

## Consumers Union Reports on Rear-Facing Convertibles

Recognizing that today's safety seats meet FMVSS 213 requirements using a 1970s vehicle simulator in a 30-mph crash test, Consumers Union (CU) conducted research using a different rear-seat test bench, more reflective of 2008-10 vehicles, with a blocker to represent the front seat. It is accelerated to 35 mph. Part 2 of the test is correct installation in 5 different, "difficult" vehicles: rear facing (RF) with belt and lower anchors, forward facing (FF) with tether/belt and LATCH. CU rated more than 50 RF-only and convertible seats as BASIC (safe), BETTER, or BEST based on crash and fit outcomes. The CRABI 12-month old (RF), weighted Hybrid II (52-lb. 6 year old), and Hybrid III, 3- and -6 year old dummies were used.

Jennifer Stockburger, in charge of the testing program, Michael Bloch, and Emily Thomas presented their findings for Technicians to help us address the public release of their ratings. Their aim is to make new choices easier. So far, 34 RF-only and 23 convertibles have been tested using the new rig.

Comparing outcomes of the crash tests with those done earlier with RF-only seats, CU strongly recommended children move to convertible seats RF by age 1. Their tests showed head strikes for the CRABI dummy in RF-only seats but not with convertibles RF.

Of the convertibles tested, CU researchers mentioned a number which, at 35 mph, indicated issues with particular dummies. For instance, the Britax Boulevard installed with 3-point belt and tether showed the harness pulling through the shell with the 62-lb., 6-year-old dummy but rated excellent for ease-of-use and FF fit, good for RF fit.; the Britax Roundabout G4 had a similar pull-through with a 52-lb. dummy but rated Very Good with Good fit to vehicle RF and Excellent, FF. The Dorel Scenera cracked at the belt path RF with 3-point belt with the 3-year-old dummy; fit was deemed Good as a towel was needed RF but FF was Excellent. The Dorel Advance SE 65 Air with the 6-year-old, 52-lb. dummy allowed the harness to pull through and FF was Fair for ease-of-use, very good FF with the belt.

### *The Best 6:*

✓ **Chicco NextFit**, with score of 82, with excellent crash and ease-of-use ratings; use of belt is recommended as it is a heavy seat.

✓ **Britax Marathon ClickTight** was next with caveats of keeping the belt flat in the ClickTight pathway without over-tightening and checking that the harness hooks are correctly attached. (See *SBS News*, 1/15)

### *And 4 Best Buys:*

✓ **Evenflo SureRide/Titan 65** had the best crash performance and very good ease-of-use with RF lower connectors fit very good, FF excellent.

*Tip: a locking clip may improve fit.*

✓ **Dorel SceneraNext** with Better crash data, ease-of-use very good, fit with rear connectors very good, RF belt, good fit.

✓ **Graco Contender 65** had a Better crash rating, very good ease-of-use, including very good RF with connectors or belt, FF excellent with LATCH, and very good with a belt.

✓ **Graco MyRide 65** had the same ratings as Contender 65 and also had excellent fit FF with belt.

## BMW Recall

### BMW Lower Anchor Recall:

SBS USA rarely lists vehicle recalls, despite risks to safety of occupants, due to the large numbers and the greater ease of companies finding owners due to vehicle registration requirements.

A rare exception is the BMW of North America recall of 7162 BMW 5 Series sedans requiring a fix on the inner lower anchor in the left rear seat, preventing full attachment of the lower connector. Use the safety belt for safety seats in these vehicles, made July to Sept. 2015, until repaired.

For details, call BMW or see SBS USA recall list.

*SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.*

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## Safety Seat Recalls

**BRITAX:** The handles on all models of Britax B-Safe 35, 35 Elite, and 35 Travel System, made 10/1/14 to 7/1/15, may crack in, around, or under the handle grip, causing seat to be dropped. Do *not* carry by the handle. Products are safe for car travel, but recall is issued by NHTSA and Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Call 800/683-2045 for repair kit with reinforcing handle bracket.

**GRACO:** Three convertible seats, the Classic Ride 1812930, ComfortSport 1794333 and 1813040, and Ready Ride 1924519 and 20, sold 3/1/14-2/28/15, were released without labeling showing instruction storage locations.

Call 800/345-4109 for labels.

## Thank You...

**\$18k** American Honda Motor Co.

**\$635** Heidi Heflin, RN, MN,  
CPSTI

**\$500** Mary Louise Blackstone, Esq.

**\$350** Safety Research &  
Strategies, Inc.

**\$250** Brian Lowy, Esq.

Karen Proctor, PNP

**\$200** AAA Tidewater VA

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## Calendar

**3/22-4/2: Special Enforcement Wk**  
**4/3-9: Safety Seat Checkup Week**

### Conference:

**4/2-5:** Lifesavers Conference,  
Long Beach, CA. Register:

[www.lifesaversconference.org](http://www.lifesaversconference.org)

**4/2:** Pre-conference session:  
National Training on School Buses.

Details and register:

[info@saferidenews.com](mailto:info@saferidenews.com)

*Details and registration:*

*SBS USA: 310/222-6860:*

### Nat'l Technician Certification:

**3/8-10:** 8 am-5 pm: Pomona PD  
Training Center plus **3/11** Checkup.

Co-sponsors: CA Dept. of Public  
Health (CDPH), CA Office of  
Traffic Safety (OTS), Pomona PD.

Safe Kids fee: \$85

Submit application to SBS USA.

### Safety Seat Checkups:

*9 am-3 pm for checkers;*

*10 am-2 pm for families*

**3/11:** Wal-Mart, Pomona, CA.

Co-sponsors: CDPH, OTS,  
Pomona PD

**4/9:** Petersen Automotive Museum,

Los Angeles, CA. Co-sponsors,

OTS, Pomona PD, Toyota Motor

Sales, U.S.A.

## Court Ruling

In *Nabors Well Services Ltd. vs Romero*, the Texas Supreme Court reversed a 40-year-old decision, ruling that safety belt use is now admissible as evidence in Texas courts.

Additionally, a plaintiff's failure to use a safety belt may count as ordinary negligence, for adults and children alike.

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## Belts on School Buses: NHTSA Goal

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Administrator Mark Rosekind, previously of the National Transportation Safety Board, brings awareness of the long battle on the issue of safety belts on school buses, along with the details of school bus crash investigations by the Board.

In 7/15, NHTSA began gathering data on the entire travel-to-school environment as it relates to deaths and injuries. Six states, CA, FL, LA, NY, NJ, and TX, have varied versions of a school bus restraint law, and they will be asked to provide two consultants, one at the state level and another at the local level, to share experiences.

Research projects will look at possible improvements, such as automated enforcement of school zone speed limits, improved locations for school bus loading zones, and the impact of impaired driving on risks. An important component is looking at how NHTSA can reduce costs to school boards for investing in buses with belts, as, in some states, implementation is linked to funding which may never have been allocated.

Reports of crashes with female, inebriated drivers in recent months illuminate another factor to explore. Increased use of drugs and alcohol among female drivers in general has spread to the school environment. Rosekind committed NHTSA to support availability of three-point belts for all traveling in school buses.

NHTSA will have more information and a toolkit at Lifesavers in April.

## Updates for 2016:

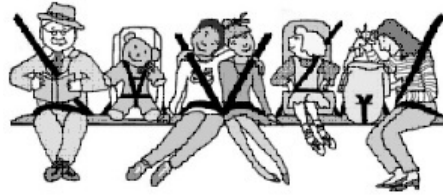
The low-reading-level brochure "**Keep Your Children Safe, Buckle 'Em Up,**" has been updated with the latest California law in all 11 languages. It is available at \$.18 each plus CA tax and shipping/handling.

SBS USA is accepting orders for the **2016 DVD of Child Restraint Manufacturers' Instructions with Summary Sheets**, covering all seats from the past 10 years. Special needs seats instructions are included.

Available for \$20; included in 2016 memberships at the \$135 level and above. Bulk prices available.

A new online version, \$25 per year subscription (450online), with personal code, is being introduced for 2016.

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**SafetyBeltSafe News**

**January 2016**

## NEW PRODUCTS

**Baby Trend PROtect Premiere/Sport**, a convertible for kids 5-40 lbs. RF and 23-65 lbs. forward facing with a 7-year expiration, has a removable headrest which is required when child reaches 22 lbs. regardless of seat direction. The no-rethread harness is adjustable in length and has 4 shoulder slot positions. The three lowest positions may be used in RF mode; the top two positions may be used forward facing, but the top position must be used for a child more than 32 lbs. Lower anchor use must be ended at 45 lbs.

The **Dorel Advance EX 65 Air+** differs from the SE and LX models due to a RF weight limit of 50 lbs. vs. 40-lb. RF limits for the SE and LX models. All three convertibles hold kids forward facing 22-65 lbs. The EX model features the same 3-position crotch strap, 4-position recline, and 10-position adjustable headrest. Discontinue lower anchor use at 40 lbs.

The **Dorel Elite 100 Air+** is a convertible/combination seat for kids 5-40 lbs. RF, 22-65 lbs. FF, 40-100 lbs. in booster mode. It has 3 crotch strap positions, a 4-position headrest, and 4 recline positions. Discontinue lower anchor use at 40 lbs. The **Multi Fit 3 in 1**, another convertible/combination seat, offers 5-40 lbs. RF, 22-40 lbs. and at least 2 years old FF, and 40-100 lbs. and at least 4 years old in booster mode, with 2 sets of harness slots – a fixed, lower slot for infants and an adjustable slot for other children. When in booster mode, the shoulder belt guide should only be used if necessary to improve fit.

**Dream On Me** booster seats, the backless **Coupe** for children 30-100 lbs., with no shoulder belt adjuster and the **Deluxe Highback Booster** for kids 30-110 lbs. with a 4-position headrest, are new.

**Evenflo SafeMax**, with no-rethread harness and 10-year expiration date, is reported as the 1<sup>st</sup> rollover-tested safety seat. It's designed for 5 lbs. through booster, with up to 40 lbs. RF, 22-65 lbs. FF with harness, 40-120 as a booster. Tethering FF is required in LATCH mode (lower anchors permitted to 45 lbs.). Unusually, use of a towel in the seat bight if needed for leveling in booster mode is permitted.

**Graco** introduced the **Nautilus 80 Elite**, a combination seat for kids 22-80 lbs. in harness mode, 30-100 lbs. in highback booster mode, and 40-120 lbs. in backless booster mode, expiring in 10 years. There are three recline positions; the most upright must be used at 65 lbs. whether in harness or booster mode. Discontinue lower anchor use at 45 lbs. LATCH system may be used in booster mode. A body pillow is provided for kids 22-35 lbs.

**Harmony Big Boost Deluxe**, with a 10-year life, is a backless booster for kids 30-110 lbs. and features a shoulder belt adjuster and lower anchor connectors.

**Peg Perego** introduced the **Primo Viaggio Convertible**, replacing their SIP 5-70. It covers kids 5-45 lbs. RF and 22-65 lbs. FF. The harness adjusts to 10 positions, and the seat may be tethered when rear facing. Discontinue lower anchor use at 40 lbs. if RF; at 45 lbs. FF. Clamps used on sides of seat for FF installations are belt guides, not lock-offs.

The **Performance Racer** and **Performance Rally** are now available from **Recaro**. The Rally features a flip foot to help with the recline angle – otherwise, the Racer and Rally are the same. The lower anchor limit is 45 lbs., and both protect kids 5-40 lbs. RF, 20-65 lbs. FF. Both have a lock-off to help with FF lap-shoulder belt installations and a no-rethread harness adjusted by turning knobs on the sides of the seat.