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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK - SEPTEMBER 20 - 27, 2008

Contact:

Patty Carrell, State Coordinator

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies – The Montana Coalition

(406) 449-8611 or (406) 465-5829

CPS Techs Work to Disarm Montana's Biggest Killer

Experts to provide technical, legislative and programming updates at statewide continuing education event.

Bozeman – Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury for Montanans, and occupant protection advocates from across the state are working to change that. National experts from Washington DC and Maryland will join Montana Senator Mike Cooney to provide them with continuing education and insight.

“Parents and grandparents want to protect their families, but almost all are using child seats and seat belts incorrectly,” says Patty Carrell, State Coordinator for Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies – The Montana Coalition. “Our network of inspection stations and certified technicians provides free hands-on help to ensure correct selection and use.”

Child passenger safety technicians have completed a nationally standardized course that covers injury prevention, crash dynamics, child seats, seat belts and air bags. Continuing education and supervised activity are required for re-certification, every two years.

“Child seats, vehicles and safety recommendations change frequently,” says Joseph M. Colella, Director of Traffic Safety Projects. “The Montana network of educators needs to maintain their basic knowledge and skills, and also become proficient with any new technology.

Colella, a Maryland instructor who has provided occupant protection training in 44 states, will present three hours of technical information to attendees. Since 2005, he has also helped Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies develop and deliver specialized classes for healthcare providers, police officers, first responders, and early childhood professionals.

“The level of commitment from individuals, agencies and community coalitions is beyond compare,” says Alan Korn, Director of Public Policy for Safe Kids Worldwide. “They undergo extensive training and freely provide community services to help protect Montana families.”

Korn, an attorney and programmatic expert for over a decade, will address liability and quality assurance issues, at the upcoming event. He will also join Senator Cooney to discuss the shortcomings of Montana's current occupant protection statutes.

“Last year, 217 occupants died on Montana roadways, and another 1,300 were injured seriously enough that they can no longer drive, walk or otherwise function as they did before the crashes,” says Senator Mike Cooney. “Since the laws of physics come from a higher authority than the policies we create, our statutes need to better reflect them.”

Cooney, President of the Montana Senate and longtime advocate, will provide a legislative update to attendees. He will also discuss plans for better laws, in the 2009 session, and will identify tools that can be used to help educate community members and lawmakers on the importance of protecting Montanans.

“The bottom line is that too many of our friends, neighbors and family members are being hurt on our roads, and most of them are unrestrained or incorrectly restrained” says Bette Hall-Munger, Executive Director of Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies. “We need to provide whatever resources we can to help all citizens make the decision to buckle up correctly.”

The 2008 CPS Technician Update is being co-sponsored by Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies – The Montana Coalition and the Montana Department of Transportation. For information about the proper use of child seats & seat belts, or to locate a free child seat inspection, visit www.hmhb-mt.org or call 1-800-421-6667.

EVENT INFORMATION: 2008 CPS Technician Update
Hilton Garden Inn, 2023 Commerce Way, Bozeman

Monday, September 22
8:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

SIDEBAR: Montana 4 Steps to Safety

No one is safe until everyone is properly buckled.

Follow all vehicle and child seat instructions to ensure correct selection, use and safety.

1 – Face the Rear

Children should ride in rear-facing child seats until they reach the height or weight limits of a rear-facing convertible seat – at least until they are 12 months old and weigh 20 pounds. Rear-facing child seats provide the best protection for the head, neck and spinal cord.

2 – Face the Front

Children should ride in front-facing child seats with harnesses until they reach the height or weight limits of the harnesses. Most models can be used up to 40 pounds, but a few go to 65 pounds or more. Front-facing harnesses spread force over wide areas of small bodies.

3 – Booster Seat

Children should ride in booster seats used with lap and shoulder belts, until the seat belts alone fit correctly.

Depending on the child and the vehicle, this usually occurs between ages 8 and 11. Booster seats help belts stay on strong body parts that don't injure as easily.

4 – Seat Belt

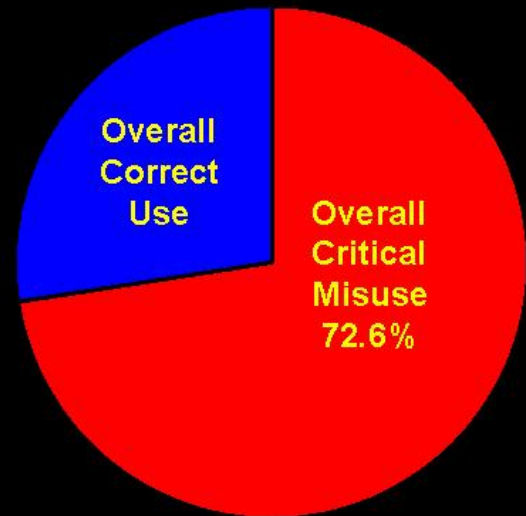
Seat belts fit if a child can sit all the way back with knees bent naturally over the seat edge. The lap belt must stay snug on the leg or hip bones, with the shoulder belt against the chest and shoulder. Seat belts distribute force and keep people in protected space.

Children under 13 should ride in a rear vehicle seat. A child in front is 40% more likely to be injured, whether there are air bags, advanced air bags or no air bags. NEVER place child in a rear-facing child seat near an active frontal air bag.

Critical Child Restraint Misuse

By Select Restraint Type:

- RF Infant 83.9%
- RF Convertible 83.5%
- FF Convertible 81.9%
- FF Only 79.3%
- Booster 39.5%



Critical misuse measures based on potential for causing injury

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - 2004

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