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YouTube Video Sends Confusing Messages

A heart-wrenching but misleading video on the internet site YouTube, about the death of a little boy, Kyle Miller, produced a panic as it was viewed and passed around by millions of parents in early November. Its focus was the apparent failure of the seat belt buckle, allowing the boy to be thrown from his booster seat. The video advocated the use of high-weight harness seats instead of boosters and recommended installation with the LATCH system instead of the seat belt.

Some retailers reported a surge in sales of CRs with high harness weights. Safe Kids Worldwide (SKW) issued "Talking Points" to its coalitions, discussing the weight limits of both the lower LATCH and tether anchors and the fact that safety belts are made to restrain passengers much heavier than children. It quoted Steve Wallen of SafeGuard, the child restraints division of IMMI, the only U.S. company that makes both safety belts and child restraints, "My biggest fear is that parents will be afraid of and stop using seat belts. Seat belts have a 40-year track record with great success and must be used for the higher weight child."

SKW quoted Deborah Stewart, SRN Editor, in a follow-up clarifying weight limits for lower anchors and tethers, which it originally had said was 48 pounds: "The most common maximum weight for lower anchors is 40 or 48 pounds. However, safety belts . . . must be used above the weight limit set by the vehicle manufacturer for lower anchors. Failure of safety belts is very rare."

Auto Show Report
see 2-page supplement

Old Car Seats Never Die... They All End Up in a Land Fill

For years, the usual advice for dealing with no-longer-usable CRs has been to put the no-longer-useful product in the trash after cutting off the pad and straps or attacking the shell with a chain saw or ax. In the next few issues, SRN will explore other ways to deal with this problem.

This series adds to the July/August 2005 SRN article, "Addressing Resale of Second-hand Car Seats," which examined NHTSA's then-recently changed views on use after a crash plus thrift shop education issues. To read that article, go to www.saferidenews.com/html/Back_issuesA.htm and select the July/August 2005 issue.

The 2006-2007 series will delve more deeply into issues of product-life debates, examination and methods of reusing products, and recycling of products. The goal will be to help conserve scarce resources, from funding for special needs products or CR give-aways to deserving families to limited landfill space and products made from non-renewable materials, such as petrochemicals. The current article explores the recycling angle.

Please send ideas, sources, or questions for helping develop this theme to benefit the needs of SRN readers in diverse sectors across the U.S. to managing editor Marni Keogh at marni@saferidenews.com.

Saving the Planet by Recycling CRs

After child passenger safety services have saved lives, the next step may be to avoid injury to the planet as well.

Recycling of child restraints by dismantling and reusing the materials in them can prevent waste of scarce petrochemical resources and landfill overload. It can generate goodwill and skills benefits while also aiding manufacturers who convert the used materials into new products and con-

sumers who gain products and potential savings, too.

CPST Instructor Bill Flinchbaugh of Colorado and CPST Donna Ott of Pennsylvania illustrate two approaches that started with solo champions with no large underwriting or training. With passion for the goal, they each saw opportunity and built community teamwork creatively to address the problem.

Flinchbaugh is a self-employed computer network manager who says he uses "my job to pay for my child passenger safety hobby." That hobby provides multiple CPS services to the greater Boulder County area, filling CPS gaps left by budget-challenged health departments or hospitals. He highlights his recycling program at www.cocasaf.org/recycle.html and plans to add more explanation and tips.

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Guest Editorial

Bringing CR Laws Up to “Code”

Only five states and Washington DC qualified for booster law incentive grants in 2006. Yet new research is confirming observations that older children are not accommodated by vehicle seating designs, are unlikely to be in size-appropriate devices, are more likely to be injured in crashes, and may not be restrained at all. With new data showing us that good laws are a key part of the solution to these problems, advocates must revisit the gap between best practice and enforceable requirements. I think that age, proper use, and primary enforcement should be the essential factors in a state law. Even if an untrained officer does not carry a scale or tape measure, age can be determined, labels can be read, and statutes can be upheld. Parents know how old their children are, and so do the kids. Incentive eligibility requires coverage through age 8, and allows for exemptions that do not undermine that coverage, but that is where clear guidance ends.

Most state laws have used weight as a secondary requirement, largely following the outdated precedent of “4 years and 40 pounds.” That method continued into the age of “booster laws,” but it now has little to do with products or best practice. During the last few legislative sessions, child height (or, in Canada, seated height) has been the focus, but variances in seating designs, body proportions, and enforceability make height alternatives less than ideal. What if “best practice,” i.e. proper seat belt fit, were defined in legislative wording? That is precisely what was done in New Mexico, and should be considered elsewhere. While their law does not qualify for incentives, because fit-testing starts at age 7 instead of 8, the concept is a revolutionary way to bridge the gap between education and legislation. Here are two sections that directly apply:

- Children seven years of age through twelve years of age shall be properly secured in a child passenger restraint device or by a seat belt.
- A child is properly secured in an adult seat belt when the lap belt properly fits across the child's thighs and hips and not the abdomen. The shoulder strap shall cross the center of the child's chest and not the neck, allowing the child to sit all the way back against the vehicle seat

with knees bent over the seat edge.

Experience is also teaching us that we need to eliminate unreasonable exemptions. Attending to a child's needs, exempting out-of-state drivers, or allowing lap-belt only exemptions that start before 65 pounds, are no longer appropriate. And there is plenty of data to demonstrate that requiring rear seat placement and proper use make sense. Laws are not only enforcement tools, but critical instruments for educating families about protecting children.

—Joe Colella

Joe Colella is a CPST Instructor, a frequent conference presenter around the country, and an advocate for vehicle, CR design, and state law improvements. He is a member of the SRN Editorial Board as well as a frequent contributor. He has been involved in CPS since 1994, when his niece was killed in a crash in which her CR was installed with an incompatible seat belt.

CPST Recertification Extension

In December, Safe Kids Worldwide (SKW) announced that technicians with an expiration date in January or February automatically received a two-month extension. Examples:

- An expiration date of 1/13/2007 was automatically changed to 3/13/2007.
- An expiration date of 2/25/2007 was automatically changed to 4/25/2007.

Technicians with expiration dates in January through April are eligible for a brief extension for completion of CEUs. Use the one-page extension request form at www.safekids.org/certification/.

Correction/Expansion:

The September/October 2006 issue contained a misleading headline on page 6. The explanation provided by Eric Dahle of why not to use LATCH system and safety belt at the same time (unless the manufacturer allows—in an unusual case) applies to all CRs with internal harness restraint systems as well as to belt-positioning boosters.

State-sponsored Continuing Education is Increasing

Some state agencies and local organizations are scrambling to determine the best approach to continuing education in an effort to keep technicians and instructors certified. Several leaders believe learning opportunities must be convenient and reasonable, since not all advocates will take individual initiative, and that assistance with documentation will be necessary. Other groups already provide ongoing education, since the standardized CPS course only provides basic knowledge, but they will need to assess their CEU eligibility.

Since a very small percentage of CPSTs attends national conferences (Lifesavers, Safe Kids Leadership, KIM, etc.), some states host their own. The events typically provide highlights of recent research, new products and technologies, changes to regulations, and information on state programming and resources. Some also include information on quality assurance mechanisms, like the proper use of checklist forms and roles of senior checkers (or similar people), and may clarify or expand on the commonly misunderstood technical concepts that lead to field issues. Several also enlist national speakers to share advanced information.

There definite differences between national and state conferences, but either type is well worth attending. At national events, there are usually a few very committed and active leaders representing each state, and there are plenty of resources to experience. Product marketing representatives, engineers, researchers, and national leaders often present content and are available for questions, while networking yields ideas from other areas. State and regional events have a much wider variety of attendees – some active and experienced and others not – but most are the folks working in the trenches. Manufacturer and researcher attendance is typically much lower, but networking often leads to direct cooperation and shared local resources.

Formats of state events vary greatly, as do their regularity or frequency. States like Oregon, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Kentucky have general traffic safety conferences. While CPS is significantly addressed, adult occupant protection, im-

Fatalities Among Kids Dropped in 2005

Children are surviving better in vehicle crashes. The 2005 Annual Assessment of Motor Vehicle Crashes issued by NHTSA shows deaths and injuries declined from 2004 in all age groups – 0 through 3, 4 through 7, and 8 through 15 – as shown in the table below. (Deaths are actual numbers while injuries are estimates.)

	Deaths		% change	Estimated Injuries		% change
	2004	2005		2004	2005	
Children 0–3						
Occupants	427	371	- 13 %	41,000	40,000	- 2.3%
Non-occupants	88	101	+ 15 %	2,000	2,000	0 %
Children 4–7						
Occupants	348	346	- 0.6%	53,000	49,000	- 7.5%
Non-occupants	139	112	- 19 %	7,000	8,000	+14 %
Children 8–15						
Occupants	1,270	1,067	- 16 %	152,000	147,000	-3.3%
Non-occupants	350	351	+ 0.3%	6,000	25,000	- 3.8%

Child occupants are passengers. Non-occupants are pedestrians, bicyclists, and occupants of vehicles not in motion or of non-motor vehicle transport devices.

Among the youngest children, the 13 percent drop in occupant fatalities was dramatic. The trend has been steadily downward for both groups since 1988, when occupant deaths were close to 600 and non-occupants over 200.

Among children aged 4 through 7, there has been very little change in occupant fatalities. As with the younger children, there has been a decrease over time, especially for non-occupants – fatalities in this group totaled over 500 in 1988. Occupant deaths have always been under 500, and have made some declines since 1998, though they have been holding

virtually steady for the last four years.

The large drop in occupant deaths among 8- to 15-year-olds did not reflect a trend. It follows three years of fatality totals over 1200; in most years since 1988, such deaths have been in the 1200–1300 range. Non-occupant deaths, however, showed a steady decline from 1988, when they totaled about 800. These figures do not illuminate the reasons for the fatality reductions, which doubtless are complex.

Reference:

www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/ncsa/ppt/2006/810639.pdf

paired driving, pedestrian issues and other related topics share the time. Kansas also has a traffic safety conference, but technicians come in a day early for an exclusive CPS focus and there is a separate day for instructor updates. Ohio has begun alternating the annual event, between general traffic safety and just CPS.

Vermont and Utah are among the states that have annual 1-day CPS conferences. While the bulk of the information is shared by local leaders, some is presented by out-of-area researchers, manufacturer reps, or experts. A few states, like New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Iowa and New Mexico offer multiple days of CPS information, and these conferences tend to have more exhibitors and out-of-state

presenters. There is time for a variety of breakout sessions and planned events, and opportunities for recertification sign-offs are often included.

What began as a shared continuing education event, coordinated by state agencies in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, has become a well-organized CPS conference for NHTSA Region II. Speakers from the Region and national organizations are invited, and the state that hosts the event rotates each year. Since many advocate agencies are represented, several manufacturers and other organizations exhibit and send personnel. Much of the content rivals that found in national conferences, but a local flavor is still

Continued, page 6

Whiplash Protection and Boosters: a Perspective

Can parents assume that their children's safety seats or boosters will protect them from neck injuries in a rear impact?

The short answer is “no,” because FMVSS 213 is concerned with front impact. Rebound forces are low in a frontal crash and unlikely to cause serious injury, because most of the energy has already been absorbed.

Whiplash injury in the real world

Rear-end crashes are less common than front or side impacts and generally occur at lower speeds and with reduced force. While whiplash injury is common in adults, it is a low-severity type of injury (categorized by researchers as Abbreviated Injury Scale level 1 {AIS-1}), despite its sometimes painful aftermath.

Researchers with Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS) at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia told SRN that they have not reported on AIS-1 whiplash injuries or AIS-2+ neck injuries in rear impacts because the incidence in their massive database of children in crashes is very low, especially to those in boosters.

Common questions

Current legal requirements and educational efforts urge parents to keep their children in boosters until they fit well in the lap and shoulder belt without a booster, which for many children is age 10 or more. The height of the seat back is not discussed, despite the fact that the largest children may tower over the back of the seat. Yet Dorel limits the use of several of its high-back combination seats in vehicles with low seat backs (see side-bar, third column.) Common question concerning whiplash prevention include:

Should parents and caregivers whose vehicles have low-backed rear seats be concerned about the protective capacity of headrests on child restraints or boosters?

Researchers Miriam Manary and Kathy Klinich of University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute say that there are several reasons why booster headrest strength is not a major concern.

- Preventing seat belt syndrome (potentially very serious abdominal or spine injuries) by using either a high-back or a backless booster has a higher

priority than whiplash protection.

- While high-back boosters may reduce the possibility of whiplash injury, there is no accurate method of measuring their effectiveness to do that. Some backs are stiffer than others. Where a specific instruction is given, as in the case of the Dorel products (see sidebar), directions to discontinue use should be followed.

Which type of booster should be used by a child riding in a seating position without head restraints?

If a high-back booster were available, that would be preferable. Backless booster instructions include discontinuing use when the child's ears are above the seat back.

Advantages of high-back boosters with deep side-wings:

- Shoulder belt guides help the belt stay in place. (The shoulder belt must slide easily through the guide).
- Side-wings support a child while sleeping so the shoulder belt stays in position and the child does not lean against the side of a vehicle with side-impact air bags.
- Side-impact protection may be improved (although no standard covers this).

Would the child be safer sitting on the vehicle seat without a booster?

Only if the child's safety belt fits properly (using the 5-Step Test from www.carseat.org), unless using one of the products designed specifically for this situation (see box, left top).

Should a parent allow a school-age child to use a backless booster for convenience when carpooling or to mitigate peer pressure?

In a vehicle with back seat head restraints, that would be fine, although a backless booster does not offer supportive side-wings for sleeping. Even in a vehicle with low-back seats, it would be preferable to use a backless booster rather than an ill-fitting seat belt system if that were the only way to get the child to comply with booster use.

Alternatives to boosters for vehicles with low seat backs

Current options that allow a booster-size child to be properly restrained while sitting on the vehicle seat:

- Ride Safer Travel Vest (used with a tether or lap-shoulder belt), two sizes: 35-60 pounds, 50-80 pounds
- E-Z-ON Vest or 86Y Harness (both installed with a tether), from 20 to 168 pounds.

Should programs only distribute high-back boosters rather than a more affordable backless model?

Having two models available is preferable. CPSTs and other educators should advise parents about possible benefits when the child's head is supported and the importance of preventing seat belt syndrome. Even a backless booster will provide the most essential protection from most likely and most serious injuries. As with other “gray areas,” caregivers need enough information to make their own decisions.

Owners of vehicles with low-backed rear seats need to realize that their vehicles will not provide whiplash protection as their children grow taller. Choosing a vehicle with rear-seat head restraints for their next purchase would be prudent. Many newer vehicles have them. In the case of pickup trucks without head restraints directly in front of the rear window, a high-back booster would at least provide a shield from the glass.

Dorel Limits Use of Some Products with Low-back Vehicle Seats

Three Dorel products—Cosco Protek and Safety 1st Apex and Intera—have limitations in the instructions pertaining to use in vehicles with low seat backs. All are combination seats and have movable head rests. The instructions state the product should NOT be used if the midpoint of the child's head is *above the top of the back of the vehicle seat* (italics added)—not above the back of the booster, which is the more usual advice. (The Protek instructions were changed in 2005 to include this warning.) This greatly limits the use of these devices for taller children in vehicles without back-seat head restraints.

Saving the Planet, continued from page 1

Flinchbaugh has found eager takers for all child restraint parts except nylon harnessing. His biggest challenge was to convince his Rocky Mountain area community recycling program to take the No. 5 polypropylene plastic of most car seat shells, as that material is not in demand locally. The market is the automotive/plastics industry in the Midwest.

The recycler agreed to take and move it if Flinchbaugh managed the hassles -- recruiting volunteer labor to dismantle the products and delivering the results in bulk, meriting the recycler's special attention.

Other parts were easier: The pads became pet-house liners or squares for quilters. Hardware went to metals recycling or other uses.

The recycling program's "only in bulk" requirement has been challenging for an entity without paid staff or a storage facility. Even so, Flinchbaugh estimates crews dismantle and channel 150 to 200 safety seats a month from retail stores, thrift stores, and families. Education on CR product life/quality is easier when the explanation includes recycling.

Safety seats are stored in Flinchbaugh's organization's panel vans until a "work weekend" is arranged along with a donation of appropriate empty space. He partners, for instance, with real estate brokers who help find work-weekend space. The work-weekend approach also generates bulk to deliver to the recycler, and the vans store and deliver it.

Prisoners as a labor source

CPST Donna Ott in Pennsylvania also started as one person with a passion, but with more questions than answers. Her local recycler had no problem with No. 5 plastic as a commodity, but couldn't cope with the dismantling. She was devising a community-wide car seat check with a Rotary club and simply wished to avoid filling the area landfill or let the devices find their ways back into circulation, so she asked her recycler for help. But she was working as an individual and needed help with dismantling.

Her recycler put her in touch with the warden of the local county jail, who wanted to create job-skills-related service activities for prisoners. For her project, the jail agreed to provide the labor. A nearby Graco plant employee offered tips about tools and

techniques for best destruction efficiency. That one-time project dismantled and then recycled 60 safety seats.

Other options

A common challenge for community recyclers is that child safety seats contain multiple kinds of plastics or component types, which rarely are marked with recycling code symbols. Manufacturers know the makeup of their products, but others do not. Recyclers suggest getting manufacturers to identify the precise materials to simplify sorting or to collect their own used products to funnel them into secondary materials markets.

Commercial recycler Premier Plastics Recycling LLC of Miamisburg, Ohio, identified for SRN by Evenflo, does not have a child restraint-specific flow but does illustrate two other solutions.

First, Premier provides "whole product recycling," meaning it handles intact products, as do other specialists across the U.S. Its machinery shreds the mixture and spits out various materials for different markets, such as plastics or metals into different heaps. Premier partnered recently with a nearby Solid Waste District that collected, shredded and recycled plastic toys. Internet searches turn up many options, including large waste-hauling franchises that also offer curbside hauling programs and/or in-house destruction services.

The second avenue for partnership is governmental Solid Waste Districts. These exist to address regional landfill and hazardous waste issues. Many conduct special-event days for collection and appropriate handling of dangerous or difficult-to-recycle products, such as paints/poisons, electronics/batteries, etc.

Because Premier Plastics Recycling is located in the automotive/plastics industrial region, it, like Ott's Pennsylvania recycler, easily moves No. 5 plastic shells into the stream of secondary material used by auto makers to make certain auto parts. "I can move all [the No. 5 plastic, polypropylene] I can get my hands on. I just moved 30 semi loads," Premier's Larry Werner, vice president of the plastics division said. (Number 5 isn't the only plastic in safety seats, but it's commonly used to make the largest component, the shell. The energy-absorbing foam on safety seats can come from several codes.)

Connecting small operations to bigger ones who know those issues and markets is key. Then comes brainstorming about how to solve the logistics according to specifications that can be challenging for novices but easy for those who do it routinely. For instance, some recyclers or commercial vendors might only be able to sell the secondary product if it first is ground or sorted or vetted a certain way. That, too, is why it is important to work with primary manufacturers to identify its content and secondary manufacturers to discern its potential.

Regardless of the resource base, the methodology for protecting people and the planet can be accomplished with creativity and partnerships.

—Sue Miller Smith

Resources

www.saferidenews.com

New Aircraft Safety Device

The first aircraft-only child safety device, called CARES, has been tested and certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). CARES is a harness with two adjustable shoulder straps attached to a horizontal strap that wraps around the aircraft seat back. The aircraft lap belt slips through loops at the base of the shoulder straps. It is intended for children from 22 to 44 pounds and less than 40 inches tall. It has been tested for FAA certification in simulated frontal crashes in aircraft seats as well as with the usual rotation/inversion tests in FMVSS 213. A red and yellow label warns against use in motor vehicles. Another label reads: FAA approved in accordance with 14 CFR 21.305 (d).

Contact:

Amsafe, 602-850-2850; www.kidsflysafe.com

Editor's comment:

This product provides a convenient, easy-to-install alternative that offers more restraint than a lap belt only. It does not solve what I consider the main problem: the fact that many young children ride on parents' laps because purchasing a ticket for a child under age 2 is optional. It also does not deal with the need to transport a CR for use after the family reaches its flight destination, unless the parents plan on renting a CR.

State Continuing Ed, from page 3

present and state meetings are included. Most attendees stay overnight, as with other multi-day conferences, so there is limited state financial assistance offered to those who need it.

In addition to conferences, a number of states and organizations host continuing education and facilitated discussion workshops for instructors, updates for technicians and instructors, opportunities for networking and recertification sign-offs, and more. Formats for these items vary greatly, since they are geared toward local needs and the last widely accepted update curriculum was published in 2003. Some groups have created continuing education presentation materials for state use, which are primarily compiled by local instructor volunteers.

With the new requirements for CEU eligibility, agencies are reviewing the amount of event content that is eligible, as well as the ability to document technician and instructor participation. Among the first organizations to identify which sessions were appropriate for credit was Safe Kids, during their recent Leadership Conference. Similar processes are being worked on for other conferences and recertification activities.

To learn about events in neighboring states, you can check with designated State CPS Training Contacts: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/Training/ContactList.cfm

—Joe Colella

Stability Control Proposal

NHTSA has found Electronic Stability Control Systems (ESC) to be highly effective in preventing single-vehicle run-off-the-road crashes, of which a significant portion are rollover crashes and reduce some multi-vehicle crashes. As a result, it has been proposed as a requirement (FMVSS 126) for passenger vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less. NHTSA estimates that once all such vehicles have ESC, 1,536 to 2,211 lives would be saved annually.

Resource:

www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/testing/ncap/rollover/pages/NewTechESC.htm

Editor's Note on Britax Recall

Boulevard recall raises questions

The Boulevard tether recall (page 7) raised many questions and deserves more explanation, to help CPSTs prepare to answer caregivers' questions. It also provides an opportunity to learn more about how tethers are tested and how they work.

FMVSS 213 does not allow a FF-CR to change position, the complete separation of a structural element, or a small opening to become smaller (pinching) during a test (S 1.1.1). Neither NHTSA nor Britax gave a clear answer about why, in this case, the hook breakage was not the main reason for the recall.

A Britax spokesperson told SRN that the tether hook provided with the Boulevard in the recall period would have been satisfactory for its models with a 40-pound maximum weight. The tether hooks used for the Boulevard both before and after the 6-month recall period were more robust.

Why was a new tether strap not provided?

SRN has been unable to fully answer that question. Apparently, the label remedy was used because a replacement tether would be too difficult to install and either was not necessary or would not be utilized to any great extent. Changing a tether strap on the Boulevard is complicated due to the harness height adjustment mechanism in the upper part of the shell.

In addition, although the standard has no head excursion requirement for CRs when tested with the 65-pound dummy (weighted 6YO), all seats for children over 50 pounds are subject to head and knee excursion and other biodynamic limits (HIC, chest acceleration, etc.) when tested with the 51-pound 6YO dummy. Britax says its own tests show that the Boulevard tested with the 65-pound dummy without its tether meets the same requirement for head excursion (32 inches) that applies to untethered CRs tested with the 35-pound and 51-pound dummies.*

Another factor for Britax was reported tether use with heavier children. Its data on use of its high-weight harness seats (a small sample of seats returned after

* *The new Hybrid III dummies weigh slightly more than their Hybrid II counterparts.*

crashes) show that very few of their customers actually use such CRs for children above 50 pounds (probably because the shoulder slots are relatively low). Only slightly more than half of those used at higher weights reportedly were tethered!

Other points to know

Although products tested with the weighted 6YO are not required to meet dummy injury criteria of FMVSS 213, Britax (and other manufacturers of CRs with high-weight harnesses) measure those aspects of performance of their products on an on-going basis. A Britax representative said that, in their own tests, the tether hook opened (rather than breaking as it did in the outside lab tests), the dummy performance actually was improved. Both head excursion and head injury criteria were very low. This is consistent with opinions from some other experts that the most likely outcome of a crash in which the tether hook deformed and released would be reduced forces acting on the child, due to the energy absorbed by the tether hook itself as it deformed. (In the theoretical possibility that the hook might break completely early in the crash sequence, the forces might not be diminished. No serious or catastrophic failures of tether hooks have been reported in real world crashes, to the best of our knowledge.)

In its own tests, Britax found that using the tether strap with an anchor located farther from the back of the CR made a significant difference in the performance of the hook. The company says that there was no bending of the tether hook when the Boulevards from the recalled batch were tested with the weighted 6YO and a tether strap 15 inches or longer, such as would be used in most SUVs, station wagons, and vans.

The tether anchor on the 213 test bench is not intended to simulate the strength or deformation characteristics of an anchor in a vehicle. It is a very heavy-duty fixture that is so solidly anchored that it can withstand repeated use without bending or breaking. It therefore stresses the tether assembly in a much more severe manner than would be found a real vehicle crash.

continued, next page

Editor's Note, cont.

Inadequacy of the remedy

The fact that Britax offers the label as the sole remedy is very disappointing — not only to myself. I think NHTSA and Britax have discounted the fact that at least some consumers may have purchased the Boulevard specifically for its 65-pound capacity. It also does not distinguish between the magnitude of a potential finger pinch risk and the risk of head injury. While, in the majority of crashes (which are relatively low-impact), the lack of a tether may make little difference to the outcome, the recall instruction is not only counter-intuitive but also directly contrary to the “best practice” of teaching the importance of tether use for forward-facing CRs whenever possible to improve performance and reduce risk. Owners can comment regarding the recall directly to Britax and to NHTSA (via the Auto Safety Hotline).

What to tell caregivers about the Boulevard from the recall period?

The recall directs the user to disconnect the tether when the child reaches 50 pounds, but this instruction should be considered within the context of the situation. Some users may want to continue tether use. The recall remedy does not (cannot) address particular circumstances in which the seat may be used, such as for a child who weighs closer to 50 pounds than to 65 pounds, a seat belt-only installation that cannot be made tight, a very small back seat, or a vehicle with a tether anchor more than 15 inches from the back of the CR. Once again, CPSTs and other advocates have the complicated task of trying to explain the issue to caregivers.

CPSTs should keep these points in mind if asked about this recall:

- The test environment applies much greater load to the tether than is likely to occur in most real-world crashes.
- If the Boulevard were to be used with its tether in a vehicle where tether anchors are more than 15 inches from the CR back, the tether hook problem is very unlikely to occur.
- Installation with a lap-shoulder belt would be the best solution if caregivers choose not to use the tether above 50 pounds. The tall belt path opening on the Boulevard (as well as some other forward-facing seats) allows the shoulder

COSCO: Dorel Alpha Elite and Eddie Bauer Comfort Infant Car Seats

Alpha Elite Comfort Infant Car Seat: 22331 BLA, 22332 RLA manufactured between July 26, 2005 and February 28, 2006

Eddie Bauer Comfort Infant Car Seat: 22631 LNG, 22630 AFD, 22630 BAL, 22630

FTM, 22630 HPN, 22630 LRS, 22630 LKM (22630 models are part of the 01726 Eddie Bauer Integrated Travel System) manufactured between July 26, 2005 and February 28, 2006

Handle trim screws can loosen and fall out — a potential choking hazard to the child. There have been no injuries reported.

Cosco is sending all registered owners a repair kit with new screws and instructions. Those who have not registered their product can do so online at djgusa.com, safety1st.com or djgusa.com/eddiebauer. If parents order the repair kit online, they can also order the replacement base from their Customer Satisfaction Program (SRN Sept/Oct 2006).

Parents should install the repair kit as soon as possible. In the meantime, parents are advised to make sure the handle trim screws have not loosened. Parents should continue to use the existing seat while waiting to receive and install the repair kit. The handle trim screws do not affect the performance of the car seat in the vehicle.

Contact Dorel: 877-229-1374, or comfortinfant@djgusa.com

belt to angle upward more directly toward its anchor than a smaller belt path. The shoulder belt may offer additional tension on the upper part of a non-tethered FF seat in a crash.

- Finger pinching cannot be compared with head impact and the likelihood of a child having a hand near any possible pinch point under the shell should be considered.

Also see the perspective on tether use in the LATCH Manual (2005 edition, pp. 49 to 52) and on the SRN web site, www.saferidenews.com > “New”

Britax Boulevard (E9L57)

Seats made between March 1, 2006 and August 1, 2006.

The tether hook broke in crash testing at an outside lab with the 6-year-old (6YO) dummy weighted to 65 pounds, allowing the CR to move into the reclined position. Britax is advising caregivers to discontinue use of the top tether once the child weighs 50 pounds due to the risk of pinching if the CR changes position. The product may continue to be used with the top tether for rear-facing installations and for forward-facing installations for a child up to 50 pounds. (See accompanying Editor's Note, page 6.)

Britax will provide labels for the instruction booklet and tether adjuster. Over 24,000 units are affected. Those still in stores have either had stickers applied by store personnel or been returned to Britax.

Contact Britax: 888-427-4829 or www.britaxusa.net.

Toyota: Tundra Access Cab Pickup Trucks Built Between 2003 and 2005

These small, four-door “access cab” pickups include an airbag on/off switch for the front passenger seat and LATCH systems in the rear seats, but no LATCH for the front passenger seat. A front-seat LATCH system is required if the rear seat is too small to fit a rear-facing CR. NHTSA denied an exemption to Toyota, stating that it must provide a LATCH system in front in order to make CR installation easier.

Toyota will contact all affected Tundra owners, sending a label outlining the problems with Tundra's child restraint anchors and recommending that owners always use the rear seats for children. More than 157,000 trucks are affected.

If owners want the LATCH system installed in front, they can request it from Toyota, which will provide them for free once it determines how to retrofit the latches into the truck. If a child is transported in the front seat, the air bag must first be turned off with the switch.

Contact Toyota: 800-331-4331

2007 Edition of SRN Fact Sheets

With the turning of the year comes the best time for CPS advocates to evaluate their materials to make sure they contain current information. The annually updated SRN Fact Sheets make that a simple process. Many advocates report that they also use them for their own review when they are feeling just a bit rusty.

There are several big changes in the SRN fact sheets for 2007.

Preprinted fact sheets in pads

Five sheets will be printed in pads of 100 sheets (English only). Each will be on a different colored paper. Included are sheets covering preemies, newborns, growing babies, toddlers, and boosters.

New fact sheet

A two-page fact sheet, *What to Do About Recalls*, is now included, covering CR and vehicle recalls.

Two sheets expanded to 2 sides

Are You Pregnant?: Additional ways (other than restraint use) to reduce risk have been added. More space has been devoted (on the back) to choosing and using a CR for a newborn.

Selecting the Right Car Seat: Topics added include evaluating crash tests and usability ratings, second-hand car seats, not moving a child to the next stage too early, and car seat features to look for.

Readability

The five basic sheets for pregnancy, newborns, big babies, toddlers, and booster-size children have been completely revised for better readability. A health educator experienced in low-literacy-level materials has reviewed, reorganized, and edited them without removing necessary information.

Best practice

All sheets have been updated to further emphasize the importance of keeping children in appropriate restraint systems as long as possible. We advise keeping children rear-facing up to 18 months or more, in a FF seat with internal harness for 40 pounds or higher, in a booster to 8 to 10 years—until the lap-shoulder belt fits properly, and in the back seat to at least age 13.

Other fact sheet changes:

Tether and LATCH sheets have been extensively rewritten. More has been

Center for Injury Research and Prevention Web Site Has Been Redesigned

This site (www.chop.edu/injury) of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia center (formerly TraumaLink) offers a library of publications organized by date, author and topic; and more comprehensive and up-to-date information on all research projects. Visitors can sign up to receive a periodic newsletter highlighting new activities, research and publications.

CPS and Crash Investigation List-serve

This new list-serve provides a forum where CPS practitioners and motor vehicle crash investigators can exchange information, knowledge and skills to increase and improve the documentation of child restraint information during post-crash investigations. To join this group, simply send a message to: cpsandcrashes-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

The Crash Survivors Network

This new nonprofit organization provides information and resources to aid in dealing with the many aspects of being a crash survivor. It was founded by Patrick and Theresa Atkinson, both PhD researchers in biomechanics who suffered the loss of a child in a car crash in 2003. The Web site and quarterly newsletter address grief support, insurance and legal issues, and especially occupant safety and injury prevention. www.crashsurvivorsnetwork.org

Pregnancy and Crashes

Advocates for auto safety during pregnancy provide a wealth of information at a new Web site. Included are classroom materials such as videos, multimedia online lectures, pamphlets, research and statistics, along with links to other resources for victims. Tips for pregnant women include ways to reduce travel and crash risks, and strategies for increasing occupant protection. www.pregnantcrash.org

added regarding tether use for car seats for children above 40 pounds.

Air bag information: More about sensors in Advance Air Bag vehicles.

Aircraft: The new aircraft-specific restraint, CARES, has been added.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2007:

National CPS Week, Feb 11-17

Lifesavers 2007, March 25-27, Chicago, www.lifesaversconference.org

First Global Roadway Safety Week, April 23-27, www.who.int/roadsafety/week/en/

KIM Conference, Aug 1-4, Denver. **The deadline for abstracts is January 12.** Go to www.kidzinmotion.org for updated information.

PCPS Report: Children Ages 4-8 More Likely to be Injured

In October, State Farm and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia released the second Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS) *Fact and Trend Report*. Using the world's largest study of children in automobile crashes, researchers found that 46 percent of children ages 4 to 8 were improperly restrained in adult seat belts, making them three times more likely to be injured in a crash than younger infants and toddlers.

The report details the fact that, as children age, their risk of injury or death in a motor vehicle crash significantly increases due to improper child restraint use. A key factor is moving children prematurely from child restraints to adult seat belts and then to the front seat.

Major findings include:

- States with the highest rate of booster seat use among 4-8 year olds have implemented child passenger safety laws that require all children under the age of seven to ride in a child safety seat or booster seat.
- Americans have significantly improved child restraint use among children over age eight from 51 percent in 1999 to 73 percent in 2005.
- Although only 7.4 percent of crashes involving children occur with teen drivers (ages 16-19), these children were 3.5 times more likely to be injured than those driven by people older than 20.

References/Resources

To access the full report and press releases, go to www.statefarm.com/KidSafety.htm or www.chop.edu/carseat (click on "In the News")