboda municipality arranged a three day conference about safe farming. The conference was connected to an EU-project (Euro Baltic Interreg III B) with an aim to increase safety, environmental protection and sustainable development in the Baltic countries. Representatives from Finland, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden attended the conference. In addition to lectures and seminars about safety and injury prevention for farmers practical examples were demonstrated at the local agricultural school.

National and international conferences

2000 National conference, Nacka, Sweden

2004 Safe community-safe industry, European conference, Skövde, Sweden