

SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 30, No. 5



September 2009

Helping the Public Protect Children from DUI

With funding from CA Office of Traffic Safety, *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A. has been publicizing the often-unknown risk to children: riding with an impaired driver. Most still are stunned to learn that the majority of kids killed when alcohol and drugs are involved are in the violator's vehicle. Here are a few excerpts from cases in California we've included in press releases shared directly with the mass media and stored at www.carseat, click on Media.

Coachella, Oakland, Palmdale, Modesto, Sun City, Highway 43, Antioch---no part of California is free from these painful headlines of serious or fatal injury. Father, domestic partner, mother; unrestrained, with or without safety seats in the car, ejection. These are the sad watchwords. The most recent report was a father who slaughtered his wife and two children, ages 7 and 5, as, clocked at 83 mph, he was weaving through traffic on July 4, and struck a vehicle with a family of 5, all injured.

How can you help? Remind adults that they must be willing to say no when an impaired driver, regardless of familial connection, wants to drive a child who never can be responsible for changing the adult's behavior. And for professionals who work with families, being alerted to this risk will help them to include this area of discussion as they try to get the impaired back on track. Remember most believe it is the *stranger* who kills and maims but as with many other "unintentional" injuries, the exposure comes from much closer to home.

Kidz in Motion Hits Texas!

The 2 ½-day conference brought together highly motivated child passenger safety (CPS) advocates and promoted technical updates and creative programs to deliver the goods. From recycling ideas to ways to reduce misuse, the cohesive group shared in sessions and at exhibits. The 2 panels presented by exhibitors allowed for previews of trends in safety seats: 1) as low as 3 lbs. and up to 45 lbs. rear facing; 2) various versions of side-impact protection being offered by many companies range from exterior impact-absorbing pieces that would soften the force on an adjacent child to air-filled pockets that deflate; 3) more emphasis on "green" actions, from sharing the entire green program of the company to participating actively in others' safety seat recycling programs; 4) dealing with non-regulated products, either by warning against them in instructions or listing ones that are acceptable on the company Web site; 5) addressing special needs issues for both larger and smaller kids; and 6) definitely soliciting specific information on any problems of fit while asking Technicians to be *very* careful about making blanket statements about products or companies.

Deborah Stewart, *Safe Ride News*, and Stephanie Tombrello, SBS USA, led a Roundtable on issues of concern. The deadline of 8/31 was announced for comments on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Rulemaking and Research Priorities, '09-'11 (NHTSA-2009-0108 at www.regulations.gov); SBS members Stewart, Tombrello, and Karen Ahmad were among those who commented.

We suggest readers consider downloading a selection of opinions posted by safety organizations, industry, and individuals about what NHTSA staff see as priorities ahead.

Calendar Note:

KIM returns to Fort Worth 8/26-28, 2010

Recall

The shell of the Dorel Maxi-Cosi Mico infant seat (Model #22-371 or 22-372; base only #22-515), made 7/1/07 to 2/17/08, may not attach securely to the base or may be difficult to detach. Call 877/657-9546 for a new base. Use the seat without its base until it is replaced.

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Ease-of-Use Ratings May Affect Safety Seat Designs

Christine Smith of Alpha Tech Associates presented an update of how NHTSA conducts the ease-of-use ratings of safety seats, a consequence of the TREAD Act of 2000. Finding that too many seats clustered at the A rating level, the agency mandated more rigorous assessments and moved to a star system, to mimic vehicles, although these are NOT crash-safety ratings. In 2002, 57% received the top rating; by 2007, it was 81% but after the change, only 5% received five stars.

Smith summarized the points evaluated and preferred findings:

- a. Labels: prefer fewer words, more pictograms; durability
- b. Buckles: one tang buckled at a time
- c. Harness: prefer no-rethreading
- d. Strap slots: seek at least 3 levels for straps
- e. LATCH attachments in the rear facing position when bought; prefer rigid, push ons vs dog leash style
- f. Belt guides for boosters that don't create slack in safety belt
- g. Reviewing possible interference of LATCH attachments with harness
- h. Tether: easy to adjust
- i. Number of recline angles
- j. Carry handle—visible indicator of correct positioning is favored

The team saw improvements in getting companies to send seats fully assembled, in more seats with no-rethread harnesses, better belt path labeling, such as Dorel using color coding, and more lockoffs replacing locking clips. With five levels for star-studding, they anticipate being able to reward those with easier designs more clearly.

Calling Los Angeles County Hospitals!

Ride Safe from the Start is the goal of every parent for the new baby. But do parents know how to effect this? With the support of CA Kids' Plates, SBS USA has developed a prototype of online training for parents expecting their first baby and is willing to take requests from hospitals that will promote the program to their mid-term, 1st-time parents-to-be.

We have flyers to distribute and posters for awareness. If parents have no Internet access, they will be sent a DVD; a Spanish version is being readied, too.

The pilot program, to be completed by spring, provides the first 300 families not only a certificate of completion but also a free safety seat checkup to ensure that their comprehension was translated into successful outcomes. The program should be introduced early enough so parents can use it to select the best seat for them, a step, if missed, that often compromises outcomes at checkups, even now. Call 310/222-6860 to participate.

BMJ Reports.....

A recent article in *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* cites a World Health Organization projection that traffic deaths will rise to 2.4 million annually by 2030, becoming the 5th most common cause, up from 1.3 million annually, unless a host of safety protections are adopted. Nearly half the deaths are related to pedestrians and cycle or motorized 2-wheeled vehicles worldwide. As countries move to private passenger vehicles, however, safety belts and seats become ever more important.

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Review of Bus Safety Standards

A five-fatality crash of a tour bus carrying French and Canadian tourists in Monterey Co, CA, required eight helicopters and 14 ambulances to transport all passengers to care. It also highlighted National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) "Most Wanted" improvements for motor coaches, listed at least two years ago. Three changes might have reduced the carnage. NTSB sought stronger roof strength, improved window retention and emergency exit options, and restraints for passengers "because most motor coach fatalities occur when passengers are ejected from the vehicle."

Although no definitive action had been taken by NHTSA in these areas, Dept. of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Ray LaHood has ordered a full review by NHTSA to consider changes to achieve the goals. With the requirement since 2005 that new school buses bought in CA have shoulder-lap belts, that technology is clearly available. And as if to underline the need for action, shortly afterwards, another 28 tour bus passengers and driver were taken to hospital in southern CA after a freeway, single-vehicle crash.

Voluntary Testing of Safety Seats in New Models

After the *Chicago Tribune* story (see 3/09 issue, p. 5) suggesting NHTSA was not reporting findings from 35-mph New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) vehicle tests with safety seats aboard, DOT Secretary Ray LaHood asked car companies to join Nissan and Infiniti in providing recommendations of safety seats which fit their vehicles well.

Starting with model year 2011, companies would provide names of suggested seats in at least three cost categories. These "fit" tests would not include crash tests; however, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety President Adrian Lund believes no company should list a seat not yet crash-tested in the vehicle with which it is being linked. The Institute points out that the 35 mph test is substantially more severe than the 30 mph sled test used to evaluate safety seats.

Lund voiced concern about the sled test since Combi, maker of two of the infant-only seats which were recalled voluntarily after the *Chicago Tribune* report, needed to use Transport Canada protocols to replicate the findings to develop a fix for the problem. Side impact testing has not yet been required, while suitable child dummies are being developed.

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New Products

Britax Parkway SG, a booster with a removable back and adjustable headrest for 40-120 lbs., has SecureGuard, an adjustable strap and clip to keep the lap portion of the belt from riding up. *Correction to July newsletter: Roundabout 50 has a locking clip, not a lockoff.*

Combi Zeus 360 is an updated version of the Zeus Turn, a convertible seat that rotates on a non-removable, anti-rebound base to face forward or rearward for travel and sideways for ease of child seating. The new model can be used 5-33 lbs. rear facing and up to 40 lbs. forward facing. 5-point harness features include a front adjuster strap, three sets of strap slots, one crotch strap location, and two harness lengths to accommodate both small infants and taller children. The belt lockoff has an internal cam so the belt can be tightened after it is closed. The seat may be tethered both rear and forward facing.

Dorel has taken over the SafeGuard Go, naming it the **Safety 1st Go Hybrid Booster Car Seat**. It is used with the harness and adjustable headrest 22-65 lbs. or as a backless booster 40-100 lbs. The tether is attached to two slots on the harness assembly and must be used when the harness is in use. The child's head must be supported by the vehicle seatback or vehicle head restraint in either mode. **SafeGuard** continues to manufacture a variety of restraint systems and parts, including bus seats, but they no longer sell child safety seats.

Evenflo Generations 65 is a combination seat used 20-65 lbs. with the harness or 30-100 lbs. as a booster. The 5-point harness is adjusted with a knob from

either side of the seat. There are three sets of shoulder straps slots and two crotch strap locations. It has pivoting armrests and two recline positions.

LaRoche Brothers, makers of the **Teddy Bear**, **Polar Bear**, and **Grizzly Bear** boosters with backs, has merged with **Jeffco Fibres, Inc.**, now the new name of the company.

Magna Aftermarket America Clek Oobr is a removable-back booster for 33-100 lbs. with backrest or 40-100 lbs. without backrest. It has an adjustable headrest and rigid LATCH connectors.

Recaro Signo G2 is a convertible seat with a 5-point harness for 5-70 lbs., 35 lbs. rear facing. The headrest has a knob to provide "infinite adjustment" without changing harness slots. Changes in design of the Signo make it easier to switch the click-on LATCH connectors from rear to forward use.

Sunshine Kids updated models are **Radian65SL**, **Radian80SL**, and **RadianXTSL** with SuperLATCH, which reportedly allows lower anchor and/or LATCH installations for a child up to 80 lbs. if the **vehicle** was made after 2005. Radian65SL is for 5-65 lbs.; the other two models are for 5-80 lbs.; the rear-facing limit for all of them has been increased to 45 lbs. but not retroactively. They have a 5-point harness, five sets of strap slots, three crotch strap locations, and a tether for rear- or forward-facing use. The company states that the seat passes NCAP testing up to 80 lbs. without a tether, using either lower anchors or a vehicle belt. They will provide detailed testing summaries and explanations of performance on request.