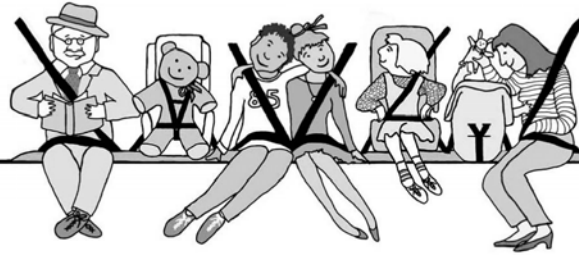


SafetyBeltSafe News

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January 2009



Happy Birthday, 3-Point Belt

Nils Bohlin, Volvo engineer, created the first 3-point belt for 2 models in 1959, a pattern now culminated in vehicles with shoulder-lap belts in all seating positions. Bohlin has contributed to saving more than a million lives, with the prospect of saving another 100,000 annually. Estimates for the USA in 2004 indicate safety belt use saved 15,200 lives and \$50 billion. Variation in U.S. laws has kept usage rates down overall, but in 2008, the rate reached 83%, despite many secondary enforcement states. If usage is increased by 1%, an additional 270 lives are likely to be saved each year.

Legislation for use changes social behavior. Omitting mandatory coverage in the back seat leads to many unnecessary deaths and injuries, even of those buckled up in front, as does allowing “extra” passengers to ride without a belt as is permitted in states, such as Hawaii. Air bags are a useful supplement but only that.

Examples of how strong laws, enforcement, and educational campaigns can protect more people are programs in South Korea and Costa Rica. South Korea went from 23% use to 98% in months. Costa Rica raised use from 24% to 82% in a year.

Teaching correct fit is equally important, for putting the shoulder belt in the wrong place—behind the back or under the arm—does not replicate the outcomes of a belt designed for use on the lap alone and can lead to serious injury. One major misconception is that belts close to the neck will prove risky in a crash. The Volvo team writes, “If the belt lies against the neck, that is not a problem. What is absolutely not permitted is to place the belt under the child's arm, since this may cause the child considerable injury.” Long live the safety belt!

Misuse of Boosters

Research shows what checkers notice as well; booster misuse is common and can be serious. Often it pops up right after a child, who has been riding with the belt improperly placed, is given a booster at a community event. Within minutes, the child has the belt behind the back or under the arm, generating unintended risk. Boosters can be designed to minimize misuse; adults helping children to buckle up also can dilute misuse.

Gothenburg, Sweden has a Science Park where 130 children up to age 12 were asked to demonstrate how they buckled up in 2 different boosters and, for those 8 or more, in a belt only. The boosters represented both built-in and “after-market” models. The study, “Misuse of Booster Cushions – An Observation Study of Children’s Performance during Buckling Up,” by Osvalder and Bohman, detailed methodology, including marking the belts in the experimental car so slack measurements were visible to recorders; timing children’s efforts to buckle themselves; and asking for the children’s assessment of the boosters.

Most striking was the belt slack as none of the children tightened the belt. The authors noted this as a reason to insert pre-tensioners in rear belts. 77% of the children misrouted the belt over the lower guides of the after-market booster. Not having these helped to reduce belt misuse with the built-in booster to 4%.

Sweden recommends booster use until 10 to 12 years old, which tallies with observations at SBS USA 5-Step Test events, which rely on belt fit to determine booster need. The after-market booster trailed both the built-in and belt alone in popularity.

* See sidebar, page 2, column 3.

MEDIA WATCH

Did you read the January 11, 2009 issue of *Parade*, included with your local paper? “**The backseat hump is the best place to ride in the car**” is the bold footer for a photo of a child holding a soccer ball but with nary a belt in use, let alone a booster.

It may be 16% safer than any other vehicle location, 25% safer than the outboard positions, and range from 59% to 86% safer than traveling in front based on studying a series of 2000-03 fatal crashes, with a center rear occupant. But where’s the belt?

THANK YOU

- \$4500 American Honda Motors
- \$1000 Lori Jacobs/Hinricher & Crasnick LLP
- \$500 American Automobile Assn.
- \$250 Samantha Merton
- \$200 AR Children’s Hospital, S.T.O.P. Program
- Beverly Emergency Medical Group
- Boone Co. Hospital Ambulance
- Bowman & Brooke, LLP
- Brackenridge Hospital Trauma Services
- John Calciana
- Childrens Hospital/Los Angeles
- Habush, Habush & Rottier SC
- Henrietta Fire District
- Mercy San Juan Medical Center/SAFE KIDS Sacramento
- Gisela Moriarty
- SAFE KIDS Frederick Co.
- SAFE KIDS Sonoma Co.
- St. Vincent Health System
- Becky Thams

Recalls

The harness system of **Britax Frontier** combination seats, made 4/1 to 9/14/08 (black harness) or to 9/17/08 (beige harness), may become detached from the harness yoke (splitter plate) behind the seat if harness is loosened by pulling on only one shoulder strap, leaving the child *unrestrained*. Always loosen the harness by pulling on *both* straps. Call 800/683-2045 for a repair kit with plastic pieces to cover harness yolk ends.

The body pillow of **Graco Comfort Sport** convertibles, made 11/1/06 to 10/8/07, partially covers the air bag warning label on the seat cover. Remove the pillow, an optional comfort feature.

For **Peg Perego Primo Viaggio SIP 30/30** seats made 7/1/07 to 3/15/08, the company has added a special telephone number and revised the end date since SBS USA announced the availability of the repair kit on 11/28/08 after being alerted by a parent. Plastic housing on the harness adjuster may have sharp edges that scratch the child’s feet. Call 888/734-6030 to order a replacement adjuster cover.

* *From page 1:* Reports on the CPSPListserv described the Scallywags Sunny Children’s Booster Car Seat as a light-weight option with which many U.S. military service families returned to the U.S. It was sold for about \$5 in UK supermarkets, was the only non-FMVSS 213 “safety” seat sold in some overseas base stores, and allegedly passed European standards. However, it was the only seat totally rejected by both Austrian and German Auto Associations. It is dangerous because it has neither lap belt guides nor armrests.

CALENDAR

- * **4/12-18:** Special Enforcement Week
- * **4/19-25:** Safety Seat Checkup Week
- * **4/25/09:** Safety Seat Checkup Day, Petersen Automotive Museum, L A, 10 am-2 pm for public (9 am-3 pm for checkers), 11 am: Ceremony honoring SafetyBelt or SeatSaved. Sign up at 310/222-6860

CONFERENCES

- * **3/29 - 4/1/09:** LIFESAVERS, Nashville, TN. For information: www.lifesaversconference.org.
- * **4/8-10/09:** CA Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Traffic Safety Summit, San Francisco.

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Emergency Nurses Association to the States: What Are You Missing in Automotive Safety Law?

The 2008 ENA National Scorecard ranks states based on 13 types of legislation, including safety belt use; child passenger safety (CPS); graduated driver licensing for teens; universal motorcycle helmet requirements; ignition interlock devices to prevent drunk driving; and creating and maintaining a well-evaluated trauma system. Washington and Oregon were the only states meeting all 13 criteria with CA, DC, ME, and TN tied at 2nd place with 11 of 13 laws in place. AR and the Dakotas captured last place with 3 and 4 respectively.

Shocking for the 21st century, only 11 of the 50 states require belt use in all locations; only 27 have primary safety belt laws; and 21, universal motorcycle helmet use. With our financial woes, every trauma prevented means both short- and long-term savings. Read about your state at www.ena.org

Safety Belt Entanglement Reaches National Audience

An incident in Maryland brought national attention when a 5 year old not in a safety seat put a belt with a switchable retractor around his neck and was taken to hospital in critical condition. (The child's 2-year-old sibling was using a booster, not recommended for that age.) Initial reports from Maryland stressed the lack of booster use by the older child as the precipitating factor; however, parents of other children who had experienced this quickly apprised Maryland emergency personnel that it was access to an unused or loose belt that led to the problem.

In October, 2008, a 13-year-old Texas boy, buckled up in back, wrapped his shoulder belt twice around his neck as a morbid joke while traveling on a freeway in his best friend's car. The friend's mother was unable to release him in time, and he died. Since the 2005 incident in northern CA brought this risk to SBS USA attention, a warning flyer, suggesting preventive measures, in English and Spanish, has been on www.carseat.org and distributed. The newest version of the SBS USA checkup form has a spot for noting parents have been warned of the risk. A similar message is now in some General Motors owner's manuals. We urge all safety seat and vehicle manufacturers to include this warning. All parents involved have stated their total lack of awareness of this possible risk.

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SafetyBeltSafe News

January 2009

New Products

Baby Trend discontinued the Rigid Loc but added two infant seats with flexible LATCH straps. E-Z Loc has a 5-point harness with a pad under the buckle and hook-type LATCH connectors. Flex Loc has a 5-point harness and click-in LATCH connectors. Both models, 5-22 lbs., have a front adjuster strap, adjustable, detachable base, and may be ordered with either a fixed back (3 shoulder harness slots) or an adjustable back (turn a knob to determine the shoulder slot level).

Combi Shuttle, birth to 22 lbs., has a 5-point harness with a front adjuster strap, no-thread harness height adjustment, and a belt lock-off in the adjustable base. Its anti-rebound bar prevents the seat from pivoting toward the rear of the car in a crash.

Learning Curve Via, an infant-only seat for 4-22 lbs. with a 5-point harness and front adjuster strap, must be installed with the base. Shoulder harness slot height is adjusted with a knob on the seat back. It features an aluminum carry handle and a belt lock-off in the adjustable base. Note: *The Shuttle and the Via are potentially useful for preemies less than 5 lbs.*

Evenflo Embrace, 5-22 lbs., re-designed for use with or without the adjustable base, has a 5-point harness with a front adjuster strap. It has 2 sets of shoulder strap slots and 2 crotch strap slots. **Evenflo Tribute 5** convertible has been redesigned to fit rear facing 5-35 lbs. but can be used only to 40 lbs. forward facing (Titan and Triumph go up to 50 lbs.). It has four harness slots and a front adjuster strap.

Graco SnugRide 32 is for babies 5-32 lbs. It has a 5-point harness with front adjuster strap and adjustable, detachable base with a belt lock-off.

Merritt Manufacturing has added a new accessory for the Roosevelt, a seat for children, 35-115 lbs., whose special needs require safety seat protection but who cannot easily use a conventional seat with a high-weight harness. With forward-facing children with low muscle tone, it is often difficult to keep the child's head back comfortably and safely in the seat. Now Merritt has designed a cap that attaches with Velcro to a pad on the safety seat padding. Adult supervision of children in safety seats is always required, but this provides comfort for the child.

Available to Order from SBS USA:

Thanks to Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. and Nissan North America, a new supply of "No Excuses" posters, with 4 different children shown at risk, is available free with English or Spanish messages. Check them out at www.carseat.org and send \$5 shipping for a set.

The 2009 CD of Manufacturers' Instructions is nearly completed. Submit your orders now. \$10 each, including shipping; check on reduced costs for 100 or more per order.