

NEWS RELEASE

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Give Your Child a Safe Ride, Every Trip, Every Time

Bismarck, N.D.—Every day in America, too many children ride in car seats that have been installed incorrectly or are the wrong car seats for their age and size. Other children ride while completely unbuckled. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 59 percent of car seats are misused. To help combat the issue, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) announced today its participation in Child Passenger Safety Week, a campaign dedicated to helping parents and caregivers make sure their children ride as safely as possible, every trip, every time. Child Passenger Safety Week runs Sunday, Sept. 18, to Saturday, Sept. 24, and is sponsored by NHTSA.

“Every 33 seconds in the United States, a child under age 13 is involved in a crash,” said Dawn Mayer, Child Passenger Safety Program Director. “Using car seats that are age- and size-appropriate is the best way to keep your child safe. Motor vehicle crashes are a leading killer of children and car seats, booster seats, and seat belts can make all the difference. In 2014, there were 252 children under age 5 saved because they were riding in the correct car seats. Car seats matter, and having the right car seat installed and used the right way is critical.”

She 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 age 13 is in the back seats of cars. Also, according to NHTSA, about 24 percent of children ages 4 to 7 years, who should be riding in booster seats, were prematurely moved to seat belts; and 9 percent were unbuckled altogether.

“It’s our job to keep our children safe,” she said. “Get your car seats checked. Make certain they’re installed correctly, 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.”

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

NHTSA recommends keeping children rear-facing as long as possible up to the top height or weight allowed by their particular seats. Once a child outgrows the rear-facing-only “infant” car seat, he/she should travel in a rear-facing “convertible” or all-in-one car seat. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing size limits, the child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether. After outgrowing the forward-facing car seats with harness, children should be placed in booster seats until they’re the right size to use seat belts safely.

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.

For help with your child passenger safety needs, please contact Dawn Mayer at the NDDoH at 701.328.4536 or 800.472.2286, or visit: www.ndhealth.gov/injuryprevention/childpassenger. Check out the new NDDoH online ordering system through this site. The public can also visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website: www.safercar.gov/parents for additional information.

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