

SafetyBeltSafe News

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November 2011

Research Data Contrast Drivers' Attitudes and Behavior with Legislative Outcomes

AAA Consumer Pulse™ Survey, conducted online in 8/11 among Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee residents, revealed that, although 85% professed support for laws enforcing proper safety seat use for children 4 to 7, 24% saw no need for boosters when children outgrow safety seats with harness systems. Their reasons were that a belt alone was adequate (76%), that no law requires it (15%), and that they didn't know what a booster seat is (14%). Of the respondents, 29% do not use more than the belt alone for children in this age range.

Analysis of data from the Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey, conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2007, based on interviews with 891 drivers, indicates that 78% drove children, ages 4-9, in ill-fitting safety belts. Despite the risks to children of lap belts resting on the abdomen or shoulder belts under the arm or behind the back, few took protective action. Data collected by SBS USA on 2565 children show that not until age 10, did 51% pass the 5-Step Test for belt fit without a booster.

The importance of state laws requiring children to be correctly buckled up cannot be ignored. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) released findings from a study comparing the injury rates of children in crashes, depending on the age coverage of state laws. The study group included only children of ages not previously covered by the state law and contrasted their outcomes with the children ages 9-12 who were not covered explicitly. Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin raised the age of coverage to 7: Wyoming went to age 8. Looking at crash outcomes 2 years before and after the change, the researchers found a 5% reduction in any injury and, more telling, a 17% reduction in fatal or incapacitating injuries.

Changing the laws was associated with a nearly 3-fold increase in the use of appropriate restraints. For the 9-12 year olds, not yet covered, the change from belts to boosters was minuscule. Although only Wyoming added the requirement for back seat travel with its change, the data showed that 6% more of the children in the newly included group rode in the back seat, a factor in reducing injury risk. The study, by A. H. Eichelberger et al, is at emailpublications@iihs.org. Sharing its findings might influence legislators and correct the false impressions of others that boosters are not an important part of the equation to achieve zero tolerance for deaths in traffic collisions.

Calendar:

Safety Seat Checkups

10 am to 2 pm for public; 9 am-3 pm for checkers.
To reserve checkup or volunteer, call 310/222-6860.
* 1/11/12: To be announced
* 4/21/12: Petersen Automotive Museum, Los Angeles, CA

National CPS Technician Certification Class

* 1/5,6,9,10 with checkup on 1/11/12
Altadena, CA. Fee, including SAFE KIDS
Certification: \$1025. Register at 310/222-6860

Educator Workshop

3 CEUs for CPST/CPSTI; 6 CEUs for nurses.
Sponsors: CA OTS/Pomona Police Dept
* 4/5/12: Altadena, CA 8:15 am-4:30 pm

Give the Gift of Safety

Thank You. . .

CA Law Improved

The holidays are fast approaching, and now is a great time to remember your child's teacher or school with a gift of safety.

The SBS USA Boosters Are For Big Kids kit is a great gift for elementary schools, while our buttons, which may be personalized, are favored by dedicated Technicians, who like to wear them at events.

Reflective "Get It Together, Please Buckle Up" signs, which carry a 10% discount for current members, are pretty nifty, too.

\$15,000 Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A., Inc.

\$3000 American Honda Motor Co.

\$300 Diane and Michael Poryes

\$250 Drs. Susan and Wm. Tully

\$235 Emilie Crown

\$200 Karen Proctor
St Helena Hospital

TMH Grant Supports Checkups

Brett Wood, now Chairman of Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A., made a presentation of \$15,000 to SBS USA on 10/25 at the Irvine, CA, site of the Orange County checkup. The teams of checkers, from 15 different agencies in Orange and Los Angeles Counties, helped families, mostly expectant parents from a dozen Orange County cities, right their safety seats, all but one of which had as many as 6 errors.

KABC TV News covered the event which brought together Pretend City Children's Museum, the SAFE KIDS Coalition Orange County, SBS USA, and TMH USA to make the event work, despite a last-minute change of venue.

The importance of re-checking, even with experienced checkers, was important since some errors were not easy to spot without close attention to harness threading and the determination to locate hidden safety belt buckles, etc! For data to be meaningful, it is important to record the equipment present in the seating position to tabulate usage data of tether anchors, lower LATCH anchors, etc.

As a vote of extra confidence for the event, some of the attending families decided to join SBS USA for 2012.

California Governor Brown signed SB 929 (Evans) to require all children under age 16 to be properly buckled up in a safety seat, booster, or safety belt (lap belt crosses hips or thighs, shoulder belt crosses front of chest). Children under age 8 must ride in a safety seat or booster in the back seat as of 1/1/12 (V.C. 27360, VC. 27360.5).

V.C. 27360 (a) and 27360.5 (a) apply to a parent, legal guardian, or driver, but the driver is exempt if the parent or guardian is in the car (separate codes were used for parents and drivers previously). Proper fit of a safety belt is now defined in the adult safety belt law (V.C. 27315) as noted above.

All child restraint exemptions have been moved to V.C. 27363, and an exemption to allow safety belt use has been added for children under age 8 who are at least 4'9", but only if they are properly restrained by a safety belt.

The changes in the law are intended to make the state eligible for federal SAFETEA-LU grants for public education and the provision of low-cost and no-cost boosters. The easiest way for professionals and parents to tell if a child fits in the belt and is ready to wear it correctly, regardless of the length of the trip, is to apply the 5-Step Test, available at www.carseat.org. Learning to apply the Test is the goal of the dual curricula from SBS USA, "Boosters Are For Big Kids" and "Belt Fit Basics."

For more information on the curricula, watch the video at our Web site and even learn the engaging rap!

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__ 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)

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Health Canada Warns Public About Dangerous Product

According to several online sources, Health Canada is telling consumers not to buy a product called the *Baby Car Seat Carrier Safety Belt* and to stop using it immediately if one has already been purchased.

The product doesn't have Transport Canada's required National Safety Mark and has not been certified to meet the safety requirements of the Motor Vehicle Restraint Systems and Booster Seats Safety Regulations. Health Canada has contacted at least one online company distributing the product and asked them to stop selling it. The agency also is working with the Canada Border Services Agency to stop the product from coming into the country.

Although the product has been removed from several Web sites, it is still being marketed online for babies 7 to 30 lbs. It looks similar to the typical baby carrier made of fabric and worn on the front of an adult's body. One online ad states "This baby seat carrier is specially designed for car seat as a safety belt" and "will keep your baby in perfect condition."

Air Bag to Mitigate Side-Impact Crash Injuries

General Motors is introducing an air bag that emerges from the right side of the driver's seat in side impact crashes. GM investigators reviewed data from the NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System, showing that far-side impacts caused 11% of fatalities of belted drivers between 2004-09 in 1999 or later vehicles; the bag is meant to shield them. Since such crash scenarios represent 29% of fatalities in far-side impacts, the new bag can be a lifesaver. The air bag can protect the front-seat occupants from striking one another in any side impact as well.

Joint developers, GM and Takata, anticipate positive protection in rollovers, too. The tool will be in some of the 2013 GM crossovers-- GMC Acadia, Chevy Traverse, Buick Enclave. Although explicit data on the effect of this new tethered, tubular air bag on rear-facing safety seats have not been released and testing is ongoing, a company representative notes their long history of taking children's needs into account when introducing new technology.

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SafetyBeltSafe News

November 2011

NEW PRODUCTS

This Bill Could Be a Lifesaver

Baby Trend EuroSport is a combination seat for 22-50 lbs. with harness, 30-100 lbs. as highback booster, 40-100 lbs. as backless booster. Harness adjusters are on the shoulder straps, and, on some models, the buckle beeps when it is buckled or unbuckled. Short or long belt path can be used, and both LATCH and tether may be used in booster mode. **Fast Back** is a combination seat for 22-70 lbs. with harness, 30-120 lbs. as highback booster, 40-120 lbs. as backless booster. Rigid LATCH connectors can be used in all modes; belt routing and booster tether use vary.

Evenflo Embrace 35 is for 4-35 lbs., rear facing only. It has 3 sets of harness slots and a crotch strap that adjusts in length and has 2 locations. The carry handle and belt path have been improved. **Secure Kid** covers 20-65 lbs. with harness and 40-100 lbs. as highback booster. Similar to the Maestro, it has deeper sides, 4 sets of harness slots, 2 crotch strap locations, and click-on LATCH connectors that can be used in booster mode; the high-end model has automatically tightening LATCH connectors.

Graco My Ride 65 with Safety Surround updates the existing model, now for 4- 40 lbs. rear facing and 20-65 lbs. forward facing. It has a removable infant insert attached to the adjustable headrest.

Recaro Euro is for 5-35 lbs. rear facing and 20-70 lbs. forward facing. Similar to discontinued Como and Signo, it has a no-rethread harness and click-on LATCH connectors.

A new accessory from **Diono**, the **Angle Adjuster**, positions their rear-facing Radian seats (all models) more upright for older children, adding up to 4" more room behind the vehicle front seats.

Mariah's Law (the Rockefeller bill, S 1449) aims to push NHTSA regulations to fill gaps and address well-established problems in child passenger safety (CPS) and related areas. The bill, awaiting a companion version in the House of Representatives, addresses CPS by seeking FMVSS 213 amendments to improve frontal impact testing as well as adding a side-impact standard. Concurrently, the bill would improve components of FMVSS 225, with increased ease-of-use for lower anchors mandated, tether anchors required for all rear seating positions, and standardized upper-weight limits for tethers matching weights listed on safety seats.

Each state would be required to set up a network of safety seat fitting stations. Research on a system for prevention of hyperthermia would be mandated to reduce the risk of forgetting children in vehicle rear seats, and it would institute a warning system for rear-seat belts not in use.

The occupant protection components related to CPS are only part of the comprehensive bill which is named for a teen who died while texting and driving, a focus of the efforts NHTSA has been making. In the process of reauthorizing the NHTSA budget, the bill would provide funding to address distracted driving and encourage graduated licenses for teens.

A number of the specific vehicle issues addressed are accelerator shape, standardizing push-button starters, methods to override accelerators when out-of-control, requiring vehicle incident recorders by model year 2015, and more openness about potential defect investigations. The extensive Senate bill has not yet been "matched" in the House of Representatives which has held up action.

TO LATCH OR.....

Denise Donaldson of *Safe Ride News* summarized the LATCH/tether confusions regarding weight limits in the “To LATCH or not to LATCH” presentation at the August Kidz in Motion conference in Florida. In 2002, it was clear that LATCH could be used up to 48 lbs., based on the then-common certified weight for forward-facing safety seats. The seat mix has changed greatly.

Now, most such seats are certified with harness systems above 40 lbs., and FMVSS 213 covers seats up to 65 lbs. (Manufacturers test higher-weight seats with bulked-up dummies.) For instance, 6 vehicle companies give no weight guidance about use of lower and tether anchors, 22 list 48 lbs., 12 suggest using the safety seat manufacturers’ guidelines, and only 4 list 40 lbs. for vehicles after ’05. Similar figures are listed for use of belt and top tether: 16 suggesting using seat manufacturers’ guidance, 4 sticking with 40 lbs., 18 for 48 lbs., and 8 not stating a preference. When it comes to retrofitted tether anchors, 40 lbs. from 13 companies is the most common figure after no statement from 16, followed by 9, referring to the seat manufacturer, and 6, 48 lbs.

Options described for use with the high-weight harness seats were using 2 tether anchors; having a National Mobility Dealers’ Association-licensed dealer add a special heavy-duty tether anchor; or rely on using safety seat manufacturer recommended options, such as using the shoulder portion of the belt in lieu of a tether or considering seat design to reduce head injury risk in a crash. Examples of the last are steel alloy in the safety seat frame or, as put forth by Britax, “safe cell technology” to lower the center of gravity under crash conditions.

Another change is the reduction by half in the number of vehicle models with more than 3 tether anchors to 25 in 2011.

With concerns about boosters flying into occupants in crashes occurring after children exit without re-buckling the seat, instructions for some boosters and combination seats used as boosters permit use of lower attachments. Instructions on their use range from attach loosely to must use both LATCH and belt when unoccupied. As always, read the instructions for the safety seat!

Lifesavers Follow-up: A Potpourri

The Lifesavers session on Special Crash Investigations at NHTSA had immediate relevance due to the Hamilton crash (5/11 issue) because exploring how a safety-seated child fares in a rollover crash is one focal category. Paul Barron, NHTSA SCI, gave examples of others, such as side-air-bag deployments near occupants, air bag deployment with death/severe injury of pregnant occupant or fetus, or a distracted-driver crash. To report a potential case, e-mail SCI.dot.gov.

Kathy Klinich, Univ. of MI Transportation Research Institute, reported on efforts to use human factors assessments to address incorrect installation of safety seats. The study of 32 subjects, divided among college/non-college educated, experienced/non-experienced safety seat users, showed difficulty in finding resolutions for this problem. Various approaches, such as numbering tasks, or color-coding, didn’t have much impact. Only 28% were tightly installed. Push-on LATCH connectors were twice as likely to be tight; lock-offs improved attachment; the Evenflo Triumph Advance infinite-slide-harness proved easiest to fit. Video reduced error. The major finding was subjects didn’t recognize their errors. As the Chrysler-sponsored interview study in the past indicated, caregivers believe they are “doing it right,” so are unaware of the need to change their approach. SBS USA believes designs need to be intuitive as even clearly written manuals are frequently unused or misunderstood.

CA OTS Grant Supports New Projects

In collaboration with Pomona Police Dept, SBS USA is tackling incorrect use of safety seats/belts, recycling expired or damaged safety seats, bringing the Model City/Boosters Are For Big Kids education program to Pomona, and maintaining statewide technical services by Helpline and Web site. Law enforcement roll calls and classroom events for elementary school students, aspiring CPS educators, and Technicians will be planned in Los Angeles County.

Headlining outreach to the public was a series of Todo Bebe events in several Southern California counties where our bilingual Spanish-speaking Technicians answered questions about proper transport. PPD plans to establish a fitting station with regular checkups at local agencies as the centerpiece of their CPS-friendly outreach. Thank you, CA Office of Traffic Safety and NHTSA, for enabling us to explore new avenues while maintaining longstanding services.



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To: Our Valued *SafetyBeltSafe News* Readers

From: Bonnie Oseas, President, Board of Directors

2011 has been a year of opportunity and accomplishment. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration honored our petition to maintain the requirement for lockable belts, which was due to sunset in 2012. This year, we helped educate those in California government considering improvement in the buckle-up law for kids. The Evans bill has been signed into law! As before, all children under age 16 are required to be properly buckled up in a safety seat, booster, or safety belt. As of 1/1/12, children under age 8 must ride in a safety seat or booster in the back seat.

Unfortunately, we have not been immune to current economic conditions. This year, we experienced an unprecedented withdrawal of government funding, due to a change in legal interpretation of the process, for a 20-month project. This situation makes your support more critical than ever to continue to provide education and support to thousands of CPS Technicians and parents throughout the country who rely on our expertise.

To make it easier for parents and professionals to help, we continue our tiered levels of participation as subscribers or members so you can choose the set of services most appropriate for your situation. Every Technician can qualify for a Continuing Education Unit for reading *SafetyBeltSafe News*. Those at the \$50 level also receive a code to download our Recall List, the most comprehensive in the U.S. At \$100, we add a code to reach our special Web page with all of the new instructions added throughout the year. At \$200, members add on the latest DVD of Child Restraint Manufacturers' Instructions, *Safe Ride News*, 100 free brochures, and, to FOUR additional locations, copies of *SafetyBeltSafe News*.

In collaboration with *Safe Ride News*, we are offering the "CPS Tech Special" for Technicians at the \$100 level to receive the DVD and *Safe Ride News* for just an additional \$35. All renewals from October 1 on expire on December 31, 2012.

Help us continue our campaign to protect every child on the road. We need you and will be anticipating your response.