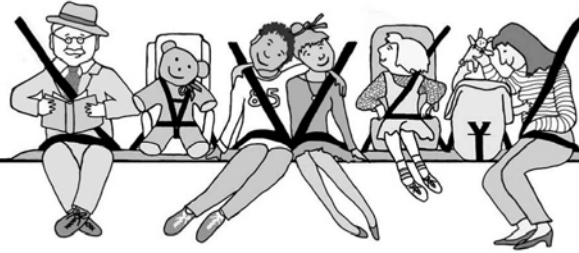


SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 27, No. 4

July 2006



5-Step Test Events

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. has a busy Speakers' Bureau with volunteers and staff participating in a variety of activities. Whenever possible, we like to engage families actively in learning about the safest way to ride. Adding a 5-Step Test Event provides a clear, "teachable" moment. The focus is meant for elementary-school-age children, but since we want families to learn the 5-Step Test, we don't turn away even 2 year olds. We point out for the youngest that even a booster isn't the right prescription.

Data from two recent experiences give a picture of what we see. The first, near Kohl's Dept. Store in Los Angeles County, attracted kids with an average age of 5½ and size of 48 lbs. It wasn't a big surprise that over 66% reported using a safety seat or booster already, given that California law requires child restraints at least until age 6 or 60 lbs. Only three 10 year olds, ranging in weight from 65-85 lbs., passed the Test. One parent sought recommendations for her autistic 8 year old who will get a tethered vest.

At YMCA Day at a local elementary school, a similar-sized group averaged age 7 and 62 lbs. Only two 10 year olds passed the Test; of the ones who did not and were not using a child restraint already, 72% stated they planned to get one.

The 5-Step Test event can be put together easily with a van parked in a safe location, a booster, flyers or brochures on CPS, and flyer #634 at www.carseat.org to collect the results. Most important is to start the Test with the child's back firmly against the vehicle seat back. The form allows parent, child, and volunteer to see how even some older children fail a crucial step, even if the others are met. Sitting with a booster in the same vehicle demonstrates quickly how much better the fit can be. When parent and child see this together, it often reduces arguments by providing an objective way to decide.

The SBS USA goal is to get the 5-Step Test to every K-3rd grade in the U.S. However, 5-Step Test Events can engage PTA members and school professionals who encounter the issue at community settings. If you decide to pitch in, SBS USA would appreciate receiving copies of your Test forms to expand feedback about who needs a booster.

California CPS Bill Passes Senate Transportation Committee

AB 2108, a bill by Assembly Member Noreen Evans to increase protection for California children six and seven years old, passed the Assembly on May 25.

On June 27, the bill narrowly passed the Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing after the author agreed to compromise on the back seat provision. The bill will require that children ride in the back seat up to age eight instead of up to age 13, as the sponsors had proposed.

The next votes (Senate Appropriations and the full Senate) are expected in August. Sponsors of the bill are *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A., Safe Kids California, and California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health. For more information on the bill, go to www.carseat.org.

BACK TO SCHOOL
School starts again soon.
Now is the time to order
Bucklebear and Buckle Up
signs for your child's
school.

THANK YOU

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(2006 membership year)
- \$200 Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center
Goleta Valley Cottage Hosp.
- \$125 AA Tidewater VA
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Capitola Police Department
City of Santa Barbara
Fire Dept.
Cobb Public Health
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Evangelical Community Hosp.
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Alicia Hair
Health Services Agency
Cindy Hearrell, RN
Hermosa Beach Police Dept.
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Lander County Sheriff's Office
Mill Valley Police Dept.
Milpitas Police Dept.
Monroe County Hospital and Foundation
Muskogee County EMS
John Nisbet
No Greece Fire Department
Oak Valley Hospital,
Family Support Network

Thank You, continued...

- Office of Public Health, SW
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PA Traffic Injury Prevention Project
Pleasanton Police Department
Traci Rebiejo
Lisa Rients
Riley Hospital for Children
Jan Ryan
SafeandSecure Baby
SAFE KIDS Cascade County
SAFE KIDS Chapter
SAFE KIDS Cherokee County
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St. Joseph's Children's Hosp.
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San Luis Obispo County Health Department
So Central Health District
Anne Stokman
Tarrant Co SAFE KIDS
The Baton Rouge Clinic
To Your Health
Univ of NV Coop Extension
Violet Township Fire Dept
Heather Watson
Yolo County Health Dept

Avoidable Tragedies

In 2004, SafetyBeltSafe News highlighted some vehicle-related issues that risked occupants' lives. As the popularity of video entertainment in vehicles grew, checkers were starting to see some with older vehicles improvise by wedging TV sets between front seats or attaching them with clearly non-crashworthy restraints.

Now from Florida comes a sad report of a three-year-old booster user who was fatally injured after her mother rear-ended another vehicle, sending "luggage," including a TV monitor, into the child. Since this child, her one-year-old sister, and their mother were restrained, the crash should have been survivable without the unrestrained missiles.

SBS USA teams warn parents to provide only entertainment items they feel comfortable having hit their children at 30 mph.

A Nightmare: A Los Angeles Police officer was hospitalized in critical condition after his 3-year-old son shot him in the back with his unsecured service revolver. The child was traveling unrestrained in the back seat of the officer's pickup. Besides allegedly violating CA CPS law, the father also appears to have broken the law against allowing children access to firearms.

Mom Made Sure...that everyone was safely buckled up on every trip. But being short, this particular Utah mom got in the habit of tucking her shoulder belt behind her back because it rubbed uncomfortably across her neck.

That move cost her life. On a rollover on the freeway, she was partially ejected, held halfway in by her lap belt. She died of head injuries in the crash, from which the rest of her family walked away.

New Technical Feature

Sunshine Kids has developed the "SafeStop," which is a piece to be attached between the loops in the harness and the adjuster strap of the Radian 65. It is to be added for forward-facing children up to 40 lbs. Anyone with the original Radian can request the piece which is meant to reduce the pressure on the child's neck in frontal crashes.

Since this energy management device reduces force on the neck by 30%, it is a worthy addition. Once the youngster reaches 40 lbs., the SafeStop is removed to reduce how far forward the child's head moves.

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What Makes a Big Difference in Vehicle Safety?

In September 2003, SBS USA Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello was invited to participate in the Los Angeles County press introduction of a new safety feature for vehicles by Continental Teves - Electronic Stability Control (ESC). Impressive though it appeared then, the research data on its effectiveness are astounding. Based on recent findings by Susan Ferguson, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), if ESC were on all vehicles, up to 10,000 of the 34,000 fatal vehicle crashes each year could be prevented.

An outgrowth of antilock brakes, ESC is based on sensors measuring steering wheel input, recognizing when the driver is losing control, and then applying brakes to each wheel. Reducing single-vehicle fatal crashes by 56%, ESC is even more effective with rollovers, a serious contributor to the annual highway carnage. IIHS reports that it reduces fatal single-vehicle rollover risk by 80% for SUVs, 77% for cars.

With such good results, it seems likely that consumer demand could influence manufacturers. Today 40% of vehicles have ESC standard and 15% more optional. If these figures don't head for 100% standard soon, it may be time for National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to look hard at a mandate.

Another Ferguson study for IIHS explored the effectiveness of safety belt use reminder systems in vehicles. By federal mandate, all vehicles have a brief system which tends to be sufficient to catch regular belt users who have neglected to buckle up immediately. But with high belt use rates and near-universal law for at least front seat travelers to buckle up, the remaining non-users are tougher customers!

Ford Motor Co introduced the extended reminder system (up to 5 minutes of follow-up) in 2000-02 vehicles, and study showed that use went from 71% to 76%. A new study of the American Honda Motors system in 2004-06 vehicles finds their owners like the reminder system which persists for nine minutes if the front seat occupants don't buckle up. Based on a mail-in survey completed by 62% of Honda drivers with the reminders, 89% would like the same system were they to purchase a future Honda.

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SafetyBeltSafe News

July 2006

Published Research Findings:

Safety seats reduce child deaths more successfully than safety belts alone

As indicated in our 5/06 issue, research by TraumaLink at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia was released in the 6/06 *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine**. The paper elucidates the careful compilation of statistics from two national databases on fatal and injury crashes (FARS and NASS CDS) to reduce database bias which might prejudice the results. By restricting sample cases to those in which one vehicle was a tow-away and gathering information on potentially confounding variables, the researchers, Michael Elliott, PhD of University of Michigan, Michael Kallan, MS, and Drs Dennis Durbin and Flaura Winston, University of Pennsylvania, examined child's seating location, driver age and fatality, and vehicle type and age, to eliminate bias. From the databases covering 1998-2003, cases examined were restricted to two to six year olds determined to have been restrained by a safety belt or safety seat. The initial finding was a 21% reduction in risk for those in safety seats over safety belts. When cases of gross misuse of both belts and seats were excluded, the risk reduction rose to 28% for safety seat users.

Many research projects have looked at variability between restrained and unrestrained children with much higher effectiveness ratings. However, like the 1994 study by Carden Johnston, MD et al who compared deaths and injuries of restrained children in two age cohorts, this study finds that the type of restraint makes a noticeable difference. Since older children were using belts alone, not safety seats, as their restraint, the earlier study showed their higher rate of injury was linked to the type of restraint. Since few children under 10 fit well in belts alone, the younger cohort whose restraint generally would be a safety seat fared better.

The latest data indicate that 28 fewer per 100 children exposed to two-vehicle crashes (where one had to be towed) were dying when they used safety seats, not belts alone.

*Not *Pediatrics*; we apologize for our inaccuracy.

**SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Board invites nominations
for the 2007-08 Board of Directors.
E-mail Karen Proctor, President, at
kkp1799@lausd.k12.ca.us
to volunteer or make suggestions.**

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