

SafetyBeltSafe News

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September 2008

5-Step Test

A *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A. pilot program through the current California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) project for 2007-09 is developing 5-Step Test* (5-ST) Events to help parents and kids learn together when boosters are needed for safe travel.

Setting up a 5-ST location at a site where families congregate, one reaches those who would never seek booster use information. Parents and kids participate in a demonstration of the process, practicing in a van with and without a booster in place.

To involve the role models for children around the county, state, and nation, SBS USA staff are partnering with groups that can provide teen and /or adult volunteers to learn how to demonstrate the 5-Step Test.

Although 5-ST events are not necessarily linked with booster giveaways, two recent events included that feature. The first was a Kohl's-funded booster giveaway through Childrens Hospital/Los Angeles. SBS USA enlisted SBS USA Board member, volunteer, and Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Technician-Instructor Lt. Col. Marc Cohen, Civil Air Patrol, to bring 3 members of the Captain Jay Weinsoff Cadet Squadron 3, Van Nuys.

The 3 teens quickly learned the points to be checked and recorded and engaged 105 youngsters between age 2 and age 8; none could pass the Test.

SBS USA doesn't recommend boosters for 2 year olds and prefers 3 year olds and even older children to stay in safety seats with harnesses for extended periods since, today, many products offer that protection. Nonetheless, it does no harm to teach toddlers' parents what lies ahead. For older children, learning how to judge if they are properly buckled up in all vehicles allows them to participate in their own

protection, setting a pattern to use into their teens.

The second 5-Step Test Event was an annual school-supplies gift program for low-income San Gabriel Valley families with K-12 students, sponsored by Foothill Unity Center. Participants included volunteers from Azusa Pacific University and Foothill Unity Center; donors for boosters, Los Angeles Police Department & CSK Auto; and gift cards from several nearby companies, including Ben & Jerry's, CA Pizza Kitchen, Cheesecake Factory, Claire's Accessories, Hot Dog on a Stick, and McDonald's. Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. lent 2 new vehicles to make it easier to do the 5-Step Test, without and then with a booster.

One older boy's anguish over needing a 'baby seat' was quelled when he saw the neat red Ferrari Ola booster he had won. He vowed to take it to school to show his friends. Only 13 of 213, ages 2 to 12, (mostly over age 9) passed the test. Parents were surprised by the results, but most asserted they would follow through to protect their children.

Booster giveaways in low-income communities come up against the potential for cars made before 12/89 or vans/trucks, before '91, to have lap belts only in back. This issue must be addressed, for boosters are not appropriate in such rear seats.

With booster use reducing injuries in car crashes for this age group by 59%, compared with belts alone, it was exceptionally gratifying to have boosters for most in this crowd; 151 boosters were donated. The volunteers learned quickly how to conduct the 5-ST and used their obvious people-skills with the families.

A warm, busy day ended with nursing students hoping to engage more of their fellows and professors in CPS and our host asking if everyone would be available next year!

* See www.carseat.org for details of the Test.

Tech Question:

CALENDAR

BACK TO SCHOOL

Should a locking clip be placed on the safety belt holding a child in a booster seat? No! A locking clip is never to be placed on a human body. The clip is meant to address the problems of safety seats which can't adjust to the swerves and curves of a moving vehicle and which topple over if the safety belt in use has an emergency locking retractor which allows movement unless the car stops or changes direction suddenly.

If a child in a booster seat has a hard time keeping the belt snug to his/her body, switching a retractor to the locked mode works well. If that is not available, the child must keep the belt snug independently.

Technician Renewal Course

* **10/6/08:** 8:30 am - 5 pm, Altadena Community Center, Altadena, CA For lapsed Technicians who have kept up their skills and want to regain Certification.

Skills and written tests are given during the class. Register at 310/222-6860. Fee: \$50; Safe Kids Re-certification fee: \$75. Additional support: CA Dept of Public Health, CA OTS.

Educator Workshop ‡

by SBS USA

CEUs for Techs and Nurses.

* **9/26/08:** 8:30 am - 5 pm, Glendora, CA. To register, call SBS USA.

Safety Seat Checkup ‡

***10/1/08:** 10 am - 2 pm for public; 9 am - 3 pm for checkers. All register at 310/222-6860. Glendora, CA, at Glendora Market Place, near Sam's Club.

‡ *Sponsored by CA OTS and Glendora Police Department*

New at NHTSA

With the resignation of Nicole Nason, David Kelly is acting Administrator of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Kelly took a leading role, beginning in 1996, in the successful campaign to get kids in back to avoid air bag interaction deaths and injuries. Conceived amidst horrendous headlines of children lost in minor crashes, the plan has been very effective.

With school starting and many school fairs being planned, we urge readers to consider setting up a "booth" with a car, a booster, and PTA or service group members, both teens and adults, who have learned the 5-Step Test, to reach out to families in your community.

It isn't necessary to give away boosters; however, if the PTA becomes interested in sponsoring low-cost purchase, there are companies that would be enthusiastic partners. Perhaps a local retailer would set up a discount table for those interested in going home "right".

Unlike a safety seat checkup, this hands-on teaching does not require extensive knowledge of CPS. Naturally, we assume most would want to pass out current written information to families, but a roster of Technicians is not required. A key message is to direct other queries to the written materials; we have found that both teens and adults learn this quickly.

SBS USA is seeking L A County service groups that would like to join us in piloting at more sites. If you know of an elementary school that has a family event coming up, we'll prepare your volunteers to reach a successful conclusion---and save kids from permanent, painful injuries.

THANK YOU

American Honda Motor Company: \$30,000, '08 member year

Hovik & Anahit Kazanchyan \$310

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Lockability Petition Addressed

With publication in the Federal Register on 9/12/08, NHTSA responded to the 1/22/2007 joint petition from SBS USA and *Safe Ride News* with the support and encouragement of 177 supporters, many attendees of the Kidz in Motion Conference 2006.

During the Roundtable discussion at the conference, SBS USA Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello and Deborah Stewart, *Safe Ride News*, alerted the community that there was a sunset clause in 2012 for manual lockability of safety belts in LATCH locations in motor vehicles.

The concerns are: 1) lockable belts are needed for safety seats for both the general market and special needs children above 48 lbs.; 2) lockable belts are important for booster use, especially for young children who find it hard to adjust to belts they must manage themselves; and 3) that caregivers lock unused belts, which some children have wrapped around their necks, coming close to strangulation.

The 2007 petition stressed the need for lead time for car manufacturers to know that they could not remove this feature.

NHTSA released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (which may be viewed at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-21026.pdf>)

which would rescind the sunset clause based on data from sponsored research on LATCH usage. The research, conducted by Larry Decina *et al* in 2005, showed 27% of those who had a choice of using belts or lower attachments in a particular location chose the former; an additional 13% chose a non-LATCH-equipped location.

The agency accepted as valid bases for ending the sunset provision some of the reasons listed by SBS USA and *Safe Ride News* in the letter. They were dubious of the likelihood that 3 safety seats might be used on one vehicle seat simultaneously and of the recommendation in a paper by Andrew Howard, MD *et al* in *Journal of Trauma*, 6/04, that vehicles might be equipped with LATCH anchors that were inset from the sides sufficiently that to fit 3 safety seats at once, 3 lockable belts would be needed.

Nonetheless, we are encouraged that the NPRM is available for comment. To record your opinion, the easiest options are FAX (202-493-2251) or e-mail (<http://www.regulations.gov>). The Docket No. NHTSA-2008-0149 should be noted on comments submitted before 11/12/08. For *SBS News* stories related to the petition, see the January and September, 2006, and January and July, 2007 issues.

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Safety Seat Updates

STAR Ratings for Vehicles

Dorel has a new version of the Maxi-Cosi Rodi, the XR, with width adjustment, belt paths marked in red, and more slots for head adjustment. The Uptown, a 5-point convertible seat, is now called the Avenue. There are some changes in previously announced features for the Alpha Omega series.

Alpha Omegas and Alpha Omega Elites sold at Babies R Us since July are certified for use with harness up to 50 lbs. These two models sold at other stores and other models based on the same two platforms (All in One Deluxe, Alpha Omega Elite/Luxe, Deluxe 3 in 1, All in One, Alpha Luxe Echelon, Alpha Omega All in One) will go up from 40 to 50 lbs. at various times in 2009.

The new maximum harnessed weight is not retroactive, since there are changes in the structure of the shell and harness webbing. Both old and new versions are certified rear facing 5-35 lbs. and have a 5-point harness system with front adjuster strap that allows harness adjustment without re-threading. The maximum weight without harness is 80-100 lbs., depending on the model. Dorel Summit has a new base and a carry handle (used only without the child in the seat).

Evenflo Symphony is a convertible-combination seat certified 5-35 rear facing, up to 40 lbs. forward facing, up to 100 lbs. as a booster. It has a 5-point harness with front adjuster strap and adjustable headrest including shoulder belt guide. The level of the shoulder straps can be changed without rethreading (same system as the Triumph Advance). Lower connector straps retract and lock automatically.

SafeGuard has added "Hybrid Booster" to the Go model name and changed the weight limit to 22-100 lbs. (22-60 lbs. and at least age 1 with harness, 40-100 lbs. and at least age 3 as a backless booster). It must be tethered when used with the harness; lower LATCH connectors (click-on type) may be used in either mode.

NHTSA is changing their STAR ratings of vehicles to combine all aspects they test for consumer awareness. The outcome may be lower ratings for some vehicles, although the vehicle itself hasn't reduced protection!

The agency also will be including 3 real-world evaluations of modifications to produce better outcomes, selecting electronic stability control; lane-departure warning systems; and frontal crash warning systems, to make data-based regulatory changes.

To date, side air bags pose no known risk for kids; however, many curtain bags do not reach down low enough for small children sitting on the vehicle seat as such children would be expected to be in safety seats of some type.

Back to School time is the perfect moment to think about supplying your child's school with CPS information. Check the SBS USA Web site (www.carseat.org) to see a list of resources, information for parents, links to other safety-related organizations, and more!