

SafetyBeltSafe News

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July 2004

Vehicle Tips for CPS Advocates

The question of adding additional seats to vehicles when the manufacturer does not offer this option arises frequently. Although SBS USA does not offer technical consulting on the comparative safety of vehicles, input from those in the vehicle field is an excellent source of conceptual information.

Paul Butler of Ford Advanced Safety and Regulation recently discussed the concepts involved on the Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Listserve. Butler remarked that most manufacturers would not want the extra products, never tested in all models with occupants (dummies) aboard and in fact, substantially increasing the overall weight added to their vehicles.

Butler compared this addition to the issue with 15-passenger vans which often are overloaded, many times with unrestrained passengers, contributing to rollovers in crashes. Any overloaded vehicle has an increased risk for this outcome. Minivans more commonly carry individual families or small groups and, statistically, are more likely to carry restrained passengers.

Three other vehicle-related areas that arise repeatedly are installing video equipment, reclining vehicle seats, and wearing the separate lap belt in vehicles with automatic shoulder belts. All of these issues must be addressed with education since they are not intuitively obvious to the public who still are unlikely to understand the dynamics of a crash.

The craze for TV/VCRs and DVD players in vehicles is increasing. Many makeshift set-ups are appearing in older vehicles. From Betsey Mowrey of

the CPS project at University of Arkansas Medical Sciences comes a chilling tale to help teach others. A TV/VCR was wedged between the front seats, a scene all too familiar. To avoid an oncoming car, the driver braked suddenly, leading to the now-dislodged TV/VCR flying toward the driver and landing on her chest, breaking ribs! The SBS USA “rule” is that if one would not want an object to strike a child in the face at 30 times its weight, it should not be loose in the car or restrained by non-crash-tested systems.

In the second case, because many vehicle seats recline, occupants are unaware that this position is NOT safe during travel but is meant for use at rest stops. The upright position allows the lap and shoulder belts to fit on the correct parts of the body and to manage the crash forces. Various scenarios can occur when the passenger reclines, including sliding under the belt, potentially leading to ejection.

The issue about separate lap and shoulder belts requires attention especially in communities with many older vehicles. During safety seat usage surveys, for instance, due to close contact with the vehicles, one can see that the lap belt often is not in use. Occupants express disbelief that it is important and have no idea that their lower body might slip down because of non-use of the belt, leading to injury or worse. Consider adding a short statement on this risk in presentation to families receiving safety seats, for instance, who may have older cars. A healthy parent is an important contribution to a good outcome for children.

THANK YOU

- \$500 Graco Children's Products
 \$450 Lori Jacobs & Terry Hinricher (to date)
 \$300 Barbara Leach in memory of her late husband Gordon (to date)
 \$125 Alisa Baer
 Deborah Baer
 Bianchi Traffic Safety Serv. Camarillo Police Dept.
 Douglas Co.SAFE KIDS
 Annette Knobloch
 Safety Council, LA Capital Area
 Violet Township Fire Dept.
 Vista Community Clinic
 \$100 B. & L. Blau
 CARSAFE, Inc.

RETIREMENT

We send best wishes to CA Highway Patrol Commissioner "Spike" Helmick, a SBS USA Advisory Board Member, on his future efforts, which surely will continue to be the safety of motor vehicle occupants, a passion he translated into high levels of enforcement of both the safety belt and child seat use laws.

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CALENDAR

CONFERENCE

***9/27-29:** 18th Annual CA Conference on Childhood Injury Control, San Francisco. Registration information at www.cipp.org. SBS USA Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello and Senior Program Consultant Cheryl Kim will serve on a panel on CPS resources.

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: Farmers Insurance
 Nissan North America, Gardena, CA.*

\$30 registration fee includes CPS Reference Manual

***8/18:** 8:30 am - 5 pm

SAFETY SEAT CHECKUPS

Checkers Needed!

***8/21:** 10 am to 2 pm. SouthBay Pavilion, Carson, CA

***9/22:** Location TBA.

New Recall List Available

Although no new recalls have been announced since January, the *SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.* List of Recalls and Replacement Parts for Child Restraints has been updated with other information useful for those who conduct or participate in safety seat checkups.

New models manufactured by Bergeron, Compass, and Safe Traffic System have been added to the "no recall" section of the list. Combi has taken over Car Seat Specialty models, added a Stolee brand, and changed their address.

Special Needs Resources

Snug Seat, Inc. has stopped producing products for children with physical challenges and will exclusively distribute Britax products instead.

The Britax Traveller Plus, termed the "best Special Needs Car Seat ever designed" by Snug Seat VP Steve Scribner, is available now.

Unfortunately, due to insistence from NHTSA that the Spelcast meet LATCH, there currently is a gap for children with spica casts. Snug Seat expects Britax to design an alternative in the future; the problem is how to handle the current children in need.

Video Updated for 2004

The 7th edition of *Don't Risk Your Child's Life*, by Shelness Productions, has just been released. Used in SBS USA Educator Workshops to present the "big picture" of CPS, it is equally apt for parents and other caregivers, covering choice, correct use, and fitting of various brands of seats in vehicles with LATCH and different safety belt systems, while demonstrating the risk of air bag interaction and loose harnesses and belts. In English or Spanish, it is available on VHS or DVD. The 6th edition is still available in Russian. Call 336/774-0780.

Commitment

The Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. NASCAR racing trucks will be outfitted with decals to encourage more adults to buckle up. Team merchandise will carry the buckle up logo as well.

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.
 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP: \$100 Contributing \$50 Supporting \$35 Basic
 SPECIAL GIFT: \$5,000 Benefactor \$2,500 Patron \$1,000 Sustaining Other \$ _____
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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: ___ Recall Update Service by e-mail ___ Recall Update Service by regular mail (if necessary)

\$100 minimum: ___ CPS Tech Update (online access to new instructions since December, 2003)

*Special for \$100 members: Add \$25 and receive Safe Ride News through
 2004 & CD of safety seat manufacturers' instructions 1996 - 2003!*

Payment: Check/Money Order (enclosed) _____ Credit Card (Visa or MC) # _____

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Intriguing Concept

Assemblyman Marco Firebaugh of South Gate, CA, has introduced AB 1569 to ban smoking in vehicles carrying children under 6 years and 60 lbs. The bill includes a one-year public education campaign on the risks of smoking around children before citations would be given. Firebaugh's representative discussed with SBS USA the current mandatory education on CPS required now in California and may mandate that this message be included. SBS USA staff shared the 2002 program with SmokingKills! which gave SBS USA members a decal asking for no smoking in the car with kids.

The bill recognizes that children cannot choose to avoid smoke in confined areas. Its rationale is similar to a campaign generated by Action on Smoking and Health to follow up in the other 49 states on a Maine ban on smoking in homes and vehicles with foster children. The Maine decision will protect both children and taxpayers by reducing risk of suits from foster children and costs of health care for reactions generated by exposure to smoke. [How many readers recall the suffocating feeling of riding in a vehicle with smoking adults?]

Fetal Injury

Hank Weiss, PhD, Univ. of Pittsburgh, teamed with the mother of a youngster injured in utero years ago to present the range of approaches used to examine the effect of the auto crash on fetal survival. Weiss has campaigned for attention on this issue, which has its elusive components since in many crashes, the pregnancy of the occupant may be known to no one. Through population assessments and studies of crash data, Weiss estimates that car crashes claim 5 times as many fetuses as infants under a year.

The bottom line for pregnant women: 1) Wear a shoulder and lap belt properly on every ride. 2) Request fetal monitoring after any collision to ascertain the state of placental attachment. 3) Avoid sitting behind the steering wheel in the latter stages of pregnancy whenever possible.

SBS USA has a brochure directed toward the newly pregnant woman, "Protect Your Baby Now...And Later" available in English & Spanish.

For more details on this subject and a related "webinar" co-sponsored by PA SAFE KIDS, visit www.circl.pitt.edu/home/past_seminars.htm or to visit the new site for Advocates for Auto Safety during Pregnancy (AASP), www.pregnantcrash.org.

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MediaWatch Successes

An advertisement for Ramada Inns in an older edition of a travel magazine was sent for to SBS USA for action. It was of particular concern because the exact photo had been reported under the aegis of an auto club ad. Ramada Inns could not explain why it was the same but stated that the ad has been “retired.”

The “Bubbles” TV ad from the Tobacco Free California project of CA Dept. of Health Services was seen by a California advocate, and SBS USA followed up with the Advisory Board. The ad was fixed which is not only good news for CA but also for the other 49 states because it had been slated to be sent to them.

The “back story” illustrates the importance of having a technical review. The leader of the project specifically raised the issue of accuracy in portraying the child in the safety seat. But unfortunately, after the contracting advertising agency pursued information on the subject, on-site staff still allowed the parent of the filmed child to set up the safety seat “as usual,” not recognizing that more than 90% of children are riding incorrectly.

Meanwhile, more cases are being pursued as well as efforts to engage major players who can impact these portrayals. It is much better to prevent mass media misuse than to complain only when it is blatant.

Ironically in a mass media story about seriously injured reclined passengers, an example of an advertisement showing a woman reclining in a luxurious vehicle seat was cited. Change is essential!

Evenflo Discovery Not Recalled

Prompted by the request of a relative of a mother and infant who died in a crash, *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A. approached National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for the status of the investigation of the Evenflo Discovery. Knowing it was not completed, we sought additional input from readers. NHTSA has reported that, after investigating 56 reported incidents, they find “no evidence of a safety-related defect at this time.”

To give a sense of the environment in which safety seats must offer protection, here is a breakdown of the crashes. Of the 8 fatal crashes, all but one involved a vehicle moving at more than 50 mph and in half, both vehicles involved were traveling over that speed. Besides the 8 infants who died and the 23 who were injured, one adult died, 20 were severely injured in the infants’ vehicles, and an additional 3 fatalities and 9 injuries occurred among those in the “other” vehicles. Of 56 incidents, 45 involved at least 2 vehicles. In total, there were 29 side impacts, 16 frontal impacts, 7 rear impacts, 2 rollovers plus 2 for which the type was unknown. In 64% of the crashes, the vehicles were exceeding 30 mph.

The Discovery has passed 15 NHTSA compliance tests 2000-03 and had no failures in tests run for Evenflo.

Election 2004!

Send us suggestions of candidates for the Board of Directors for SBS USA. For more information, request a call from Karen Proctor, RPNP, Board Secretary.