

SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 26, No. 1



January 2005

Celebrate Campaign 25

*Back Seat, Boosters,
and Buckling Up Tweens*

With Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. as the kickoff underwriter, *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A. will celebrate 25 years of striving to protect child passengers from death and injury with the **Campaign 25 Brunch** at Petersen Automotive Museum on March 5 at 10 am. The brunch will feature Marc Cohen, SBS USA Board member, sharing the story of his grandson, Alec, whose loss motivated Marc to become a Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Technician and to spend much of his free time urging others to join in reducing the number of these painful events.

Cohen encourages a special Campaign 25 gift-- \$25, \$125, \$250, \$2500....for the necessary efforts to increase the numbers of children in the back seat, in boosters, and for those elusive tweens, 8 to 12 year olds who tend to be the least noticed, simply assuring that they are buckled up at all. These issues will be a major focus of the organization and strongly emphasized for **Special Enforcement and Safety Seat Checkup Weeks** in April.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. invites readers to add to their special gifts by enclosing a photo of the important children in their lives for use in a large collage for display at the Brunch and at Safety Seat Checkup Day. Of course, photos of children buckled up would be great, but it's the children we want to celebrate—the reason all staff and volunteers give for working so hard on this issue.

For details or extra invitations, call the office.

Twenty Years Later

Important Mandatory Vehicle Improvement

On Dec. 9, 2004, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced mandatory center rear shoulder-lap belts for vehicles, starting with half of the 2006 model year production, and including 100% by model year '08.

This was a goal of the petition that SBS USA submitted to NHTSA in 1986. However, when the petition was granted in December of 1989, the center shoulder-lap belt mandate was omitted. This decision led to problems now that boosters are being promoted. Owners of large vehicles have discovered that they cannot use center lap belts for best protection of their older children.

Thanks to federal legislation on which SBS USA consulted, NHTSA was required to establish a timetable for introducing this mandatory step, and the agency has moved it to the top of their agenda. As Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D., NHTSA Administrator, stated, this move makes "the rear center seat the safest place for older children."

SBS USA agrees that booster children and tweens who meet the 5-Step Test without boosters are safest riding there with the shoulder-lap belt. If there are children in safety seats, they can be placed on the sides where they can use the LATCH system.

This scenario shows that it is a good idea to attend to safety indications from the beginning because now there are 20 production years of vehicles that lack the center rear shoulder belt, thus, reducing protection for older children.

NEW BOARD: Congratulations to the newly elected **Board of Directors**, serving until December, 2006, including President Karen Proctor, CPNP, Secretary Marisa Gonzalez, Treasurer John Nisbet, Past President Joan Jackson, and Members-at-Large Patty Basham, Shelagh Carrick, Zosia Cheiuk, Marc Cohen, Tanya Klowden, Carol Meidinger, Louise Nichols, Donna Ott, Barbara Potts, Darren Qunell, and Becky Thams.

Seat Collapse

For years, reports of the collapse of vehicle seats in rear-end collisions have reached SBS USA staff. Firsthand evidence was the case of Senior Program Consultant Cheryl Kim's son whose seat back collapsed backward, fortunately with no serious medical consequences. A case in Tennessee ended with a large jury award for the family of an infant who died from head injury when the vehicle seats collapsed on him in a crash from which 5 others walked away. Eight other similar occurrences led to settlements.

As these cases involved various manufacturers, we believe that resolution is needed on a public interest basis. *New York Lawyer*, 12/04, reported that an industry spokesperson alleged that it is not clear to auto engineers whether or not a collapsing seat promotes safety more than a stronger seat.

Although this doesn't seem logical, it is testable. It seems appropriate for that test to be conducted and regulatory action, considered, if appropriate.

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THANK YOU

\$15,000

State Farm Insurance Companies

\$10,000

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A.

\$3,000

American Honda (to date)

\$500

Lori Jacobs & Terry Hinricher
Michael Sachs, MD

\$250

Samantha Merton & Brett
Humphreys

\$200

Dynamic Research, Inc.
John Muir Medical Center
Vanessa Merton, Esq.
SAFE KIDS of No. Central NE
Becky Thams

\$125

ACTS-Oregon
Amador Co. Public Health
Cobb Co. Board of Health
Exponent, Inc.
Debe Harman
Cindy Hearrell
Jr League of Ft. Smith
Lander Co. Sheriff's Office
ME Emerg. Nurses Assn
Carol Mazzocco
Memorial Hospital West –
-- Family Birthplace
Gisela Moriarty
Darren Qunell
SAFE KIDS, Frederick Co.
Sue Severin
Tucker Associates
Univ. of NV Cooperative Extension
Ventura Co. Public Health
Heather Watson
Wonder Years Babyproofing

CALENDAR

CONFERENCES

***3/13-15: Lifesavers 2005**,
 Charlotte, NC. 703/922-7944 or
 www.lifesaversconference.org
 SBS USA Executive Director
 Stephanie Tombrello will moderate
 a panel on "Sustaining CPS," while
 Senior Program Consultant Cheryl
 Kim will moderate "Enforcing CPS
 Laws." Input is welcomed on both.
***8/4-6: Kidz In Motion**, Orlando,
 FL. email: kimconf@hiwaay.net

*Call SBS USA for information about
 the following events:*

SAFETY SEAT CHECKUPS

***2/4:** Hope Chapel, Hermosa
 Beach, CA 10 am - 2 pm.
 Sponsored by State Farm, Hope
 Chapel, and Hermosa Beach PD
***3/1:** Location TBA, 10 am - 2 pm
***4/16:** Safety Seat Checkup Day at
 Petersen Automotive Museum, LA

EDUCATOR WORKSHOP

***2/3:** Nissan North America,
 Gardena. Sponsored by State Farm
 8:30 am - 5 pm. \$30 registration

CERTIFICATION TRAINING

***2/23-25&28:** Nissan North
 America, Gardena, CA \$950 fee.
Scholarships available up to \$500.
 Call Cheryl Kim, 626/968-6555.

RECALLS

Topsafe by Mercedes-Benz made
 3/1-11/30/03 has LATCH
 attachments that may fail in a crash,
 releasing the safety seat. Go to a
 dealer for refund. Install with the
 vehicle safety belt until replaced.

The **air bag suppression system**
 in some Toyota Camry sedans and
 Lexus ES 300, model year 2004 -
 2005, may fail. Contact your local
 dealer for repair.

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 \$ _____
Name _____	Org/Occup _____			
Address _____	City/State _____		Zip _____	
E-mail* _____	Phone: Home () _____		Work () _____	
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
2005 & CD of safety seat manufacturers' instructions 1996 - 2003!*

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

Name on Card _____ Signature _____ Exp ____ / ____

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Brochure Updated for Californians

Keep Your Children Safe, a low-reading-level brochure, printed in 10 languages, is available in a California edition which includes a brief summary of CPS law in the state. Due to a change in that law, *SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.* has recently updated the California version which can be ordered from SBS USA by FAX or telephone. The order form also is at www.carseat.org.

This brochure meets the requirements under California statute for materials to be provided by every California hospital and birth center to the parents/guardians of patients under 6.

New Recall List

In January, a new recall list was posted at www.carseat.org.

The list now has a separate section at the end for equipment recalls by vehicle manufacturers that affect the performance of child restraints.

Several new child restraint models with no recall also were added.

State Farm Funds Training

State Farm Insurance Companies have renewed support for the training programs of SBS USA as well as for increased participation in safety seat checkups and community exhibits. The \$15,000 Program Sponsorship for 2005 is underwriting a one-day Educator Workshop, followed by a safety seat checkup at Hope Chapel in Hermosa Beach. (See Calendar, p. 2.) This is the first in a series of checkups planned throughout 2005. In addition, the funds will enable us to include 5-Step Test events on request at community service fairs.

Safety seat checkups require teams of trained checkers and are an important contribution. But the 5-Step Test events can be conducted by just a pair of volunteers who invite families to have their post-safety seat children experience the difference between sitting in a belt alone or using a booster. This learning opportunity can educate families of older children who would not have sought the information, mistakenly believing their children are long past this phase.

The funding will underwrite planning and securing volunteers, a necessary component of the Speakers' Bureau which has provided more than 85 interventions annually in person or through the mass media, excluding checkups and trainings.

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New Products

Should Safety Seats Have Names?

Many child restraint manufacturers now offer the latest style of booster, with a removable back and an adjustable headrest. Examples are Britax Parkway; Apogee, Saratoga, and Strollee Saratoga by Combi; Safety 1st High Rider/Lightweight Booster by Dorel; Evenflo Big Kid; Graco Turbo; and Mercedes Kid.

This design positions the shoulder belt exactly at shoulder level and can prevent a sleeping child from falling sideways out of the belt. Other advantages compared to most combination seats and high-back boosters: the belt can retract properly after the child leans forward; the child sits farther back; and the booster base is easy to use for carpools or play dates.

Cosco Traveler is a 2-piece high-back booster, but the backrest *must* be installed and used.

Evenflo Embrace is a new infant-only seat for babies 5-22 pounds. It has a carry handle, detachable base, 5-point harness, 3 sets of shoulder strap slots, and 2 crotch slots. Evenflo Generations is a combination seat certified for 20-40 lbs. with the harness and 30-100 lbs. as a booster. The harness is adjusted with one of the knobs on each side of the seat. When it is used as a booster, a guide in the adjustable headrest is used to position the shoulder belt.

New products from Lenox Juvenile Group are the TattleTale Convertible Car Seat, for children 5 to 40 lbs., and the TattleTale Toddler/Booster Car Seat, used with a harness 20-40 lbs. or as a booster 40-80 lbs. Both seats have a 5-point harness and front adjuster strap. The battery-operated monitoring system sends a warning if the vehicle belt is too loose, the harness is unbuckled, or the child starts to climb out of the seat.

SBS USA has worked hard over the years to develop both the Color Pictorial of safety seats back to the '80s and summary sheets for the instructions of all of the safety seats since the '90s. The need for the Color Pictorial is based on the many seats that arrive at safety seat checkups without an identifying name. Summary sheets differentiate between models by focusing on the key areas of the instructions.

Currently, there are safety seats so poorly labeled that it is nearly impossible to know the name of the seats. Identified by a long model number, the seat can be recognized by the manufacturer, but it is not likely that Technicians will memorize lists of long model numbers.

Additionally, many infant-only safety seats arrive as part of a stroller package. The name of the system obscures the model name of the safety seat, making parents believe that they know the name of the seat.

SBS USA believes that the name of each safety seat model should be included as a necessary part of the product, both on the safety seat and on the instructions. If multiple names are attached to the safety seat for marketing reasons, there should be a basic model name. On the other hand, if the safety equipment, such as buckles or tether adjusters, is not the same, the products should have different names.

This change could be an industry policy, perhaps led by the Society of Automotive Engineers. If not, a petition to NHTSA to help families identify the products they are using to protect their children may be needed. After all, many parents seek information online and cannot tell if recall lists include information about their seats nor can they discuss the products accurately on Helpline calls.