

# SafetyBeltSafe News

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May 2004



## Buckle Up Laws—How Long Should Child Restraints Be Required?

Although US laws requiring child restraints, not safety belts alone, have a variety of prescriptions, each provokes opponents' insistence that their rules are too stringent. This was seen in the report of the European Union law, in effect in 5/06, requiring children to use child restraints until 4 ft. 11 in. and 79 lbs. British commentators worried that the expense and possible need for two boosters per child might push parents to extremes. They quoted research as indicating "only" 26% always used a child restraint with 10 & 11 year olds!

Based on events at which SBS USA volunteers conducted the 5-Step Test in family vans, it was a rare child *under* 10 who could pass and safely use a safety belt only. In California, the law requires correct use by all ages, thus allowing for assessment by officers. If the child is over 6 years or 60 lbs. and *doesn't* fit the belt, there is a violation of law. If the child fits well, the issue is unlikely to arise.

In another thought-provoking news note from the UK, a Welsh school district is under watch by parents and others after a coroner's inquiry recommended

that every school bus have a monitor as well as a driver. It is meant to avoid circumstances of student misbehavior distracting drivers who are trying to manage their charges *and* the bus itself. The finding emerged after the death of a 12 year old in a crash prompted by pupil interference with the driver.

*Staggering Statistic: If current trends continue, the number killed and injured on the world's roads will rise by more than 60% between 2000 and 2020. Most of these injuries will occur in developing countries where more and more people are using motorized transport. Currently 1.2 million die and 50 million are injured.*

Auto-Ideation(TM) Study shows owners of new vehicles in focus groups specified important safety equipment as necessary for vehicles they choose. Safety features desired included built-in mechanisms to recognize and respond to driving cues indicating drowsy or distracted driving patterns, both of which are emerging more prominently; monitoring systems for parents of teen drivers; alarms to warn if a child is left behind in a car by mistake; and blind spot and glare reduction.

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## Bereaved Family Asks for Reports on Evenflo Discovery Infant-Only Seat

A 5-month-old infant in the 3-point harness Discovery in the base died during a crash in Mississippi. The shell left the base and, as it traveled inside the vehicle, allegedly the harness loosened, and the child was ejected.

Lisa James, the baby's great-aunt, searched the NHTSA Defect Investigation Database, finding at least 2 other allegations that Discovery shells left their bases. In one case, the infant suffered brain injury and died. In another, the parent reported finding the shell on the opposite side of the back seat from the base.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Office of Defects Investigation has opened an investigation, citing 7 allegations of such separations, 2 involving deaths and 3 non-fatal injuries. Both NHTSA and Ms. James ask that any similar cases be forwarded to NHTSA to contribute to the investigation. SBS USA seconds the request. The Discovery has been a popular product so it is critical to locate the cause of these incidents, whether from materials defects or parental misuse, inadvertent or negligent.

## New Harness for Older Children

The **Ride Safer Travel Vest** can be used two ways. In seating positions with a lap-only belt, the belt goes in front of the child and the top tether strap is attached to the vehicle. A special dual top tether must be ordered for children over 60 lbs. It may also be used, with a lap and shoulder belt, as an alternative to a booster.

Unlike other non-booster belt-positioning products, the Ride Safer Vest is certified to meet FMVSS 213 and has clips to keep the lap belt low and the shoulder belt positioned correctly, even if the child leans forward or to the side. It is manufactured by Safe Traffic Systems and can be purchased from National Safety Resources (800-620-2268 or Sue@nsrinc.org).

Size small fits 35-60 lbs. and size large fits 50-80 lbs. Pictures of the vest can be seen on the Internet at [www.safetrafficsystem.com](http://www.safetrafficsystem.com).

## THANK YOU

**\$6000** American Honda Motors (to date for 2004 membership year)  
**\$1000** CARE Foundation; Volkswagen of America, Inc.  
**\$250** Bidez & Associates; Harvey & Ellen Knell  
**\$200** Children's Healthcare of Atlanta; Douthitt Frets Rouse Gentile & Rhodes, LLC; Stephen Tannenbaum, MD  
**\$125** Aliso Viejo Police Services; Buckle Up Orange Co, HCA-Public Health; Del Norte Child Care Council; Gerald Eizen; Exeter Police Dept.; James Griffin, Jr., Dep.; Cindy Hearrell, RN; Kenosha Co. Div. of Health; LA Passenger Safety Services; Pacific Safety Council; Redwood Memorial Hosp; SAFE KIDS of Central WY; Margaret Sirtak; Anne Stokman; Carolyn Stumpf; Craig Thiessen; Union Co.Safe Communities Coalition; Vail Valley Medical Ctr; Gary Van Etten; Beth Warren; Howard Willson; Mary Ann Zavorskas  
**\$100** Accident Reconstruction Associates, Inc.; Baby Trend, Inc.; Susan Berres, OTR/L; Jill Brodkey; John Calciana; Dorothy Carle; Diane Cherry; Collision Analysis & Reconstruction; Jan Darter, RN; Decatur Police Dept.; Emerson Middle School PTSA/Booster Club; Karen Fond, PNP; Jerry Gaines; Linda Galer; Marti Garrido-Young; Alice, Dennis & Taylor Hacala; Mahtab Hakim; Dennis Kraft; Lassen Child & Family Resources; Carla Levinski; MS Safety Services; Mommy & Me, Inc.; Barbara Nimocks; John Nisbet; Norman Police Dept.; N. Dakota Dept of Health; Peoria Area SAFE KIDS; Petersburg SAFE KIDS; Barbara Potts, RN; Mary Kay Reed, RN, MPA; (continued.....)

Safeline Kids, Inc.; Safety Restraint Coalition; Pam Stottman; SulmeyerKupetz; Anna Thompson, WY DOT; U GA Traffic Safety Institute; Ventura Co. Public Health; VT Governor's Highway Safety Program; Gayle Weiner; Paul Wells; D West, WY DOT; West Wendover Fire Dept.

## Thanks Again

Thanks again to Nissan North America for underwriting the SafetyBeltSafe Social on 3/29 in San Diego. We were pleased to welcome at least 160, including residents of 31 different states, Washington DC, Japan, and Canada. It was fun to greet new friends and enjoy "old timers."

## CALENDAR

### CONFERENCE

**\*9/27-29:** 18<sup>th</sup> Annual CA Conference on Childhood Injury Control, San Francisco. Registration information at [www.cipp.org](http://www.cipp.org).

### CERTIFICATION TRAINING

*\$950 fee. Nissan North America Scholarships up to \$500 available. Call Cheryl Kim, 626/968-6555.*  
**\*9/16-17, 20-21:** Nissan North America, Gardena, CA.

### EDUCATOR WORKSHOP

*Sponsor: Farmer's Insurance Nissan North America, Gardena, CA.*  
\$30 registration fee includes CPS Reference Manual  
**\*8/18:** 8:30 am - 5 pm

### SAFETY SEAT CHECKUPS

**\*8/21:** 10 am to 2 pm. South Bay Pavilion, Carson, CA  
**\*9/22:** Location TBA.

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**Side Air Bags—A Gray Area for CPS**

In analysis of real-world crashes, side air bags cut the risk of death by 45%, yet child seat manufacturers uniformly recommend children not sit next to them. Trying to clarify murky sentences in the instructions for some safety seats, CPS advocate Deborah Stewart sought to disentangle the risks to children properly secured in safety seats from passenger air bags in front and side air bags in back. To general surprise, at Lifesavers in March, every manufacturer's representative asserted the warning covered both types of air bags.

By *SBS News* press time, NHTSA had removed the 1999 recommendation for manufacturers to deliver vehicles with side air bags deactivated and to encourage parents to discuss the decision to reactivate them with car salespersons. On May 12<sup>th</sup>, NHTSA Administrator Jeffrey Runge, MD announced a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to make side air curtains a mandatory feature of motor vehicles, a step prompted by the 9800 deaths annually from side impacts. Meanwhile, the newest national certification curriculum for CPS Technicians notes no dangers from side air bags for properly restrained children.

**Current Manufacturers' Instructions**

The new CD of Child Restraint Manufacturers' Instructions with Summary Sheets for 1996-2003 has just been released. This tool is essential for anyone who does checkups, installations, or telephone consultation. National SAFE KIDS will provide a new CD with each participant manual for future Certification classes. However, CDs received by Technicians and Instructors prior to June 2004 (possibly later) are obsolete.

To order a current CD for \$10, call the office or download an order form from [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org). Encourage your agency to subscribe to the CPS Tech Special, which includes the new CD, *SafetyBeltSafe News* and *Safe Ride News* through 2004, and a password to enter the CPS Tech Access Web page.

Subscribers can download and print the SBS USA comprehensive List of Recalls and Replacement Parts as well as new and revised child restraint manufacturers' instructions as they become available. Over sixty 2003 instruction booklets were available to subscribers last year, and the 2004 instructions are arriving. To view a sample summary (new information highlighted in red) and instructions for a new model available in 2004, go to What's New at [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org). Group rates are available.

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*SafetyBeltSafe* News

May 2004

## Safety Seat Checkup Day, 2004

Safety Seat Checkup Day, dedicated to the memory of Elaine Sachs, was held at Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles on April 24<sup>th</sup>. We served 39 families who arrived in 48 vehicles, carrying 33 children. Another 17 children, including 10 not yet born, were protected when their families brought their seats along without them. The families came from 8 different cities in Los Angeles County and 1 in Orange County. Among the 51 safety seats evaluated, including 22 convertibles, 16 infant-only, 3 child seats, 8 childseat/boosters, and 2 boosters, 105 errors were found. Six seats were correctly used. Seven seats were brought uninstalled and so could not be evaluated for misuse.

Forty checkers, from 17 communities in 4 counties, participated, representing a range of agencies and organizations. This year, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., major sponsor of the Week, sent a substantial group of checkers as well as a demo Sienna van. The Peace Officers Assn of Los Angeles County was well represented. LA Center for Enriched Studies and Civil Air Patrol Cadet volunteers participated as Bucklebear, handling traffic flow, and helping keep the event running smoothly. Special arrangements for museum admission enabled both volunteers and participating families to enjoy its diverse collection.

Including a personal letter from the CA Governor and a personally delivered Resolution from the CA Assembly, the display of Proclamations in support for Safety Seat Checkup Week graced the site.

A museum visitor stopped at the event and offered SBS USA a stock of large posters, featuring a Ferrari, the shadow of an F-16, and the slogan, "Fasten Your Seat Belt." The posters, which are being distributed by LAPD as well, are available free; if shipped, up to 4 can be requested for \$5. Consider this for high school and middle school classrooms. Add your own contact information or the SBS USA Helpline for follow-up. Thanks, Garry Brod, now a crime photographer for LAPD.

Due to the proximity of Lifesavers 2004, SBS USA was able to distribute Safety Seat Checkup Week posters to attendees from around the country. Thanks to ColorGraphics, the supply was substantial. In addition, SBS USA sought proclamations from every California county Board of Supervisors. Here's part of a note received from San Luis Obispo County: "Just a special thank you for doing the legwork for the proclamation in SLO. Mike Hennesey, CHP, and I were there (and on public access TV) to receive handshakes from the Board and a beautiful Proclamation suitable for framing. It went well. Somehow, between coordinating the car seat program and Sr. Home Safety Program, there is not enough time but, with SBS (USA) doing the legwork it happened!..."

In 2005, SBS USA will be happy to share the sample proclamation and a supply of posters with any group who wants to pursue this approach to publicity.