



County of Sonoma  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
SERVICES

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*Prevention and Planning Division*  
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**Safe Kids Sonoma County, CHP, and Others  
Unite to Remind Parents of Importance of Child Passenger Safety**  
*Valentine's Week to Focus on Booster Seats- If They're Under 4'9", They NEED a Booster*

**[2/10/07]**—According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), approximately 7,500 lives have been saved by the proper use of child restraints during the past 20 years. Yet, motor vehicle crashes remain the number one killer of children ages 4 to 14 in America. The reason? Too often it is the improper use or non-use of child safety seats and booster seats.

That's why Safe Kids Sonoma County is joining the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and other state and local leaders around Valentine's Day this year to commemorate Child Passenger Safety Week (Feb. 10-17). On Saturday, February 10, Safe Kids Sonoma County kicked off the week with a car seat check-up event in West Santa Rosa. With 10 stations and over 20 certified car seat technicians, Safe Kids showed parents how to properly install their children's car seats and booster seats. Free car seats were available to families that qualified.

"In 2005, an average of five children ages 14 and younger were killed and 640 were injured in motor vehicle crashes every single day," said Jette Selberg, a NHTSA car seat technician instructor at Rohnert Park Public Safety. "That's why we'll be working so hard during Child Passenger Safety Week and throughout the year talking to parents and caregivers about the importance of restraining their children properly in their vehicles."

While 98 percent of America's infants and 93 percent of children ages 1 to 3 are regularly restrained, not enough children ages 4 through 7 are restrained *properly* for their size and age. Only 10 to 20 percent of children ages 4 through 7 who should be using booster seats to protect them are actually in them. But children ages 4 to 8 who are placed in booster seats are 59 percent less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a seat belt, according to a study by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

"As children grow, how they need to be secured in a car, truck, van or SUV changes," Selberg said. "Moreover, when you're an expectant mother, it's important to always wear your seat belt to protect yourself and your unborn child. Wear the lap belt across your hips and below your belly with the shoulder belt across your chest. Once your child is born, be a role model and continue to buckle up every trip, every time."

"This year, during Child Passenger Safety Week, we are working hard to remind all parents, grandparents and child care providers that if their children are under 4'9", they need to be in a booster seat," said Selberg. "What better way to show you love your children on Valentine's Day than to make sure they are secured properly. Make it the law in your car - it might actually save your children's lives."

Side Bar Material

**For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers simply need to remember and follow the 4 Steps for Kids:**

- 1) For the best possible protection keep infants in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until a minimum of age 1 and at least 20 pounds;**



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- 2) When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at a minimum age 1 and at least 20 pounds) they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds);
- 3) Once children outgrow their forward-facing seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in booster seats, in the back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall);
- 4) When children outgrow their booster seats, (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall) they can use the adult seat belt in the back seat, if it fits properly (lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt across the chest).

There are many free child passenger safety resources in Sonoma County. To get your car seat checked, make an appointment with any of the following certified car seat technicians:

**Car Seat Check Ups:**

Santa Rosa- Bianchi Traffic Safety Service, Donna Bianchi (by appointment, fee) 579-3485

American Medical Response, Karin Dowling (by appointment) 570-2808

American Medical Response, Carrie Cabral (by appointment) 478-0704

Sonoma County Sheriff's Department, Pat Moffitt (by appointment) 565-3940

Rohnert Park/ Cotati- California Highway Patrol (by appointment) 588-1400

Rancho Adobe Fire District (Penngrove), Lynn Millerick (by appointment) 795-6011

Rohnert Park Public Safety, Jette Selberg (Th-M by appointment) 584-2649

Petaluma

Santa Rosa Junior College (Petaluma campus), Tera Gutierrez-Morarity (by appointment) 527-1000

Sonoma

Sonoma Police Department, Mike Baraz (T-F 6 a.m.- 2 p.m., call first) 996-3602

Guerneville

River Child Care Services, Maria Cardona (by appointment) 887-1809

Windsor

Windsor Police Department, Lyndy Stevens and Juan Valencia (by appointment) 838-1234

Healdsburg

Healdsburg Fire Department, Bill Albers (M-F, by appointment) 431-3360

Cloverdale

Cloverdale Police Department, Teresa McDonald (by appointment) 894-2150

**Car Seat and Booster Seat Education and Distribution Programs:**

***For the Public and Clients (reduced cost car seats for income-eligible families)***

585-6108 California Parenting Institute, Santa Rosa (car seat voucher)

894-4229 x155 Coppertowers Family Medical Center, Cloverdale

887-1809 River Child Care Services, Guerneville

**For Clinic Clients only:**

433-7008 Alliance Medical Center, Healdsburg (education)

521-4565 Sonoma County Indian Health, Santa Rosa

547-2222 Southwest Community Health Center, Santa Rosa

578-2005 Roseland Children's Health Center, Santa Rosa, Irma Oregon

For more information about Child Passenger Safety Week and the proper use of booster seats, please visit [www.BoosterSeat.gov](http://www.BoosterSeat.gov), [www.SaferCar.gov](http://www.SaferCar.gov) or [www.SeatCheck.org](http://www.SeatCheck.org).



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Safe Kids Sonoma County works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Safe Kids Sonoma County was founded in 1998 and is led by the County of Sonoma Department of Health Services. ###