

Feb. 13-19 National Child Passenger Safety Week	April 25-29 National Playground Safety Week
March 20-26 National Poison Prevention Week	Apr. 30-May 7 National SAFE KIDS Week



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COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

Hold Your Breath — We Have a New Driver in the House!

My son Grant recently turned 15½, so we went to the local DPS office and got one of their handy little “How To Drive” books.

A few weeks later, when Grant announced he was ready to take his written test, we schlepped back to the DPS and stood in two long lines to show the required documentation and take the test.

Here's where I promised to leave out a few details. But let's just say Grant learned the hard way that driving is not all common sense, you do have to study that little book, and if a pedestrian is crossing your path, blowing your horn is *not* an appropriate response.

Once Grant passed the test and was presented an Oklahoma learner's permit, I finally mustered the courage to let him get behind the wheel.

His dad and I decided several weeks ago to go with the AAA parent-taught driver education course. Not because we have nerves of steel, but because driver education courses are scarce in Oklahoma high schools today, plus the parent-taught course carries the same insurance discount, but offers 55 hours of behind-the-wheel time vs. six hours in a regular class. I'm a big believer in hands-on practice, whether you're learning how to drive, learning how to install a car seat, or learning how to make a good pie crust.

So, after reviewing the video and materials that come with the AAA course, Grant and I took to the nearest abandoned parking lot. The whole experience gave me flashbacks

of when my father, a cop, who *did* have nerves of steel, taught me how to drive 30-plus years ago.

“OK, first you have to learn to use your right foot on both pedals. That way, if you ever have to drive with a standard transmission, you'll have your left foot free for the clutch,” I said to Grant.

“What's a clutch?” he said.

It never occurred to me that he hadn't ridden in a car with a standard transmission — or had, but was unaware of anything called a clutch.

Not exactly a mechanical person myself, I responded, “It's a pedal you'll probably never have to use. But just don't use your left foot on the brake, just in case.”

We survived Lesson No. 1. No pedestrians were mowed down, no curbs were scraped, and I only had to grab the wheel twice.

But if this child thinks he's grown up with a “safety Nazi,” boy, is he in for a shock now! More than 6,000 teens will die in car crashes this year. It is their *No. 1* health threat. Every day, I get the fatality reports from the DPS. These are one-paragraph summaries of each traffic fatality that occurs in the state.

I see how disproportionately young drivers are represented. I wonder about each one. I wonder if they ever took a drivers ed class. I wonder if they were alone in the vehicle, or if it was filled with a carload of testosterone-laden young boys. I wonder how many days/weeks/months/years their

mothers will cry themselves to sleep because they lost their sons too soon.

I think about all the times that I, as a young driver, drove too fast (in a VW bug, no less!), didn't buckle up (hardly anybody did in 1975), and that it was nothing short of a miracle that any of us survived our youth. I think about how the line between life and death is oh, so thin. How a swerve 12 inches to the left of center could mean our demise. How it's a wonder there aren't even more traffic fatalities, which are practically epidemic as it is.

Sorry, Grant. If you think Oklahoma's “graduated licensing law” leaves room for improvement, you're right. But it's nothing compared to “Mom's graduated licensing law.” I would encourage all parents of young drivers to enforce their own rules, realizing once again that just because something is legal doesn't mean it's safe.

Here are just a few suggestions:

- * Limit the number of passengers in the vehicle.
- * Limit high-risk driving situations during the first year (ie., ice/snow-covered roads, congested traffic or highway driving, unsupervised long trips, etc.)
- * Limit night-time driving.
- * Have stiff penalties for drug or alcohol use, or traffic citations.

For more information about this “Partnership for Survival” and the parent-teen contract, call AAA, (405) 290-7100.

— Martha Collar, Coalition Coordinator

FUND DEVELOPMENT

Our Holiday Wish — Safe Kids

This holiday season, we're grateful for the freedom we have in this country to make decisions — from how we celebrate the holidays to how we raise our kids. Still, we know some parents may not have the knowledge or resources to keep their children safe. You only need to read the paper to realize the work of SAFE KIDS is far from done.

The good news is, thanks to help from advocates like you, more parents throughout Oklahoma are learning how to protect their children.

Our office is almost overwhelmed by the number of requests from parents for assistance for child safety seats. More and more parents realize a car seat is a requirement. The challenge is some of the community resources for car seats have been used up and some volunteers can no longer staff events.

“If you enjoy what you do, you'll never work another day in your life.”

Confucius

Meanwhile, our new program providing car beds for high-risk premature babies being discharged from neonatal intensive care units is growing daily. Every time a nurse or doctor requests a car bed, we realize how many babies were perhaps at risk before this program began. The car seat loaner program for special needs children is the only one in Oklahoma, and hospitals throughout the state are quickly learning we can help. In addition to 25 new car beds, we have various types of other seats to accommodate other special needs children, most of which are in use. We anticipate needing additional seats and are hoping our '04 Annual Giving Campaign will help fund them.

Thank you for all you do for SAFE KIDS. You may think that simply showing a film to your class, volunteering for a few hours at a safety fair, or reminding a child to wear a helmet is not a big deal. But if only one parent hears your message, we are one step closer to achieving our mission: *to prevent unintentional injuries — the leading killer of kids — to children in Oklahoma.*

— Patricia Wimberley, Development Director

THANKS FOR MAKING OKLAHOMA SAFER FOR CHILDREN

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Graphic Design . . . Shauna Schroeder

Attention: Certified CPS Techs!

Don't wait to start on your re-certification. The re-certification process cannot be completed in a single day, and there is *no grace period*. Re-certification includes:

- Successfully meeting all pre-registration requirements, including verified seat check activity
- Registering and paying for re-certification
- Completing the written re-certification exam online

Have you checked your online profile lately? National SAFE KIDS, the new certifying body, has contacted all technicians they have contact information for, but they unfortunately were unable to contact many because their contact information is out of date.

For help with usernames and passwords, contact Customer Service at (877) 366-8154 or cps.certification@safekids.org. For more information, check out the policies and procedures manual on the National SAFE KIDS Web site, www.safekids.org.

PROGRAM NOTES

Preemie Seat Program Piloted

SAFE KIDS has just completed a pilot project in conjunction with the OU MEDICAL CENTER neonatologists, to provide one hour of training for 175 nurses in the special care nurseries on proper positioning of premature infants in conventional car seats and car beds. As of Dec. 1, OUMC instituted a new policy to test premature infants to determine if they can tolerate riding in a car seat without any breathing and/or heart rate issues. This testing is highly recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and should be done on all babies born at 36 weeks gestation or less for at least one hour to determine if the infant is physically stable enough to withstand the stresses of riding semi-reclined in a car seat. If the baby fails the test in their own car seat, they would possibly be sent home in an infant car bed, which allows the baby to lie flat in the car. As part of this program, SAFE KIDS, with the help of Pediatric & Adolescent Care, recently purchased 20 additional car beds for our loaner program.

EMS Providers Sought

A new injury prevention curriculum has been designed especially for emergency medical service providers. With help from the Oklahoma EMS for Children Resource Center and the Oklahoma Poison Control Center, the curriculum will soon be available on CD and distributed statewide. Train-the-trainer sessions for EMS instructors are scheduled for February through April; the instructors will in turn share the program with providers.

"EMS providers who deal with death and injury every day often wish they could do something to prevent the injury in the first place. This curriculum will make it relatively easy for them to get involved in prevention," said Paul Marmen, EMSC director.

These Routes Aren't Made For Walking

Walking is the deadliest form of travel in the U.S., according to a recent study by the non-profit Surface Transportation Policy Project. The study found pedestrian death rates for seniors, minorities, and children are all disproportionately high, particularly in Florida, New York and California. Last year in Oklahoma, 38 pedestrians were killed and hundreds more were injured.

Experts from the pedestrian advocate group America Walks say demographics, planning and safety programs all play a role in pedestrian safety.

NHTSA Requires Lap/Shoulder Belts For Rear Center Seats

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently announced a final rule requiring that rear center seats in all new passenger vehicles be equipped with lap/shoulder safety belts.

All passenger vehicles will be required to comply with the new rule by 2008 when NHTSA estimates the change will result in 10 to 23 fewer highway fatalities per year, and 245 to 495 fewer injuries.

SAFE KIDS Seeks Parent Advocates

Has your family been personally affected by an unintentional injury? Has a family member been spared from injury because of some action you took? If so, would you be willing to work with SAFE KIDS to help teach others? Sharing your story with others can also be therapeutic.

For more information, call SAFE KIDS and ask for a copy of our "Parent Advocate" form, which can also be accessed online, www.oksafekids.org.

RESOURCES

ATV Safety Kit

A new ATV safety kit is available for loan from SAFE KIDS. The kit, produced by the ATV Safety Institute, includes a video, a CD with public service announcements, and two booklets with tips for parents and teens. To check out the kit, contact SAFE KIDS, (405) 271-5695, or safekids@ouhsc.edu.

Roll Call Video

A new video about Oklahoma's amended child passenger safety law has been produced and will be sent in January to every law enforcement agency in the state for their use at roll call. The details of the law and other tips for choosing an appropriate child safety seat are discussed in the video, which was produced with the help of the Oklahoma City Public Schools Office of Communications. It is about five minutes and available in English and Spanish. In addition, a limited number of copies have been reserved for child care providers. To request a copy, contact SAFE KIDS.

"This rule will greatly improve safety for both children and older people," said Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D., NHTSA Administrator. "One huge advantage is that lap/shoulder belts can be used with belt-positioning booster seats, making the rear center seat the safest place for older children."

Using a lap belt only on a child who has outgrown a harness-type seat or an adult can result in "seat belt syndrome" — abdominal and/or spinal cord injuries.

Since 1989, NHTSA has required that all rear outboard seats in new passenger vehicles be equipped with lap/shoulder belts. At this point, 23 percent of new passenger cars, along with 51 percent of new vans and light trucks (SUVs and pickups), are only equipped with lap belts for use by rear center seat passengers.

The new rule will be phased in by manufacturers, with half of model year 2006 passenger vehicles offering the lap/shoulder safety belts; increasing to 80 percent of vehicles in model year 2007 and 100 percent in model year 2008.



Safety Partners

Farmers Insurance is SAFE KIDS' newest partner in conducting child safety seat check-ups. Farmers provides trained volunteers for the events, and also distributes their child ID kits called "M.I.L.K." Pictured (l-r) are Yvonne Marsh, Jennifer Bates, Lily Quach-Dinh and Jim Mallory.

UPCOMING CPS TRAININGS

The following "Introduction to Child Passenger Safety" classes are scheduled for 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.:

- * Sat., Jan. 15, Ponca City
- * Thurs., Feb. 3, Guymon
- * Wed., March 23, Noble
- * Sat., May 21, Perry
- * Wed., July 13, Ardmore

* Wed., Sept. 21, Durant

The following "Technical Update" class is scheduled for 1-4 p.m.:

* Fri., May 6, Woodward

The following CPS certification classes are scheduled for 8 a.m.-5 p.m.:

- * June 6-9, Tulsa
- * June 7-10, Okla. City

A one-day recertification class for CPS technicians whose certification has expired will be scheduled after Jan. 1.

For more information, contact SAFE KIDS, (405) 271-5695, or safekids@ouhsc.edu, or register online, www.oksafekids.org.



Dealers Donate Dummy

Members of the Metropolitan Auto Dealers Association present SAFE KIDS with a new infant CPR mannequin for their "Super Sitters" classes. Pictured (l-r) are Dale Daniels of Reynolds Ford, Frank Eskridge of Eskridge Lexus, Hal Steinke of Bob Howard Auto Group, Martha Collar of Oklahoma SAFE KIDS, Peter Hodges of MADA, Tony Fuentes of Five-Star Ford and Clay Moore of Bob Moore Pontiac-Buick-GMC. The next class is set for Dec. 29 and is open to youths age 11 to 14.

PUBLIC POLICY PROGRESS

Burglar Bars Keep Intruders Out, Fire Victims In

Be on the lookout for a bill next legislative session that addresses the issue of burglar bars. A family of four plus a teen-age friend died in a house fire in the Oklahoma City metro area this fall, trapped in their home by burglar bars. This bill will most likely attempt to prevent the installation of such bars unless they have a quick-release mechanism.

Farm Tag Issue to Be Addressed

Another issue that will be addressed next session is the seat belt exemption for occupants of vehicles bearing farm tags. The exemption was intended to not mandate seat belt use while the vehicle is used *on the farm*, but that is not how the law is being interpreted. This initiative is being led by the Oklahoma Chiefs of Police Association.

Trouble May Increase For Drunk Drivers Carrying Kids

The Oklahoma Ignition Interlock Association (OIIA) has released its 2005 legislative agenda aimed at making the streets safer from those who continue to drive while under the influence of alcohol. One proposed initiative would require an ignition interlock system to be installed on the vehicle of a motorist who receives a DUI conviction with a minor child in the car, even if it is a first offense.

"In a 2000 CDC report, 64% of children killed by impaired drivers in the U.S. were killed by their *own* impaired driver," said Toby Taylor, president of the OIIA. "Although we can all make the choice of whether or not to get into a car with an intoxicated driver, a child has little or no choice."

To learn how you can help OIIA pass this legislation, contact Patrick Gaines, (405) 831-7092.