

SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 31, No. 4



July 2010

Lifesavers Conference Notes

A panel from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHA), within the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) elaborated on concerns and important, data-driven countermeasures. Concerns are: the advancing U.S. median age, which affects driving ability; reaching diverse audiences; increasing booster and belt use for elementary school children; and addressing both distracted driving and speed.

From FHA came “forgiveness,” roads designed to reduce effects of driver error. Dangerous roads, site of 56% of fatalities, tend to be rural, while interstates, with 25% of U.S. traffic, have 1% of the deaths and are three times safer. One example is the rumble strip, warning when vehicles are too close to the shoulder. And it’s hard to die in a traffic roundabout, of which 2000 have been installed!

IIHS marked its 50th anniversary by demonstrating the effects of crashing a 1959 Chevy Bel Air with a 2009 Chevy Malibu. The “driver” of the former died while the improved passenger compartment saved the Malibu driver quite handily. Joan Claybrook, NHTSA Administrator in the 1970s, initiated the New Car Assessment Program, a consumer-information testing series, effectively improving vehicle safety *without* specific regulations. A recent IIHS survey found 75% familiar with vehicle ratings, even if most can’t identify the specific source. Indeed, many manufacturers advertise top-rated models, as 86% of potential customers responding thought safety relevant in choosing their next vehicle.

Along with structurally safer vehicles come new techniques for harnessing computer technology for safety. Making an error while driving should not result in the death penalty. For instance, blind-spot zone warnings can reduce crashes by 32%. NHTSA is measuring the effects of the new technologies more quickly to decide on new regulatory goals.

The effectiveness of the child passenger safety (cps) movement was evident in stimulating changes in social behavior. Even MADD was born from the deaths of two children: one a passenger and the other, a pedestrian.

What About Grandparents?

At Lifesavers, Judith Talty, Riley Children’s Hospital, presented an observational and focus group study of how grandparents, both custodial and intermittent caregivers, perceive and handle cps. Almost a quarter of kids under 5, a third of kids of single dads, and almost 40% of Latino children receive child care from grandparents.

In Indiana, observing parents and grandparents showed many similarities in use of an inappropriate safety seat and choosing to turn babies forward. More substantial disparities appeared in having children in front, loose installation, and harnessing errors.

From the focus groups - 1 for custodial grandparents, the other, intermittent transporters, the former reported physical problems, such as arthritis and back pain, which affected them, especially lifting a heavy baby into the center location. Often they needed to set standards of cps for parents while non-custodial grandparents followed the lead of their children. Both groups preferred learning by watching, not reading, and sought lighter seats with buckles easier to release, more legible instructions (size 14 font), and standardization.

Messages that most crashes occur close to home, how seats improve children’s behavior, and information about cps laws are needed to help reach grandparents.

Thank You

\$14,000 American Honda Motors
\$7,905 Ohio State Membership

Revised Video on Tap

“Don’t Risk Your Child’s Life,”
Version VIII, probably the best-known educational video in cps, is now available in English or Spanish, on DVD or VHS, from Shelness Productions, 336/774-0780.

In 18 minutes, the video covers the why and how of cps for children from birth to belt wearer. Highly recommended for parents, the video is used in SBS USA Educator Workshops as an overview of the field.

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, LCSW,
CPSTI
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
Kellie L. Mzik, MA
EDITORIAL BOARD:
Sean Kane, BA, Safety Research
& Strategies, Inc
Annette Knobloch, DNS, RN,
MPH, CPST, CNE, Associate
Professor of Nursing, Our Lady
of the Lake College
Betty Mason, BA, MPH, CPSTI
Jim Savage, Kohl’s Safety
Center, American Family
Children’s Hospital

Calendar

Safety Seat Checkup:
*Fall date TBA.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Call 310/222-6860

SBS USA Educator Workshop
3 CEUs for CPS Technicians
6 Cont. Ed hours for nurses
***9/2/10:** 8:15 am-4:30 pm, Altadena
Community Center, Altadena, CA.
Sponsor: CA Office of Traffic Safety.

Certification Training for Technicians:
* Fall date TBA. Call 626/968-6555 for application. \$950 fee. \$75 Safe Kids certification fee.

CONFERENCE

***8/26-28: Kidz in Motion Conference,** Ft. Worth, TX. For details, go to www.kidzinmotion.org. Visit the SBS USA exhibit and workshop on Ride Safe from the Start.

Updated Materials

SBS USA has released the 2010 version of the Color Pictorial, visible at www.carseat.org, which organizes pictures of safety seats from 1999 to mid-2010 by category of seat and then alphabetically by manufacturer. This helps users identify unlabeled seats to retrieve the correct instructions and check the recall list.

Another feature is listing of the manufacturing dates of the products, a clue that might lead to advice to replace the seat.

The Pictorial is designed for fitting station and checkup use. Order a printed version for \$50 plus \$17 shipping/handling or get permission to download and print a copy for \$30.

For details of costs for multiple copies, including unlimited printing for one year, visit www.carseat.org.

Safety Belt Entanglement

Having another adult next to 61-year-old Joyce Solomon of NY did not prevent her death, strangled by a safety belt, allegedly triggered by tightening from the switchable retractor. The late Ms. Solomon was being transported to a day service with an employee sitting next to her. She choked on the unlatched shoulder belt from the center seating location. Somehow, its locking mechanism had been engaged. After stopping the van, the driver joined the other employee in trying to release the belt. Responding to a 911 call, firefighters cut the belt but not in time to prevent her death in May.

Vehicle manufacturers are beginning to include a warning about this risk in manuals. However, not everyone reads vehicle manuals entirely, and many encountered on the Safe Ride Helpline or at checkups have no idea how switchable retractors are activated nor even that they exist.

It is important to alert the community, and readers may download the SBS USA flyer, #646 in English and Spanish, at www.carseat.org under Helpful Handouts, to distribute.

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 include *SafetyBeltSafe News*, which qualifies for 1 Continuing Education Unit per year for re-certifying Technicians with subscriber code. \$200 or more 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 January, 2009)

Special for \$100 members: Add \$25 and receive Safe Ride News thru 2010 & latest CD of safety seat manufacturers' instructions!

Payment: Check/Money Order (enclosed) _____

Credit Card (Visa / MC / Discover / Amex) # _____ Security Code (on front or back) _____

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

Family Safety Camp

Lexus Family Safety Camp convened in Pasadena, CA, on June 3rd to introduce 17 bloggers, moms all, to safety features in Lexus vehicles, through description and experience driving vehicles on laid out courses.

Bloggers were allowed to drive or ride along to test ABS brakes, which they learned (A)llow (B)raking and (S)teering; vehicle stability control, to reduce rollovers; the brake override system; LATCH; and built-in communication features.

Janette Fennell, KidsandCars, and SBS USA Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello were invited to present key child protection issues around and in motor vehicles.

Since the bloggers' children were on site, at midday Tombrello offered 5-Step Tests with assistance from blogger Heather Watson,

CarseatBlog and SBS USA member. In fact, several bloggers' children will be returning to their boosters following the experience.

Follow-up review of the blogs showed the cps component struck a high note for a number of them. This was an important chance to share focal messages for parents with communicators whose words are followed regularly on the Web.



Ever wonder what a fully-inflated air bag-laden vehicle looks like? The Lexus air bag system was displayed June 3rd at the Rose Bowl.

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



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

Return Service Requested

*Make a difference.
Renew your membership today.*

SafetyBeltSafe News

July 2010

Legalized Negligence?

Can a cps law prevent a child from suing an adult for not providing a correctly used safety seat?

The case of a badly-injured girl who, in 2005, was placed by her dad on the floor of his truck in a foam seat, posed this issue to the Virginia Supreme Court. A split decision elucidated the contending opinions. Virginia law states that violating the cps law "shall not constitute negligence."

The suit, brought by the then-4-year-old's mother to recover compensatory and punitive damages, was dismissed initially because not using a safety seat was not to be considered negligence. However, the Supreme Court majority found four potential bases for negligence: placement on the truck floor (regardless of safety seat use); the cps law addresses negligence, not "gross negligence"; the "absurd result" of the legal interpretation that violating the cps law *prevents* any claims of negligence, a form of legal immunization; and finally that the statute states it cannot be used to prevent claims for medical expenses and personal injuries of a child due to a motor vehicle crash.

One justice wrote a separate opinion to point out that to claim otherwise would mean that the cps law destroyed the tort remedy for injured children, i.e. paying a \$50 fine would exonerate the violator from any responsibility for the consequences to the child of his/her action.

The decision sent the case back to the circuit court to proceed.

Focus on Social Workers

SBS USA described our training program with L.A. County Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) newcomers (*see SBS NEWS, 11/08*). We are not alone in recognizing the issue. Sacramento County Department of Public Health has a program combining an online educational program with individual seat checks.

Presented at Lifesavers, a program in Florida to impact their workers arose after a new employee learned at a checkup the seat given for her use was old and inappropriate. She was nearly fired for disposing of "state property." This experience and her cps mentor, Reggie Belle of Titusville Fire and Emergency Services, were major factors in employees being trained and for state action on the quality of the seats used along with a defined transportation policy.

Ana Merk, Buckle Up Project Coordinator, Orange County Health Care Agency, in California, realized that she could not take on training DCFS staff alone. She proposed all DCFS staff receive training and a corps of DCFS workers become CPS Technicians to assist her in providing and maintaining training.

With this as the underpinning, by 2010, a complete cps policy for all youngsters under agency care has been promulgated. The policy is thorough, covering maintenance of seats and two designated Technicians per program to provide aid to colleagues and track seats, along with basic rules for transport that are focused on best practice. Even a spica-cast safety seat is available for checkout when needed through a department residential facility.

The program, presented at the March "Moving Children Safely" conference in California, coordinated by CA Kids' Plates, included sharing the exemplary DCFS Operations Manual segment on "Car Seat Usage."