

CPS Express

E-News for Child Passenger Safety Technicians

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JULY/AUGUST 2016

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Top News

NHTSA Decides on Use of Federal Funds for Car Seats, Bike Helmets

Many state CPS programs provide safety seats which are funded by federal funds through state road safety offices. Over the years, two federal fund accounts have been used to fund the distribution of car seats, but a ruling by NHTSA would have limited that to a small portion of the fund designed specifically for occupant protection (Section 405(b)), and barred use of the other road safety fund (Section 402). After more than a

year of consideration, the issue has been resolved so that both federal road safety accounts can be used to obtain car seats, bike helmets and other similar types of equipment for distribution as set forth in states' road safety plans. The sole purpose must be to improve road safety. Specific performance criteria will be attached to the distribution of such items including targeted population, method of distribution and connected educational component. Please continue to work with your [State Highway Safety offices](#) for additional information.

Review [the memo from NHTSA](#).

Submitted by Anthony Green, Director of Public Policy, Safe Kids Worldwide (Washington, DC)

CPST Month Recap

Thank you to all the almost 400 instructors who taught 84 Certification Courses in 41 states! We didn't meet our goal of 100 courses, but we did certify 1252 new technicians!

Lead Instructors: Help us plan for 2017 by taking this very short [survey](#). One survey submitter will win ten 2016 CPST Month pins (drawing on July 22). [Fill out the survey today!](#)

Take Expiration Dates Seriously!

The [Manufacturers Alliance for Child Passenger Safety](#) (MACPS) encourages adherence to expiration dates as stated by each car seat manufacturer for its car seats. Expiration dates are provided for some or all of the following reasons:

- Because the plastic shell and other components may degrade over time if the car seat has been improperly used or stored in an adverse environment for a prolonged period of time.
- Because exposure of components to many environmental factors including food, drinks, dirt and debris, cleaners and other contaminants may cause degradation of the seat's effectiveness.
- Because parts of the seat may be lost, installed incorrectly or damaged from potential wear and tear.

- Because instructions or labels may not be available or no longer be legible.

The benefits of expiration dates include:

- Phasing out older seats to ensure that as many of the car seats in circulation as possible benefit from new advancements in safety and technology and incorporate the latest regulatory requirements
- Discouraging second hand car seat use and helping to move recalled products out of circulation.

More expiration date resources:

- [MACPS Harmonized Statement](#)
- [Britax](#)
- [Chicco](#)
- [Clek Boosters](#) and [Infant Thingy](#)
- [Dorel](#)
- [Evenflo](#)
- [mifold](#)

Submitted by Diana Imondi Dias, Communications Committee, National Child Passenger Safety Board (Providence, RI)

Being a Resourceful Technician

Nearly everyone has that "go to" person; a "phone-a-friend". Whether it is a very knowledgeable technician or an instructor, we know who to call when we have questions or we need advice. Whether it's a question like "Can I install a Britax Marathon in the center of a 2011 Toyota RAV4 using LATCH?" or "Which handle position of a Graco SnugRide ClickConnect 30 can be used in the car?", it's great to have that person as a resource or to even be that resource. However, many people rely too heavily on that person to be there whenever they need them and are left unprepared when they can't reach him. The resource is expected to know all, be all and be readily available, which is not realistic. The risk of relying on this type of arrangement is that the resource isn't available 24/7, and could leave the technician in a panic situation if they don't know what else to do.

It's important for technicians to be resourceful when seeking answers to questions or issues that come up when helping a family install their car seats. You'll want to seek information from credible sources such as the [car seat manufacturer](#), the [National CPS Board](#), [NHTSA](#), [Safe Kids Worldwide](#), etc. This not only ensures that you receive the correct and current information, it also empowers you to not have to rely on another [technician or an instructor](#) to give you the information that you can find yourself. In turn, it demonstrates to the parents how they can access the information on their own so they are not coming back to you every time the seat is removed from the vehicle.

As that resource for technicians in your area, it's best to remind them of readily available resources to lessen the strain on your time and to boost their confidence in finding the answers to their questions, reminding them that saying "I don't know the answer, but I'll find out" is an acceptable response.

Yes, there are times when you've exhausted your efforts and need help to find the information you are seeking. That is a great time to access the experience in your network. While it may be easier and quicker to go to that source before trying anything else, realize that it's setting you up for a panic situation when you can't get a hold of that person and don't know what other resources to use. If you are the "go to" person in your community, inform the technicians of the wealth of [technical resources](#) available to them at their fingertips and help build their confidence to find the answers they are looking for themselves. It lessens your responsibility and the expectation that you know everything and can recall information without opening a manual. Even the most experienced and knowledgeable technicians and Instructors should continually read instruction manuals and review information to make sure they are providing accurate information to the parents and technicians who contact them. We all know that this is an ever-changing field and no one has the right answer to every question. Be a resource, but also empower and motivate.

Submitted by Suzanne Grace, Tall Pine Safety Resource Center/Safe Kids Maine (Windham, Maine)

Manuals: Protect Your Practice and be a Model Educator

Safety seats are becoming more feature-rich and varied, which is wonderful for the industry and requires us to stay on our toes. Using the child restraint manufacturer's

instructions is vital when checking safety seats and working with families. Because so many caregivers choose and/or use safety seats incorrectly, modeling use of the manufacturer's instructions is essential to help change caregiver behavior. Using the most current and accurate information available should be a top CPST priority and will protect your practice.

Most safety seat instructions are available online through [manufacturers' websites](#). Updated information about each safety seat, added after publication of the original instructions, may be more difficult to track down but sometimes can be found in the FAQ section of each website.

For techs who prefer a one-stop shop, [SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.](#) has compiled [manufacturers' instructions](#) and created consistently formatted summaries for all 396 child restraints manufactured during the past ten years, as well as instructions for 25 child restraints for children with special needs. The individual summaries provide easy-to-use, concise and updated information for you to consult as a quick guide to the lengthy instructions and clarification of sometimes hard-to-interpret directions. This tool is available both online and on DVD, so you can have it available as you work with families. The standardized formatting allows techs to quickly search the summaries and manufacturers' instructions which are analyzed for updates. Don't get complacent about manuals. They provide critical information for new and seasoned technicians and instructors. Recommit to reviewing manuals regularly. It is another opportunity to engage the caregiver and make sure you are providing accurate information.

Submitted by Heidi Heflin, SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. (Redondo Beach, Calif.)

Tethering Rear Facing Seats: An Update

Rear tethering with the Swedish method has been an effective method of securing a car seat to reduce injuries. Keep in mind that rear tethering ([Swedish or Australian](#)) has been optional and not required in the U.S. One of the manufacturers that has a history of rear tethering with the Swedish method and has discontinued that recommendation is [Britax](#). [Diono](#) does not permit Swedish rear tethering if vehicle wiring is nearby. The use of Swedish rear tethering has always been dependent on if the [vehicle manufacturer](#) permits its use. With the development of advanced front passenger air bags, advanced

air bag suppression systems may be adversely affected by any pressure upward from under the front seat. Some manufacturers that have a designated tether anchor would be fine to use. The Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) is the only vehicle manufacturer that makes this reference currently in their manual. FCA says to “only attach the tether strap to a rear facing car seat that is approved for that seating position.” Vehicle manufacturers are likely to say rear tethering is not approved according to the [LATCH manual](#) chapter 7 page 67. Vehicle manufacturers typically do not provide such guidance in their owner manuals because rear tethering is not regulated in the U.S.

Other car seat energy management features such as rebound bars, load legs and European belt routing reduce forward rotation in a crash, and we are more likely to see more of these features in the future.

Always follow car seat user guides/owner’s manuals, which are written the way the product is to be used – if it doesn’t tell you it is okay to do, you shouldn’t do anything without asking. Call the [manufacturer’s customer service](#) department.

Submitted by Kim Herrmann, Safe Kids Worldwide (Ft. Myers, Fla.)

Feeling Hot, Hot, Hot?

The summer months bring sunshine, heat and lots of car seat check events! Our first priority at any seat check is safety. That usually means making sure every child leaves safer than when they arrived. You educate caregivers on making sure their precious cargo is being transported as safely as possible, but do you also educate them on the dangers of hyperthermia? The interior of a vehicle heats up rapidly, even on overcast days. This increase in temperature can be fatal for a child who is left inside of a vehicle intentionally or unintentionally. There are several tips for caregivers to make sure a change in routine doesn’t cause them to accidentally forget their child inside the car. For more information on heatstroke, check out these tips from [Safe Kids Worldwide](#) and [NHTSA](#).

Taking care of yourself during seat checks must also be high on your priority list, as the dangers of the sun and heat do not only apply to the children and families we serve. If

you are working alone, make sure to bring plenty of water to drink so you stay hydrated and wear sunscreen to protect you.

If you are hosting an event, provide your techs and volunteers with enough cold water to make sure they stay at the top of their game, and bring sunscreen for those who may have forgotten to bring their own. For large events, assign a volunteer to be responsible for hydration and sun protection. Having a person whose only job is making sure the techs and volunteers stay "sun smart" throughout the event assures everyone stays safe. If you are an instructor, tech proxy or senior checker, make sure they drink water each time they work with you. Keep a cooler next to where the checklists are turned in to keep hydration top of mind. Our goal is to make sure everyone leaves safer than they arrive, and that includes the technicians and event volunteers.

Submitted by Jami Eklund, Safe Kids Worldwide (Massillon, Ohio)

CEU Resources

This section provides information on nationally available continuing education opportunities. We are not able to include information on state or local conferences, training or other technical updates if they cannot be made available nationally. This information is provided as a resource only. Events and activities listed here are not endorsed by Safe Kids unless otherwise noted.

CPS Express CEU Corner Submissions: Please e-mail the necessary information (in the format below) to [Kerry Chausmer](#).

Conferences

Conferences (includes pre-conference dates)

[KIDZ IN MOTION \(KIM\) Conference](#)

Orlando, Fla.

August 10 - 13, 2016

[New England Child Passenger Safety Regional Conference](#)

Burlington, Vt.

September 9-11, 2016

Online Courses

A variety of webinars are available online and free of charge. [Learn more](#)

Upcoming Webinars

Troubleshoot to avoid problems: [Test your connection now](#)

Can I get credit for watching a webinar with a group? [Read more](#)

Tech Proxy Town Hall – Overview and Q&A

** Not eligible for CPS CEUs or Community Education requirement.

Thursday, July 28, 2016

2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. ET

[Register now](#)

Car Seat Manufacturer Update: Nuna

Thursday, August 4, 2016

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. ET

[Register now](#)

Car Seat Manufacturer Update: Baby Trend

Thursday, August 18, 2016

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. ET

[Register now](#)

Using Technology Curbside

** Not eligible for CPS CEUs. May be used for [Community Education](#) requirement.

Thursday, August 23, 2016

2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. ET

[Register now](#)

More webinars coming soon! Mid-month updates posted on [Facebook](#).

For Instructors

Tech Proxies: What is My Long Term Responsibility?

As instructors, we may consider supporting a technician's application to be a Technician Proxy. We are confident in their skills (each point on the testimonial), but wonder about our long term responsibility. Is it OUR certification behind each seat check they review?

That question is *exactly* why Safe Kids, with support of the National Child Passenger Safety Board and NHTSA, made it official in 2011 with a formal application. Each instructor has to feel confident in what they are signing on the testimonial, point by point. Once approved, the tech proxy is responsible for their seat check reviews, not the people who supported their application.

Think about it like when you work with techs on their seat checks for recertification: If the tech demonstrates quality technical and communication skills, you'll approve the seat check. When the tech leaves you, they are acting on their own and under their own certification. Another way to think about it is the Certification course itself. As an instructor, we can sign off that a student passed the requirements of the skills tests and checkup event. When the students are certified as technicians, they operate under their own certifications, not ours.

[As a CPSTI who is submitting a testimonial on behalf of the applicant, am I responsible for the Technician Proxy's approvals of other Technician's sign offs moving forward?](#)

No, once you complete the Technician Proxy application testimonial, you are agreeing that the applicant is qualified and skilled enough to make sound judgments on future seat check sign offs. Once approved as a Technician Proxy, all seat checks will be submitted under their certification. If you have any reservations about the readiness of a Technician to be a Technician Proxy, take time to mentor the Technician and help them be ready for the challenge and responsibility of being a Proxy.

We have heard concerns that proxies do not have to demonstrate continued seat check review skills when they recertify. Remember this: Instructors have no quality assurance that they are great communicators for seat checks either. Instructors recertify with the

same quality assurance (seat checks) requirements as technician. If we need to get updated or remediated, we do...And then we pass the seat checks. We trust that our technical and communication skills are maintained when we recertify, just like techs.

More [Technician Proxy FAQs](#).

Join us for a [Tech Proxy Town Hall webinar](#) on July 28 that will provide a brief overview of the technician proxy application process with most time dedicated to getting your questions answered.

Course Letters Update: No Waiting!

Safe Kids is pleased to announce a change in how students get their official course grades and certification information. Safe Kids is no longer mailing out course grade notifications (what we know as course letters). Instead, the day after the student is graded during course finalization, they will get an email notifying them of their course grade and certification status. The email will also include their log in information and encourage them to review their online profiles.

Please [let us know](#) if you have more ideas or suggestions on how we can improve the certification program.

Questions? Comments? Concerns?

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Washington, D.C. 20004
cps.certification@safekids.org
Phone: 877-366-8154 (toll free)
Fax: 202-393-2072

Ideas and Article Submissions

Advocates and manufacturers are welcome to submit articles, or suggestions for articles, to the CPS Express!

Send your ideas and submissions to kchausmer@safekids.org.

All submissions may be edited for content and length.

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[National CPS Certification Training](#) is a program of [Safe Kids Worldwide](#), which is the certifying body and responsible for managing all aspects of the program.

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