



Town of Falmouth

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Falmouth Fire-EMS and the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety Urges Parents and Caregivers to Get Their Child Safety Seats Inspected

Falmouth, Maine – Falmouth Fire-EMS and the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety are urging parents and caregivers to make sure their child safety seats are properly installed during National Child Passenger Safety Week, September 19-25, 2010. Car seat checkup events will be conducted in several Maine communities where certified car seat technicians will be available to provide free hands-on child safety seat inspections and education. A calendar of events can be found at www.buckleupmaine.org

“It’s the responsibility of every parent and caregiver out there to make sure their children are safely restrained – every trip, every time,” said Lauren Stewart, director of the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety. “We are urging everyone to get their child safety seats inspected. When it comes to the safety of a child, there is no room for mistakes.”

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research, 8,959 lives have been saved from 1975 to 2008 by the proper use of child restraints. In 2008, among children under age 5 in passenger vehicles, an estimated 244 lives were saved by child restraint use (child safety seats and adult seat belts). Research shows that child restraints provide the best protection for all children until they can fit properly in an adult seat belt.

For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers can attend a local car seat checkup event and refer to the following *4 Steps for Kids* guidelines that determine which restraint system is best suited to protect children based on age and size:

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. Most car seats allow a child to remain rear-facing until 30 pounds while others have a 35, 40 and even 45 pound limit. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until a minimum of age 1 and at least 20 pounds.
2. When children outgrow the weight or height limits of their rear-facing seats (at a minimum age 1 and at least 20 pounds) they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats with a 5 point harness, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat.
3. Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats, 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 when they are 4’9” tall).
4. When children outgrow their booster seats and when the vehicle seat belt fits properly, (usually not until they are 4’9” tall) they can use the adult seat belt in the back seat.

Remember: All children younger than 13 should ride in the back seat.

For additional information about child passenger safety, visit www.buckleupmaine.org