

SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 24, No. 2



March 2003

Safety Seat Checkup Day, 2003

Parents can combine the fun of a family outing at the Petersen Automotive Museum with the serious business of ensuring their children's safety by attending Safety Seat Checkup Day on Saturday, April 5.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. will provide free safety seat inspections from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Museum parking lot at Fairfax and Wilshire in Los Angeles.

The event is being underwritten by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., which has supported a SBS USA annual event since 1986. We invite readers to register with the office to attend for checkups or to volunteer. For those who would like to participate as checkers, TMS USA will fund checker trainings this month.

The 11:30 a.m. press conference will feature Samantha Babcock, who lost her two-year-old daughter in a car crash last year (see 11/02 issue). Samantha learned from her tragic experience and wants to convince others to prevent any child from riding loose in the car. To underline this message, during Special Enforcement Week (March 23-29), traffic officers will focus on writing tickets for unrestrained children, including passengers in the back of pickup trucks. This Week is spearheaded by Peace Officers Association of LA County, our long time partner.

Teams, including CPS Technicians and trained volunteers, will check safety seats for fit and proper

use for the child and in the car. Sample seats will be displayed to help parents make a new choice, if necessary. Older children will try the 5-Step Test to see if safety belts only are suitable.

The press conference will include commendation of any who were saved by a safety belt, safety seat, or helmet as well as local dignitaries. Please refer any SafetyBelt/Seat/Helmet/Saved to us to participate. Visitors may explore the Museum, check out the exhibits of antique and modern car seats, and learn about the evolution of vehicle safety features in the two exhibits created by *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A. and Petersen Automotive Museum, "A Journey Through Time: Child Passenger Safety" and "Boosters Are For Big Kids." Admission is free for checkers and volunteers; checkup participants receive discounts. April 5th is Discovery Day at the museum, a special event for youngsters to explore the Discovery Center there.

You can help by copying and distributing the flyer in the newsletter (Spanish version available by e-mail or mail on request); attending a city council meeting when a proclamation of the Week is announced; and offering to help on 4/5. Dydee Service will be distributing 1800 copies of the flyer to their customers. Let us know what you can do.

In Memory – Advisory Board Member **Robert K. Merton**, 92, Professor Emeritus of Columbia University and first sociologist to receive the National Medal of Science ('94), lost his battle with melanoma on 2/23/03 in NYC.

Well known for his work, both in theory and research, his many publications, and his teaching, Merton often speculated about the struggle to fund child passenger safety (cps) programs in light of their positive impact on social institutions. His final book, published in Italy in 2002, will be issued in the U.S. by Princeton University Press.

Survived by his second wife, 3 children, including SBS USA Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello, and 9 each grandchildren and great-grandchildren, he was acutely aware of the importance of cps.

SBS USA thanks Elaine and Michael Sachs, MD, for a gift in his memory.

THANK YOU

\$7500

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A.

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Anonymous

\$270

Total Child Safety, Inc.

\$200

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Srvcs/Ctr. for Health Promotion
MaryAnn Zavorskas

CALENDAR

CONFERENCE

***9/22-24:** CA Conf on Childhood Injury Control: will cover national issues. Los Angeles Airport Radisson Hotel. More info at 619/594-3691 or www.cipp.org

Safety Seat Checkup Day

***4/5:** Petersen Automotive Museum, 10 am to 2 pm:
11:30 am Ceremony to honor the SafetyBelt/Seat Saved. Parent Samantha Babcock, whose daughter died unrestrained, will speak about the consequences of not using proper child restraints.

CHECKER TRAINING

4-hour checker trainings will be held in various locations throughout the month of March. Call the SBS USA office for times and locations.

SAFETY SEAT CHECKUPS

*Call SBS USA to register
Trained checkers are needed!*

***4/5:** Petersen Automotive Museum, Los Angeles
***5/17:** sites nationwide TBA for State Farm Insurance checkups
***6/6:** Site to be announced

TRAINING

(See story on page 3 for more details.)

***4/29:** Educator Workshop, 8:30 am - 5 pm, Nissan North America, Gardena, CA. \$30 registration fee required.
***6/2-5:** Certification Training, Nissan North America, Gardena

Injury Risks Unclear

A report from the 10-trauma-center CIREN (Crash Injury Research & Engineering Network) system to integrate data from the crash itself through hospital treatment and long-term follow-up, illustrates the need for accurate information going to and from "the street."

Mentioned was the story of a nurse who survived a crash and resisted going for assessment because she didn't feel hurt. A well-informed officer noted the risk factor in the crash: the driver was wearing only the automatic shoulder belt but had no lap belt attached. He convinced the nurse to be checked out. A series of surgeries repaired her liver and stemmed abdominal bleeding!

Other cases involved infants whose parents placed harness straps under baby's arms instead of on their shoulders. Some infants who seemed unhurt and were conscious, died en route to care.

It is critical that clear information about restraint status of crash survivors gets to medical personnel, speeding evaluation and care. On-scene first responders need to convey the type of restraint system and manner it was used, the type of crash (rollover, side impact), the condition of vehicle equipment, such as the steering wheel and frontal and side air bags, to alert trauma staff to potential diagnoses.

CIREN is collecting a wealth of data to help save lives by finding and publicizing the source of hidden injuries and promoting improved engineering for future vehicles. NHTSA provides major support for this network.

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You can help SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. save children's lives with your membership or donation.

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Memberships and subscriptions are for the calendar year; \$100 minimum includes *Safe Ride News* through December.

____ Check here to enroll in the "Automatic Update" service by e-mail (\$50 minimum membership/subscription).

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Donations are tax deductible.

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Federal Government Denies Petition from Xportation Safety Concepts, Inc.

The Pioneered Infant Safety Seat is described by its makers as an "air bag resistant, rear-facing infant restraint." Thus, the company petitioned, ultimately unsuccessfully, to omit use of the FMVSS 213-mandated warning label required on the upholstery of every rear-facing safety seat to reduce the risk of being placed in front of a passenger air bag.

SBS News referred to the presentation of this product at Lifesavers 20 (see 11/02 issue). With this ruling, the required labeling on the product makes it a misuse to place it in front of an air bag. In states with requirements for "correct use" of child restraints, this makes drivers liable for citations.

Note: Statistics from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA): From 1996 to July, 2002, 7,786 drivers & 1,539 front passengers, of whom 72% were unbelted, were saved by air bags. Of 221 air bag-induced fatalities, 137 were children, many of whom were totally unrestrained. However, 22 were riding in rear-facing safety seats.

The number of such fatalities has decreased markedly over the years. Only 2 child deaths from air bag interactions in a crash were reported in 2002. Keeping high awareness levels of the risks of air bags to children is essential. Recently, the LA Times reported that a 4 year old had been removed from life support after an air bag interaction in a crash, leading to a broken neck. The article implied that the child's safety seat was in the back seat, unoccupied.

Air Bags in the News Again—Are They “Smart” Enough?

A report in *USA Today*, by Jayne O'Donnell, indicated that some automakers are dubious about the reliability of the next generation of air bags which, to meet federal regulations, must be able to discern key characteristics of the person sitting in front. By September 2003, at least 20% of the fleet must be outfitted with the "smart" air bags.

Depending on the method used, it is possible that a child might appear to be an adult due to the weight of a safety seat used. Certain seating configurations chosen by adults might lead the bag to respond to the adult occupant as if to a small child.

To help with these problems, NHTSA is offering to continue education to keep children in the back seat and to inform adults of the importance of sitting "properly" to avoid mistaken reactions from air bags.

At American Honda Motor Co., "advanced frontal air bags" are deemed very reliable based on a sensor system that determines the total weight on the front passenger's seat. The findings of the set of 4 sensors suppress air bag deployment if the weight is less than 65 lbs. An American Honda spokesperson pointed out that even with advanced frontal air bags, they strongly recommend that those of small stature as well as children ride in back for greater protection. To know if the air bag has been turned off, look at the Passenger Air Bag Off light on the dashboard. Both the Acura MDX and Honda Odyssey for 2003 have the new system.

Important Findings for Teaching and Advocating in CPS

Building on a host of prior studies, Rebecca Sweitzer, MS, MD, Richard Rink, PhD, Tracey Corey, MD, & Jane Goldsmith, Ph.D published "Children in Motor Vehicle Collisions: Analysis of Injury by Restraint Use & Seat Location" in the 9/02 issue of *Journal of Forensic Science*. The study was a retrospective review of autopsy reports and medical records at the Office of the County Medical Examiner or Kosair Children's Hospital between 1/1/94 & 12/31/98.

Observations were based on 499 children, grouped birth to 3 and 4 to 9, based on similarities of types of restraints recommended and physical development. Due to the source of the data, the rate of misuse (20%) recorded is likely very much underreported. Nevertheless, the rest of the findings accord well with observations made in other studies and at the grassroots.

The most relevant results follow: 1) 0-3 year olds had higher reported misuse; 4-9 year olds, higher non-use of restraint systems. 2) Most children rode in the rear, *but* of those 0-3 who were unrestrained, 53% were in the front seat. 3) Head injury, diagnosed in 60% of the children, was serious for only 18%, *but* of the 25 who died, 20 had head injuries. 4) The back seat is clearly the best seating location, *but* in comparing unrestrained children in back with properly restrained children in front, that advantage disappeared in this study. 5) Only .9% of the 4-9 year olds were using boosters.

The importance of correct restraint choice for this group was underlined by the higher number of abdominal injuries for restrained 4-9 year olds than for the unrestrained, who suffered other injuries instead. With a booster in place, the improperly placed safety belt can be fitted correctly, which would reduce this factor.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. strongly encourages the use of the "Boosters Are For Big Kids" curriculum for K-3rd graders in schools and kid-oriented organizations and the mass application of the 5-Step Test at checkups and other youth gatherings to allow parents and children to learn of the benefits of booster use and the wide age range of children who are not ready for safety belts only.

Nissan North America Promotes Training

With a pledge of \$25,000, **Nissan North America** matched their generous sharing of training and storage space at their main headquarters with funds to increase access to the nationally certified SBS USA training team. With **Andrea Swanson** as lead instructor, LAPD Officers **John Nisbet**, **Norm Kellems**, and **Pat Beighley** and SBS USA staff **Cheryl Kim** and **Stephanie Tombrello** will provide a series of training opportunities this spring.

On April 29th, a 1-day Educator Workshop will be held in Gardena from 8:30 am to 5 pm. Participants will receive the SBS USA Child Passenger Safety Reference and Teaching Guide (a \$50 value) and will be directed toward a safety seat checkup in which participation helps to consolidate the educational overview at the workshop. SBS USA recommends that those intending to apply for national certification complete these steps prior to embarking on that training experience.

To receive an application, call 310/222-6860 or e-mail dssecure99@aol.com. The reservation fee is \$30, in advance, by check, VISA, or MasterCard.

A national certification training will be offered at the same site from 6/2-5 with a safety seat checkup scheduled on 6/6/03 in a location to be announced. Applications can be obtained from ckim@carseat.org.

The participant fee for the session is \$950, due by 5/25; however, with funds from Nissan, SBS USA will offer at least 20 scholarships of up to \$500 to individuals or non-profit agency representatives who are pledged to provide cps services for at least two years. [Attrition among those who qualify as Technicians mandates this requirement.]

Thank you, Nissan North America.

Special Thanks to:

...**American Honda Motor Company**, for storage of new safety seats for use at safety seat checkups for low-income families with seats that cannot be used.

... **Disneyland** for providing temporary storage of used safety seats which will be available for a "crushing" in future.

...**REI-Harbor-UCLA Medical Center** for office space.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

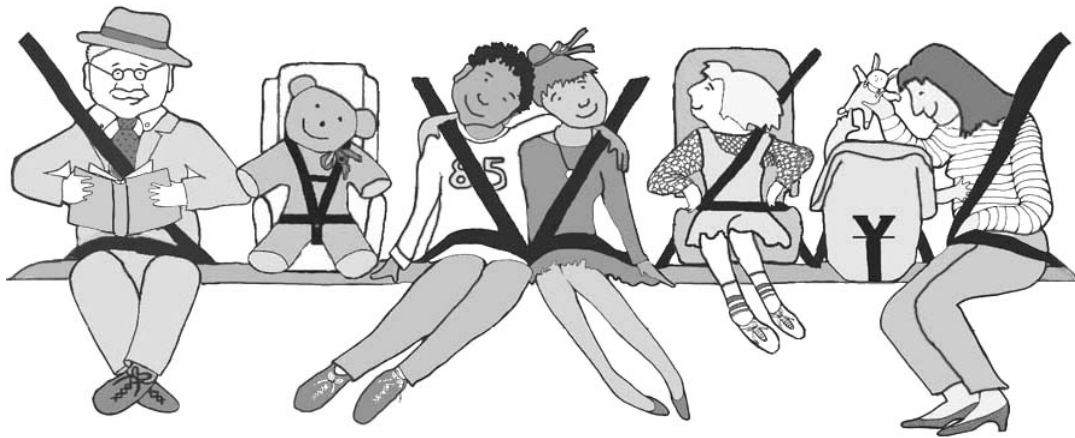
Safety Seat Checkup Day

Saturday, April 5 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

11:30 a.m. Welcome Ceremony and Recognition of Notable Guests

Petersen Automotive Museum

6060 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles (Wilshire at Fairfax parking lot)



Buckling up is a family affair.

Safety Seat Checkup Week March 30-April 5, 2003

Sponsor

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A.

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Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County

FREE SAFETY SEAT CHECKUP (95% had mistakes last year!)

Help save children's lives with your tax-deductible support.

Meet Bucklebear and his friends. Visit new child passenger safety exhibits.

Petersen Museum discount coupons available for families participating in the checkup.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Box 553 Altadena, CA 91003 310/222-6860 www.carseat.org
SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is the national, non-profit, member-supported organization for child passenger safety.

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SafetyBeltSafe News

March 2003

Recalls for Special Needs Products

Snug Seat announced that tether kits for Gorilla (FW-50250-12-ZY) and Spelcast (FW-50250-12-ZY) made 7/26/02 to 1/15/03 have a washer that is not resistant to salt spray. Call 800/336-7684 to receive a replacement washer and instructions.

New Products

All models listed except belt-positioning boosters have LATCH hardware.

Car Seat Specialty (CSS) has introduced two new infant-only restraints that fit up to 20 lbs. Baby One and Baby Ride have a 5-point harness, front adjuster strap, and safety belt lock-off; Baby Ride also has a detachable base. The CSS Dreamer is a booster for children who weigh 33-80 lbs. It has a removable back and adjustable headrest. The CSS Ola is a backless booster that fits 33-80 lbs. The CSS Nuevo and Solo are combination seats with front adjuster and a 5-point harness for 22-40 lbs. They may be used from 33-80 lbs. as belt-positioning boosters.

Evenflo Express has been remodeled with armrests as the Chase. It is a combination seat with the harness adjuster on the child's chest. The harness fits 20-40 lbs. The seat may be used 30-80 lbs. as a belt-positioning booster.

Graco Assura (formerly sold as Century Assura) is a rear-facing-only seat without a base for babies up to 22 lbs. that has either a 3-point or 5-point harness.

The ProRider CNS Booster is a backless booster that fits 33-80 lbs.

The convertible safety seat, Sit 'n Stroll by Safeline Kids, now based in UT, has a taller shell and is certified for use rear facing up to 30 lbs, forward facing to 40 lbs.

LACDHS Increases Contract to \$25,000!

SBS USA has provided technical support for the Safety Seat Education and Voucher Program of LA County Dept of Health Services for the many years since our pilot program was adopted as the model for the 5-site system. This year, an increase is permitting additional safety seat checkups to be conducted for families in areas with underserved populations.

The January checkup at El Super in E. Los Angeles was arranged with assistance from Plaza Community Center, a voucher site. Not only were 39 seats/children evaluated for proper transport, but also 15 new safety seats were distributed.

A second checkup on 2/28 in Los Angeles, coordinated by Clinica Msr. Oscar Romero, was specifically geared to distributing their allocation of the CSK Auto-funded safety seats (see 9/02 issue) to pre-selected families while ensuring that old or damaged seats still in use were turned in and that new ones were properly secured. Fourteen safety seats were evaluated; ten new ones were provided. No correctly transported children were seen!!



Health Net of California believes that safety is in everyone's best interest. As a health plan dedicated to wellness and prevention, we are pleased to support the community services of SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.