



March 1, 2012

Notes from the [CPS Board](#):

Continuing Professional Development: What does this really mean for CPS Technicians?

Most licensing and certifying programs require that individuals renewing their license or certification demonstrate and submit proof of continuing professional development. What does this mean? Why is it important for CPS Technicians?

It may be helpful to look at the purpose of a certification program. Certifying programs validate that individuals or organizations have mastered defined skills or capabilities and the knowledge required to apply these skills correctly. Safe Kids Worldwide, as the official certifying program for the National Child Passenger Safety Certification Training Program assures that all certified CPS technicians have the knowledge and skills to 1) advise and coach families on selection and installation of child safety seats, 2) identify misuse or incorrect child safety seat installation and 3) correctly install child safety seats in a variety of motor vehicles according to vehicle and child restraint manufacturer instructions.

Your initial certification is based upon attending a national training course, passing the written testing (three written quizzes), demonstrating your technical CPS skills (three skills tests) and participating in a mandatory “clinical” session, or as it is known in the CPS community, a “checkup” event. While your certification is valid (two years), you, and every other CPST, have an obligation to maintain your technical skills, adhere to the standards of the National CPS Certification Training curriculum and uphold the [code of conduct](#). However, we live in a constantly changing environment with new products and technology being introduced regularly. For this reason, most certifying programs require documentation of continuing professional development.

The CPS certification program requires completion and online documentation of three elements for recertification: [5 seat checks](#) reviewed by a CPS Instructor or Technician Proxy, [6 hours of continuing technical education](#) and participation in a [community event](#).

- The 5 seat check requirement documents that you have maintained and can demonstrate your CPS skills with a CPS instructor. This requirement is similar to law enforcement officers periodically returning to the firing range to re-qualify and demonstrate their expertise with firearms.
- The 6-hours of technical education makes you stay up-to-date with innovations in vehicle and child restraint technology, new guidelines, best practices and the scientific evidence that

supports child safety seat use. The past two years that I have been a technician has seen the introduction of Ford Motor Company's inflatable seat belt technology and an update to the NHTSA and AAP recommendations on child passenger safety.

- Participation in a community event demonstrates that you are a “practicing” technician applying your CPS skills and knowledge in the field.

In closing, as I begin the process to recertify as a CPS Technician, I find myself reflecting on how I have used my skills in the past two years – the seat check events where I volunteered, CPS technicians that I have met, and the hugs and smiles of families that I helped with child restraint installation.

As I enter my CEU documentation in my profile, I think about the trends I am monitoring and how I will need to look for CEU opportunities next year: inflatable seat belts and changes to child restraint manufacturer instructions, Mercedes may have new seat belt technology soon, too and don't forget the new rules introduced by NHTSA regarding “10-year old” crash test dummy. And most importantly, this summer I have to help out at more Illinois seat check events – I will need 5 more seat checks, soon.

Submitted by Tess Benham, Secretariat, CPS Board (Itasca, IL)