

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

September 18, 2017

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North Dakota Observes Child Passenger Safety Week

BISMARCK, N.D. – Many children ride in car seats that have been installed incorrectly or ride in the wrong car seats for their ages and sizes. Even worse, many other children ride while completely unbuckled. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), two out of three car seats are misused. The NHTSA emphasizes Child Passenger Safety Week from September 17-23, to help promote correct usage. The campaign is dedicated to reminding parents and caregivers to make sure their children ride as safely as possible – every trip, every time.

“Every 33 seconds in 2015, in the U.S., a child under 13 was involved in a crash,” said Dawn Mayer, Child Passenger Safety Program Director with the North Dakota Department of Health. “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 age five saved in the U.S. because they were riding in car seats,” she said. “Car seats matter, and having the right car seat installed and used the right way is critical.”

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 car seat. Once a 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 seat with harness, children should ride in a booster seat until they are the right size to use a seat belt safely. The safest place for all kids under age 13 is in the back seat.

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“Keep your children safe,” Mayer 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.”

During Child Passenger Safety Week, the North Dakota Department of Health is offering a two-day workshop to more than 220 North Dakota child passenger safety technicians in Bismarck, Tuesday, Sept. 19 and Wednesday, Sept. 20.

Parents and caregivers can view more information on car seat safety and locate a certified child passenger safety technician at www.nhtsa.gov/carseat or can contact the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2286.

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