Seat Belts on School Buses

Since the late-1970s school districts, school transporters, state, local and federal agencies have been working to improve the safety standards of the big, yellow school bus. Despite the excellent school bus safety record, with compartmentalization being used for occupant protection, many safety advocates understand that additional occupant protection such as lap and shoulder belts would afford the student rider improved safety.

Over the years, research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) determined that lap and shoulder belts provided protection that is superior to lap belts only. This led to the 2011 federal regulation that all new small school buses with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of less than 10,000 pounds are required to have lap and shoulder belts in all seating positions. At that time school buses with a GVWR of more than 10,000 pounds were exempt from the requirement for lap and shoulder belts, instead relying on compartmentalization for occupant protection. Although compartmentalization, which is defined as closely spaced, high-back energy absorbing school bus seats, works in certain types of crashes it is not enough according to Mark R. Rosekind, Ph.D., Administrator at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The NHTSA is recommending three-point seat belts for school buses for the first time, but Administrator Rosekind stopped short of saying he would craft new rules to require them. School buses have typically been exempt from federal regulations that require seat belts in most other vehicles. The position of the NHTSA is that seat belts save lives. "That is true whether in a passenger car or in a big yellow bus. So NHTSA’s policy is that every child on every school bus should have a three-point seat belt," said Administrator Rosekind. The seat belt recommendation for school buses is a big departure for federal regulators, who have historically maintained that school buses are designed to be safer than other passenger vehicles. CPS technicians are often asked why there are no seat belts on school buses. Now with NHTSA’s leadership the school bus industry will be exploring ways to provide lap and shoulder belts for all student riders.

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), representing state government school transportation leadership from all 50 states, fully supports the installation and use of lap and shoulder belts in school buses. NASDPTS is not advocating that the installation and/or use of lap and shoulder belts be required, but believes this should be a local decision based on local need. NASDPTS also believes lap and shoulder belt equipped bus seats should be encouraged as an option when considering new bus original equipment. Should a state or local district decide to equip their buses with lap and shoulder belts, NASDPTS believes a mandatory usage policy should also be in place along with necessary training on the importance of wearing and proper usage of the seat belts along with proper evacuation training. NASDPTS supports the NHTSA position that this local decision should not be done at the expense of students being displaced from school bus transportation.

NASDPTS suggests that a state or local district that does decide to proceed with lap and shoulder belts should consider the following points on use:
- A usage policy must exist for buses equipped with passenger restraints.
- A training program must exist for proper usage and adjustment of passenger restraints.
- A training program must exist for evacuation that includes un buckle drills.

The NASDPTS position paper entitled, “The Equipping and Use of Passenger Lap/Shoulder Belts In School Buses” can be found at http://www.nasdpts.org/Documents/NASDPTS%20POSITION%20PAPER%20PA%20PASSENGER%20LAP%20SHOULDER%20BELTS%20FINAL%20FEB%202014.pdf. The paper provides the points used in support of their position on equipping and use of lap and shoulder belts in school buses.

The National Association of Pupil Transportation (NAPT) stated that absent a federal requirement for seat belts, it is most appropriate if the decision to order seat belts on large school buses were left to the States and local jurisdictions. "States and local school districts are better able to recognize and analyze school transportation risks particular to their areas and identify approaches to best manage and reduce those safety risks."
Reasons for Child Passenger Nonrestraint in Motor Vehicles Study

A recent article was published by Mark R. Zonfrillo, Rennie W. Ferguson & Lorrie Walker after evaluating the reasons parents and caregivers may not restrain children in a motor vehicle. The article appeared in Traffic Injury Prevention, 16:sup2, S41-S45, DOI: 10.1080/15389588.2015.1040115.

Abstract

Objective: Although child passenger restraint use in motor vehicles has increased, there is an important minority of children who remain unrestrained. The goal of this study was to identify the frequency of and under what circumstances parents keep their children unrestrained.

Methods: A cross-sectional, online survey was distributed to parents and caregivers of children 10 years old and younger. Survey participants were asked about child restraint practices, including frequency of and reasons for nonuse of restraints. Parents were specifically asked how acceptable it would be to keep their child unrestrained in certain situations.

Results: One thousand two hundred eighty-five parents and guardians responded to the survey and 1,002 completed it;

- 23.8% (95% confidence interval [CI], 21.3–26.6%) of respondents said they had driven with their child not fully restrained on at least one occasion.
- Approximately 1 in 5 parents strongly or somewhat agreed that it would be acceptable to keep their child unrestrained in certain situations, including:
  - A short drive,
  - In a rush,
  - An inadequate number of restraints,
  - Riding in a taxi,
  - If somebody was holding the child, and
  - As a reward for a child.
- Parents were more likely to agree that it was acceptable to keep their child unrestrained under nearly all circumstances listed if they were:
  - Male,
  - Ages 18–29,
  - With a graduate school education,
  - In the $100,000+ income bracket, or
  - Latino.

Conclusions:

There are certain situations for which parents find it acceptable to leave their children unrestrained. This has implications for targeted child passenger safety efforts designed to maximize consistent restraint use.

Federal Aviation Administration

120-87C - Use of Child Restraint Systems on Aircraft

On Sept. 24, 2015 the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) revised their policy on the use of child restraints on aircraft. The updated advisory circular provides information and practices regarding the use of child restraint systems (CRS) on aircraft. The FAA intends for operators to use this as a resource during the development, implementation, and revision of an air carrier’s standard operating procedures, websites and training programs regarding the use of CRSs. The full circular can be found at: https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/advisory_circulars/index.cfm/go/document.information/documentID/1028289

FAA Initiatives. This advisory circular is one of several FAA initiatives designed to address safety concerns of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). It is a part of the FAA’s ongoing commitment to educate and inform aircraft operators, crewmembers, and airline passengers regarding the use of CRSs on aircraft in order to encourage and increase the use of approved CRSs. For more information, refer to the following FAA website:

Regulatory Requirements. In addition, this advisory circular provides information to air carriers conducting Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 121 operations about the requirement to make available on their websites the width of the narrowest and widest passenger seats in each class of service for each make, model, and series of airplane used in passenger-carrying operations. If an air carrier does not have a website, the air carrier is not required to establish a website in order to comply with this regulation.

The advisory circular can be found at http://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Advisory_Circular/AC_120-87C.pdf.
Volvo Debuts Baby Seat in the Front

Volvo Cars introduced a new child-safety concept for their luxury, family-friendly vehicles -- an infant’s car seat that will mount in the front seat where the front passenger seat is positioned. To use this option, the front passenger seat is removed and replaced with a raised platform outfitted with the child safety seat and the front passenger-side airbag is disabled.

This child seat concept by Volvo Cars has completely re-imagined how children could travel safely in cars of the future. Shown in the XC90 Excellence, this concept is innovatively designed to make it easier to get the child in and out of the seat without compromising comfort. The car seat swivels toward the door for ease of securing the child into the car seat and then locks in a rear-facing position. It also provides a safe rear-facing seating position that brings parent and child closer together, and includes smart storage for vital child accessories.

A video released by Volvo shows how the seat is able to recline, which would allow the child to sleep, and how it can be moved forward and back to reveal storage. 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmidDG-q8g8

Volvo focused on three key benefits:
♦ Making it easier to get the child into and out of the child seat from an ergonomic and comfort perspective,
♦ Providing the child with a safe rear-facing seating position that enables the child to keep eye-contact with either the driver or the rear passenger, and
♦ Including enough storage for those vital child accessories, such as diapers, bottles, wipes, and so on.

But is this concept safe? When asked, Volvo said "From a safety perspective there is no difference between the rear seat or front seat, given that the airbag is disconnected."

New WC18 Standards Will Provide Increased Safety for Wheelchair Passenger Transport

New safety standards for wheelchairs and tie-downs promise to improve transportation safety for people who must use their wheelchair as the passenger seat when riding in a car, van or bus. Transportation safety and occupant crash-protection studies have shown that a motor vehicle seat is an important part of an occupant protection system. As a result, concerns have been identified when a wheelchair must function as a motor-vehicle seat. With safety as the number one priority in wheelchair transportation, the Rehabilitation Engineering Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) updated the WC18 standards for wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint systems (WTORS) which went into effect in December 2015.

To comply with the new industry standards published in Wheelchairs and Transportation, Volume 4, of RESNA wheelchair standards — commonly referred to as WC18 — wheelchair tie-downs or other securement devices must pass two different dynamic strength tests. Both of the impact sled tests subject the tie-downs to a 30 mph, 20g crash using a 187 lb. “surrogate” wheelchair and average weight dummy. What differs between the two test requirements is how the occupant belts are installed.

WC18 requirement for the first impact sled test has the lap and shoulder belt installed in such a way that the entire load of the occupant is applied to the vehicle during impact, effectively separating the wheelchair and occupant loads from each other.

The second impact sled test is a result of the revised WC19 standard requiring the availability of an optional wheelchair-anchored lap belt to hold the occupant into place. This change results in higher wheelchair forces being transmitted to the tie-down/securement system when a person riding in a wheelchair uses the lap belt. As a result, RESNA developed the new WC18 standard requiring that WTORS to withstand the increased forces generated in a second impact test, in which the crash-test dummy is restrained by a lap belt that is anchored to the surrogate wheelchair rather than to the vehicle itself.

For more information, go to: http://www.umtri.umich.edu/what-we-offer/wheelchair-and-tiedownrestraint-testing
### Child Passenger Safety Trainings

The **CPS Certification** course provides the training necessary to become a certified CPS technician. This four-day course establishes CPS certification for a two-year cycle. The fee is $75. To register, go to www.safekids.org/certification.

The **CPS Renewal** course is for CPS technicians with an expired certification. The one-day course allows re-certification for a two-year cycle. The fee is $75. To register, go to www.safekids.org/certification.

The **TIPP CPS Technical Update** class has been pre-approved for 6 CEUs towards re-certification. Please contact TIPP if you are interested in hosting an Update class for CPS technicians in your area.

For questions on how to create a personal profile or register for a class, please go to [http://cert.safekids.org/ResourcesFAQs/Howto.aspx](http://cert.safekids.org/ResourcesFAQs/Howto.aspx).

### CPS Certification Courses

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<tr>
<th>County</th>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Butler County</td>
<td>PA201512101077</td>
<td>April 6 - 9, 2016</td>
<td>8:00 am - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Kathy Strotmeyer</td>
<td>412-885-0266</td>
<td>Cranberry EMS, PA 20272 US19</td>
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<td>Union County</td>
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<td>April 26 - 29, 2016</td>
<td>8:30 am - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Kathy Strotmeyer</td>
<td>412-885-0266</td>
<td>Evangelical Community Health &amp; Wellness Department, PA 210 JPM Road</td>
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<td>Luzerne County</td>
<td>PA201512011034</td>
<td>Thurs, March 10, 2016</td>
<td>9:00 am to 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Kathy Strotmeyer</td>
<td>412-885-0266</td>
<td>NE Training Center, 4989 Wyoming Avenue, PA 15229</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crawford County</td>
<td>PA201512081060</td>
<td>April 27, 2016</td>
<td>9:00 am - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Mary Lakari</td>
<td>814-838-9971</td>
<td>Meadville Fire Department, PA 16335</td>
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| Westmoreland County | PA201512001077           | March 11, 2016   | 9:00 am - 4:00 pm | Mary Lakari              | 814-838-9971    |好

### Renewal Courses

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<td>PA20151102990</td>
<td>Jan 8, 2016</td>
<td>8:00 am - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Kathy Strotmeyer</td>
<td>412-885-0266</td>
<td>Ross West View EMS, 5325 Perry Highway, PA 15229</td>
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<td>Luzerne County</td>
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<td>April 27, 2016</td>
<td>9:00 am - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Mary Lakari</td>
<td>814-838-9971</td>
<td>Meadville Fire Department, PA 16335</td>
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### CPS Update Courses

Please RSVP if planning to attend. Class earns 6 CEUs toward recertification.

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<td>February 18, 2016</td>
<td>9:00 am - 4:00 pm</td>
<td>Mary Lakari</td>
<td>814-838-9971</td>
<td>Goodwill Fire Co., 714 E High St, PA 19464</td>
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<td>Blair County</td>
<td>March 4, 2016</td>
<td>9:00 am - 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Mary Lakari</td>
<td>814-838-9971</td>
<td>PennDOT District 9, 1620 N Juniata Street, PA 16648</td>
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<td>Columbia County</td>
<td>March 30, 2016</td>
<td>9:30 am - 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Mary Lakari</td>
<td>814-838-9971</td>
<td>South Centre Police Dept, 6200 4th St, Bloomfield, PA 17815</td>
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<td>Monroe County</td>
<td>April 21, 2016</td>
<td>9:30 am - 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Mary Lakari</td>
<td>814-838-9971</td>
<td>Monroe County Emergency Management Agency, 100 Gypsum Road, PA 18360</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erie County</td>
<td>June 2, 2016</td>
<td>9:00 am - 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Mary Lakari</td>
<td>814-838-9971</td>
<td>Contact Mary</td>
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### A Boost for Booster Seats: All New Models Earn Good Safety Ratings

Booster seats reduce the risk of injury in a car crash by 45 percent for kids ages 4 to 8, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) says. And that organization said in its annual ranking of booster seat options, that almost any choice of booster seat that a parent makes this year will be a good one.

Twenty of the 23 booster seat models introduced in 2015 earned the highest possible safety rating from IIHS. The other three models — Cybex Solution M-Fix and Q2-Fix (highback) models and the Safety 1st Grow & Go (highback) earned a “good bet” rating.

Proper fit is key: IIHS ratings identify booster seats most likely to provide good lap and shoulder belt fit. Safety belts are designed with adults in mind, not children, but when a booster seat is used, the vehicle belt will fit a child correctly. The lap belt lies flat across a child's upper thighs, not across the soft abdomen, and the shoulder belt crosses snugly over the middle of a child's shoulder.

### Save the Date

**NHTSA Region 2 CPS Technical Conference**

**The 12th NHTSA Region 2 CPS Conference will be held at:**

**Lake Placid Conference Center**

2634 Main Street

Lake Placid, NY 12946

Date: May 10 - 12, 2016

The Conference Center is located in the heart of Lake Placid Village and within walking distance of the hotels.