

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Contact: Stephanie Tombrello, LCSW, Executive Director
SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A., stombrello@carseat.org
(310) 222-6860 or (800) 745-SAFE (English)
(310) 222-6862 or (800) 747-SANO (Spanish)

Safety Seat Checkup at the Petersen Automotive Museum

LOS ANGELES, CA (April 9, 2007) -- 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 28. 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.

At 11:30 a.m., there will be a press conference honoring Assembly Member Gene Mullin for introducing AB 881. The bill increases protection for children under age eight by requiring them to ride in a safety seat or booster, which is 60% safer than a vehicle belt alone. Children age 8 or under would be required to ride in the back seat, which is 40% safer than the front. Current law permits children to wear vehicle belts, if they are properly used, and to sit in the front seat when they reach six years or 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.

Children and adults who have been saved by safety belts, safety seats, or helmets have been invited to the 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. 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.

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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 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.

During Special Enforcement Week (April 15-21), 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. In a novel training program supported by California Kids' Plates, the organization is introducing hands-on training for social workers for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. 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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