



Elk Grove Police Department

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 17, 2017

Free Resources for Parents to Ensure Children's Safety

ELK GROVE, CA – Every day in America, too many children ride in car seats that have been installed incorrectly, or are riding in the wrong car seats for their ages and sizes. Even worse, many other children ride while completely unbuckled. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), two out of three car seats are improperly installed or misused. To help combat this issue, Elk Grove PD and NHTSA are sponsoring Child Passenger Safety Week from September 17-23, 2017, a campaign dedicated to helping parents, grandparents and caregivers make sure their children ride as safely as possible - every trip, every time.

“Every 33 seconds in 2015, a child under 13 was involved in a crash,” said Lt. Eric White of the Elk Grove Police Department’s Traffic Bureau. “Using car seats that are age- and size-appropriate is the best way to keep your children safe.”

According to NHTSA, motor vehicle crashes are a leading killer of children, and fatalities are on the rise. Car seats, booster seats, and seat belts can make all the difference. “In 2015, there were 248 children under the age of 5 saved because they were riding in car seats,” he said. “Car seats matter, and having the right car seat installed and used the right way is critical.”

He added that too often, parents move their children to the front seat before they should, which increases the risk of injury and death. The safest place for all kids under 13 is in the back seat. Also, according to NHTSA in 2015, about 25.8 percent of children 4 to 7 who should be riding in booster seats were prematurely moved to seat belts, and 11.6 percent were unbuckled altogether.

“It’s our job to keep our children safe,” he said. “Get your car seats checked. Make certain they’re installed correctly, and that your kids are in the right seats and are buckled in correctly. Even if you think your child is safe, check again, so you can be sure that your child is the safest he or she can be while traveling.”

NHTSA Trained Child Safety Seat Technicians are available by appointment with health providers, insurance companies and many local businesses which can be found at the [Safe Kids Worldwide](#) website this and every week of the year.

California law requires:

- Children under 2 years of age shall ride in a rear-facing car seat unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds OR is 40 or more inches tall. The child shall be secured in a manner that complies with the height and weight limits specified by the manufacturer of the car seat.
- Children under the age of 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat. Children who are 8 years of age OR have reached 4'9" in height may be secured by a booster seat, but at a minimum must be secured by a safety belt.

<https://www.chp.ca.gov/programs-services/programs/child-safety-seats/child-safety-seat-videos>

When can a child graduate to a booster seat?

- California law does not address graduation time from a five point harness to a booster seat. In the interest of safety, do not rush to move a child into a booster seat before they're ready. Each time you "graduate" your child to the next seat, there's a reduction in the level of protection for your child. Keep your child in each stage for as long as possible.
- A child is ready for a booster seat when they have outgrown the weight or height limit of their forward-facing harnesses, which is typically between 40 and 65 pounds. Read the forward-facing car seat's owner's manual to determine height and weight limits, and keep your child in a harnessed seat for as long as possible.
- Children at this stage are not yet ready for adult safety belts and should use belt-positioning booster seats until they are at least 4'9" and between 8 and 12 years old. Safety belts are designed for 165-pound male adults, so it's no wonder that research shows poorly fitting adult belts can injure children.

(California Vehicle Code Section 27360.) (California Vehicle Code Section 27363.)

Always remember to register your car seat and booster seat with the car seat manufacturer so you can be notified in the event of a recall. Parents and caregivers can view more information on car seat safety and locate a certified child passenger safety technician at www.nhtsa.gov/carseat.

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