

For immediate release

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Safety Seat Checkup at the Petersen Automotive Museum

LOS ANGELES, CA (March 8)—Parents can combine the fun of a family outing at the Petersen Automotive Museum with the serious business of ensuring their children's safety by attending Safety Seat Checkup Day on April 26. Coordinated by SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. with sponsorship by California Office of Traffic Safety and Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., free safety seat inspections will be provided from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Museum parking lot at Fairfax and Wilshire in Los Angeles. Families participating in the checkup will be given discount coupons to visit the museum.

Children and adults who have been saved by safety belts, safety seats, or helmets are invited to the 11:30 a.m. press conference so they can be recognized. Local lawmakers and other dignitaries are expected for the celebration and to present resolutions for Safety Seat Checkup Week (April 20-26). Sponsors and supporters for the event are California Office of Traffic Safety, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Petersen Automotive Museum, and Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County.

Teams of nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians and other trained volunteers will inspect each safety seat at the event to make sure it fits the child properly, is correctly installed, and is in the safest possible location in the vehicle. Sample seats will be on display to help parents choose a safety seat that fits the child and can be securely installed in the vehicle. Older children will be invited to try the 5-Step Test to find out if they fit properly in a vehicle safety belt without a booster.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. conducts free car seat checks throughout the year at various locations as a part of a training program for health and safety professionals. At checkups last year, more than

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90% of the seats checked were not safe for the child or needed adjustment. Even well-educated, safety-conscious parents often make unsuspected mistakes that can result in serious injuries to their children. According to the California Highway Patrol, more than 80% of the small children killed in car crashes would have survived if they had been properly buckled up.

California law requires children to ride in a safety seat or booster, in the back seat, until they are at least six years old or weigh 60 pounds. However, most children need a booster for proper belt fit until they are at least age 8 to 10, depending on their proportions and the design of the vehicle. SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. recommends that children ride in the back seat, which is 40% safer than the front, until they are old enough to drive.

During Special Enforcement Week (April 13-19), law enforcement officers will focus their efforts on writing tickets for children under six riding in the front seat, babies on laps, and children under 16 riding loose or in the back of pickup trucks. Special Enforcement Week is co-sponsored by Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County and SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is the national non-profit organization dedicated to child passenger safety and was founded in 1980 by fifteen Los Angeles-area safety advocates. The organization is nationally recognized for technical expertise and program excellence. An innovative program started last fall with support from a California Kids' Plates grant will teach expectant parents how to buckle up their newborns safely and help hospitals develop appropriate policies and procedures regarding child passenger safety. Last month, Toyota Motor Sales, U. S.A., and SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. began a new collaboration to help families have tether anchors installed in pre-2001 Toyota and Lexus vehicles. Using a top tether strap with a safety seat enhances protection and allows for use of a wider range of products. For more information, go to www.carseat.org or call the Safe Ride Helpline: (310) 222-6860 or (800) 745-SAFE. For Spanish: (310) 222-6862 or (800) 747-SANO.