



Ride Safe

A passenger safety newsletter of the Safe Riders Program, Public Health Promotion Division, Texas Department of Health, in cooperation with the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation.

Fall 1989

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 8 HAS A NEW STAFF

Cecilia Garza is the new Regional Community Occupant Protection Coordinator in Harlingen. Cecilia is a May graduate in Business Administration from Pan American University. Cecilia worked as Administrative Assistant for the Brownsville Community Health Center for 10 years. Welcome Aboard!

IBM TO HOST "EMPLOYER'S INITIATIVES WORKSHOP FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY"

IBM in Austin has agreed to sponsor a day-long seminar for 35 of Austin's largest employers on September 18. The goal of the seminar is to promote the development and implementation of traffic safety programs within the community's workplace. IBM is providing the conference room, the audio-visual equipment, breaks and luncheon, the mailing of all invitations, registration, and materials for the day's seminar. Along with the Texas Department of Health, other co-sponsors include Travis County Anti-DWI/COPP Program, Texas Safety Association, and the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation. Sixteen representatives of local and statewide safety agencies will discuss available resources. Continuing education credits are available to Safety Directors attending.

Such a seminar can be put on in your community. For more information and a copy of the agenda contact Carla Baker 1-800-252-8255.

CHILD SAFETY SEATS AWARDED TO 45 AGENCIES

871 infant and convertible safety seats are being awarded to 45 agencies statewide for FY 89. Fourteen of the agencies are new loaner programs who will be provided with a 2 1/2 hour training course. The seats are provided by a grant from the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation. This year additional funding was provided by the Texas Health Foundation (Tyler), the Northeast Kiwanis Club (Austin), the Insurance Women's Group (Dallas), and the Mother's of Twins Organization (Longview).

DEATHLESS DAY CAMPAIGN ON TEXAS HIGHWAYS

ONE DEATHLESS DAY on Texas highways. It sounds easy, but it isn't. " Texas hasn't had a day without a traffic death since January 5th, 1977, said Dyanne Fry-Cortez, Coordinator of the Texas Coalition For Safety Belts at the Texas Safety Association.

The coalition's goal is one day without a traffic death during the 101 Days of Summer. The last deathless day on Texas roadways was January 5, 1977, more than 12 years ago. The promotion began Saturday, May 27 and will continue through Labor Day, September 4. According to the Department of Public Safety, the day so far with only one death recorded was May 31. The season's worst day so far was May 28 with 19 fatalities.

As an additional promotion this year, the Coalition targeted 18 major Texas cities during the July 4th weekend which began at 6:00 p.m. and ended at 12:00 p.m. to have a Deathless Weekend. 14 cities were able to achieve Deathless Weekends. They are Abilene, Amarillo, Austin, Beaumont, Brownsville, Bryan/College Station, Corpus Christi, Ft. Worth, Laredo, Lubbock, Midland, Tyler, Waco, and Wichita Falls.

The Texas Department of Health's Saferiders Program is a member of the Coalition and provides input for various coordinated safety efforts both locally and statewide.

COUNTERFEIT SEAT HITS THE LA MARKET

Strange but true, and right in Los Angeles, where Los Angeles Area Child Passenger Safety Association (LAACPSA) found not one, but numerous counterfeit safety seats in the hands and cars of unsuspecting consumers.

LAACPSA was first alerted to the existence of suspicious-looking seats when a parent called the association's "Helpline" in March 1988 with a problem about her child's discomfort in her safety seat. It became apparent to Stephanie Tombrello, executive director of LAACPSA, that the seat was not one of those commonly available in the USA. It had plastic harness adjusters, rather than metal ones, and an old fashion arm rest; its label contained neither the date of manufacture nor the manufacturer's name. The manufacturer was later found to be Lin Lih Ltd. of Taiwan.

Tombrello and Maurice Huebsch, of Lager & Associates, made an "undercover" search, finally locating the store where the seat had been purchased more than a year earlier. The store still had several Lin Lih seats in stock. Ultimately, two seats were purchased for crash-testing by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The original seat, donated by the Helpline was turned over to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) since, under California's child restraint law, the sale of an unsafe seat is an infraction. After police alerted the city attorney's office, the seat was tested by the California Bureau of Home Furnishings, which discovered its extreme flammability. This was sufficient grounds for placing an immediate embargo on the sale of the 2300 seats found in warehouses.

On December 12, 1988, the LA city attorney announced the filing of a suit against Lin Lih Ltd., two distributors and the store where the seat had been purchased. The seat did not comply with Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213; NHTSA had found that the plastic harness adjustment slides broke during a crash test, allowing the dummy to be ejected from the seat.

Extensive press and television coverage led to many calls from consumers. From the first 100 calls, IAACOSA identified 20 of the unsafe seats, bought at flea markets and in shops. Some were over two years old, while others had been purchased recently. To prevent their further use, IAACPSA collected the seats and referred parents to loan or purchase programs. In January of 1989 more seats were discovered, leading the LAPD to sweep stores to try to eliminate the seats from the marketplace. IAACPSA continues to publicize the problem through radio and TV publicity and with flyers for consumers in Spanish as well as English.

Other fall-out from the discovery included a call for the LAPD to keep track of the brand names of CSSs in use in fatal crashes, and a proposal to amend the California child restraint law to upgrade the penalty for the sale of an unsafe product.

"The discovery of a dangerous counterfeit child safety seat," commented Tombrello, "must remind us that vigilance cannot be replaced by regulation alone, that a network of technically competent advocates is essential to keep children safe, and that gaps in the laws and data collection need to be recognized and remedied." She cautioned that parents must continue to be taught to look for proper labeling and other specific features to make sure that seats meet FMVSS 213. "Information about the Lin Lih seat must get out to advocates and parents everywhere because, given the mobility of the American public, one of these seats could turn up anywhere."

For a flyer on the seat, write or call IAACPSA, Box 553, Altadena, CA 91001; (213)-673-2666.

For a listing of all infant, convertible, and booster seats that have been crash-tested and certified by the manufacturer as meeting the current Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213, please call the Saferider's Hotline 1-800-252-8255.

**** Excerpt from the Safe Ride News, American Academy of Pediatrics. Vol. VIII, No.2: Spring, 1989.

CHILD SAFETY SEAT USAGE RATES: AN UPDATE...

A recent report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provides parents with a useful analysis of child safety effectiveness. The report states that safety seats are very effective in preventing fatalities. Fatality reductions, based on crash reports from the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) and the assumption of a certain level of misuse, are estimated to be:

- * 69 percent for infants in safety seats;
- * 47 percent for toddlers in safety seats;
- * 36 percent for toddlers in adult belts.

In comparison, the commonly used estimates of potential effectiveness for child safety seats (71% reduction in fatalities and 67% reduction in serious injuries) determined by Charles Kahane in an earlier study are based on correct use only.

The report goes on to calculate the number of lives saved by occupant restraints, based on the effectiveness ratings and usage statistics. In 1982, 75 lives of young children (age 0-4) were saved. This number has steadily increase 213 in 1987, the last year studied. The study projects that, if 100 percent usage were achieved at current misuse levels, some 462 lives could have been saved in 1987.

**** Excerpt from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Lives Saved by Child Restraints 1982-1987"

FISHER-PRICE RECALLS SEATS

In March 1989, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced the recall of over 1.5 million Fischer-Price child safety seats that do not meet the federal flammability standard. The foam pad of models 9100 and 9101, made between 1985 and 1989 will be replaced free of charge by the company. No complaints of fire or fire-related injuries have been made. NHTSA urges owners of these seats to continue to use them while awaiting the replacement pads. Owners should call Fisher-Price at 1-800-334-5439 for service.

DYN-O-MITE WARNING NOTICE

Evenflo has announced a change in the instructions for use of its Dyn-O-Mite and Evenflo infant car safety seats. As noted in the notice, Dyn-O-Mite seats (441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 448) made from 1985 through January, 1989, should not be used in motor vehicles in the fully reclined position(#4) when secured with a lap/shoulder belt. With the shoulder belt wrapped around the front of the seat, it may be reclined to position 4. The Evenflo infant car seat (456, 458) also should not be used in its most reclined position (#2), unless the shoulder belt is wrapped around the front of the seat. For more information contact 1-800-543-8954.

AUSTIN CAR SEAT PROJECT....A SUCCESS

Zilker Park, in Austin, was the "Kickoff" site for this year's Austin Car Seat Project in May. Featured speakers included the Governor's wife, Rita Clements, Bob Cole of MAJIC 95 Radio Station, and Portia Hausman and son, Hunter, who both survived a serious auto accident when he was only three months old. A proclamation declaring this Austin Car Seat month was presented by the Mayor's office.

Linda Allison, chairperson of the event, stated that "last year \$5400 was raised to purchase car seats in the community and this year the project could bring in as much as \$6100." This year's funds will start-up 7 new local loaner programs as well as replenish several existing locations such as St. David's Hospital, Easter Seals, and Del Valle Community Center. Bob Cole, MAJIC 95 Radio's Disc Jockey, appealed to his listeners to donate a car seat to a needy family which was profiled on the "air" daily during the month. Volvo Motor Imports matched each donation.

A banner stating "Buckle Up Your Children" was placed in a busy intersection near downtown. Mall exhibits were provided during the month with information about child safety seats. Wal-Mart stores provided "Check-Stations" in their parking lots where safety experts could check that child safety seats were correctly installed by parents in their vehicles. Special public service announcements were aired each day promoting safety and Channel 36 featured a week-long program about the event.

If you would like more information about this project for your community call 1-800-252-8255.

SOUTHWEST TRAFFIC SAFETY WORKSHOP IV

The Southwest Traffic Safety Workshop IV will be held in San Antonio November 13-15 at the Hyatt Hotel on the Riverwalk. Several announcements will be forthcoming. Please let us know if you would like to receive an invitation.

NEW MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

We have revised the "Texas Safety Belt Survivors' Club" brochure, and it includes new categories for survivors saved by automatic restraints and airbags. The code is 4-150.

NEW LEGISLATION

All operators and passengers of motorcycles effective September 1, 1989, must wear a helmet. The helmet must have a Department of Transportation (DOT) sticker which shows that it meets federal standards.

Senate Bill No. #170 also passed. This new law, effective on September 1, 1989, does two things. It takes away the defense of a parent purchasing a safety seat and bringing it before a judge to have the ticket dismissed.

The second provision states, "A person commits an offense if the person, at a speed that exceeds 35 miles per hour, operates an open bed pickup truck or an open flatbed truck or tows an open flatbed trailer on a public street or highway when a child younger than 12 years of age is occupying the bed of the truck or trailer."

Copies of both new laws are available by calling 1-800-252-8255.

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