

SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 26, No. 2



March 2005

Safety Seat Checkup Week April 10-16, 2005

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. Underwrites the Week

Join us in promoting the importance of correct, consistent use of safety seats with a checkup in your community, building on the focus we are placing on this key aspect of child passenger safety (CPS).

Checkups not only provide important services for children and their parents but equally important, help CPS educators consolidate their classroom learning and give Technicians an opportunity to hone their skills. Checking with others can point out areas of misunderstanding and offer opportunities to help teach newcomers to the field as well as parents, increasing resources.

SBS USA has sample proclamations to offer to state, county, and local governments, posters with or without the Safety Seat Checkup Day event in L.A. listed, and ideas for how communities can secure tools to make *every week* focused on preventing unnecessary injury to child passengers.

This year, once again, Petersen Automotive Museum has offered their spacious, covered parking lot for the 10 am to 2 pm checkup on Saturday, April 16. Already parents are signing up for services while checkers are registering to serve on the teams. We can use plenty of checkers, all of whom will have the chance to tour the museum after the event concludes. Bucklebear will entertain the youngsters; the SafetyBeltSaves are invited to share their stories; and local politicians will offer their encouragement.

Please join us! Call the office or e-mail stombrello@carseat.org to volunteer to help or to request posters, underwritten by ColorGraphics.

Special Enforcement Week Planned to Precede Checkup Week

Years ago, during a special event marking our focus on child passengers, SBS USA volunteers were saddened to hear over the radio systems of the many law enforcement officers participating, that a child had died in a crash, even as they labored to help the many parents and children at the event.

From that sad day, the concept of a preceding week of intensified focus on enforcing CPS laws arose. Since then, Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County has encouraged its members and colleagues to join in.

This year, April 3-9 is the target period. The goal is to reduce the likelihood of losing a child during the following week and even more important, reminding all parents that it doesn't matter how short the trip, everyone needs to buckle up.

Whether your agency is in southern California or across the country, this is a good time to consider checking on how children are riding in your area.

Let us know that your department is joining the effort so we can list you on the Scroll of Appreciation distributed on April 16.

Anniversary Social—Please join us

Thanks to Nissan North America, *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A. can reprise the excellent experience of holding a Social last year in San Diego. Come to The Westin Charlotte, Providence Ballroom III in North Carolina on March 14 from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm for conversation and light refreshments.

THANK YOU

\$4,500 American Honda (2005 membership year)

\$750 CA State Automobile Assn

\$200 Childrens Hospital/Los Angeles
Norm Kellems
Little Company of Mary Hospital
SAFE KIDS OF GA
St Francis Medical Center

\$125 AR Dept of Health
Baptist Health
Susan Berres
Bianchi Traffic Safety Services
Child & Family Resources
Marc Cohen
Collision Analysis
Columbine Ambulance Service
Edna Guilbeaux
Hermosa Beach Police Dept
Humboldt Co CPS Program
Cindy Humphry
Kenosha Co Div of Health
KY Transportation Cabinet
Annette Knobloch
Lakeshore SAFE KIDS
Livermore Police Dept

Thank You, cont....

MI ENCARE/Macomb Coalition
Monroe Co. Sheriff's Office
NV Office of Traffic Safety
John Nisbet
Norma Oliver
Pacific Safety Council
Pacifica Police Department
PA Traffic Injury Prevention Project
Portage Co. Child Psgr Safety Assn
Mary Kay Reed
Richland Hospital
Sacramento Co Hlth & Human Servs
SAFE KIDS Los Angeles
Safety Council, LA Capitol Area
Safety Council of SW Ohio
St Jude Medical Center
Carolyn Stumpf
Margaret Sirtak
Tarrant Co SAFE KIDS Coalition
Univ of AR Med Sciences/Pediatrics
U GA Traffic Injury Prevention
Violet Township Fire Dept

\$100. . .
Aliso Viejo Police Services
Baby Trend, Inc.
Mary Louise Blackstone, Esq.
John Calciana
Columbia Medical
Eagle Co. Health Services Distr.
Linda Galer
Lowndes Co. Sheriff's Office
Brian & Renee Mann
Jennifer Newell
Barbara Potts
Karen Proctor, CPNP
Drs. Susan & William Tully
Vermont SAFE KIDS

*Los "Boosters" Son Para Ninos
Grandes bumper stickers are now
available from SBS USA. Like the
English version, the reverse side
has the entire 5-Step Test, making
them an educational **and** publicity
tool. Send a dollar to get yours!*

CALENDAR

CONFERENCES

***3/13-15: Lifesavers 2005,**
Charlotte, NC. 703/922-7944 or
www.lifesaversconference.org
SBS USA staff are panelists in:
(3/13) CPS Legislation &
Enforcement: Your Strongest
Educational Tools; (3/14) New
Immigrants & Restraint Usage--A
Special Challenge; (3/15) Boosting
Restraint Use for Young Children -
Part 2; & Sustaining Our
Investment in CPS.

***8/4-6: Kidz In Motion,** Orlando,
FL. email: kimconf@hiwaay.net

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

SAFETY SEAT CHECKUP

***4/16:** Safety Seat Checkup Day
April 16, 10 am to 2 pm
Petersen Automotive Museum, LA
(Checkers arrive at 9 am)

*Remember to share the flyer for the
4/16 event with your neighbors,
preschools, gym programs, and
play groups. For the Spanish
version, call the office or download
it from the Calendar at carseat.org.*

CHECKER TRAININGS

*Prepare to check seats with SBS
USA on 4/16 or refresh your
knowledge.*
***4/6 or 7:** 8:30 am to 12:30 pm
at Nissan North America, Gardena,
CA. Sponsored by Toyota Motor
Sales, U.S.A.

Special Enforcement Week

***4/3-9:** Sponsored with Peace
Officers Assn of Southern CA. Be
sure your law enforcement agency
joins in reducing the number of
children riding unrestrained.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.
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LA BioMed,
Building B-1 West
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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
2005 & CD of safety seat manufacturers' instructions 1996 - 2003!*

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

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5-Step Test is Important

Studies show that a 59% reduction in children's injuries can result if kids use boosters. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) sponsored a 2003 survey of 6000 Americans over 16, selected at random, asking how the 4-to-8 year olds in their vehicles traveled. Only 40% reported they rode even occasionally in boosters or safety seats with harnesses. Reasons not to use special child restraints for these children were 1) the child is in the vehicle only briefly (50%); 2) lack of available seats (41%); or 3) dislike by the child for the seat (34%).

SBS USA volunteers have found that many parents do not perceive the need to consider boosters for older children. They are stunned when they see their child "failing" the 5-Step Test when SBS USA holds such an event at a safety fair or other public gathering. The 5-Step Test allows parent and child to be mutually empowered to see the need—and especially the risk of injury from the lap belt, which is rarely recognized as the focal concern of improperly fitted belt systems.

Until families see how to judge fit in vehicles, they are oblivious of the calls for booster use and may even violate changed laws, figuring that the message is not for them and their children.

Rock-a-Bye Baby?

In a departure from the recommendations of manufacturers, SBS USA staff hear that pediatricians are approving parents putting newborns to sleep in safety seats. The safety seats are placed inside cribs and are alleged to encourage sleeping through the night.

In a new twist on the usual counseling about doubts that babies are safe riding in the back seat alone, CPS advocates are recommending *against* overnight or nap-time sleep in safety seats. Concerns include babies becoming tangled in harness systems or tipping over the unrestrained seats.

Staff have heard of two occasions in which babies were strangled in the straps during play with slightly older children. Recently, a Kansas 14-month old became tangled in the straps, flipped over the safety seat, and choked while playing with three other preschoolers at home. An earlier incident occurred to a relative of an active SBS USA member, again while playing inside around a safety seat with a harness.

Additionally, a pediatrician in Utah has found an increase in infants developing flat areas on their developing skulls from sitting too long in a safety seat.

Sleeping in a properly used safety seat while traveling in a motor vehicle is an appropriate use of the product. Using the safety seat as a bed or babysitter at home isn't.

SafeGuard Wants CA Kids in Shoulder-Lap Belts

In advance of the California law requiring shoulder-lap belts in new type 1 and type 2 school buses taking effect in July, 2005, manufacturer Indiana Mills and Manufacturing is offering a special prize for a lucky public or private school. Schools that host a demonstration visit of a bus equipped with the SafeGuard seats with built-in adjustable shoulder-lap belts will be entered in a drawing for a free bus. The program will start in Northern California, but by next fall, the school bus demonstration team will traverse the state.

The federally-required technology for occupant safety in school buses is compartmentalization: placing vehicle seats with absorbent seat backs close together. The concept is that the child will be thrown into the crash-absorbent seat back. However, it is not designed well for children not seated properly or for collisions leading to rollovers or sideways motion. Most school bus-related fatalities occur outside the bus. However, children are killed and injured in school buses because they are thrown from or around the bus.

Other advantages of buckling up children is their improved behavior, leading to less driver distraction and the greater likelihood that the children will be properly positioned in case of an emergency. Indeed, the more children who are buckled up in family vehicles, the more anomalous it seems that they ride loose on buses. In addition, more very young children are riding in these buses. These children should be in child safety seats, but on large buses, belt systems have not been available to attach them. Some of the children involved are the children of students; others are children whose needs require early attendance at special programs.

Finally, the lifetime of a bus is long in most cases. Even today, records show that California leads the nation in having pre-1977 school buses on the road, even if they are serving other constituencies, such as campers, churches, or other private groups. It makes sense to adopt current technology, not that of the '70s when investing in such long-lived products.

According to the company, 1200 buses in 35 states have the SafeGuard seats. Indianapolis, IN, is developing a fleet with these seats. So far, they are pleased with the outcome, including the improved behavior aboard. In addition to the SafeGuard technology, C. E. White provides buses with safety belts and built-in safety seats.

A Request for Proposal from LA County Department of Health Services

Contact Michelle Parra, PhD, Director, Department of Health Services Injury and Violence Prevention Program, for details of the Request for Proposal (RFP) with guidelines, criteria, and procedures for submitting bids to provide services for low-income residents seeking aid in obtaining safety seats.

The proposal must address all identified objectives for the CPS Seat Program. Contracts will be awarded to Community-Based Organizations providing motor vehicle safety-related services to low-income families and young children. Contact Dr. Parra at 213/351-7888 or miparra@ladhs.org.

Why Not Use Safety Belt Extenders for Kids in Boosters?

Paul W. Butler, Ford Advanced Safety & Regulations, would not recommend "using a Ford belt extender, which lengthens the buckle end by 8 inches, with a typical booster. Moving the junction between the shoulder belt-the lap belt by 8 inches can increase the tendency of the shoulder belt to pull the lap belt up onto the abdomen during a crash, increasing the risk of abdominal or spinal injury.

Belt extenders should only be used by occupants who are too large to buckle the belt without adding an extension, and should not be used to change the fit of the shoulder belt or to make buckling easier."

A recent crash in northern CA underlines the importance of teaching parents never to remove a crying baby from a safety seat while in transit. The infant's sister removed her just as the girls' mother swerved and rolled the SUV. Both girls were ejected with serious consequences.

SBS USA was fortunate to have a professional team create a PSA, "Tension Time," that addresses that issue. There are copies in VHS available to advocates who can place the PSA with a TV station. Let us know if you can do this.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.
P.O. Box 553
Altadena, California 91003

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Dorel-Cosco Recall

Dream Ride car beds, made 12/1/03 to 4/28/04, when used rear facing, may rotate downward too far in a crash.

Use only as a side-facing car bed. Call 866/611-3022 or e-mail dreamride@djgusa.com for a warning sticker and, if a rear-facing seat is needed, for a replacement seat.

New Convertible Seat from Britax

The Britax Decathlon is for children 5-65 pounds, rear facing up to 33 pounds. Similar to the Marathon, it has three crotch strap positions, vehicle belt lock-offs, a tether for forward- or rear-facing use, and click-in LATCH connectors.

The Decathlon also has an infant positioning system consisting of head and body pillows.

SAVED!

A disaster was averted during a road rage incident in Southern Utah. A drunken teenage driver forced another vehicle with 6 prom-bound teens off I-15 at 65 mph. The victims' vehicle rolled 3 times before coming to a stop, while the aggressor over-corrected his vehicle, crossed the freeway, and slammed into a group of motorcyclists.

UHP officers at the scene credited the vehicle occupants' use of safety belts and the cyclists' use of helmets for saving the lives of everyone involved as well as reducing the severity of the injuries.

Tips for CPS Advocates

On the CPSP Listserve recently, the question of positioning children's legs in rear-facing safety seats came up with a special twist. A mother was concerned that her severely "in-toed" (commonly referred to as "pigeon-toed") child would suffer additional problems if she didn't turn her forward, much as she preferred to keep her rear-facing. SBS USA Board member and pediatric physical therapist Donna Ott, MS PT, of Pennsylvania, summarized the counsel that physical therapists usually share with parents in such dilemmas.

In the experience of these therapists, such "in toeing" usually fades as children spend more time upright and walking, with no specific treatment. There is even a video, "In toeing: Growing Out of It," that is used to help parents understand the phenomenon. Therefore, before turning a young child forward, one would want to have a very specific assessment from a pediatric orthopedic surgeon, preferably from a Children's Hospital.

Even if the tibial torsion were extremely severe, it would be unlikely to match the risk of a spinal cord injury nor would treatment for that problem match the difficulty of the ensuing therapy after a crash.

Keeping children rear-facing for 18 to 24 months is now quite possible as all of the current convertible safety seats are certified to 30-35 lbs. rear facing.

Have you visited www.carseat.org lately? You'll find testimonials, reference materials, tools, and travel information. Share the news with your local media about this important resource.