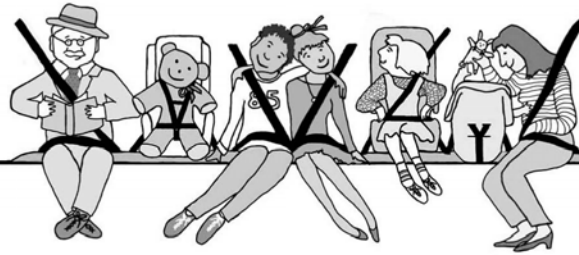


SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 28, No. 1



January 2007

Technical Issues Trouble the Community

A major disruption in child passenger safety (CPS) occurred when Consumers Union (CU) announced, mistakenly, in *Consumer Reports* February, 2007, and in national press releases, that most of the infant-only seats tested failed disastrously in crash tests “just a little more severe” than tests used routinely. CU is initiating another test series and setting up a panel to explore how the test procedure, used by Calspan, veered so far off the mark.

Nevertheless, the publicity, widespread and graphic, startled parents and professionals alike. Unfortunately, some parents reported they would forego safety seats entirely due to their unreliability. In some areas, the safety seats that “passed” disappeared from retailers while others were being returned en masse by angry parents. Immediate disbelief came from both safety seat manufacturers and engineers who have conducted crash testing of safety seats. Fortunately, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) quickly replicated the tests after conferring with CU staff, finding the tremendous failures had occurred in tests that mimicked a 70-mph side impact. A crash at that speed would literally destroy the vehicle and is far above the typical crash velocity.

A few key findings help to put the scary messages in perspective. Most obvious is that headlines of safety seats being ripped out of their bases are infrequent, although this sort of atypical event would be “news.” Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has found no evidence of this. A key statistical study, from the Center for Injury Research & Prevention, which conducts multi-layered research on crashes involving children, reviewed 400,000 crashes, finding “only one child in an infant seat was

injured.” The Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety has tasked CU with recalling all of the magazines which will linger in waiting rooms and libraries as well as in subscribers’ homes.

Deborah Stewart, editor and publisher of *Safe Ride News*, has posted a detailed explanation of how side impact testing should be conducted to replicate crash experience and why the CU findings were suspect. In short, to replicate a 38-mph side impact, one would program the test sled for 15 mph and 18 mph speeds for the 2 vehicles. From www.carseat.org, find a link to her Web site summary.

The CU story related the case of a baby who died in an infant-only safety seat in Mississippi. In our May, 2004 issue, *SBS News* carried the report, asking readers to share similar incidents as NHTSA was considering recall action. Not only did we receive no examples from our CPS-savvy readers but by our 7/04 issue, the seat had been “cleared.” Of the crashes with reported failures, 64% had exceeded 30 mph which falls into the highest 3% of U.S. crash severity among the 6 million annual crashes.

As part of the CU report, LATCH performance also was questioned for a number of products. Additional testing is being done.

One point in the article that generated support was recommending that the alternative base for the Dorel Comfort Infant Seat become an actual recall, not just an option for parents, since it seems to be virtually impossible to install it tightly in most vehicles.

CU stated the findings surprised them greatly so why didn’t they seek outside input? And how did Calspan, a firm so long involved in government regulatory testing of safety seats, decide to use this overly harsh test environment? Stay tuned.

Recall Concerns

In our November, 2006 issue, *SBS News* reported on Britax Boulevard troubles with top tether hooks which opened or broke during testing, leading to a recall that featured a label to cease use of the tether anchor when the child reached 50 lbs. This action conflicts with our knowledge of both the value of tethers for bigger, heavier children and even the test results that led to the recall.

This exemplifies the complexity of explaining such issues to Technicians who may not be schooled in crash test issues, let alone parents. There are now calls for Britax to reconsider and find a way to replace tethers or replace the seats.

THANK YOU

\$7500* American Honda Motors
*2007 membership year

\$6,600 North Carolina

\$5,000 State Farm Insurance Companies

\$2,500 Christine Ford

\$250 Samantha Merton

\$200: Beverly Emergency Medical Group

Brackenridge Hospital Trauma Service

Childrens Hospital/Los Angeles

Driscoll Children's Hospital

Family Support Network

Little Company of Mary Hospital

Bonnie & Mark Oseas

SAFE KIDS Frederick Co.

St Helena Hospital

\$175 Jennifer Herren

\$160 SAFE KIDS Val Verde

\$150 Rosalie Berquist

\$125: AAA/Yolanda Cabrera

ACTS-Oregon

Aliso Viejo Police Dept

Amador Co. Public Health

Baby Focus

Isabelle Becker

Diane Benson

Susan Berres

Marc Cohen

Collision Analysis LTD

Colusa County Health & Human Services

Vera Fullaway

Linda Galer

Charlene Galston

Ruth Gardner

Debe Harman

Health Services Agency

Erin Hoch

Humboldt County Health & Human Services

Jr League of Fort Smith

KS Safety Belt Education Office

ME Emergency Nurses Assn

Medina County Health Dept

Mercy Medical Center

Monroe Co Healthcare Foundation

Gisela Moriarty

Calendar

TRAININGS

***March 3 or 31: Special Training for Child Care Providers** in English & Spanish Free, funded by **CA Kids' Plates** Includes hands-on fitting in vehicles, 9 am to 4 pm at Connections for Children in Santa Monica. Call 562/696-0208 to register.

***April: Educator Workshop and Checker Training.** Dates TBA.

***May:** Technician Certification Training. Dates TBA
Call 626/968-6555 for details

CONFERENCES

***March 25-27: Lifesavers 2007 in Chicago.** For updated info, go to www.lifesaversconference.org and then...**Come to Our Party!** The **Nissan-sponsored SBS Social** on **March 26**, 4:45 pm-6:30 pm at the Willard Room of the Hilton Chicago, is open to all but please register at stombrello@carseat.org to help us plan!!

April 22-28
Safety Seat Checkup Week
April 28 is
Safety Seat Checkup Day

***April 9-11:OTS Traffic Safety Summit – San Diego –**
“Celebrating 40 Years of Traffic Safety”

***August 1-4 Kidz in Motion (KIM) Conference – Denver.**
Go to www.kidzinmotion.org for details and registration info.

***Visit our Exhibits!**

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

Office: 1124 W. Carson St.

LA BioMed,

Building B-1 West

Torrance, CA 90502

(310)222-6860 - English

(310)222-6862 - Spanish

(800)745-SAFE

(800)747-SANO

FAX: (310)222-6862

Web site: www.carseat.org

Mail: Box 553

Altadena, CA 91003

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Stephanie M. Tombrello,

L.C.S.W.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Kellie L. Mzik

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Sean Kane, BA, Safety

Research & Strategies, Inc

Annette Knobloch, RN, BSN,

MPH, DNS(c), CPST, Our Lady

of the Lake College

Betty Mason, BA, MPH, CPSTI,

Maine Injury Prevention

Services

Jim Savage, CPSTI, Children's

Hospital of Denver

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*, which qualifies for 1 Continuing Education Unit per year for recertifying Technicians with subscriber code. \$200 or more automatically includes *Safe Ride News*.
 ___ Check here if you are a Certified Technician or Instructor and want information about CEUs for subscribers.

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 September, 2005)

Special for \$100 members: Add \$25 and receive Safe Ride News thru 2007 & latest CD of safety seat manufacturers' instructions!

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

Name on Card _____ Signature _____ Exp ____/____

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is a 501(c)(3) corporation

Please mail this form to: *SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.*, Box 553, Altadena, CA 91003

Federal Tax ID #95-3676040

**Safe Ride News and SBS USA
 Petition NHTSA:
 Save Belt Lockability**

In August, at the Kidz In Motion (KIM) Conference in Orlando, support for the manually lockable belts in today's vehicles built to a petition to remove the sunset clause on lockable shoulder-lap belts in LATCH-equipped vehicle locations in 2012.

Deborah Stewart, Cheryl Kim, and SBS USA Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello compiled a letter of petition with supporting data about the children whose safety might be compromised if the sunset clause were in force in 2012.

The largest group of kids at risk are the new booster users, who have been snugly buckled up in harnesses since birth and suddenly need to focus on managing a belt. This doesn't happen easily; kids can end up with mispositioned belts, vulnerable to ejection or even belt-fostered injury.

Other youngsters for whom such belts are a boon are those riding in seats with internal harnesses beyond 40-48 lbs. and challenged children whose physical or emotional needs require locked safety belts.

Almost 200 supporters had signed the petition when it was submitted; more names are coming in. For details, visit www.carseat.org and send your comments to stombrello@carseat.org if you wish to join in.

International Contest!

The United Nations declared April 23-29, 2007, **Global Road Safety Week** and launched a contest for kids ages 4 to 11 to write stories and poems about holding hands with adults when near traffic and also to name the road safety zebra. This campaign symbol will be featured in an online game teaching kids everywhere to "mind the road."

The competition, which ends March 16, will be divided into three groups: under age 5, 5-7, and over 7, with cash prizes for winners and their schools. Go to www.makeroadssafe.org for details.

NISSAN Funds Scholarships

Nissan North America presented SBS USA with a generous gift of \$25,000. Part of this grant will fund the revision of the CD of Manufacturers' Instructions for Child Restraints, 1997-2007.

The rest is for a scholarship fund for those from non-profit organizations who wish to train as Certified Technicians. The grants provide up to \$500 toward the tuition for the course. Fourteen grateful participants in October were able to take advantage of the gift funds. All of us thank Nissan--now in Tennessee.

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

Return Service Requested



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Van Nuys, CA
Permit No. 987

*A new year - A new commitment to safety.
Check your label to be sure your
membership is up to date.*

SafetyBeltSafe News

January 2007

LATCH Study Released

The TransAnalytics, LLC report on observations of LATCH use rates and incorrect use was released in December, 2006 by its sponsor, NHTSA. Due to the focus of the study, 80% of the data collection sites were in middle-to-upper-middle class urban/suburban areas in seven states; 77% of drivers were white, 9% African-American, and 7% Latino. Of this group of 1182, 52% knew there was a “new way” to attach safety seats in cars and of those, 69% knew the term LATCH.

The 2005 study captured data on 1728 children under 13 but focused on the 70% of cars 2000 or later, 50% of which were 2002 or later. Of the 1351 children under 5, 84% were in safety seats which could be correctly used with lower anchors.

A summary of key findings indicated: of the 426 children riding forward facing in cars and safety seats with complete LATCH systems, 55% used top tethers, including a third using the entire system and 14% using belts while a third used belts only and 10%, lower anchors only.

Of those using a top tether, main errors were looseness (18%) and twists (12%) with 12% of unused tethers not stowed.

Non-use of tethers: 61% were unaware of the importance, existence, or process of use.

Of the 85 in rear facing seats, 52-55% used lower anchors, 30-35% used belts.

Of the 353 children using lower anchors, 61%

were securely attached. Errors included 30% not tight, 9% each twisted or attached upside down; 21% were at the wrong angle rear facing;

Of those using the “wrong bars,” 96% of the 27 observed were riding in the center, using inner bars. 77% of those using both lower anchors and belt said they did it for “greater safety.”

Of the 249 not using the lower anchors, 55% were unaware of their existence, their importance, or the process of use. Fifty-four chose not to use LATCH to take advantage of the center location (1/3 of those center locations *had* LATCH) or because they viewed belts as safer or more familiar to use.

Most LATCH users considered the system easy to use; 64% gave that as a reason for the choice, but 48% found it hard to disconnect, connect, or simply use.

Of 216 who had used both approaches, 75% found LATCH easier, 9% belts easier. Even the belt users found LATCH easier.

The study found a 39% misuse rate for installation.

Nicole Nason, NHTSA Administrator, has set a public meeting on the TransAnalytics, LLC findings in Washington DC for February 8, 2007 with promised proceedings to be released subsequently. The public may comment officially on the issue by May 4, 2007, Docket# NHTSA-2006-26735.