

Functions of NHTSA

- Education
- Enforcement (two kinds)
- Research
- Regulations
- Compliance testing
- Defect investigation

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Education:

- NHTSA provides a variety of traffic safety training programs.
- NHTSA produces brochures, posters, statistics, and fact sheets that you can get from www.nhtsa.gov.
- Ten regional offices work closely with State and local agencies in carrying out safety programs.

Enforcement:

- There are two types of enforcement:
 - NHTSA provides funding to promote occupant protection by working with the law enforcement community and media campaigns such as Click It or Ticket.
 - It enforces its standards by selecting certain products on the market to see if they meet Federal standards.

Research:

- NHTSA conducts and/or funds research to demonstrate and evaluate programs related to traffic safety.

Regulations:

- NHTSA sets performance and some design standards.
- This class focuses on NHTSA's involvement with

CLASSROOM NOTES:

seat belts, air bags, CRs, and other occupant protection systems.



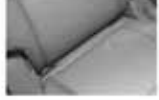
Compliance testing:

- NHTSA does not certify CRs before they go to market.
- Vehicle and CR manufacturers self-certify their products as meeting NHTSA performance standards.
- This means that products are sold on the basis of manufacturer testing and assurances.
- NHTSA requires all manufacturers to label their products in accordance with these regulations and randomly tests these products.

Defect investigation and recalls:

- NHTSA tests products that have been reported by the public or manufacturer to have a potential problem.
- If a real problem is identified, a recall of the product may follow.
- Manufacturers can issue a recall before involving the Government if a problem is known to them. This information is made available by NHTSA and is referred to in the field as the Recall List.
- A CR that is missing its label may be dangerous to use as recalls cannot be determined.
- This list includes information on every recalled CR and is updated on an as-needed basis (when new recalls are announced).
- For more information go to <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls/childseat.cfm>
- Each CR comes with a product registration form that parents/caregivers should complete and mail back to the manufacturer. Refer to the Appendix for a copy of the form.
- Manufacturers can then let product owners know if there is a recall.
- If a parent/caregiver has not sent in a car seat registration form, he or she can submit the NHTSA

CLASSROOM NOTES:

Federal Standards – Knowing the Rules		
FMVSS 208	Seat belts and air bags	
FMVSS 213	CRs (including LATCH)	
FMVSS 225	Vehicle anchorage systems (LATCH)	

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FMVSS = **F**ederal **M**otor **V**ehicle **S**afety **S**tandards;
see Glossary

LATCH = **L**ower **A**nchors and **T**ethers for **C**hildren

FMVSS 208:

- This standard regulates seat belts and frontal air bags.
- Beginning with 1996 vehicle models, all passenger seat belt systems must lock to secure CRs. (Driver belt systems do not need to lock because CR will never be installed in this position.)

FMVSS 213:

- This rule provides CR performance standards for children up to 65 pounds.
- Some of these standards include:
 - Crashworthiness (how a CR holds up in a crash)
 - Labeling and instructions
 - Flammability
 - Buckle release pressure
- NHTSA randomly tests CRs on a vehicle bench seat in a 30 mph frontal crash involving crash test dummies.
- LATCH-on CRs have two parts:
 - Top tether reduces forward movement (excursion).
 - Lower anchors replace seat belts for installation.

CLASSROOM NOTES:

Non-Regulated Products

- No Federal regulations
- Assessment of the product

Examples:

- Belt-tightening tool
- Seat belt adjusters
- Toys attached to CR
- Suction window shades
- Rear-facing mirrors

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Products that are not regulated are sometimes called aftermarket products and are designed to improve the comfort, fit, or installation of CR and/or seat belts. Some examples are infant head-positioning pads and shoulder belt positioning devices.

However:

- There are no Federal standards for these products. For example, a seat belt adjuster label may say the product “meets all applicable federal standards” when there is no Federal standard.
- Carefully read all manuals and instructions, including vehicle and CR manufacturers’ instructions and recommendations. Many warn against using “extras” with their products.
- Some devices can injure if not properly secured during a crash. Suction window shades and mirrors are two examples of objects that can harm vehicle occupants during a crash. Window shades that stick to the windows are better to use.
- Manufacturer-tested and -approved accessories such as toys for their own CRs or shoulder belt adjustable clips are fine.
- There is a difference between seat belt adjusters that come with booster seats (manufacturer-tested and endorsed) versus those that are sold independently.

Remember: Parents/caregivers make the final decision regarding use of these products. As technicians, we advise and educate.

CLASSROOM NOTES:

**Consumer Information –
NHTSA Ease of Use Ratings**

- Overall grade is based on multiple categories:
 - Preamsembled vs. assembly required
 - Clarity of labeling on CR
 - Ease of securing child in CR
 - Ease of installing CR in vehicle
 - Clarity of written instructions

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- Purpose of ratings is to educate parents/caregivers about child restraint features and assist them in finding the appropriate seat for their needs.
- Manufacturers often take these ratings into consideration when updating their products.
- Ease of Use Ratings are found on NHTSA’s Web site, <http://www.nhtsa.gov>. Ratings are announced yearly.
- The best seat is the one that fits the child appropriately, is the one parents/caregivers are most likely to use correctly every time, and fits the vehicle correctly. You may be asked this question many times by parents/caregivers. Do not offer personal opinions.

Chapter Review

- What is NHTSA?
- What are the basic Federal regulations for vehicles and CRs?
- What are non-regulated products?
- Give three examples
- List two ways to report a defect
- What is NHTSA’s Web site address?

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