

CERTIFICATION NEWS

As we look back on 2004, the nationwide Child Passenger Safety certification program has seen quite a few changes! Thank you to everyone involved with the certification of 7,842 new technicians who went through 743 standardized courses. With 145 new instructors, we now have over 30,000 certified technicians!

Don't wait to start on your re-certification!

The certification period for both technicians and instructors is two years. In order to maintain certification, an individual must meet all of the requirements for and successfully complete the re-certification process.

There are three steps to successful re-certification:

1. Successfully meet all pre-registration requirements, including verified seat check activity and teaching hours (if applicable)
2. Register and pay for re-

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION

New Side-Impact Air Bag Guidance for Parents

NHTSA has developed new consumer information ("Frequently Asked Questions" or FAQs) for its web site to replace its previous advisory. The FAQs can be found at www.safercar.gov. Technicians are urged to read them and refer parents to them.

The new advice regarding children states that all children should be restrained properly in the back seat and that children should not lean against the side of the vehicle if it has chest-only or head-chest air bags in that position. NHTSA has not seen any indication that current roof-mounted Side Air Bags (SABs) pose a risk to children.

The revised information is based on new data from NHTSA regarding the risks of SABs to out-of-position occupants as well as SAB tests developed and conducted by a group of outside vehicle experts, the Technical Working Group (TWG). The agency's crash investigators actively seek cases where SABs have deployed in crashes. Of 92 cases (as of April 2004) investigated, only six involved children. Among these six, there were no moderate or serious injuries to children from SAB deployments and only one minor injury, a skin laceration from an SAB cover. This small number of cases is related to the small number of vehicles with these systems and may not represent all the SAB systems available. NHTSA continues to monitor the real world performance of SABs involving children and adults.

Voluntary Industry Testing

The TWG, comprised of experts representing the automotive and insurance industries, developed a voluntary industry-wide test protocol agreement to minimize the potential risk of injury to children and other occupants seated very close to a deploying SAB. The TWG testing is done with child and small female dummies leaning against the side of the vehicle.

NHTSA has listed 2004 and 2005 model year vehicles with side air bags in the front and rear seats that meet the TWG protocols. Most have curtain or tube air bags that pass the TWG tests. According to the NHTSA information, contained in the brochure "Buying a Safer Car," very few 2004 models have torso SABs that do not meet the test. They include various BMW, Mercedes, and Bentley models; Cadillac DeVille; Lincoln LS; Rolls Royce; and Porsche Cayenne. Of the 2005 vehicles, only Mercedes Benz models have torso SABs **in the back seat** that do not meet the protocol. The few others listed as not meeting the test have only head-impact curtains or tubular air bags.

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Re-certification, continued
certification

3. Complete the written re-certification exam online

The re-certification process cannot be completed in a single day. Depending upon the choices made by each individual, the process could take as few as five days to as many as 60 days to complete.

There is no grace period for re-certification except to re-take the exam. You must complete your registration for the online re-certification exam (steps 1-3 above) prior to the expiration date.

Correction regarding seat check sign-offs and testing (from Fall 2004 Tech Update) Your seat check sign-offs do not expire. There's no time limit between when you log your seat check activity and when you start the re-certification process.

Online Testing Policy Revised (effective January 18, 2005)

All re-certification exams must be taken online. **There is NO paper version of the exam.**

Within several days of registration, information about accessing the exam will be sent both by e-mail and postal mail to the technician. An individual has 30 days from the date this notification is sent to complete the exam. **The specific access period and the deadline to complete the test will be included in the notification.**

Technicians may log on and off as often as they like during the test access period.

The test must be completed by the date and time indicated on the notification.

At the end of the 30-day period, if the exam has not been completed, the partial exam will be automatically submitted and graded. This will serve as the final grade for the re-certification exam. **The 30-day exam period WILL NOT be extended.** Failure to

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Resources on Side Impact Air Bags

NHTSA Side Air Bag FAQs at: www.safercar.gov/airbags/, go to Resources, then to Side Impact Air Bags link at the bottom of the page.

Vehicle list for 2004–05 models that meet TWG protocol: in the NHTSA brochure, *Buying a Safer Car*, at the NHTSA web site: www.safercar.gov, find it under “Resources.” Also check the vehicle owner’s manual for advice. (The printed brochure can be ordered from the Vehicle Safety Hotline, 888-327-4236.)

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, *Status Report* article, September 13, 2004, www.iihs.org, under Publications

The Forgotten Child

A comprehensive report on booster seat research and policy, *The Forgotten Child: Children Who Move to Seat Belts Too Soon*, was published by Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). It is the first of an occasional series of reports on child passenger safety issues aimed at making research and policy findings widely available.

Children from 4 to 8 years of age are most likely to be “sub-optimally restrained” in seat belts instead of much more protective booster or harness restraints. The report lays out the research basis for upgrading laws and promoting booster use for children and outlines interventions and policies that must be used to improve proper restraint use. Also included is a one-page basic reproducible fact sheet for parents about boosters.

The report is available in its entirety at the PCPS web site below: www.chop.edu/traumalink/download/2004/pcps_cpsreport.pdf

(From SAFE RIDE NEWS, July/August 2004)

Two Research Papers from Partners for CPS Study: Shifts in Child Restraint Use

In one of two research papers from Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS), shifts in child restraint use by children weighing 20 to 80 pounds was analyzed for children in crashes between 1999 and 2002. Much progress was noted during that four-year period. The most prevalent type of restraint shifted from the seat belt to a child restraint with a harness. Belt-positioning booster seat use grew substantially. Harness use is extending beyond 40 pounds, which often indicates misuse of the product but implies that parents are learning that extended harness use is beneficial.

Points to note:

- Fifteen percent of children 41 to 50 pounds were using a child restraint (CR) with a harness, despite the fact that during the period there were very few CRs intended for a child of that weight. This was found both for convertibles (7.5 percent) and combination CR/booster seat used with their harnesses (5.8 percent). By the end of 2002, such use had reached 27 percent for this weight range, above the maximum weight for which the harness is certified for almost all forward-facing seats. The report recommended monitoring to identify any increase in injuries.
- The use of rear-facing infant-only seats by children over 20 pounds was also seen.
- Shield booster use diminished greatly during the period of study, from 15 to 3 percent.

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STATE NEWS

Nevada OPC Assessment Spurs Change

Nevada's child passenger safety program has made some exciting changes in the past year. This has been due mainly to Nevada's participation in November 2003 as a pilot state for the development of a new child passenger safety program assessment along with changes to Nevada's child restraint law during the same year.

The Occupant Protection for Children Program (OPC) Assessment, developed by the Governors Highway Safety Association, is an objective analysis of needs and activity in the state concerning occupant restraint use by children ages 0-15. The analysis resulted in a strategic plan of recommendations to improve upon the state's existing CPS program.

One of the main recommendations involved the formalization of Nevada's CPS Task Force. This task force began as an ad-hoc group of CPS advocates and Instructors across the state that pursued the subsequent changes to the child restraint law during the legislative session of 2003. The purpose of the Task Force, as it is now established, is to serve in an advisory capacity to the State with the goal of decreasing the number of childhood injuries and deaths from motor vehicle crashes. It does not have policy making or regulatory authority. Task force functions include:

- providing quality assurance guidelines and procedures for the state's Technicians and Instructors;
- determining a system to assure that all child restraint inspections at fitting stations and clinics meet minimum standards;
- developing statewide curricula for various levels of CPS training;
- pursuing clarification of and strengthening current Nevada Administrative Code in regard to transportation of children for day-care providers and other public children institutions, and in regard to hospital discharge policies;
- providing input to the development of CPS educational materials for health care providers, first responders, law enforcement, legislators, day-care providers, schools and the general public about the benefits of child restraints and seat belts; and
- collaborating with other injury prevention organizations.

The child restraint law was upgraded to include children up to age six and 60 pounds; fine amounts were increased; previous 'loopholes' were deleted; and proper selection, use, and installation of a child restraint is now addressed. The biggest change, however, is that a CPS training program is now required for all child restraint law violators. The task force worked with other organizations in implementing a statewide public education campaign regarding the changes to the law, which took effect in June 2004.

The Task Force created the state's required violator curriculum. The curriculum consists of one hour of classroom instruction followed by one hour of hands-on education on how to install the seat in their vehicle. In addition, the task force developed a standardized CPS Assistant course for the state. This is a 12-hour training (8 hour classroom/4 hour seat check event) that fosters volunteers to assist Technicians at events, and is a suggested prerequisite to taking NHTSA's standardized CPS Technician course. Current CPS Technicians are authorized to teach the course.

Traci Pearl, Occupant Protection Program Manager, Office of Traffic Safety, serves as staff to the task force, as well as representing the Department of Public Safety (www.ots.state.nv.us/cps.htm) on the task force. She can be reached at 775.684.7476 or tpearl@dps.state.nv.us.

complete the exam or inadvertently submitting an incomplete exam will result in a graded exam. If the exam score is less than 85% (a failing grade), the technician is eligible to register for and take a re-exam.

PLEASE NOTE: If the test is never started, you must register and pay for re-certification again.

One-day Certification Renewal Course

The Certification Renewal Course, a one-day course for lapsed CPS Technicians, will be available this summer. It is for people who have maintained their CPS knowledge and skills but have not kept up their actual certification status. Eligible technicians must be in the certification database as having been certified at one time.

Prior to the development of the Certification Renewal Course, the only option available to CPS Technicians with expired certifications wishing to renew their certification was to retake the entire 32-hour training course.

The course entails a brief overview of changes in the 2004 National Standardized Child Passenger Safety Training Program (NSCPSTP) curriculum followed by hands-on testing. It is not for people who want a refresher, need to re-learn CPS, or desire further hands-on practice.

Following successful completion of the hands-on portion of the course, people must pass the online exam to become fully certified once more.

By August 1, instructors will be able to register new 8-hour Certification Renewal Courses. The database will allow people to search for these courses, like they would the NSCPSTP.

For more information on re-certification, the Renewal Course, and other certification-related policies, including step by step instructions, go to the CPS Board's website (www.cpsboard.org) and click on Class Registration and CPS Certification for a link to the SAFE KIDS CPS Certification site.

Research Papers, cont.**Editor's Note**

Child Passenger Safety Technicians should watch for the use of rear-facing infant-only seats and forward-facing seat above their intended weight and take steps to make sure parents are aware of the maximum weight limits for the use of these seats. For example, the instruction to "keep infants rear-facing as long as possible" could be misconstrued if the caveat "within the weight range of the seat" is not included.

Study: Effectiveness of Forward Facing Child Restraints

Data were analyzed on 1207 children in crashes (a cross-section representing over 12,000 children) aged 12 to 47 months, riding in a child restraint or safety belt, and seated in the rear seat. The risk of serious injury was 78 percent lower

among the children in the forward-facing child restraints, regardless of misuse, compared to those in safety belts of any kind.

References

Shifts in Child Restraint Use According to Child Weight in the United States from 1999 to 2002, Winston, et al, *47th Annual Proceedings*, AAAM, September 2003.

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Forward Facing Child Restraint Systems, Arbogast et al, *Accid Anal Prev*

Both papers cited above available at:

www.chop.edu/traumalink

(From *SAFE RIDE NEWS*, July/August 2004)

Visit and refer people to the

**Partners for Child
Passenger Safety
Multimedia Web Site**

www.chop.edu/carseat

(in English and Spanish)

Certification Contact Information

SAFE KIDS customer service

877/ 366/ 8154

e-mail:

cps.

certification@safekids.org

web site:

www.safekids.org

CPS Board

www.cpsboard.org

TECH UPDATE

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