

SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 25, No. 1



January 2004

NHTSA Startles CPS Community

In early 2004, without warning to the CPS advocate community, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued a press release reversing its long-standing recommendation to discontinue use of safety seats involved in a crash. If the safety seat and the door next to it were not visibly damaged, the air bag was not deployed, no one was injured, and the car could be driven, the safety seat need not be replaced. The press release cited two studies, one by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) and the other by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), that show safety seats can be subjected to as many as 50 low-speed (9 mph) crashes with either no detectable damage or with damage that did not affect subsequent performance. Their reason for this reversal of position was to prevent parents from refusing to use safety seats subjected to minor collisions, thus leaving the child without any seat to use either initially or permanently. NHTSA noted the agency would eagerly receive data that contradicted their findings.

It was unclear if NHTSA has data that show parents are removing children from crash-involved safety seats and no longer restraining them in any safety seats after crashes. That has not been the finding of grass-roots organizations. Many children are found riding in safety seats that were in crashes, and few parents know that this might be a risk. It may be that the CA law that requires insurers to replace seats in use in crashes is changing that pattern among the insured. As more law enforcement officers know about the law, families are being advised to exercise this option. But a subsequent law removed from coverage any unoccupied seat, assuring that the costs for some seats that have been subjected to devastating crash forces are not being reimbursed.

SBS USA looked at the data before this release when the IIHS tests were published previously. These data indicate that safety seats can withstand multiple high-speed crashes despite visible damage and still perform at the level of FMVSS 213 in subsequent tests. Nevertheless, it is difficult to tell parents that a specific crash-exposed seat is "fine" for future use. Most CPS advocates are not looking at crash reports from trained personnel but hearing estimates of the crash impacts, often long after the event. If the CPS advocate has long experience in the field, such counsel might be considered "expert," leading to extensive liability. For those who are newcomers, the counsel might be given without weighing all factors involved since it is difficult to integrate all of the diagnostic assessments required so soon after completing 4-5 days of training.

There is another aspect of this situation which might be called the "fairness" concept. That is the situation in which a family has a safety seat in a vehicle that was struck by another. Why should this family have to meet such criteria to apply for replacement? As an "innocent bystander," one has been inconvenienced. It leaves it to the "innocent party" to replace the seat or to take a chance on failure if the crash initiator's company refuses to pay.

Thus, SBS USA has a "3-point summary" of the situation. First, it hasn't been our experience that parents have removed children from safety seats used in crashes and kept them loose and unprotected on future travels *because* they feared the safety seat in question was a risk to their children. Second, it appears that CA law has been successful in empowering more insured and "not-at-fault" families to use it to have seats that were in use in crashes replaced. Third, and finally, it may be that the NHTSA recommendation will prevail and protect a counselor who used it to guide a family whose child was injured/killed in a subsequent crash in the same safety seat. But along the way, the counselor may well have a difficult and expensive legal defense.

Recalls/Advisories

Britax - 888/427-4829

Husky - All. Use of the long belt path with a lap belt only may allow excessive forward head movement in a crash. Call for new labels and instructions; use the short belt path with recline bar.

Roadster - All. Preferred shoulder belt routing is *under* the arm rest. (Instructions prior to 12/03 show the shoulder belt routed over the arm rest.)

Dorel - Cosco - 866/611-3022

Alpha Omega or Eddie Bauer 3-In-1 (02-331, 02-332, 02-531, 02-533, 02-537, 02-555) 11/17/00 to 1/10/01. The top tether strap could be cut off the shell by the metal attachment plate. Call for a free repair kit w/plastic protector. Continue using the top tether strap.

High Rise (22-297, 22-298, 22-299) 10/1 - 10/31/03. Label states booster is for use by children *under* one year of age; it should say *over* one year. Call for replacement label.

THANK YOU

\$7,500 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. Ohio Dept of Health - for 100 memberships*

\$4,000 CSK Auto, Inc.

\$2,250 American Honda Motor Company (year to date)

\$2,000 Auto Club of So. California

\$1,500 David & Sylvia Weisz Family Philanthropic Fund, Inc.

\$1,171.83 Hawthorne Savings*

\$750 Samantha Merton

\$600 Michael Sachs, MD*

\$500 Aprica America, Inc. Goodman, Lister & Peters, PC

Linda Jones & Tompkins Foundation*

\$300 Candy Mintz

\$262 Fremont Investment & Loan*

\$200 Carrie Carlson ChildrensHospital/Los Angeles

Dynamic Research, Inc.

E-Z-On Products of Florida Harris Methodist HEB Hosp.

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Donna Ott, MS, PT

SAFE KIDS of Georgia

SAFE KIDS of North

Central Nebraska

St John's Health Center

San Luis Obispo County

Public Health Dept.

Strategic Safety/Sean Kane

\$155 Phillip Przybylo

\$150 Marc Cohen

Passenger Safety Services

Karen Proctor, RN, CPNP

* Creative ways donors have found to help SBS USA and the Safe Ride Helpline: **OH Dept of Health** signed on for a statewide network of members, using the special "package rate for 100 members."

Both Hawthorne Savings and Fremont Investment & Loan offer donations to non-profits whose members deposit funds for a year in their banks and who mention our special code numbers. SBS USA has no idea of depositors' names nor the amount of their deposits but thanks anyone whose savings were "counted" toward the donation from these community-oriented savings institutions. [The codes are 4020 and 387 respectively.]

Another unique method is pursued by **Michael Sachs, MD**, who donates to SBS USA for special holiday cards sent to his friends and associates. Next holiday, other SBS USA members could plan with our organization staff for a similar effort.

Linda and William Jones have worked on generating a matching gift annually from the foundation of the company where William worked. This year their gift garnered \$500 for SBS USA.

We thank all of our supporters, at every level, and encourage each of you to search for creative ways to help fund the vital services provided by SBS USA.

For 2004, a substantial number of gifts are in memory of **Elaine Housman Sachs**, who is sorely missed as a SBS USA Board member, community volunteer, and friend. Elaine would be deeply touched as are all of the others in whose names gifts were received.

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In Congress, Peter King (NY) introduced HR 3683 to have NHTSA track non-crash/non-traffic incidents (backovers, kids left in cars) & named it Cameron Gulbransen/Kids And Cars Safety Act for a backover victim whose MD dad couldn't see him. (See *SBS News*, 11/03.)

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

GROUP SUBSCRIPTION: \$500 Major Corp. \$200 Hospital \$100 Small Bus./Prof Grp \$50 Community Org.
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I can help with _____

* E-mail address is required to receive passwords for access to Recall List and CPS Tech Update.

All memberships/subscriptions are for calendar year and include *SafetyBeltSafe News*.

\$200 or more automatically includes *Safe Ride News*.

Check below if you want to receive the following special subscriptions:

\$50 minimum: ___ Auto Update Service by e-mail ___ Auto Update Service by regular mail (if necessary)

\$100 minimum: ___ CPS Tech Update (online access to new instructions since 12/2002)

*Special for \$100 members: Add \$25 and receive Safe Ride News through
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CALENDAR

CONFERENCES

***3/28-30:** Lifesavers 2004

www.lifesaversconference.org - San Diego, CA
 Call 703/922-7944. *Special Invitation: On Monday, March 29 from 4:15 pm to 6 pm at the Town & Country Hotel, Nissan North America will partner with SBS USA to sponsor a chance to meet and get to know the people behind the names on e-mails and materials while enjoying a pre-dinner snack. If you know you'll be coming, drop us a note at stombrello@carseat.org; It's an Open House but it would be great to know that YOU will be there!*

***5/16-19:** Safety 'N Kids Traffic Summit, Los Angeles Sponsor: CA Office of Traffic Safety.
www.safetynkids.org. Call 213/241-2172

**Special Enforcement Week
 April 11 - 17, 2004**

Safety Seat Checkup Week, April 18-24, 2004
sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A.
 including
Safety Seat Checkup Day - April 24, 2004
 Petersen Automotive Museum, Los Angeles

TRAINING

Nissan North America, Gardena, CA

***3/23:** 8:30 am - 5 pm, Refresher and Update for previously trained CPS advocates and Technicians ✧

***4/8:** Educator Workshop, 8:30 am - 5 pm sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. (TMS USA) An overview of the technical and program aspects of child passenger safety (CPS) ✧
 ✧ \$30 pre-registration fee includes SAFE KIDS curriculum on 3/23 & CPS Reference Manual on 4/8. Attend both for \$50 pre-registration fee.

***4/15:** 9 am - 1 pm, Checker Training, sponsored by TMS USA, a short introduction to technical aspects of CPS. (No fee required.)

CERTIFICATION TRAINING

\$950 fee. Scholarships available up to \$500. (See pg. 4.) Call Cheryl Kim, 626/986-6555 for details.
***4/28-29 and 5/3-4:** Nissan North America

SAFETY SEAT CHECKUPS

*Call SBS USA to register - Checkers are needed!
 Parents: Register at 310/222-6860*

10 am - 2 pm (Checkers: 9 am - 3 pm)
***4/24:** Petersen Automotive Museum, Los Angeles
***5/5:** Location TBA (mandatory for certification)

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*A New Year, a new chance
to spread the word!
Renew for 2004 today!*

SafetyBeltSafe News

January 2004

New Products

Baby Trend Booster is a highback booster for children between 30 and 80 pounds.

Britax has introduced an infant-only seat, the **Companion**, for babies between 4 and 22 pounds. It may be used with or without the adjustable base, which has an anti-rebound bar and lockoffs.

Cosco Protek, certified for 30-100 pounds, is a new booster from Dorel with a removable back and adjustable headrest. The design is similar to that of Britax Bodyguard, Car Seat Specialty Dreamer, Combi Apogee, Graco Turbo, and Evenflo Big Kid. A booster of this type is probably the best choice for most families and programs.

The **B500 Booster** by Compass is a highback booster with an adjustable headrest; the seat folds for storage or easy transport.

Training Ops—Don't Miss Them!

SBS USA is proud to announce that Nissan North America has provided scholarships of up to \$500 for more than 25 participants in Certification Training since their gift of \$25,000 last summer. Not only do they offer the free use of their training site but also a storage location for the overflow of safety seats and materials that don't fit into our Torrance office space.

Coming up this spring, SBS USA has a string of additional training options at Nissan North America, Gardena, CA; see Calendar for details.

Old Products

The September, 2002 issue of *SBS News* carried the PACE story of parents whose children were injured while riding in shield boosters and who were combining to petition Dorel to stop manufacturing the last shield booster on the retail market, the Grand Explorer. The product was labeled for use with a shield for children weighing 30-40 lbs. and for use from 40 lbs. as a belt-positioning booster.

SBS USA maintained that the product filled no critical niche because there is a wide range of safety seats with full harness systems for the child under 40 lbs. and boosters for older children more than 40 lbs. whose vehicles had shoulder-lap belts. Since all organizations in the CPS field and the federal government recommended that children under 40 lbs. ride in safety seats with full harness systems, parents who received education might have heard this position. Nevertheless, based on years of input from the SBS USA Safe Ride Helpline, both by telephone and online, many parents receive NO education in CPS and rely entirely on the labeling on products at retail. How would they know that they were not following recommended practice when they found the Grand Explorer, carrying its notice of compliance with federal regulations, on store shelves?

The latest news is that Dorel stopped production of the Grand Explorer late in 2003 and no longer has the mold available in its original form. Thus, the stream of new shield boosters has ceased. From now on, the shield booster campaign focus must lie with the used safety seat market.