

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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## Three Children Dead in Holiday-Weekend Tragedies; DUI Suspected

TORRANCE, CA (September 7, 2016) – Three young children are dead after two separate tragedies during the Labor Day weekend, with drunk driving suspected in both incidents.

Two children from Bakersfield died in a rollover crash on Highway 166 near Cuyama Monday. The 7-year-old boy and his 4-year-old sister were ejected from the vehicle and died at the scene. The 36-year-old male driver was arrested and booked on multiple charges, including felony DUI and gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated. Several occupants of another vehicle caught up in the crash, including two children, suffered minor-to-moderate injuries.

The 15-month-old son of well-known Mixed Martial Arts fighter Marcus Kowal also died Sunday from injuries sustained when the child and his 15-year-old cousin were plowed into by an SUV while using a crosswalk in Hawthorne on Saturday afternoon. A 72-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of hit-and-run and drunk driving after fleeing the scene.

The scenario is all too familiar to Stephanie Tombrello, Executive Director of SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. “Our hearts go out to the children and families involved in these awful crashes. Sadly, these cases are becoming more and more common. Sometimes it’s the life-choices of a stranger that causes these tragedies, but more often it’s a person responsible for the child’s welfare – often a parent. The results are devastating for so many families. We urgently need drivers, agencies that work with families who are struggling with addiction, and the courts, to take this risk to children more seriously. We ask the media to help us call attention to this growing problem. It is essential that families with members who suffer from such addictions

have a plan to prevent children from riding with that family member or friend. SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is here to help.”

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