

SafetyBeltSafe News

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September 2011

NHTSA Addresses Regulatory Concerns

In August, 2006, at the Hot Topics in CPS Roundtable at Kidz in Motion (KIM) Conference, SBS USA raised concern that in 2012, manual lockability of safety belts was to sunset. The concept had been introduced when National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) predicted that LATCH connections would make it unnecessary to have lockable shoulder-lap belts to hold safety seats in place and before center shoulder-lap belts were made mandatory.

SBS USA expressed concern not only for safety seats with top weights higher than the 48-lb. limit on many LATCH lower bars but also because being able to lock belts on children when they first ride regularly in boosters is protective in case of a crash, making it more likely that the belt will be correctly placed on the child's body. With support of more than 200 advocates, *Safe Ride News* and SBS USA sent NHTSA the petition to avert sunset, which NHTSA adopted as the basis of rulemaking in 2007. On 8/27, the sunset was rescinded, leaving it mandatory to have lockable safety belts in all passenger positions.

On another potential regulatory issue, NHTSA did not go forward. With the leadership of Center for Auto Safety and Arthur Yeager, DDS, whose focus, for decades, has been to have belts required on school buses, 21 organizations, including SBS USA, supported mandatory shoulder-lap belts on school buses. California already requires this for new purchases. With major improvements from school bus companies and SafeGuard of IMMI, the arguments about reducing bus capacity, having systems that accommodate students of varied sizes, and performance have been addressed successfully. Instead, NHTSA focused on the low death rate of children inside school buses and the concern that school districts might drop school bus service instead of purchasing new buses. Given the economy, this is a valid point. However, mandating safety equipment often brings its cost down. The issue of reinforcing the safety belt habit apparently did not factor in with sufficient force. Based on the 2002 National Academy of Sciences study, only .5 % deaths of children 5-18 during normal school hours occur on school buses; 1.5% deaths were pedestrians outside school buses. However, 75% of the annual fatalities during the time period were to occupants in passenger vehicles, and 24%, involved those walking or riding a bicycle.

Brett Wood Joins Advisory Board

We welcome Brett Wood, President of Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A., the largest forklift manufacturer in the U.S. Brett tasked his national marketing manager, Melinda Beckett-Maines with finding agencies that had the same focus on safety as TMH USA. SBS USA is honored to have been selected. Moreover, Wood brings additional important connections besides his company culture. A Board member of the CA Soccer Association and father of a six year old, Wood is strongly identified with keeping youngsters healthy and with the issues of CPS. His wife, also highly involved in children's safety, is an executive in the toy industry.

Wood invited SBS USA to collaborate on two Safety Seat Checkups in areas where the company is rooted. The first is scheduled for October 25 at Pretend City, in Irvine, CA, site of the company headquarters, and the second, in Columbus IN, home of Toyota's manufacturing facility, on May 5, 2012.

Thank You. . .

(For 2011 membership year)

American Honda Motors \$18,000
Mary Louise Blackstone, Esq. \$200

Calendar

Safety Seat Checkups: 10 am to 2 pm for public; 9 am-3 pm for checkers. To reserve checkup, leave a message at 800/745-SAFE; to volunteer, call 310/222-6860.

* 10/25/11 Pretend City Children's Museum, Irvine, CA

Sponsor: Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A.

* 4/21/12: Petersen Automotive Museum, Los Angeles, CA

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Congratulations for 2 SBS USA Members!

Promoting booster use for young children has been a passion at SBS USA for years. Now two members have been recognized for their hard work in this area.

SBS USA President **Bonnie Oseas**, busy mother of four and energetic volunteer, was recognized at the Palos Verdes PTA Council Honorary Service Awards breakfast for her efforts to incorporate the 5-Step Test into the school system, leading the Asst. Superintendent of PVUSD to summarize the program and Test for the group.

On the other side of Los Angeles County, **John Stubbs**, CPSTI, who works regularly for SBS USA, was made Rotarian of the Year by the Sierra Madre Rotary for his efforts to provide boosters for low-income children.

John sought funding from his Club to purchase boosters and then sought matching funds from District 5300, allowing him to distribute 164 boosters throughout Los Angeles County, often in partnership with police departments which pre-selected the families. The Club sent John to the District 5300 conference where their Club exhibit featured the Model City program to teach the 5-Step Test throughout communities, showing contributions from Rotary funds and their Interact teen members who engaged in 5-Step Test Events.

John also got the 5-Step Test in the annual Rotary book, used to raise funds for community activities and he represented Rotary by riding in the July 4th Parade in his city.

If you're not already a member, join SBS USA now, and, like Bonnie and John, make a difference for children in your community!

Shopping Cart Tragedy

In Macon, GA, a 3-month-old boy died when he and his safety seat tumbled from a shopping cart as it was pushed over a speed bump by a supermarket employee. At conferences and in instructions, safety seat manufacturers decry the use of their products in shopping carts, citing the many injuries from carts tipping or children falling from them. However, unless suitable alternatives are provided to shopping cart users, it is likely that this scenario will be repeated.

Some companies do offer a few carts with pseudo-safety seats built in for infants, but often, this option is not available. Some parents try to mimic it by placing the shell of a rear-facing-only seat in the toddler seating area of the cart.

CPS advocates can include this warning in educational materials. SBS member Officer Traci Rebiejo, CPSTI, of Livermore (CA) P D, reports a litany of cases in which children fell from carts or were otherwise injured because no harness was connected. She has added this warning to her checkup form.

New Jersey Law

A proposed New Jersey law would require upper body safety belt restraint for wheelchair-bound patients in ambulances, after an elderly man with Parkinson's disease arrived from his nursing home at the physical therapist with a broken neck, presumably due to a misadventure en route. His widow is suing the ambulance company. The bill is under consideration in the legislature.

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New Products

Two convertible seats for small newborns are now available: **Combi Coccoro** (3 to 40 lbs., 33 lbs. rear facing) and **Dorel Maxi-Cosi Pria 70** (4-70 lbs., rear facing to 40 lbs.). Both seats have an infant insert designed to allow the child to lie in a more comfortable position and keep the airway open.

Three companies have new rear-facing-only seats: **Aprica A30** for 4-30 lbs., with a 5-pt. harness, front adjuster strap, and detachable base; **Summer Infant Prodigy** (4-32 lbs.), with an infant insert designed to fit preemies and a digital display that shows if the recline angle is acceptable and if the safety belt or LATCH straps, tightened with a mechanical ratchet system, are tight enough; and **Learning Curve Via I470** (5-35 lbs.), with a 5-point, no-thread harness, belt lock-offs, and detachable base.

Baby Trend Euro Sport is a combination seat (22-50 lbs. with harness, up to 100 lbs. as a booster). The buckle beeps if it is released. The harness, LATCH strap, and tether strap have tension indicators.

Diono, (said Deono, formerly Sunshine Kids) released **Radian R100** (5-65 lbs. with harness, rear-facing to 40 lbs.; up to 100 lbs. as booster); **Radian R120** and **Radian RXT** (both 5-80 lbs. with harness,

rear facing to 45 lbs., up to 120 lbs. as booster).

New Dorel convertibles are **Alpha Elite 65** (5-65 lbs., 40 lbs. rear facing, up to 100 lbs. as booster), **EasyFit 65/XRS 65**, and **Aquos 65** (both 5-65 lbs. 40 lbs. rear facing).

Graco added **Argos 70** (20-70 lbs. with harness, 30-100 lbs. as highback booster; 40-120 lbs. as backless booster) which has a no-thread harness with automatic adjustment, steel-reinforced frame, and adjustable headrest.

Snug Seat Pilot Booster Seat (made by Diono) is for special needs children (40-120 lbs.) and has a 4-point harness for positioning only.

Another special needs seat is the **Recaro Monza Reha** (33-110 lbs.), distributed by ExoMotion. It has a 5-point harness for positioning only and adjustable headrest. It has ventilated foam and an optional swiveling plate for side loading.

The **BubbleBum** inflatable booster (40-80 lbs.) has energy-absorbing memory foam and still passes crash tests if it deflates. Metal positioning clips keep the lap portion of the belt low on the child.

Harmony added 3 booster models: **Cruz**, **Youth Booster**, and **Olympian** (backless, 30-110 lbs.).

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Kidz In Motion Returns to Florida

With both preemie and school bus pre-conference workshops, KIM returned to Orlando, where both the 8/12 conference and 6/12 Lifesavers programs also will be held. The child passenger safety (CPS) attendees were treated to brief but detailed reviews by each exhibitor, many of which were introducing new safety seats or school bus seats about which attendees followed up in the exhibit hall. Sessions focused on technical aspects of federal standards, contrasting European, Canadian, and United States requirements and available test dummies as well as new technology in safety seats, special needs products, and the Child Aviation Restraint System (CARES) for restraining children on aircraft. Program-focused presentations included outreach for grandparents, developing social norms for longer-term booster use, social media applications, and special needs outreach.

Workshops covered a range of current issues, such as developing fee-based cps services, reviewing the confusions in LATCH and tether use limits, developing programs for special needs transport, and getting safety belt use pledges from high school students. Choosing among the many fine workshops wasn't easy; only a few can be shared.

The CARES system, which is designed to give upper body restraint for 22-44 lb. children flying without their safety seats on aircraft, was presented by the inventor, Louise Stoll. The kit includes an anchoring strap that is tightened under the tray and around the airline seat, providing an anchor for the harness straps with chest clip and lower loops through which the airplane lap belt is passed. In emergencies, releasing the lap belt permits sliding the harness over the child's head, a key requirement for

aircraft use. Stoll described a two-year patent process, followed by securing AmSafe Aviation, airline safety equipment manufacturer, to assist in obtaining FAA approval and producing the equipment. Stoll expected airlines to distribute the equipment to customers in need; however, only Virgin Atlantic does so.

SBS USA suggests parents who use CARES gate-check the child's safety seat to avoid delay, loss, or damage to products sent through baggage as it is difficult to replace a safety seat at an airport. Most flights include automotive travel at each end.

Erin Durbin presented the Illinois DOT-funded special needs safety seat loan program. Housed at Children's Hospital of Illinois Advocacy Center, Technicians with Special Needs qualifications take calls statewide, assessing the children's requirements, providing local educational and seat services, and reaching their network of Special Needs-qualified Technicians to whom they ship seats with 2 days' notice to serve families in other areas. Seats return to the Center for inspection, cleaning, and equipment replacement. In FY 2009, more than 1300 calls were received and since 2006, annually more than 350 safety seats have been rented at \$20 or less for two-month periods.

This model provides a resource for parents and hospitals and brings together trained Technicians. Center services include marketing the need to provide seats for children with challenges who require special seats and concurrently, allows the experienced staff to direct families to seats on the retail market if the more specialized products are not needed.