

# Safety NETS

SPRING 2002

Information to help keep your employees safe on the road

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MINNESOTA NETWORK OF EMPLOYERS FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY

## The Facts About Child Passenger Safety

### How you can help

A recent study released by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign reinforced the continuing need to educate adults about the dangers of letting children ride unbuckled in vehicles or in the wrong type of seat. Based on nationwide observational surveys, the study found that one third of children under the age of 14 were riding in the wrong type of restraint and another 14 percent were not buckled in at all (see back cover for details of the study). The facts are powerful and disturbing. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- Child safety seat use plummets after age 3. In one study by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, one-half of 3- to 8-year-old children were not being placed in child safety or booster seats, where most of them belong.
- Small children (ages 2 to 5) who are placed in seat belts rather than child safety seats or booster seats are 3.5 times more likely to be significantly injured in a crash. They are four times more likely to receive a significant head injury.
- More than half (56%) of all children under 15 years old killed in car crashes in 2000 were completely unrestrained.
- Unrestrained children are three times more likely to be injured than those who are restrained.



- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages four to 14.
- Child safety seats reduce fatal injury by 71 percent for infants and by 54 percent for toddlers (1-4 years old) in passenger cars. For infants and toddlers in light trucks, the seats reduce fatal injury by 58 percent and 59 percent, respectively.
- Traffic crashes have psychological as well as physical repercussions. A study in the journal

*Pediatrics* found that 25 percent of children suffering traffic-related injuries were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, as were 15 percent of their parents. This is a rate similar to that found among children exposed to violence.

Employers can play a role in providing education on this issue. On the next page of this newsletter we've created a camera-ready information sheet that you can copy and hand out to your employees. It's a way to show

your concern about the safety of your employees and their families. And it's good business—traffic crashes off the job and their aftermath take an enormous toll on workplace resources and productivity.

# Four Steps to Keep Kids Safe

Great progress has been made in increasing the use of child safety seats and booster seats, which has decreased deaths among children in car and truck crashes. But much more remains to be done. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends the following:

- Children 12 and younger should be buckled up in the back seat. The front seat is a more dangerous spot in a crash. And front air bags deployed in even minor fender-benders have seriously hurt and even killed some children.
- When placing a child safety seat or booster seat in your car or truck, be sure to read the instructions so you install and use the seat correctly. Also, look at your vehicle's owner's manual to see what it says about installing and using child safety seats and booster seats.
- Children, as they grow, should progress through three types of child safety seats before using the seat belt alone: from rear-facing seats to forward-facing seats to booster seats.



- Infants must always be placed in rear-facing seats until they are at *least* one year old *and* 20 pounds.
- Children between 20 and 40 pounds should be placed in forward-facing safety seats.
- When your child outgrows his or her forward-facing safety seat, use a booster seat until your child is at least 8 years old or over 4-feet 9-inches tall. Seat belts alone are made for adults. A booster seat raises a child up so the seat belt fits. This will prevent your child from being thrown from the car, or thrown around inside it, during a crash.
- Children who have outgrown booster seats should use belts. Take the time to educate yourself about the correct way to buckle your child. If you need more information

check the following online resources:

- [www.mnsafetycouncil.org/kids/cpsweek.htm](http://www.mnsafetycouncil.org/kids/cpsweek.htm)
- <http://www.dps.state.mn.us/trafsafe/childsafety/childhome.html>
- <http://www.buckleupamerica.org/>

## Finding the Right Seat

### How to Buckle Up a Child

Under 1 year old and less than 20 lbs.	<b>Rear-facing infant seat</b>
Over 1 year old and between 20 lbs. and 40 lbs.	<b>Forward-facing child safety seat</b>
Approximately age 4 to at least age 8 or under 4-feet 9-inches tall	<b>Booster seat</b>
At least age 8 or over 4-feet 9-inches tall	<b>Seat belt</b>