

CPS Board NEWS

Angela Osterhuber Becomes Chair of National Child Passenger Safety Board

Angela Osterhuber, Ed.M., of Reigelsville, Pennsylvania was elected for a two-year term as the new Chairperson of the National Child Passenger Safety Board at the Board's February 2004 board meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

Ms. Osterhuber has been involved in child passenger safety since 1985. She was one of the first nationally certified technicians and instructors in Pennsylvania when the Child Passenger Safety Standardized Course was introduced in 1998.

Employed by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Director of the Traffic Injury Prevention Project, Angela is also the Child Passenger Safety state training contact for Pennsylvania. Her responsibilities include providing education and serving as a resource for child passenger

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION

2002 Study Points to High Rates of Serious Misuse

The NHTSA study of observed use and misuse of child restraints (CRs) has confirmed that restraint use decreases with age and that booster seat use is growing. Child restraint use by infants under 20 pounds was 97.1 percent; for children 20 to 39 pounds, 86.4 percent (with an additional 6.3 percent in safety belts); for those 40 to 59 pounds, 41.7 percent (plus 43.1 percent in safety belts); and for children 60 to 79 pounds, 10.9 (plus 64.9 percent in safety belts).

Only misuses that could be observed without removing the child from the CR or the seat from the car were studied. The focus was on "critical" misuses, i.e., those that would be most likely to cause serious injury. The major misuses included loose installation or harness straps, transporting an infant facing forward, and placing an infant in front with a frontal (passenger) air bag. Observable critical misuses were found in the range of 79.3 to 83.9 percent of infant, convertible and forward-facing CRs. Shield boosters had a 60.5 percent rate of serious misuse; belt-positioning boosters had a 39.5 percent rate. Note that these rates do not cover all critical misuses because some of the misuses (such as harness straps not properly secured in back) could not be observed within the limitations of the study.

There were 42 instances of LATCH use observed. Three of these seats had improperly used lower anchors and three had misused tethers. Six were attached by both the LATCH anchors and the safety belt.

Passenger frontal air bags were found in 71.8 percent of the vehicles in the study. Few vehicles had air bag on/off switches. In those vehicles, 16 children were in the front seat with the air bag on: of which 2 were rear-facing, 4 were in forward-facing CRs, 3 were in a safety belt, and 7 were unrestrained.

Reference:

Misuse of Child Restraints, Decina, LE, and Lococo, KH, NHTSA Final Report, DOT HS 809 671; summary at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/outreach/TrafficTech/2004/trafficTech290/; the full text is available at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS or by faxing a request to 202-366-7096.

Angela Osterhuber continued safety, overseeing the Car Seat Loan Programs mandated by state law, and maintaining a database of all certified technicians and instructors in the state.

The National Child Passenger Safety Board a group of dedicated individuals who represent many agencies that are involved in the CPS community. It was established to provide program direction and technical guidance to states, communities, and organizations as a means to maintain a credible, standardized child passenger training and certification program.

When asked what the Board's goals will be in the next two years, Ms. Osterhuber responded, "I see the need to more clearly define the relationship and roles among NHTSA, the certifying body (SAFE KIDS), and the National CPS Board. We are also working on the development of a Board Policy and Procedure Manual that will complement the Certification Policy and Procedure Manual. The manual will be a resource for certified technicians and instructors to understand the operation of the Board and provide information and consistency regarding protocols that are followed."

Angela also spoke on her desire to be Chair, stating that she "hoped to meet the needs that are identified and provide leadership for the productivity of the Board."

For more information on the Board, including a list of members, visit the web site: www.cpsboard.org

NEW: Booster-Harness for Use with Lap Belts

After years of testing and hard work, a booster is now available for use with the E-Z-ON Y-harnesses in both passenger vehicles and school buses with only lap belts available. The booster can be used for children weighing 30 to 80 pounds in school buses and 40 to 80 pounds in passenger vehicles. It also can be used as a belt-positioning booster.

The **Ride Ryte Booster**, which comes in either a backless or high-back version, was originally the **Galaxy 2000** from Basic Comfort. Now it is jointly made by Safe Start, Inc. and Safety Angel Int'l, Inc. It has been tested satisfactorily with the new, slimmer version of the E-Z-ON **86Y Universal Harness**, and a child-size version, the **Kid Y Harness**, for children up to 80 pounds. The latter has lighter adjusters, webbing like that on a regular CR harness, and a retainer clip. It is important not to use other boosters with either harness.

The Ride Ryte booster is sold through Safety Angel, Inc., while the 86Y and Kid Y harnesses are sold by E-Z-ON distributors. Prevention Alternatives is marketing the harness and the booster together.

The Ride Ryte will be tested with the E-Z-ON Vest soon. In a related move, E-Z-On has developed a new way of anchoring a tether to the base of a school bus seat that is "seat-belt ready."

Contacts

Safety Angel International, Inc., 888-RIDE-RYTE (743-3798), www.safetyangel.com

E-Z-ON Products, 800-323-6598, www.ezonpro.com

Prevention Alternatives, 517-927-7731, www.stores.ebay.com (search for *safety products for families*)

from *SAFE RIDE NEWS*, Nov/Dec 2003

Misuse of Air Bag Switches Puts Kids and Adults at Risk

A NHTSA report has found that air bag (AB) on/off switches are not always switched off for children and sometimes are left off for adult and teenage passengers. The 2000 survey conducted in four states included 617 cases where at least one front seat passenger was an infant or child under age 13. The AB was off for only 86 percent of the rear-facing infants and 52 percent of children age 1 to 12. That means that 14 percent of the most vulnerable, rear-facing babies riding in such vehicles are at high risk of death from a frontal air bag and 48 percent of the older children are at risk of serious injury. The incidence of active air bags went up from about 25 percent for children age 1 to 6 and jumped to 41 percent for 7 to 8 year olds. For teens 13 to 15, ABs were turned off in 22 percent of the cases. When a child and two adult were in the front seat, the AB was on in 38 percent of the cases, protecting the right-front adult but possibly putting the child at risk, at least in some vehicles. When only adults were in the vehicle, 17 percent of the ABs were off.

Most owners knew that their vehicles (mostly small pickups) had a switch and understood its function but were not well informed about some aspects

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Certification News

Web Access

There are now two related sources of information, the CPS Board web site (www.cpsboard.org) and the SAFE KIDS web site (www.safekids.org). Since SAFE KIDS is the certifying organization, more and more material is appearing on its site. For specific time-sensitive needs not answered on the web site, call the toll-free certification support line for SAFE KIDS, 877-366-8154 or e-mail to cps.certification@safekids.org.

For more details on the new process, see the extensive Policies and Procedures Manual posted on the SAFE KIDS site. Its FAQs are also useful.

At www.cpsboard.org, there are links to SAFE KIDS, lists of registered classes, and news of the meetings and actions of the CPS board itself. Archived issues of the *CPS Tech Report* (now *CPS Tech Update*) also are on-line.

Access to Personal Information

It is important to update your own technician or instructor profile whenever necessary. To do so, you must use your user ID and password.

All current and expired CPSTs should have received their user ID and password by letter. These codes are case sensitive. If yours does not seem to work, try letters/numbers that look alike, such as uppercase "I", lowercase "l" and the numeral "1". If you are having trouble or did not receive your codes, call Customer Service, 877-366-8154.

Recertification Details

There will be no grace period beyond the certification renewal date. A certified technician whose renewal date has passed must take either the 32-hour course again or the forthcoming NSCPSTP Renewal option. The latter is anticipated to be available in the first quarter of 2005. People who have taken the 32-hour course but were not certified at that time cannot qualify through the renewal class.

Recertification testing and logs of checks performed must be done via the online system. The instructor who has signed off on checkup installations will validate checkup installation performance. Seat checks must be done before beginning the test process.

Whenever a technician or instructor completes one or more of the required installations, they should go to "Log Seat Check Activity" section of the certification website and enter the information. The instructor who signed off will be notified automatically to verify the information. Submitting copies of checkup forms will no longer be an option. There are log forms on the website that technicians and instructors can use to keep track of their sign-offs prior to entering them electronically.

Once the seat check logs have been verified, a CPST will have 20 days to start the test and 10 days to complete it once the process has begun. Afterward, feedback will be given on areas of the test that a person did not do well in, but no reporting of the specific questions missed.

CURRICULUM UPDATE

The 2004 National Standardized Curriculum Instructors' Guide includes changes in some practices, clarifications of certain topics, and some new material. It has been provided to all instructors, state highway safety offices, and regional NHTSA offices. Highlights of the changes and the full text of the Participants' Manual is available for viewing or printing on the CPS Board web site.

Highlights of Course Revisions:

- All modules have been updated, especially Federal Role, Selecting CRs, Installation, and Compatibility. The glossary was expanded. Resources sections now mainly list referral sources, such as web sites or phone numbers or forms, rather than reprinting entire sections in the manual.
- Emphasis on using instructions rather than generic guidelines was affirmed.
- Some interpretations of best practices were clarified, such as identifying the belt path as the best location for checking tight installation of a rear-facing seat, rather than also pulling on the top of the restraint.
- A NHTSA policy change was incorporated relating to the circumstances under which a CR should be replaced after use in a crash (see Summer 2004 issue).
- The definition of harness snugness given in FMVSS 213 is used: "A snug strap should not allow any slack. It lies in a relatively straight line without sagging. It does not press on the child's flesh or push the child's body into an unnatural position."
- Material about school buses and wheelchairs was expanded.

Misuse of Air Bag Switches, cont. of use. They generally knew that it should be used to turn off the air bag when an infant or small child was in the front seat, but they were not clear that children as old as 12 could be in danger or that teens would benefit from the air bag.

Some owners said they preferred to leave the air bag off all the time, so they would not forget to turn it off when their children were in the front seat. That means that some adults would not have the protection the air bag could provide.

CPS advocates and technicians must continue to inform parents they work with about correct use. It will be essential to refer to the owner's manual of a pickup-truck or sports car if the air bag cannot be switched off.

Reference on Air Bag Switches

Results of the Survey on the Use of Passenger Air Bag On-Off Switches, Christina Morgan, NHTSA Technical Report, DOT HS 809 689, Nov. 2003, www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/regrev/Evaluate/809689/index.html

From *SAFE RIDE NEWS*, March/April 2004

New Web Site: www.safercar.gov

This new site from NHTSA includes crash test and roll-over ratings, defects and recalls, and FAQs about air bags (including side air bags).

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

Stay in Touch Electronically

Sign up for the free e-mail alert systems on both the CPS Board and SAFE KIDS web sites. (Hint, find the sign-up screen for the SAFE KIDS site under "Support" on the CPS Certification page.) SAFE KIDS publishes the "CPS Express" frequently to update those who are certified and whose e-mails are available. Encourage everyone to sign up!

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