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CPS Inspections and Checkup Events

Prepared by the National Child Passenger Safety Board

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Introduction

Providing caregivers with hands-on education on proper use of their car seats can be accomplished through Child Passenger Safety (CPS) inspection stations (also known as fitting stations), car seat checkup events or one-on-one interactions.

Car Seat Inspection Station Locator

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration maintains a [Car Seat Inspection Station Locator](#) which lists inspection stations by state or zip code. To add your inspection station to the list, contact: [Judy Hammond](#), National Child Passenger Safety Board NHTSA Regions Representative.

Setting the Stage

Whether the checkup event is held at an indoor or outdoor setting, it is important to remember that safety is the number one priority for staff and families.

To the extent possible, all events should be accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Indoor Setting

An indoor setting provides many benefits, especially protection from the weather. However, there are still precautions that must be taken when setting up an event:

- Check that there are no safety hazards anywhere in the event area.
Make certain the location is safe for families.
- Bathrooms must be easily accessible.
Be sure they are clean and operational before each scheduled event.
- Designate an area to keep equipment and supplies.
- Designate where the vehicle(s) will wait in line.
Be sure to have the driver turn the engine off to prevent any accidental acceleration of the car.
- Have a clearly defined path for the vehicle to follow at the conclusion of the checkup.
Ideally, the vehicles will enter in one side of the facility and exit from the other side to avoid backing up.
- If the checkup event is held at a location where people will be working, be certain that ALL employees are notified that children will be in the area at various times.



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Outdoor Setting

An outdoor setting provides unique advantages, usually more space, and disadvantages, i.e. traffic and weather considerations, for a checkup event. In addition to the safety considerations listed for an indoor setting, the following precautions should be taken when hosting an event in an outdoor setting:

- Be sure the area can be set up out of the flow of routine traffic.
- Have clear enter and exit areas designated by signs and traffic cones.
Have a Traffic Coordinator available to direct waiting vehicles safely in and out of the event area.
- The CPS Technician teams should be set up at well-spaced and clearly marked stations.
Be sure to have sufficient equipment at each station in order to minimize the amount of foot-traffic around the inspection site.

Mapping it Out

Design your checkup event by using a grid, such as the one included with this document, to draw a map of the physical environment. This is helpful so you can fit your event in the designated space and so you can explain traffic flow, waiting areas, supply stations, etc. to those who will be working the event.

Remember SAFETY of staff, children and /caregivers is your main priority, so keep this in mind as you plan.

Personalize your plan to include:

- Identify entrance and exits into the parking lot.
If possible, avoid having vehicles back up to exit.
- Use directional arrows to show traffic flow.
- Mark median curbs.
- Draw checkup lanes.
You do not necessarily need to stay within the white lines in the parking lot.
- Be sure to have plenty of traffic cones to manage traffic flow.
- Identify the location for caregiver registration or the spot where the Greeter will stop vehicles and direct them to the appropriate check station.
- Indicate supply stations – where materials will be kept.
Several stations may be needed to minimize foot traffic around vehicles.
- Identify businesses (stores, gas stations, restaurants) on the grid.
This will help staff get a sense of direction for the parking area and will highlight areas of concern relative to the checkup.



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"Mapping It Out" Sample Grid



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Staffing the Event

A CPS Technician has the central role in conducting car seats checks. However, there are other duties and responsibilities that are very important to the successful operation of a checkup event. In an ideal situation, people would be assigned separate roles, but in most cases, one person may have several roles to play. One of the most important aspects of staffing is to assure that all individuals understand and their roles and responsibilities in the checkup event process.

Checkup Event Coordinator

The Checkup Event Coordinator plans, promotes and manages the checkup event.

The Checkup Event Coordinator does not have to be a CPS Technician.

Greeter

The Greeter helps to ensure the smooth operation of the checkup event by welcoming the caregivers upon their arrival at the event and answering any questions. The Greeter can assist the caregiver in completing the caregiver information for the car seat check form.

The Greeter does not have to be a CPS Technician.

Traffic Coordinator

The Traffic Coordinator assists with directing vehicles and ensuring the public's safety during the checkup event. This position is most appropriate to inspection stations held at outside locations. However, depending upon the volume of traffic, it may be necessary to have a Traffic Coordinator at any CPS inspection site.

The Traffic Coordinator does not have to be a CPS Technician.

Scribe

The Scribe assists the CPS Technician during the car seat check. Using the car seat check form for the event, the Scribe gathers and records information about the vehicle, passengers, and car seats.

A Scribe does not have to be a CPS Technician. Serving as a Scribe provides an excellent introduction to the role of a CPS Technician.

Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Technician

The CPS Technician's main role is as an educator. The CPS Technician is responsible for the car seat check, providing hands-on education to the caregiver on how to properly install and use the car seat.

The CPS Technician's certification must be current.



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Lead CPS Technician

The Lead CPS Technician is a more seasoned CPS Technician who serves as the final check on the car seat installation before the caregiver leaves the event. The Lead CPS Technician also ensures that the car seat check from is completed correctly. At checkup events that operate with multiple CPS Technicians, it is advisable to have at least one Lead CPS Technician available to serve in this capacity.

The Lead CPS Technician's certification must be current.

Caregiver

The most critical role in a checkup event is that of the caregiver. The knowledge gained from the experience is meant to empower the caregiver to properly install and use an appropriate car seat for their child. For this reason, the caregiver should always be the last person to install the car seat using the education, guidance and assistance of the CPS Technician.

Outfitting the CPS Inspection Station

The following are the basic equipment and supplies used during a checkup event.

- Car seat check forms
- Recall lists
- Clipboards
- Pens and pencils
- Tablets (if using digital check form)
- Education materials
- Dolls
- Receiving blankets
- Locking clips
- Pool noodles
- Tape
- Donation car seats and booster seats
- Exam gloves
- First aid kit
- Hand sanitizer
- Waste receptacles
- Traffic cones*
- Caution tape*
- Directional signs*
- Tents*

**These items are primarily used for outdoor settings.*



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Note about Liability Concerns

The following considerations may provide some assistance in crafting liability prevention protocol and procedures. However, it is advisable to consult with an attorney and insurance carrier knowledgeable and experienced in liability/risk-reduction issues for specific guidance. If the CPS inspection station is part of a larger network of inspection stations, be sure that every inspection station is following the same written procedures.

Provide Accurate and Current Information

All information distributed should come from credible sources and reflect current traffic safety issues and technologies. Contact the [State Child Passenger Safety Training Coordinator](#) to determine what materials are recommended for distribution.

Teach Correct Installation and Use of Car Seats

The most critical role at a CPS inspection is played by the caregiver. The knowledge gained from the experience is meant to empower the caregiver to properly install and use an appropriate car seat for his or her child. For this reason, the caregiver should always be the last person to install the car seat using the education, guidance and assistance of the CPS Technician.

Refer to the Vehicle Owner's Manuals and Car Seat Instruction Manuals

CPS Technicians must use and encourage caregivers to consult their vehicle owner's manual and the car seat instruction manual to help answer specific questions.

Check for Recalls

CPS Technicians must check each car seat for possible recalls using the most current recall list available. An updated recall list is available for download from the [NHTSA website](#).

Be Consistent with All Inspection Procedures

Checkup event staff should be clear about their roles prior to each event.

The Checkup Event Coordinator must ensure that all necessary materials and equipment are readily accessible.

When possible, a Lead CPS Technician should be responsible for quality control of the inspections conducted.

Consistent use of a standardized car seat check form will help ensure the quality of every car seat check. Completed forms should be collected and retained by the coordinator.



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Have a Clear Policy about Replacement Car Seats

All staff should be aware of the policy for replacing car seats and disposing of old, damaged or recalled seats. The policy should specify whether replacement seats would be provided without charge, with a requested donation or for a purchase price, and describe the process for disposing of damaged or unsafe seats.

If replacement seats are not supplied, it is advisable to provide an accurate list of community resources that offer car seats for families-in-need.

Make Safety a Priority

The Traffic Coordinator should ensure that vehicles and people are able to move safely in and around the event setting. The safety of young children should be a top priority.

The site host may have additional considerations to ensure that car seat checks are conducted in a safe, consistent and professional manner. Be sure to communicate all requirements and procedures to all staff participating in car seat checkup activities.

Liability Coverage

It is advisable to first consult the sponsoring organization to determine how liability protection will be addressed.

The following are the most common types of coverage used for checkup events:

- State Law**
Many states have a “Good Samaritan” law that may cover the type of services provided by the CPS inspection station. In addition, several states have enacted “CPS Services Immunity” laws to specifically cover CPS Technicians. Consult the state occupant protection coordinator to determine whether such laws exist in your state.

- General Insurance Policy**
The activities of the CPS inspection station may be covered under the general insurance policy (or through an additional rider) of the site host or sponsoring organization. Consult with the site host or sponsoring organization about specific terms and conditions.