



NEWS RELEASE

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TXDOT OFFERS FREE CHILD SAFETY SEAT INSPECTIONS TO SAVE YOUNG LIVES

Child deaths on Texas roadways up 25 percent in 2014

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AUSTIN – The Texas Department of Transportation offers free child safety seat checks at the agency's 25 statewide district offices and encourages all caregivers to make an appointment as part of national Child Passenger Safety Week, Sept. 13-19. TxDOT reminds all Texans that properly restraining their children while riding in vehicles is an everyday, year-round responsibility. It's also the law.

"We're not going to stop until every child in Texas is buckled into the correct safety seat for their age and size," said TxDOT Executive Director LtGen Joe Weber, USMC (Ret). "It's not only the law, but it's also unacceptable for any child to die or be injured on our roads – especially if those deaths and injuries could have been prevented with the proper use of a safety seat."

In 2014, crashes on Texas roads killed 81 children younger than 8 years of age. In 2013, that number was 67. Texas law requires all children under 8 years old – unless they are taller than 4 feet 9 inches – to be in a child safety seat whenever they ride in a passenger vehicle. Failure to properly restrain a child can result in a ticket up to \$250.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports most parents are confident they have correctly installed their child's safety seat, but 59 percent have not. Common child safety seat errors include: installing the seat too loosely; putting the harness straps through the wrong slots; leaving harness straps too loose; positioning the chest clip incorrectly; and using the wrong seat belt path.

Drivers should refer to their specific child safety seat manufacturer's manual for instructions on how to install the safety seat. The vehicle owner's manual also includes information on the proper placement of the safety seat and proper use of the seat belt or LATCH system.

To schedule a free child safety seat check with a nearby TxDOT Traffic Safety Specialist, text the word "seat" and your ZIP code to 876526. Drivers also can visit www.SaveMeWithASeat.com to learn if a child should be in a rear-facing seat, forward-facing seat or booster seat.

During Child Passenger Safety Week, two TxDOT safety demonstration vans will travel the state to show caregivers how to choose and install the correct safety seat for their child. The demo vans will appear at safety seat check events and media outlets.

For more information, contact TxDOT Media Relations at MediaRelations@txdot.gov or (512) 463-8700.

The information contained in this report represents reportable data collected from the Texas Peace Officer's Crash Report (CR-3). This information was received and processed by the department as of Sept. 1, 2015.

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