



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 8, 2007

CONTACT:

Nathan Bowie, 651-201-7571

Dennis Smith, 651-201-7569

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

ARMER/911
Program

Bureau of
Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Homeland
Security and
Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal
and
Pipeline Safety

THREE IN FOUR CHILD CAR SEATS USED INCORRECTLY IN MINNESOTA

*February 11–17 Is National Child Passenger Safety Week;
TV Outlets: Crash Test B-Roll and PSA Available on Pathfire*

ST. PAUL — In Minnesota, three out of every four child restraints are used incorrectly — meaning children are riding in the wrong restraint or it is not properly secured. Between 2001–2005, 73 children under age 11 were killed on Minnesota roads and at least 25 of those were either not in child restraints or the restraint was used improperly.

To encourage proper child restraint use, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) is urging Minnesota parents to re-educate themselves during National Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Week, Feb. 11–17.

“Many families are on-the-go all the time,” says Maureen Janke, Public Safety CPS coordinator. “It’s critical we take time to ensure children are correctly restrained in our vehicles.”

Janke says a major issue with child passenger safety is that parents are unaware of the restraint steps a child should progress through as they grow: rear-facing infant seats, forward-facing toddler seats, booster seats, and seat belts.

The most commonly ignored restraint is a booster seat — seat lifts that help seat belts fit children properly. In Minnesota, only 30 percent of 4–8 year-olds use boosters. Poor seat belt fit can contribute to serious injury, ejection and death in traffic crashes. Booster seats are recommended for children 4–8 years-old and under 4-feet 9-inches.

Janke says a sign that a seat belt does not fit properly and a booster is needed is if the child wraps the shoulder belt behind them to avoid the belt rubbing against their neck.

Parents are encouraged to visit the state’s www.buckleupkids.state.mn.us Web site to download fact sheets and a child safety chart that identifies the proper seat for children as they grow. Educational brochures such as the “Buckle Up Kids” and “Don’t Skip a Step” are also available as well as child safety-themed valentines for children to color and give to parents.

###

Editor’s note: For Pathfire video instructions and to interview a CPS expert in your area, contact Nathan.bowie@state.mn.us.

444 Cedar Street, Suite 155 • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-5155 • www.dps.state.mn.us