

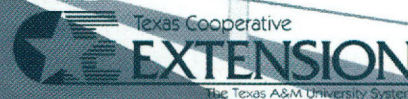
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On The Road With...

Fall 2001

Rural Passenger Safety Education

Vol. 2 No. 2



COPS & SHOPS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Publications
Texas State Documents

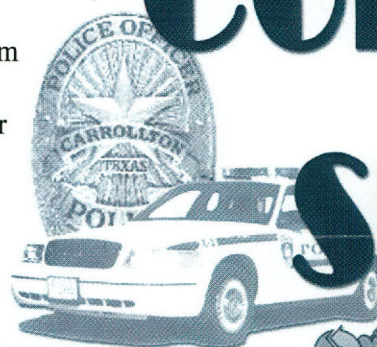
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Carrollton Police Department Promotes Child Passenger Safety

In the spring of 1999, Sgt. R. Digman attended the Traffic Management School at the Northwestern University Traffic Institute. While at the school he learned about the child passenger safety training available through USAA. Sgt. Digman brought the idea back to Carrollton and set out to start a program in the City of Carrollton. Initially Sgt. Digman and five traffic officers were certified as child passenger safety technicians. In the fall of 2000, Carrollton Police Department (PD) hosted a training session for area police departments in an attempt to get more local police agencies involved in this program. Carrollton currently has a total of eleven officers certified. The program is managed through grants as well as donations.

To date, Carrollton PD has inspected over 400 children and provided new child safety seats (CSS) to over 60 children who needed them. The program is expanding as more officers come forward to attend the training and get involved in this rewarding community project. Carrollton PD's goal is to have the financial means available to provide anyone in the community with a CSS who needs one. Plans are underway for the purchase of a trailer to use for these events. The trailer will contain all of the necessary items associated with a "checkup event," and at the same time advertise the program and its sponsors. The PD averages one checkup event a month and several walk-ins a week. All of the materials used for the events are purchased through corporate donations. Carrollton PD is one of the few agencies in the DFW metroplex that has an active involvement in this great program. Listed on NHTSA's Web site, they receive several inquiries a week for assistance in properly installing child safety seats. If parents have the interest in seeking out the



COPS & SHOPS



Once Upon a Child



'Once Upon A Child' Hosts Bounty Program in College Station, TX

Just as important as correctly installing a child safety seat (CSS) is making sure it is safe to use. *Once Upon A Child*, a local children's store, recently hosted a bounty program. The owner, Nancy Gillmore, wants to keep children safe. It was decided that the store would help get unsafe CSS out of circulation. Their first bounty campaign was put together by using Rural Passenger Safety Education's *Child Safety Seat Bounty Program Guide*. They were looking for any CSS over five years old, on recall, damaged/altered, involved in a crash, or the history was unknown. Using local media, the call went out for these "wanted" CSS.

Keep It Moving

by Chief Harry Crum, NHTSA Region 6

With the recent tragic events that occurred in New York City and the Pentagon, many Americans across this country have refocused their energies and priorities. We have become more aware of our vulnerability. Many law enforcement agencies have redirected their efforts to "homeland" security, detection and prevention techniques.

We certainly should be very cognizant of these efforts and changes; however, we must not lose sight of the fact that thousands are killed each year in vehicle related crashes. In fact, in 2000, 41,821 were killed on our Nation's roadways—a 0.2% increase from 1999. In 2000, 39.8% of these fatalities were alcohol related—yet another increase from 1999. In Texas, 3,769 fatalities occurred in 2000 with 50.4% being alcohol related. In year 2000, Texans saw an increase of 7% in vehicle fatalities from 1999 and an increase in alcohol related deaths. Citizens must become even more responsible while operating a motor vehicle, as law enforcement cannot do it alone—and in fact shouldn't have to. Texas has come forward with new laws in their fight against drunk driving by recently passing an "Open Container" law, which prohibits open containers of alcoholic beverages in

the passenger compartment of passenger vehicles. It doesn't matter whether you're drinking or not!

One example of how law enforcement and the motoring public partnered together to save lives was the significant decrease in vehicle related deaths this past Labor Day weekend. "Operation Blue TALON: Crash Crackdown" mustered law enforcement, the media and the motoring public—working together by raising enforcement activities, public information and awareness to reduce the number of fatalities during the Labor Day weekend. As a result of this effort in the five states of NHTSA Region 6, Labor Day fatalities dropped 37% in 2001, compared to 2000. In Texas, there was a 47% drop in fatalities during the Labor Day weekend.

No price can be placed on the loss of a friend or loved one. Yet the majority of these tragedies on our nation's roadways are preventable and could have been avoided all together. The holiday season brings with it celebration, festivities, and cheer. Don't be a statistic. Always **Buckle Up**, don't drink and drive or have an open container of alcohol in a vehicle, and be responsible by obeying traffic laws when getting behind the wheel. Join in the celebration of life and be an example for others.



National Goals*

- ✓ Increase safety belt use to 85% by the year 2000*
- ✓ Increase safety belt use to 90% by the year 2005*
- ✓ Reduce child passenger fatalities 15% by the year 2000**
- ✓ Reduce child passenger fatalities 25% by the year 2005**

Texas is dedicated to meeting the national goals and is an active partner in Buckle Up America.

* Baseline data from 68% in 1996
** Reduced to 515 in 2005

December is "National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention (3D) Month." December 15-17 is "You Drink & Drive You Lose Mobilization Weekend." These initiatives in December are geared to raise the awareness, to not only the public but to law enforcement agencies, that **alcohol, drugs and motor vehicles don't mix.**

Source: Chief Harry Crum, NHTSA, Region 6, 819 Taylor St. Rm. 8A38, Ft. Worth, TX 76102, e-mail: harry.crum@nhtsa.dot.gov or call 817-978-2021, 2001.

Resources Available:

Educational material available from the Rural Passenger Safety Resource Library to support National 3D Month:

Exhibits:

You Booze, You Cruise, You Lose!

Interactive items:

Fatal Vision Goggles
Question & Answer Board

Printed Material:

Underage Drinking Brochure
If You Are Under 21... (poster)

Fact Sheets:

Impairment Begins With The First Drink

Videos:

Brandon's Story

Contact Dana Runyan at 979-845-1104 for assistance with any resource materials.

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HEAD RESTRAINTS

Head restraints are a type of vehicle occupant protection system. It is a vehicle safety feature built into the vehicle. Its purpose is to absorb energy and slow down deceleration and decrease injury to occupants. The head restraint provides support for the head and neck and helps prevent whiplash injuries. (*NHTSA Standardized Child Passenger Safety Training Program*)

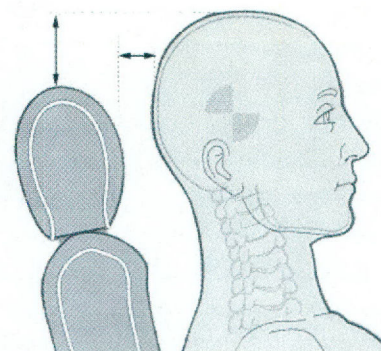
Is your head restraint doing its job?

In most instances, motorists leave their adjustable head restraints in the lowest position, where they provide little or no protection for many people, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) reports. According to IIHS president Brian O'Neill, for maximum effectiveness a head restraint must be positioned high and close behind the back of a person's head. So how do you put your adjustable head restraint in the proper position?

1. Adjust the head restraint so it reaches at least as high as the center of the back of your head. Lock it in this position, if possible. (See your vehicle owner's manual. Some adjustable head restraints do not include a locking feature.)

2. If possible, adjust the angle of the seat back so

the head restraint is no more than 3 or 4 inches away from your head. (On some vehicles, the head restraint itself can be tilted forward.)



Correct alignment is essential for proper head restraint protection.

Head restraint ratings for many 1999 model vehicles are available on the IIHS Web site. Among more than 180 models rated, only a handful received a "good" rating: BMW 23 coupe, Chevrolet S10, GMC Sonoma, Mitsubishi Montero, Saab 9-3, 9-5 and Volvo C70, S70, V70 and S80.

IIHS, which is supported by USAA and other insurers, is urging automakers to design more effective head restraints. According to IIHS, fixed head restraints that are high and close behind a motorist's head are more effective than adjustable designs, though not nearly as common. To prevent injuries, adjust head restraint properly.

Source: USAA Magazine, October/November 2000.

Carrollton Police from page 1

best for their children, Carrollton PD will provide the best they can.

Source: Sgt. R. Digman, Certified Child Safety Seat Technician, Carrollton Police Department, Carrollton, TX, 2001.

Bounty Program from page 1

One week in advance, *Once Upon A Child* provided flyers and had public service announcements broadcast on local radio station MIX 104.7. The afternoon of the event a disk jockey from Mix 104.7, came out to the store to inform all the listeners of the program and where to come.

The "bounty" offered up for unsafe

CSS was a \$10.00 gift card from Target Stores. The general manager was extremely helpful and supportive of the effort.

The turnout was good, especially since this was the first bounty program in College Station. The final tally indicated seven \$10.00 Target gift cards given out for two-shield boosters-over five-year limit (one-Gerry, one-Cosco) and five convertibles-over the five-year limit (two-Century, one-Fisher Price, two-Cosco). Everyone was provided with safety recommendations and left more informed than when they arrived. The CSS were then properly and safely destroyed.

Tiffany would quickly and enthusias-

tically recommend this type of event to anyone or any group wanting to make a difference, but without the available time, funds, or location for a checkup event. Everyone involved had fun and felt like they really helped some parents. "The Rural Passenger Safety Education Project of Texas Cooperative Extension is a terrific resource for valuable information and advice, always willing to help, and making it easier for all of us to help out where we can. Don't forget about them when you're planning your own event of any kind. Good luck to all future bounty-hunters!"

Source: Tiffany Ritter, NHTSA Certified Child Safety Seat Technician, Once Upon A Child, 2001.

For Child Safety Seat Technicians/Instructors...

■ Twisting the stalk:

According to every vehicle manufacturer responding to this question and people who conduct testing, the question of strength reduction of safety belts (SB) due to twisting is a non-issue with regard to child restraints. The original strength of the webbing is much greater than needed to hold the weight of a child in a child safety seat (CSS). The purpose of twisting the short end of the SB is to move the buckle down, not to make the belt tighter. That technique only works if up to three twists are used. The reason for limiting the number of twists has nothing to do with belt strength. The consensus is that the warning against twisting the belt is for a person, not a child restraint.

(Source: Paul Butler, Ford Motor Company)



■ **Seats equipped with standard LATCH:** Cosco Triad (convertible) and Britax Expressway (forward-facing (FF)). All Century products made since September 1997 can use the Century retrofit kit. (Source: Century)

■ **LATCH attachments:** Only one tether attachment per tether anchor. Do not use an anchor that is more than 20 degrees off-center from the child restraint, unless it is the factory anchor recommended for that seating position.

■ **Boosters:** A special warning concerning problems with combination CSS/boosters and belt positioning boosters (BPB) (various models made by various manufacturers; based on Consumer Reports, July 2001).

1. When FF seat is used as BPB, the plastic comfort clip on side of BPB may prevent shoulder portion of belt from retracting properly if child leans or pushes belt forward, resulting in dangerous slack. If the comfort clip is needed to keep SB from crossing neck or face, supervise child very closely or select a different model of BPB. If shoulder belt fits properly, do not use the clip.

2. Some models hold the lap belt too high above the vehicle seat, which may allow the child to slide under lap belt (LB). Make sure LB fits child's hips or thighs, and shoulder belt crosses child's shoulder, not arm, and touches child's chest.

■ **Head Excursion:** Using a lap/shoulder belt (L/SB) with a lockoff will help reduce head excursion (over just a lap belt). The reduction in head excursion is greatest if the shoulder part of the belt exits the child seat high on the side, as it does when it is in the lockoff of the Britax

Freeway. The tether strap reduces head excursion even further. The tether is most important for taller, heavier children, because they will experience more head excursion.

■ **Forward-Facing Restraints in the Recline:** Always follow the manufacturer's instructions. There is no scientific basis to assert that the crashworthiness of forward-facing child restraints is in any way diminished when they are used in a reclined orientation, provided that the use position is one approved by the manufacturer. On the contrary, child restraint manufacturers are obligated under FMVSS 213 to ensure that their child restraints conform to all of the requirements of the standard in any recommended use position. In the latest version of the NHTSA CPS Technician Curriculum, Module G, this fact is acknowledged. With some vehicle/child restraint combinations, it is actually easier to get a good, tight fit when the restraint is placed in a recline mode.

■ **Tethering a BPB:** It has been shown in certain situations that a tethered BPB may have less of a tendency to rock sideways in hard cornering than one untethered. According to directions for the Graco CarGo Express "Use of the tether is NOT required when using the seat in this mode; however, it may keep the seat more stable..." (Page 43 6.2 Securing Your Child and the Booster Seat with the Vehicle Lap/Shoulder Belt). As always refer to each CSS's instructions when considering this option and the parent should be the one to make the final decision.

■ **Time to Renew?** AAA is the certifying body for child safety seat technicians. Contact AAA, Nicola Tavares at ntavares@national.AAA.com or 407-444-7362 for recertification materials. The National CPS Board website at <http://www.cpsboard.org> also provides current information.

Source: CPS List Serve, 2001.



you might be a CPS Technician If...

"Your seven year old can point out several misuses of a CSS in a grocery store parking lot."

*Courtesy of Flora Williams
Wharton County Extension Agent*

If you would like to submit an item for this feature, please contact Bev Kellner @ b-kellner@tamu.edu or 979-862-1782.

AIR BAGS: SAFETY FEATURE CAN BE DANGEROUS

In the field of transportation, safety education has come a long way in the past few decades, especially as it pertains to child passengers. But in spite of recent advances, there's still a long way to go.

The good news is, parents and other drivers are more aware of how dangerous some formerly-common practices were. No more is it common to see:

- Children standing on the floor of the backseat while the car is in motion.
- Children lying on the rear window shelf, gazing up at the stars.
- Children bouncing from window to window in the backseat.
- Children sitting in the driver's lap, helping to "steer" the car.
- Children climbing from front seat to back.

Young vehicle passengers now are more likely to be restrained in age-appropriate safety seats—rear-facing for young infants, forward-facing for toddlers and booster seats as children get older and taller.

But when it comes to air bags, this safety feature can be

hazardous to small passengers.

Air bags, which have saved lives in critical situations, have also been known to be the cause of death or serious injuries for smaller passengers. While some of these injuries for adults are nothing more than bruises, cuts or scrapes, some injuries children receive may require hospitalization; some are even fatal.



According to guidelines from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Highway Loss Data Institute (IIHS-HLDI) air bags—which are installed as standard equipment in nearly all new cars—have reduced driver deaths by nearly 14 percent, and passenger deaths by about 11 percent.

But at the same time, deployed air bags are potentially deadly to passengers not wearing safety belts, drivers sitting 10 inches or less from the steering wheel, and infants riding in rear-facing child safety seats that have

see Air Bags page 7

New Technicians Trained

Temple NHTSA CPS Training

Rural Passenger Safety Education sponsored a NHTSA CPS Technical Training, July 24-27, 2001, at Temple College, Temple, Texas hosted by the Temple Fire Department. Thomas Pechal was the training site coordinator. Despite the July heat intensified by the black asphalt, 29 new technicians were trained consisting of five law enforcement members, seven healthcare professionals, six EMS, five fire department members, two representatives from auto dealerships, one school professional, two members from children's organizations and one trauma council member.



State Senator, Steve Ogden, stopped by to talk to the technician candidates at the recent training held in Bryan, Texas.

Bryan NHTSA CPS Training

Rural Passenger Safety Education sponsored a NHTSA CPS Technical Training at the Texas A&M Riverside Campus in Bryan, Texas, August 21-24, 2001. A total of 31 new technicians completed the four day training. The new technicians include 21 law enforcement, one county Extension agent, one child-care provider, one CPS advocate, three healthcare professionals, two auto dealerships and two people from child oriented retail businesses. There were 52 child safety seats checked and misuse corrected during the two hour training checkup event.



The Copperas Cove Fire Department showed their support for CPS by sending five of their members to the Temple training.

Safe Communities Corner

with Bruce Shults, NHTSA, Region 6



What's New @ NHTSA Region 6 for Safe Communities?

Texas now leads the nation in the number of people killed in traffic crashes according to statistics and crashes cost the state \$11.2 billion annually. To help Texas communities address traffic safety and injury prevention, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration continues to expand its products and services.

NHTSA Region 6 in Fort Worth recently hired Luther Perry as its **Diversity Outreach Liaison** to help bring together minority communities, state highway safety offices, and local traffic safety programs aimed at decreasing injuries and fatalities to minorities. Perry served on the Fort Worth Police Department for 25 years as a patrol officer, recruiter and as a special assistant to the chief to organize community outreach. Together with local clergy, Perry helped to create the Ministers Against Crime to help prevent crime and reduce injuries. To get involved in diversity outreach in your community, call Luther at 817-978-0661 or email lperry@nhtsa.dot.gov.

Region 6 **Law Enforcement Liaison** (LEL) Harry Crum continues to work closely with Texas law enforcement agencies to champion highway safety and elevate traffic enforcement to a higher priority in Texas. Most recently over the Labor Day 2001 holiday weekend, Crum and State LELs facilitated the efforts of 1,700 law enforcement agencies across TX, AR, LA, OK, NM and the Indian Nations to conduct **Operation Blue TALON 3: Crash Crackdown**. Traffic deaths on R6 roads dropped to 36 over the holiday weekend compared to 57 in 2000 and 85 in 1999. Reductions in Texas led all Region 6 States with only 18 deaths in 2001 compared to 34 in 2000 and 45 in 1999. For assistance with your community's traffic enforcement efforts, call Harry Crum at 817-978-2021 or email harry.crum@nhtsa.dot.gov. (see Chief Crum's article on page 2).

Region 6's Bruce Shults with the **Safe Communities Service Center** continues to provide help to traffic safety coalitions with their individual needs. Since its creation in 1997, the Service Center has responded to more than 1,000 requests for materials and technical

SAFE COMMUNITIES SERVICE CENTER
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/>

- Customer Service Center**
 - About Us & About Safe Communities
 - Site Map
- Safe Communities Newsstand**
 - Calendar
 - Local & National News
 - Special Features
- Best Practices Showcase**
 - Safe Communities Success Stories
- Partnership Emporium**
 - Links to Web Resources
- Safe Communities Town Square**
 - Coalition List
 - Virtual Library
- Product Shop**
 - Materials Catalog
 - Safe Communities Workbench
 - On-line Resource Warehouse **NEW!**

assistance from community coalition members and other interested individuals nationwide. In addition, the popular Safe Communities Web site has welcomed thousands of visitors seeking ideas they can use in their communities to address traffic safety and injury prevention concerns. Visit the site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/> and checkout the following:

@ the **Customer Service Center**: learn how the Safe Communities injury prevention model can help each community.

@ the **Safe Communities Newsstand**: there's helpful local and national news and Special Features will provide insights into working in Hispanic, American Indian, international and rural communities.

@ the **Safe Communities Town Square**: locate other coalitions and the new Virtual Library will transport user to vast repositories of safety & prevention info in every corner of the Web.

@ the **Best Practices Showcase**: find new ways of doing things in over 50 success stories from communities
see Safe Communities page 7

Air Bags from page 5

been placed on the front seat.

“Anyone, regardless of size or age, who’s on top of, or very close to, an air bag is at risk,” IIHS-HLDI information states. “Most air bag deaths have involved people who weren’t using (safety) belts, were using them incorrectly or were positioned improperly.”

Fortunately, the hazards caused by air bags are relatively simple to eliminate—and the benefits of air bags are great. These safety practices, courtesy of IIHS-HLDI, make air bags less of a hazard:

- Never place a child in a rear-facing child restraint in the front seat in front of an air bag.
- Even on that first trip home from the hospital, make sure an infant rides in a rear-facing

child safety seat that has been situated firmly into the center position in the back seat of the vehicle.

■ As the child grows older and big enough to graduate into a forward-facing child safety seat, make sure that safety seat is securely restrained in the vehicle’s back seat.

■ Adults should always buckle up, whether they are driving or just riding. “It isn’t your size, gender or age that determines risk. It is position in relation to an air bag,” reported the IIHS-HLDI information.

Most adults can virtually eliminate the risk (caused by air bags) by buckling up. Neither short women nor elderly drivers are especially vulnerable if they use safety belts and sit at least ten inches from the

steering wheel.

Not only is the back seat a safer place to ride, but it keeps children away from the danger caused by air bags. And remember: Use the safety belts properly. The shoulder portion does not go under the arm.

Most new pickup models are equipped with off-on switches for air bags. That way the air bag can be switched off if a child is riding as a passenger.

The danger of serious or fatal injuries due to air bag deployment is a problem that may be solved by new technology. Currently, researchers are developing such safety features as a sensor that can detect rear-facing restraints and passengers who have leaned forward into the deployment zone. This sensor will automatically shut down the passenger-side air bag if it senses someone in the danger zone.

And deployment rates of air bags will be altered, depending on the severity of the crash.

In the meantime, remember the IIHS-HLDI air bag safety tips... and buckle up!

For more information visit the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Highway Loss Data Institute Web site at <http://www.hwysafety.org>. Click on the link marked Site Map for links to consumer publications, including those concerning air bags and safety.

Source: Linda Anderson, Ag Communications, Texas Cooperative Extension, 2001.

Safe Communities from page 6

ties nationwide.

@ the **Product Shop**: preview and order free safety materials. Plus download tools and presentations at the Workbench and find new products on-line in the Resource Warehouse.

@ the **Partnership Emporium**: there’s over 100 great links to local Safe Communities, useful safety & prevention sites, huge Jumplists, powerful toolboxes, and help with coalition building and fundraising.

In addition, NHTSA offers several products designed to assist Safe Communities coalitions: *Safe Communities: The First Six Months* is an easy-to-use guide for organizing a coalition and implementing data driven programs. A *Safe Communities: Taking It to the Streets* marketing brochure is designed to

help coalitions sell the SC approach to their community. And the informative *Building Safe Communities* newsletter is distributed to over 15,000 people nationwide.

Safe Communities: *Getting Started and Safe Tribal Communities* PowerPoint presentations are now available to help market a coalition. Special reports have been produced on *Connecting Traffic Safety and Community Health*, *Safe Communities Buckle Up Action Plan*, *Safe Communities Report to Congress* and *Safe Communities Timelines*. NHTSA Region 6 along with TxDOT will also conduct customized Safe Communities Coalition Training on request.

To get involved in Safe Communities, order the above products, or to request technical assistance, contact Bruce Shults at 817-978-4423 or email Safe.Communities@nhtsa.dot.gov

Source: Bruce Shults, NHTSA, Region 6, 2001.

Aransas County - Rockport, Texas

County Extension agents in family and consumer sciences (FCS) as well as in agriculture came out in support of the checkup training event held in Rockport on September 13, 2001. The event, hosted by Aransas County FCS Extension agent Stephanie Johnson, presented technicians with many unusual scenarios. Congratulations to all the Extension employees who worked at this event for a much needed job well done!

The statistics:

■ Total CSS checked	22
■ Children arrived correctly restrained	0
■ Number of recalled seats	4
■ Old and unsafe CSS collected	10
■ Number of CSS distributed	16
■ Children arriving unrestrained	3



Matagorda County FCS Extension Agent Cindy Van Devender checks a child's safety seat at the Rockport checkup event.

Brazos County - College Station, Texas

The Brazos Valley was the focus of a child safety seat checkup training event held at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church on September 20, 2001. The event, sponsored by State Farm Insurance, was considered a tremendous success by all those involved.

DPS Sr. Trooper Eddie Carmon and State Representative Fred Brown talk with a parent during the recent checkup event at College Station.



The statistics:

■ Total CSS checked	68
■ Children arrived correctly restrained	0
■ Number of recalled seats	14
■ Old and unsafe CSS collected	17
■ Number of CSS distributed	45
■ Children arriving unrestrained	12

Brazoria County - Angleton, Texas

Dr. Alma Fonseca, Brazoria County FCS Extension Agent, broke a record with her child safety seat checkup training event on September 26th at the Wal-Mart parking lot in Angleton. With the assistance of fellow county Extension agents, law enforcement and many other volunteers, a total of 107 children left the event riding safely. Alma also conducted a bounty program to collect unsafe seats. Forty-nine unsafe child safety seats were taken out of service thanks to Alma's efforts and planning.

The statistics:

■ Total child safety seats CSS	107
■ Children arrived correctly restrained	0
■ Number of recalled seats	6
■ Old and unsafe CSS collected	49
■ Number of CSS distributed	81
■ Children arriving unrestrained	22



Brazoria County Extension agent Dr. Alma Fonseca, who is also a Certified Technician, checks an installation at the Angleton event.

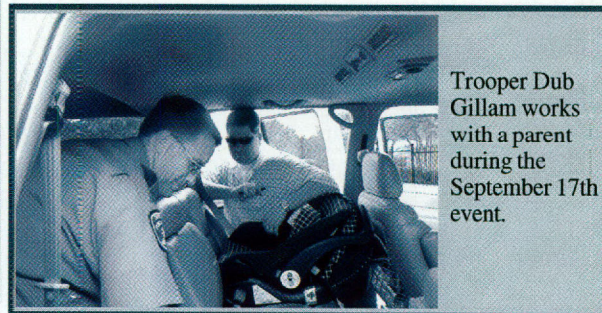
Child Safety Seat Checkups

Cheryll Hall, TxDOT Traffic Safety Contract Specialist-Fort Worth District teamed up with Fort Worth Pediatric on September 10, 2001 to conduct a child safety seat checkup event. A total of 31 CSS were checked and eight seats were replaced. Another event was held at a second Fort Worth Pediatric location on September 17, 2001. This time 38 CSS were checked and 14 were replaced.



Cheryll Hall, Jackie Carter, Michael Grigsby (Fort Worth PD) and Kala Sloan (Fort Worth PD) with the unsafe seats collected during the September 10th event.

TxDOT Fort Worth District, Fort Worth PD and DPS are making a difference in child passenger safety.



Trooper Dub Gillam works with a parent during the September 17th event.

Source: Cheryll Hall, Traffic Safety Contract Specialist, Texas Department of Transportation, 2001.

What Every Technician Should Know

It is CRITICAL that all who check seats be willing to say, "I don't know," when there is a situation that is unfamiliar. In addition, if a tech uses a comprehensive checkup form which requires documenting which set of instructions one used (i.e. the parent's or the agency's), he/she is less likely to make the

mistake of flying by the seat of the pants. If a checker signs a form, it means that the form represents the action of that person. If the instructions were NOT used, then, the person cannot sign the form.

As a person who has had responsibility for safety seat checkups since the 1980's, I am as aware as anyone of

the pressures on those doing checkups to "move fast" and handle a bigger crowd. However, whether one does checkups primarily as a public service or as a training event, the responsibility to "do no harm" is paramount. If a tech doesn't know, **Tell the parent/caregiver.** And then, refer them to a resource that

may be able to assist. After all, there are only a few resources that do nothing but child passenger safety. Most are working on multiple issues and cannot be expected to spend the same amount of time on a single issue in that context.

Source: Stephanie Tombrello, SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

Child Safety Seat



GRACO CENTURY

The following Graco Century CSS manufactured between April-May 2001 have been recalled:

Century Encore

44612 GTN & 4662 WSC 01

Century Bravo

44622 LTG, 44630 LTH,
44631 PFN & 44662 WSC

Century Accel

45100 CHT, 45100 MTE,
45100 STH, 45200 LFT
45200 MXM, 45600 JTI,
45600 MTE, 45600 MTO,
45600 MXM, 45600 SAF,
45700 GSD, 45700 LFT

Century Smartmove

44709 MTE, 44709 SVR

The A-Lok Adjuster may allow the webbing to slip in the event of a vehicle crash. Century will replace the CSS free of charge. NHTSA advises parents to continue to use the seat while waiting to receive a replacement as it will still provide better protection than an adult safety belt or no restraint.

For more information contact Graco Century toll-free at 800-575-6097 or NHTSA Auto Safety Hotline 888-DASH-2-DOT.

Source: NHTSA, 2001.

SAFELINE KIDS, INC.

Safeline Kids, Inc. is voluntarily recalling specific Sit'n'Stroll shipped with incorrect or missing labels.

Sit'n'Stroll model 3240 manufactured between 6/9/97 and 8/9/97 are missing required air bag warning label on the seat pad warning not to place the CSS in the rear-facing position in any vehicle seat with an air bag.

Sit'n'Stroll model 3240 manufactured between 11/96 and 6/99 have labels incorrectly recommending the rear-facing position for children weighing up to 25

pounds instead of 22 pounds as allowed by FMVSS.

Parents should continue to use the CSS but not in a vehicle seat with an air bag or with a child weighing more than 22 pounds in the rear-facing position. Please note the Sit'n'Stroll is recommended for use up to 40 pounds in the forward-facing position.

For more information contact Safeline Kids toll free at 800-829-1625 or email at service@safelinekids.com.

Source: Safeline Kids, Inc. 2001.

SIGNPOST FOR DISASTER

Flash Floods



In the TV series *The Twilight Zone*, narrator Rod Serling would comment "Up ahead lies a signpost. You're about to enter the Twilight Zone." In Central Texas and the Hill Country, that signpost could read "Roadway subject to flooding. You're about to enter the Flash Flood Zone."

Flash floods can happen any time of the day and are especially treacherous at night, striking swiftly under the cloak of darkness. Although flash floods are deadliest in hilly and mountainous terrain, they can occur in the arid desert and gently rolling terrain.

Although they can, and do, occur in other locations around the U.S., arguably nowhere else do flash floods take place with greater frequency, and with deadlier results, than in the Texas Hill Country and Central Texas. In fact, the I-35 corridor from Austin to San Antonio has recently been dubbed "flash flood alley." Expand this "alley" along the Balcones Escarpment into the Hill Country and Edwards Plateau, and you come up with the section of the country that experiences the most flash flood occurrences and flash flood-related deaths anywhere. Not just Texas, but the entire country!

Several factors contribute to flash flooding - rainfall intensity and rainfall duration. Intensity is the rate of rainfall, duration is how long the rain lasts. Topography, soil conditions and ground cover also play important roles. Flash floods occur within a few hours, even minutes, of excessive rainfall. Flash floods can turn a dry creek bed or gently-flowing river into a raging torrent, capable of rolling boulders, tearing out trees, destroying buildings and bridges, scouring out new channels, producing viscous mud slides, and seriously undermining roadways.

Most flash floods are caused by slow-moving thunderstorms, thunderstorms repeatedly moving over the same area, or heavy rains from dissipating hurricanes or tropical storms. Flash flooding has even occurred miles distant from where the deluges actually fell, causing residents and motorists to be lulled into a false sense of security.

Motorists are especially at risk when it comes to flash

flooding, accounting for the majority of deaths. As little as 6 inches of fast-moving water can knock a person off his/her feet, and a depth of 2 feet will float a car or pickup.

A rule-of-thumb to remember—NEVER try to walk, swim or drive through swift water in or near a river, creek, drainage ditch, culvert, or low-water crossing. Stop! Turn around and go another way. If barricades are up on roads and streets leading to flooded low-water crossings, don't drive around them and into the rapidly-flowing flood waters. This is not only against the law, it is life-threatening.

Know the difference between a flash flood watch and a flash flood warning. A flash flood watch means heavy rain or flash flooding is possible within the designated watch area—stay alert. A flash flood warning means heavy rain or flash flooding has been reported or is imminent—take necessary precautions at once to safeguard life and property. Besides local radio and TV stations, a reliable source of weather information is the National Weather Service's NOAA Weather Radio system, broadcasting on a continuous basis on VHF frequencies between 162.400 MHz and 162.550 MHz.

It seems South Texas is either coming out of a drought, going into a drought, or deeply entrenched in one. City street or Hill Country road signs such as "Watch for water on road" go unheeded when rain is scarce. It's only when heavy deluges fall on parched ground, followed by destructive flash flooding, do we pay attention. Disaster awaits those who don't heed these signposts.

Source: Larry Peabody, National Weather Service, Austin/San Antonio 830-606-3717, 2001.



Save a Life™

Texas Department of Transportation

Now Available **ICIP Insurance Program**

In November, 2000, the International Center for Injury Prevention in Stevens Point, Wisconsin negotiated and made available critically important liability insurance for certified technicians that is affordable and was previously not available.

The liability policy offers \$1,000,000 in liability coverage for bodily injury or property damage alleged to be caused by the activities of a certified technician occurring during a safety car seat check clinic or while providing safety instructions. This policy importantly covers both professional and general liability for the insured technician. It also pays for the costly legal bills defending the technician even if the allegation is groundless and without merit.

Another very important feature ICIP negotiated for was incorporated into the policy. This policy is written on an "occurrence" basis. This means that the technician will be defended by the insurance company even if they discontinue the coverage and the claim or lawsuit does not become known until after the policy is dropped. The only requirement is that the occurrence or incident that leads to the claim takes place during the policy period when the insurance was in force.

An example may help. Let's suppose

a family has a serious automobile crash and their insurance company pays them for their injuries. The insurance company and/or the family may turn around and sue the technician because of damages suffered by kids in child safety seats that were supposedly confirmed to be safe at the child safety seat checkup event. That lawsuit may not come to the doorstep of the technician until months after the checkup was conducted. The ICIP insurance policy will cover the technician for legal costs and awarded damages months and years after the policy has ended or been dropped as long as the original "occurrence" took place while the technician was insured. This feature lets the technician know that his/her activities will be covered now and... into the future.

The final point ICIP requested is that Certificates of Proof of Insurance will be provided to site sponsors when required. Furthermore, these site sponsors can be added as additional insureds when required. These features should enable more site sponsors to be comfortable hosting child safety seat checkup events.

The cost of the policy is \$250 and it can be purchased by contacting ICIP at their offices in Stevens Point at 800-344-7580.

Source: Scott Faris, International Center for Injury Prevention, 2001.

The newsletter, *On The Road With...* is produced quarterly by the Texas Cooperative Extension, Rural Passenger Safety Education Project in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation.

Rural Passenger Safety Team:
Marlene Albers, Editor
Bev Kellner, Technical Editor
Myrna Hill, Contributing Writer
Dana Runyan, Contributing Writer
Janie Harris, Principal Investigator

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November 2001

- ⊕ 11/9/01 CSS Checkup Event, Austin County, contact Ext. Agent Janice Gaskamp at 979-865-5911
- ⊕ 11/13-11/16/01 NHTSA CPS 4-Day Training, Fort Worth, contact Johnny Humphreys, Safe Riders at 800-252-8255
- ⊕ 11/15/01 CSS Checkup Event, Matagorda County, contact Ext. Agent Cindy Van Devender at 979-245-4100
- ⊕ November 19-26, 2001 is Operation ABC Mobilization

December 2001

- ⊕ Baby Safety Month
- ⊕ National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month
- ⊕ 12/7/01 Child Safety Seat Check Up Event, Freestone County, contact Ext. Agent Wendy Green at 903-654-3076
- ⊕ 12/15-12/17/01 You Drink & Drive You Lose Mobilization Weekend

January 2002

- ⊕ 1/8-1/11/02 NHTSA Child Passenger Safety 4-Day Training, Houston, contact Johnny Humphreys, Safe Riders at 800-252-8255
- ⊕ 1/9/02 CSS Check Up Event, Cochran County, contact Ext. Agent Marsha Blair at 806-266-5215

February 2002

- ⊕ 2/11-2/16/02 National Child Passenger Safety Week
- ⊕ 2/11/02 CSS Check Up Event, Waller County, contact Ext. Agent Lynna Wright at 806-266-5215
- ⊕ 2/12/02 CSS Check Up Event, site to be announced, contact Dana Runyan at 979-845-1104
- ⊕ 2/13/02 CSS Check Up Event, San Saba County, contact Ext. Agent Carolyn McDowell at 915-372-5416
- ⊕ 2/14/02 CSS Check Up Event, Borden County, contact Ext. Agent Julie Mumme at 806-756-4336
- ⊕ 2/15/02 CSS Check Up Event, Reeves County, contact Ext. Agent Maria Cardenas at 915-447-9041
- ⊕ 2/25-3/1/02 NHTSA CPS 4-Day Training, Del Rio, contact Myrna Hill, RPSE at 979-862-4855

Rural Passenger Safety Education



7607 Eastmark Drive, Ste, 105
College Station, TX 77843-2473
Attn: Marlene Albers