

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Parents Warned After Baby Crash Death

Parents urged to take up free safety seat inspection appointments offered Saturday.

(Torrance, April 18, 2012) — A horrific rollover crash that claimed the life of a newborn baby from Long Beach Monday has prompted warnings to parents from child passenger safety advocates.

The crash, which occurred on the 710 freeway at the Long Beach Boulevard off-ramp, took the lives of eight-week-old Sophia Gutierrez, her father Abel Israel Gutierrez, and her mother, who has not yet been named.

The tragedy is a sad reminder of the dangers that car travel can pose to children, according to child safety advocates.

“Our hearts go out to the families of this precious child and her parents,” said SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello. “Nothing could be more devastating for them. Unfortunately, this is a tragedy that is repeated over a thousand times across our country every year.”

“Every day we put our children in the car, and we rarely stop to think about the risk. But car crashes are the number 1 cause of death and serious injury of children. And many of those deaths and injuries are preventable.”

While emphasizing that no details of the circumstances of this particular crash have been released, Tombrello is keen to alert parents to the fact that **9 out of 10 safety seats inspected at safety seat checkups are found to be fitted or used incorrectly**. In most cases, this means that the child is at greater risk in a crash.

“Parents who attend safety seat checkups are conscientious, careful parents who usually think they’ve done a good job installing their safety seat. The fact that 90% of them have made errors should make every parent think seriously about having their seat checked by a Child Passenger Safety Technician” said Tombrello.

In a sad coincidence, the death of little Sophia came during the SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. sponsored Child Passenger Safety Week, which is observed by many districts across California.

Safety Seat Checkup Day is being marked this Saturday, April 21 at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. Child Passenger Safety Technicians will be on hand from 10 am -2 pm offering free inspections of the installation and use of safety seats. Families who wish to have their children's seats checked can call SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. at 310/222 6860 to make an appointment.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is the national non-profit organization solely dedicated to child passenger safety. The organization is nationally recognized for technical expertise and program excellence. It offers a statewide helpline for parents and regular safety seat checkups through a program funded by California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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.

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