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The new standards were recommended by a panel of medical and safety experts, seat manufacturers and consumer groups.

Clinton singled out one member of that panel, Joe Colella, executive director of The Dana Foundation, who has been lobbying for a universal model since his 3-year-old niece, Dana, was killed in a 1993 crash. She was in a car seat that was incompatible with the seat belts in her family's car, Clinton said.

``All too often, car seats don't protect our children as well as they should," he said. ``Anyone who has struggled to get a car seat to fit snugly into a back seat knows exactly what I'm talking about."

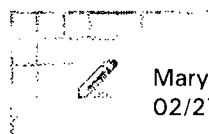
The president repeated his recommendation that states tighten their standards for drunken driving convictions and adopt blood alcohol concentration levels of 0.08 percent ``to keep more drunk drivers off our roads." Many states now set their level at 0.10 percent.

Congress last year defeated an effort to push states to make that change.

The government estimates a 137-pound woman who drinks three beers in two hours could have a blood alcohol content of 0.07, while drinking four beers over the same time period could push her to 0.10.

AP-NY-02-27-99 1357EST

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Mary L. Smith
02/27/99 02:27:34 PM

Child
Safety
Seat

Record Type: Record

To: Thomas L. Freedman/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: ap child safety seat story

By TERENCE HUNT AP White House Correspondent

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- President Clinton announced new federal rules Saturday to make child car seats safer and protect ``our smallest and most vulnerable passengers.''

The new measure is aimed at helping parents avoid the familiar struggle to cinch child safety seats and the confusion that results when using seats or cars of different designs. The rule establishes a single standardized system for anchoring child safety seats in new cars and light trucks by the end of this year.

Clinton, in his weekly radio address, cited government estimates that more than 70 percent of children who ride in car seats are at risk of injury because their seats are improperly installed.

Under the rule, all new child seats will have three standard attachments, one on top and two at the base. And all new cars and trucks will have standard anchors in the back seats to link to the seat attachments.

``With this new rule and with these three simple attachments,' ' the president said, ``we can save lives and prevent up to 3,000 injuries a year.''

His radio address was broadcast during a six-day trip with stops in Arizona and California before a four-day vacation at a Utah ski resort. Before leaving Los Angeles, the president played golf at the Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades. His partners included his chief fund-raiser, Terry McAuliffe.

The new federal rules have been a long time coming. Two years ago Clinton announced he was directing the Transportation Department to set uniform standards for car seats. Since then, the design of the seat anchorage has changed, in part to try to ensure that auto makers could use the same anchor system in vehicles sold in other countries.

FACSIMILE COVER PAGE

Date: 3/1/99
Time: 15:23:26
Pages: 2

*Child
Sent*

To: Mary Smith
Company: White House Domestic Policy
Fax #: 202-456-7431

From: Joe Colella
Title: Executive Director
Company: DANA Foundation
Address: P.O. Box 1050
Germantown, MD 20875-1050
United States
Fax #: 301-601-9228
Voice #: 301-601-4330 / JMColella@aol.com

Mary,

Here is the response that I sent to an inquiring police chief, today. The questions asked were in reference to whether police training and involvement should continue to be supported. The original e-mail brought up the issues I addressed.

Joe

I've participated in the LACP Conference for the past three years, and I was also a judge for the National Chief's Challenge. I would love to see more attention to occupant protection issues (workshops and meetings), during the Conference. Obviously, state and provincial attention is just as (if not more) important!

I am a bit worried about people being pacified by the universal anchorage announcement. The costs were understated at \$15 per child restraint. NHTSA's actual estimates are:

CRS Rigid	\$33.87	-	\$43.87
CRS Nonrigid	\$9.62	-	\$21.09

The rigid, high-end system is the one being showcased, while the mid-range non-rigid cost is being stated. We MUST make sure that the additional costs do not dissuade more people from correctly restraining their children. The best way to do that is through visible enforcement of strong laws. The cost of a child restraint is far less than the cost of an emergency room visit --- as well as the medical/productivity costs to communities.

Another inaccuracy is in the time-frame. The new system will not be in 100% of new vehicles until model year 2003 (vehicles manufactured after 9/1/2002). NHTSA estimates vehicle fleet life at 15-20 years, and young families (the ones affected) can't usually afford new vehicles. This means that the universal system will not saturate the consumer market until model year 2018 - 2023.

I'll give you one more of the many issues. The new system will only be in the outboard positions of most vehicles. The "safer" center position will not be equipped with lower anchorages, and families may be inclined to install child restraints in the center position, using the seat belt (where compatibility issues will still exist). In addition, families with more than two children will be forced to do so. Add in that shoulder belts are still not required in center positions, and older children sitting between two car seats may not be well-protected.

Don't get me wrong. I am VERY supportive of the universal system, but we need police involvement in enforcement and education. With the increased public attention to the issues, police involvement is more important than ever before!

Let me know how I can help you and/or your colleagues.

Joe

USA Today

CBS 3 weeks, Delivered

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Feb. 12

Mary L. Smith
01/28/99 04:06:05 PM

USA Today
any day now

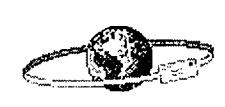
Record Type: Record

To: Thomas L. Freedman/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: AP: Child Seats

----- Forwarded by Mary L. Smith/OPD/EOP on 01/28/99 04:07 PM -----



Carrie.Hyun @ ost.dot.gov
01/28/99 03:54:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Mary L. Smith

cc:

Subject: AP: Child Seats

Normally get survey

Must not start by 1/24

CBS - 1/6/99

! let's discuss.

Secy
Industry
Sub

Forward Header

Subject: AP: Child Seats
Author: Bill S. Adams at OSTPO
Date: 1/28/99 2:34 PM

AP v5138 rw 3exec Child Seats,605

01-28 2:29p

Feds to announce common anchorage system for child seats
With AP Graphic CHILD SEAT
By CATHERINE STRONG
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - All child safety seats would be anchored by the same, simple system in new cars under a rule federal regulators will issue within a few weeks.

The rule has passed its final hurdle, review by the Office of Management and Budget, and awaits only the formal announcement. Department of Transportation officials said they have not yet set a date, in part because they are coordinating with the White House.

Canada also will require the system, and Transport Canada is coordinating its announcement with the U.S. one, government officials said.

→ press h.s
→ mwh

The rule would require auto makers to outfit new cars with a single type of anchorage system to hold child seats so parents can avoid the struggle to cinch the seat with a seat belt.

Auto makers will be given lead time to install the anchors in rear seats. It will take years for all child seats and cars to have the system, since it will be required only on new products.

With dozens of child seats on the market, parents have been frustrated by the difficulty of finding the right ones for their cars, which have a wide variety of seats and seat-belt designs. The transportation agency says about 80 percent of child cars seats are not properly installed.

If all children using child seats were restrained properly, 68 more lives would be saved annually, according to a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimate.

The NHTSA has decided to make auto makers install rigid metal bars behind the rear seats of new cars to serve as a universal anchor for child seats, according to government and industry officials and safety groups familiar with the plan.

Child seat manufacturers would be allowed flexibility in designing attachments on the child seat that would hook onto the anchoring system, officials said. That would allow for cheaper systems, such as traditional seat-belt webbing attached to the child seat bottom on either side that would be secured to the anchors with hooks, the safety groups said. However, there could be more expensive options such as rigid rods on the child seat to snap onto the quarter-inch-thick metal bars.

A tether strap would secure the top of a forward-facing child seat near the child's head to another pin on the vehicle's rear package shelf, transportation officials said. The tether is intended to prevent head and neck injuries by keeping a child's head from moving too far forward in an accident.

Almost two years has passed since the government announced the proposed uniform child seat in a speech by President Clinton. Since then, the design of the seat anchorage has changed, in part to try to ensure auto makers could use the same anchor system in vehicles sold in other countries.

Child seats now cost from \$40 to \$220, safety experts say. The agency, in a study last year, had estimated a new, universal latching system would add \$10 to \$65 to those costs.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, a research group backed by insurers, published illustrations of the new seat this month in their safety report. Institute researcher Elisa Braver said the group had expected the federal government to announce the new child seats in December, and they did not expect to publish information on it in advance.

"Every time you have a month's delay (in the rule), there's three-quarters of a million new cars being produced that are not going to be equipped with the devices," Braver said.

Play it
gets

→ bullshit



012815CL.TXT

Equal Pay

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of Legislative Affairs, Senate Liaison

Telephone: (202) 456-6493

Fax: (202) 456-6468

Fax Cover Sheet

To: Tom Freedman ; Jenny Luray

From:

Tracey Thornton☒ Caroline FredricksonRoger BallentineJoel WigintonVirginia RustiqueJanelle EricksonMarty HoffmannMatt Bianco

Fax:

67431 ; 67311

Phone:

Date:

Pages including cover sheet:

Message:

FYI - here are the other changes
Daschle is looking at; these were
discussed at earlier meetings.

Memorandum

To: Caroline
From: Carmel
Date: March 1, 1999
Re: Paycheck Fairness Act

Below, I have summarized the changes to the Paycheck Fairness Act ("PFA") proposed by the AFL-CIO.

It is my understanding that we have already agreed to amend the bill in its current form to accomplish the following:

- (1) Eliminate the establishment requirement. Currently, the Equal Pay Act ("EPA") only covers workers in the same establishment.
- (2) Amend the fourth affirmative defense under the EPA so that market-based wage differences are not allowed. Right now the fourth defense is a catch-all. We could amend by stating that every other non-discriminatory wage differential is allowed except those resulting from market-based salary scales. The alternative would be to change the catch-all to allow only pay differentials resulting from "bonafide job-related evaluation systems."

We are still considering adding data collection requirements. The White House is working with DOL, EEOC and OMB to determine how it could be done at a low cost to the federal agency collecting the data and to the employers.

The AFL-CIO has proposed the following additional changes, but I don't think any of them are priorities ("deal breakers") for them:

- (1) The EPA's current non-retaliation provision protects employees who have instituted or participated in an EPS proceeding. The PFA would extend existing protections to cover retaliation based on inquiries about or sharing of wage information. The AFL-CIO would like to strengthen the anti-retaliation provision further by: (a) extending protections to an applicant, as well as an employee; and (b) by protecting both with respect to retaliation based on opposition to alleged violations of the EPA.

I would be inclined to make these changes. Title VII's retaliation provision incorporates both ideas.

- (2) The AFL-CIO is worried about adding compensatory and punitive damages. They fear that adding them will invite the Republicans to seek to cap damages. They suggest changing the

definition of liquidated damages (in order to increase the amount) as an alternative.

I would imagine that other interest groups may feel that the change substantially weakens - what they already believe - is a weak bill.

- (3) AFL-CIO believes that the provision in the PFA amending the statute of limitations provision of the EPA is confusing.

The provision could be clearer. I can talk to Leg. Counsel about it. The change would not be substantive.

Paycheck Fairness Act

Section by Section Analysis

January 5, 1999

Section 1: Short title

Section 2: Findings

The Paycheck Fairness Act includes Congressional findings on the prevalence of wage disparity in the United States, the effects of wage disparity of women, families and commerce, and the positive effects the elimination of wage barriers would have on our country.

Section 3: Enhanced Enforcement of Equal Pay Requirements

Nonretaliation provisions: Amends 29 U.S.C. 215 (a)(3).

- ✓ The original section makes it unlawful to discharge or discriminate against any employee because the employee has filed a complaint, has filed any proceeding, will testify in a cause of action or has served on an industry committee.

The proposed change will also make it unlawful for an employer to discharge or *discriminate against any employee who has inquired about, discussed or disclosed the wages of the employee or another employee.*

Enhanced penalty provisions: Amends 29 U.S.C. 216(b)

- ✓ The original code makes any employer who violates section 6 or section 7 of the FLSA liable to the employee or employees affected in the amount of their unpaid minimum wages, or unpaid overtime compensation, as the case may be, and an additional equal amount as liquidated damages.

The Paycheck Fairness Act will add a sentence to provide that any employer who violates 6(d) of the FLSA will be additionally liable for such compensatory and punitive damages as may be appropriate. The section excludes the U.S. from punitive damages.

- ✓ The Paycheck Fairness Act will also allow any cause of action brought to enforce section 6(d) to be maintained as a class action.
- ✓ The original code provides that in any action brought under section 6 or 7, the court can – in addition to any judgment for the plaintiff – an award for attorneys' fees and the cost of the action. The Paycheck Fairness Act will amend this provision to include awards for expert fees.

Action by Secretary: Amends 29 U.S.C. 216(c)

- ✓ The original code allows the Secretary to supervise payment of unpaid minimum wages or unpaid overtime owing to any employee. The Paycheck Fairness Act adds to the Secretary's supervision payment of additional compensatory or punitive damages in the case of a violation of section 6(d). The Paycheck Fairness Act will also expand any action by the Secretary in

court to include recovery of additional compensatory or punitive damages in the case of a section 6(d) violation.

Section 4: Training

The Paycheck Fairness Act authorizes the EEOC and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance – subject to availability of funds – to provide training to employees and related entities on matters involving discrimination in the payment of wages.

Section 5: Research, Education and Outreach

The Paycheck Fairness Act authorizes the Secretary of Labor to conduct studies and provide information to labor organizations, employers and the general public on available means to correct wage disparity conditions. This will include publication of studies and research, sponsoring and assisting State efforts, recognizing employer achievement in this area, and convening a national summit to discuss and consider approaches to rectify wage disparity.

Section 6: Technical Assistance and Employer Recognition Program

The Paycheck Fairness Act authorizes the Secretary of Labor to develop guidelines to evaluate job categories based on objective criteria. The guidelines will be designed to enable employers to voluntarily compare wages paid for different jobs with the goal of eliminating unfair disparities. The guidelines will be published 180 days after the enactment of the Act.

The Paycheck Fairness Act also authorizes the Secretary of Labor to establish a program to provide recognition to employers who voluntarily conduct job evaluations and adjust their wage scales using the Department of Labor guidelines. The Department of Labor may provide technical assistance to employers wishing to do so.

Section 7: Establishment of National Award for Pay Equity in the Workplace

The Paycheck Fairness Act establishes the Robert Reich National Award for Pay Equity in the Workplace, awarded through an application process within the Department of Labor. The Act defines businesses that will qualify for the award and specifically includes nonprofits, labor unions, partnerships and training programs.

Section 8: Sense of the Senate

The Paycheck Fairness Act establishes the sense of the Senate that the President should take steps to increase information about pay equity issues. A need to protect individuals' privacy and a need to minimize burdens of reporting are recognized.

Section 9: Appropriations

The Paycheck Fairness Act authorizes appropriations for the programs established under the Act.

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Federal Legislative Programs Designed to Encourage Enactment of State Impaired Driving Laws

Congress has demonstrated its concern about the national impaired driving problem and its interest in encouraging states to enact impaired driving laws. This bipartisan Congressional support has been longstanding. To encourage the enactment of illegal *per se*, 0.08 BAC, zero tolerance and administrative license revocation (ALR) laws, Congress has established the following Federal programs:

Section 408 and Section 410 Programs

NHTSA's Section 410 program was created by Congress in 1988. Its predecessor, the Section 408 program, was created by Congress in 1982. Both programs were designed by Congress to encourage states to enact strong and effective impaired driving laws.

They both offered incentive grants. States qualified for basic and supplemental incentive grant funds by adopting and implementing comprehensive drunk and drugged driving prevention programs.

To qualify for a basic grant under the Section 408 program, states were required to meet four criteria, including the establishment of a "prompt" suspension program for drivers who fail or refuse to submit to a chemical test for alcohol and the enactment of a 0.10 BAC *per se* law. States that qualified for basic grant funds could qualify for supplemental grants based on additional criteria, including the enactment of a 0.08 BAC *per se* law.

To qualify for a basic grant under the Section 410 program, states were required to meet five out of seven criteria. Three of these criteria were: establishing an administrative license suspension or revocation (ALR) system for impaired drivers; enactment of a 0.02 BAC *per se* law for drivers under the age of 21 (zero tolerance law) and enactment of a *per se* law for all drivers. To qualify under the *per se* law criterion for all drivers during the first three years that a state received section 410 basic grant funding, the legal limit had to be set at 0.10 BAC or lower. To qualify under that criterion during subsequent years, the legal limit in the state must be 0.08 BAC. States that set the legal limit at 0.08 BAC during the first three years of section 410 basic grant funding were eligible for additional supplemental grant funds. Thirty-eight states qualified for incentive grants under the Section 410 program in 1997 and in 1998.

Zero Tolerance Program

In June 1995, in a weekly radio address, President Clinton called on Congress to make "zero tolerance" the law of the land, prohibiting persons under the age of 21 from driving with any measurable alcohol in their system. Congress acted in November 1995, and established the Federal Zero Tolerance program, requiring the withholding of certain Federal-aid highway funds from states that do not enact and enforce "zero tolerance" laws.

To avoid the withholding of funds, states must enact and enforce zero tolerance laws by October 1, 1998, that: set 0.02 percent BAC as the legal limit for all persons under the age of 21; make 0.02 a *per se* offense (without having to prove intoxication); provide for primary enforcement; and authorize license suspensions or revocations for any violation of the state zero tolerance law.

At the time of the President's June 1995 radio address, 24 states and the District of Columbia had zero tolerance laws (although three of these state laws did not fully conform with the Federal zero tolerance requirements). Today, the remaining 26 states have enacted zero tolerance laws (and two of the three non-conforming states have upgraded their laws into compliance).

Safe and Sober Streets Act of 1997

On March 3, 1998, President Clinton encouraged Congress to enact legislation as soon as possible to help ensure state passage of 0.08 BAC laws. On March 4, the U.S. Senate passed "The Safe and Sober Streets Act of 1997," which had been introduced by Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH). Similar legislation was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY).

The Safe and Sober Streets Act would have required the withholding of certain Federal-aid highway funds from states that do not enact and enforce a 0.08 *per se* law. To avoid the withholding of funds, states would have been required to enact and enforce a 0.08 BAC *per se* law by October 1, 2001.

TEA 21

On May 22, 1998, Congress passed H.R. 2400, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21), authorizing highway, highway safety, transit and other programs for the next six years. TEA 21 did not establish 0.08 BAC as the standard for impaired driving nationwide. It did, however, provide \$500 million of incentive grants over 6 years to states that have enacted and are enforcing a 0.08 BAC *per se* law. These grants are to be based on what a state receives under NHTSA's State and Community highway safety formula grant program, under Section 402 of title 23, U.S. Code. The grant funds may be used for any project eligible under title 23, which may include highway construction as well as highway safety projects.

Draft 10/18/96 12:30pm

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS ON TEEN RESPONSIBILITY
THE WHITE HOUSE
October 19, 1996

Good morning. Today I want to talk to you about how we can demand responsibility from all our young people, by taking firm steps to stop teens from driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

My vision is of an America where we offer opportunity to all; demand responsibility from all; and build a stronger community. That's America's basic bargain. And that is how we will keep our young people safe, and give them the futures they deserve.

We have done a lot to expand opportunity for young people -- reducing the cost of college loans, expanding scholarships, and creating millions of new jobs. We should demand responsibility of them, as well. No one is too young to learn right from wrong, and to act accordingly.

So we have required teen mothers to live at home and stay in school, or lose their welfare benefits. We went to court to support communities that require drug testing for high school athletes. And we have encouraged communities to enforce truancy laws, adopt school uniforms, and impose community curfews. These are ways for parents, teachers and law enforcement to set rules, enforce order, and make schools places of learning, not violence.

Today, we're taking another step. Too many teens pose a threat to themselves and others by drinking and driving. Last year, 2200 young people aged 15-20 died in alcohol-related car crashes. Thanks especially to the leadership of groups like Mothers Against Drunk Driving, America has made real progress in reducing teen drunk driving over the past decade, but there is more to do. So we have pushed for a policy of "zero tolerance" for teen drinking and driving. If you are under 21, and you drink, you can't drive. Period.

Last year, when less than half the states had zero tolerance laws, I called on Congress to enact legislation making it the law of the land. Congress acted. And during this time, 13 more states adopted these strict rules. Now, we are taking final action to demand responsibility from teens in all 50 states.

The new rule says: every state must pass a law making it illegal for anyone under 21 to drive with alcohol in their blood.

February 9, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN PODESTA

FROM: BRUCE REED
LARRY STEIN
ELENA KAGAN

SUBJECT: Equal Pay

The Administration has supported Senator Daschle's equal pay bill which strengthens enforcement of the Equal Pay Act. The Administration has not supported Senator Harkin's bill which provides for comparable worth, a method that tries to address wage discrimination by equalizing wages between "equivalent" jobs. This memorandum discusses the differences between the equal pay bills by Senators Daschle and Harkin and describes what actions the Administration has taken with respect to equal pay. Finally, this memorandum discusses some of the issues surrounding data collection with respect to equal pay.

I. Administration Actions

Last year, the Administration held two equal pay events, on April 3 and June 10. This year, the President's radio address on January 30 announced \$14 million in the FY2000 budget for a new equal pay initiative for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Department of Labor.

Last April 3rd, the Vice President announced the Administration's support for Senator Daschle's legislation to improve the enforcement of wage discrimination laws and to strengthen the remedy provisions in the Equal Pay Act by permitting victims of wage discrimination to seek compensatory and punitive damages.

In addition, the Vice President also announced the following:

- Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) Between EEOC and DOL. EEOC and DOL are developing an MOU to train each other's staff on pay issues, to refer potential violations to the applicable EEOC or DOL office for appropriate action, and to permit the DOL's Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to serve as the EEOC's agent for purposes of seeking damages for wage discrimination.
- 10-Step Voluntary Self-Audit for Businesses and Employees. To help employers who would like to improve their pay and hiring practices, DOL placed on the Internet a

10-step package that gives companies guidelines in determining whether they offer equal pay, hiring, and promotional opportunities. A similar checklist for employees, to help them determine if they are being paid equitably, also is on the Internet.

- Self-Audit for Agencies. To make the federal government a "model" employer, federal agencies will conduct a self-audit, similar to the one described above, and use these results to monitor their efforts on equal pay. ✓
- Increased Data Analysis on Pay Equity. DOL will publish an annual report on pay differences by gender. The purpose of this report will be to highlight the important issue of wage disparities. The Department of Labor estimates that this report will be ready in late March or April 1999.
- Guide to Recruitment and Retention of Women in the Federal Government. OPM ✓ published a new Guide on Recruitment and Retention of Women in the Federal Government, which contains information to make agency managers aware of career opportunities for women and to provide guidance on recruitment and career development for women.
- Federal Contractor Best Practices. DOL will publicize successful programs of federal contractors by placing them on DOL's web site.

On June 10, the President commemorated the thirty-fifth anniversary of President Kennedy's signing of the Equal Pay Act and urged passage of Senator Daschle's and Congresswoman DeLauro's legislation to strengthen the laws that prohibit wage discrimination against women. In addition, the President released a Council of Economic Advisers' (CEA) report on the gender wage gap, and announced a Department of Labor report that provides a historical perspective of the wage.

The CEA report found that there still exists a significant wage gap that cannot be explained by differences between male and female workers in labor market experience and in the characteristics of jobs they hold. In 1963, the year that the Equal Pay Act was signed, women earned 58 cents for every dollar men earned. Today, women earn about 75 cents for every dollar men earn -- a 29-percent increase over the 1963 levels. The most recent detailed longitudinal study found that in the late 1980s about one-third of the gender pay gap was explained by differences in the skills and experience that women bring to the labor market and about 28 percent was due to differences in industry, occupation, and union status among men and women. Accounting for these differences raised the female/male pay ratio in the late 1980s from about 72 percent to about 88 percent, leaving around 12 percent as an "unexplained" difference.

Most recently, in his January 30, 1999 radio address, the President announced that his FY2000 budget includes funding for a \$14 million equal pay initiative for the EEOC and the DOL's Office of Federal Contractor Compliance (OFCCP):

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The President's FY2000 budget includes \$10 million for the EEOC to:

- triple the number of EEOC enforcement staff who receive training in identifying and responding to wage discrimination;
- provide, for the first time ever, training and technical assistance to employers (about 3,000 in total) on how to comply with equal pay requirements; and
- develop public service announcements to educate employees and employers on their rights and responsibilities under equal pay laws.

The Department of Labor

The President's FY 2000 budget includes \$4 million for the Labor Department's OFCCP to:

- help women obtain and retain employment in non-traditional jobs by identifying and disseminating model employer practices and assisting contractors to finding qualified women employees, including through the new nationwide network of One-Stop Career Centers established by last year's Workforce Investment Act; and
- increase outreach, education, and technical assistance to federal contractors on equal pay issues, by providing legal guidelines and industry best practices.

II. Endorsement of Daschle Bill

The Administration has endorsed "The Paycheck Fairness Act," introduced by Senator Daschle and Congressman DeLauro, to strengthen laws prohibiting wage discrimination. The highlights of this legislation include:

- Increased Penalties for the Equal Pay Act (EPA). The legislation would provide full compensatory and punitive damages as remedies for equal pay violations, in addition to the liquidated damages and back pay awards currently available under the EPA. This proposal would put gender-based wage discrimination on equal footing with wage discrimination based on race or ethnicity, for which uncapped compensatory and punitive damages are already available.
- Non-retaliation provision. The bill would prohibit employers from punishing employees for sharing salary information with their co-workers. Many employers are currently free to take action against employees who share wage information. Without the ability to learn about wage disparities, it is difficult for employees to evaluate whether there is wage discrimination.
- Training, Research, and Pay Equity Award. The bill would provide for increased training for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission employees to identify and respond to wage discrimination claims; research on discrimination in the payment of wages; and the establishment of an award to recognize and promote the achievements of employers in eliminating pay disparities.

- Data Collection. Daschle's bill contains only a Sense of the Senate that the President should take appropriate steps to increase the amount of information available with respect to wage disparities.

III. Harkin's Bill

Last year, Senator Harkin introduced a comparable worth bill called the "Fair Pay Act of 1997." (It doesn't appear that he has reintroduced the bill this year.) The highlights of this legislation include:

- Comparable Worth. Harkin's bill amends the Fair Labor Standards Act to prohibit the paying of unequal wages for work on "equivalent jobs" dominated by employees of a particular sex, race, or national origin and those dominated by a different sex, race, or national origin. The legislation defines "equivalent jobs" as "jobs that may be dissimilar, but whose requirements are equivalent, when viewed as a composite of skills, effort, responsibility, and working conditions." It exempts from this provision wage differences on the basis of seniority, a merit system, or an quality/quantity system.
- Data Collection. The other major provision of Harkin's bill is the requiring of employers to submit wage data to the EEOC. Employers must submit data not only with respect to job category but also with respect to sex, race, and national origin. Furthermore, the EEOC is authorized to publish this data and is authorized to provide specific employer's reports to the public. This provision also is very controversial.
- Non-Retaliation Provision. Harkin's bill also contains a non-retaliation provision and a provision to permit the awarding of expert fees.
- Education, Training, and Technical Assistance. The bill also provides for research, education, and technical assistance.

IV. Issues Surrounding Comparable Worth and Data Collection

The Administration decided last year that it could not support comparable worth because it is difficult to administer and it would impose severe burdens on employers.

In addition, the Administration removed a more substantive data collection provision from the Daschle bill that would have collected wage data on the EEO-1 form and replaced it with a Sense of the Senate. There was a consensus that any attempts to add wage data to the EEO-1 form will draw immediate fire from the Republicans and the business community. In addition, the thought was that any announcement of a process to determine the best way to gather this data would likely provoke a rider and risk the increase in funds requested for the EEOC in the budget.

Currently, there are two data collection issues pending at OMB. They are:

- OFCCP Information Collection Request for Affirmative Action Plans and agency reviews of federal contractor compliance: The request raises two important issues, the reviewability of OFCCP desk audits by OIRA and the collection of detailed compensation data at the desk audit stage of OFCCP compliance reviews. This came in for review in mid-December and is due on February 20. The Department of Labor has asked for a 90-day extension on this.
- Bridgestone/Firestone - OFCCP dispute: This dispute on which OMB has been asked for an opinion involves the collection of information by OFCCP from Bridgestone/Firestone during a compliance review. Bridgestone/Firestone contends that OFCCP was making a standardized data request that was not covered under the previous submission of the collection discussed above. OMB staff are currently deliberating the claim.

V. Next Steps

It doesn't seem likely that the Administration will be able to support comparable worth anytime soon. However, there are a couple of items where we could do more:

- Data Collection. The DPC is starting a process to review how we might be able to collect more data, either through the EEOC or the Department of Labor.
- Strengthening the Daschle bill. At a recent meeting, the AFL-CIO suggested about four or five minor changes we could make to the Daschle bill. The EEOC has done a preliminary review and feels that we should be able to make a few of these changes.

① Sh

② Great Issue

③ - Gov't / ~~setting~~ u

- Worth saying they
are not mutually exclusive.

- Come all

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SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

Office of Public and Consumer Affairs

400 Seventh Street, S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20590

Phone: 202-366-9550

Fax: 202-366-5962



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Date

2/25/99

To

MARY SMITH

Organization

White House

Phone

Fax

456-7431

From

Tina Hurd

Number of pages (including this cover sheet)

4

Message:

AIR BAG info

Auto Safety Hotline

(800) 424-9393

Wash., D.C. Area (202) 366-0123



Safety Fact Sheet

Comprehensive air bag plan

These are the key steps to date in the Department of Transportation's comprehensive plan to preserve the benefits of air bags while reducing their risks:

- May 1995: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration allows automakers to install on-off switches on new cars and light trucks that have no rear seats or rear seats that are too small to properly accommodate a child seat.
- May 1996: NHTSA launches the Air Bag Safety Campaign, a public-private coalition involving automakers, insurance companies, suppliers and safety groups aimed at educating people about safe transportation in vehicles with air bags.
- November 1996: NHTSA requires that bold new labels with explicit air bag safety warnings be installed in all new vehicles and on child safety seats. Automakers also agree to mail copies of the new labels to the owners of air bag-equipped vehicles that already are on the road.
- December 1996: NHTSA extends for two more years, until August 31, 2000, its policy allowing on-off switches in vehicles that cannot accommodate a child seat.
- March 1997: NHTSA gives automakers the ability to more quickly reduce the power of their air bags by 20 to 35 percent. Automakers have said they will be able to install reduced-power air bags in most 1998-model vehicles that need them.
- November 1997: NHTSA allows consumers fitting certain risk profiles to purchase an on-off switch to temporarily deactivate air bags when needed.
- *September 1998*
~~First half of 1998~~: NHTSA ~~plans to~~ issues a proposal for new air bag testing procedures that will lead to more advanced air bag systems.



**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

News :

**Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 14, 1998

NHTSA 63-98

Contact: Tim Hurd

Tel. No. (202) 366-9550

Transportation Secretary Slater Announces

Proposal to Preserve, Enhance Benefits

Of Air Bags and Reduce Risks

Continuing the comprehensive plan to improve air bag safety, U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater today announced a historic proposal to require 21st century technology to preserve and enhance the benefits of air bags while reducing the risks associated with them.

"Safety is President Clinton's highest transportation priority, and this proposal will help prepare the way for better air bags," Secretary Slater said. "It continues our comprehensive series of actions, begun in 1995, requiring protection for a wide range of motor vehicle occupants involved in crashes."

The proposal by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) would require additional air bag system performance tests for passenger cars and light trucks in order to provide maximum protection for properly seated adults and reduced risks for infants, young children and adults who get too close to inflating air bags.

"This proposal will improve safety and give automakers maximum flexibility to pursue effective technological solutions," said NHTSA Administrator Ricardo Martinez, M.D.

Though air bags are expected to save more than 3,000 lives per year when every vehicle is equipped with them, new information and better science provided by the advanced air bag proposal will save additional lives by overcoming the limitations of the sled test and previous injury criteria.

Proposed crash tests would incorporate a new crash test dummy family with improved injury criteria that better represents human tolerances. The family includes 1-, 3- and 6-year-old child dummies, a small (5th percentile) female dummy, and an average size (50th percentile) male dummy.

The advanced air bag proposal calls for additional tests to reduce the risks to infants, children and out-of-position adults. The proposal also includes full car crash tests to preserve and enhance the current level of air bag protection. The only currently required test is a 30 mph crash into a barrier or an optional

sled test which does not destroy the vehicle, both using only an average size male dummy.

Dr. Martinez cautioned that advanced air bags will never eliminate the need for vehicle occupants to use seat belts. Even in vehicles with advanced air bags, the back seat still will be the safest seating position for children, and young children should still be transported in safety seats or booster seats appropriate for their age, he said.

The rulemaking announced today proposes a phase-in schedule for these requirements. Under the proposal, manufacturers would be required to comply with the new standard beginning with Model Year 2003 vehicles. Twenty-five percent of each automakers' production beginning Sept. 1, 2002, would be required to meet the new standard; 40 percent of MY 2004 production would be required to meet the new standard; 70 percent of MY 2005; and all MY 2006 passenger cars and light trucks would be required to meet the new standard.

The proposal is in NHTSA's Docket No. 98-4405. Interested parties may comment on the proposal within 90 days of publication of this proposal in the *Federal Register*. NHTSA will schedule a public meeting on the proposal later in the comment period. A separate *Federal Register* notice will be published announcing details of this meeting.

###



If they are caught, their drivers' licenses will be taken away.

Now we should take the next step to demand responsibility from teens.

Drug use is down across America, but it is rising among young people. That's why I have fought to expand the safe-and-drug-free schools program, and why we are requiring parolees to pass a drug test or go back to jail. We need all young people to get the message that drugs are illegal, dangerous, and wrong.

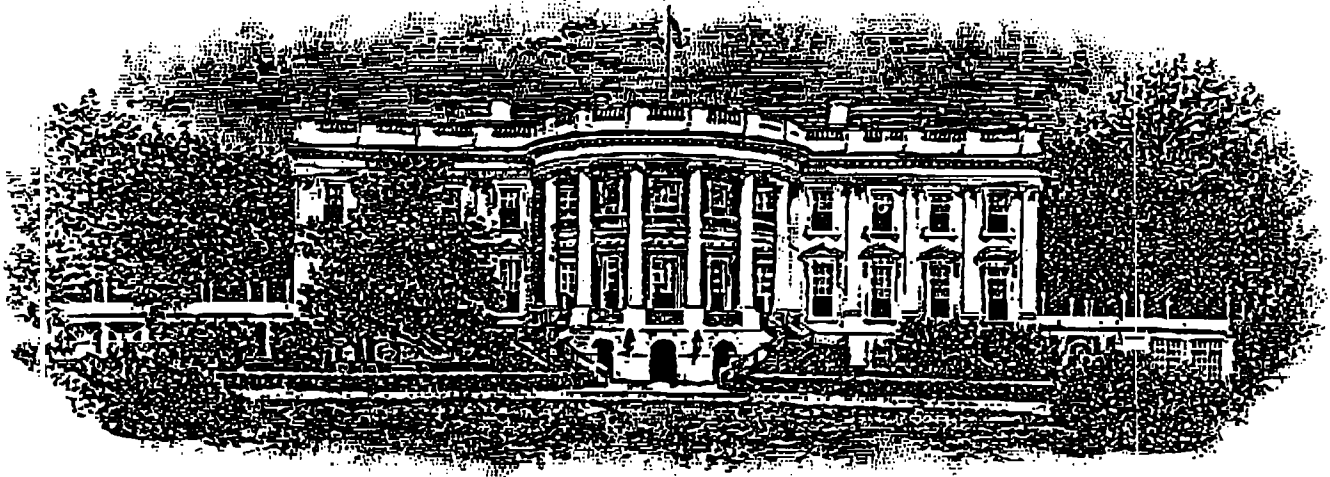
So we should use the privilege of a drivers license to demand responsible behavior by young people. Teens should have to pass a drug test as a condition of getting a drivers' license. Our message is simple: no drugs -- or no drivers' license. I can't think of anything that will get a teenager's attention faster than that.

Today, I am directing General Barry McCaffrey, the director of our drug office, and Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena, to report back to me with a plan for how to do this -- including legislation, if necessary -- within 60 days.

These are among the most important lessons we can teach our young people: right from wrong; act responsibly; take charge of your own life and your own future. That's a job for parents, for teachers, for law enforcement, for those of us in public life -- for all Americans. If we offer opportunity and demand responsibility, I am confident that America's best days are ahead.

Thank you for listening.

The White House



DOMESTIC POLICY

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FROM: Jeremy Ben-Ami

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OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR



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ENTERPRISE

Startups

THIS GENERATION IS ALL BUSINESS

Young entrepreneurs ride waves of technology, cheap capital, and boundless optimism



To start a wholesale computer business in 1996, Joshua Z. Tabin, then 27, cashed out his IRA and sold the goodies he had bought with commissions earned as a computer salesman: a BMW, a Jeep Cherokee, and five luxury watches. He borrowed on credit cards, from his family, and against his home. Then, when he had the \$160,000 he needed, he launched Chicago-based Tabin Technology Inc. "It was all or nothing," says Tabin. "All through my life I've craved freedom."

With \$5.6 million in sales last year and \$112,000 in profits, Tabin has satisfied his craving for now. But all or nothing at 27? Freedom as an early career goal? Crazy as it sounds to some elders, Tabin isn't even an eccentric. In

this generation, he's one of the crowd.

No doubt about it: Entrepreneurship is hot. And why not? Booming new technologies in a nine-year economic expansion have spawned a class of rich, youthful, CEO role models. At the same time, the obstacles to going it alone have shrunk in a dreamy environment

of low interest rates and plentiful capital. Personal prosperity is another springboard. "Mom and Dad will back them—it's a graduate course with no degree," says John P. Jaquette, executive director of Cornell University's Entrepreneurship & Personal Enterprise Program.

Who are these whippersnappers? Many, it turns out, got a taste of entre-

preneurship as teenagers and grew up cynical about a corporate world that downsized their parents. They're technically savvy, passionate, and keen to make their mark—right now.

"We don't want to look back on our lives and say, 'What if?'" says Sean S.

Smith, 30, who launched Coalition America Inc. in Atlanta in 1995 with his twin brother Scott—and netted over \$1.9 million last year. As college grads in 1991, they knew they wanted to start their own company. The actual business idea—helping corporations select managed-care providers—came later.

Youthful dreams of entrepreneurship seem to be on the rise. Ten years ago, when Gerald E. Hills, Coleman Chair of

ENTREPRENEURS

ENTERPRISE

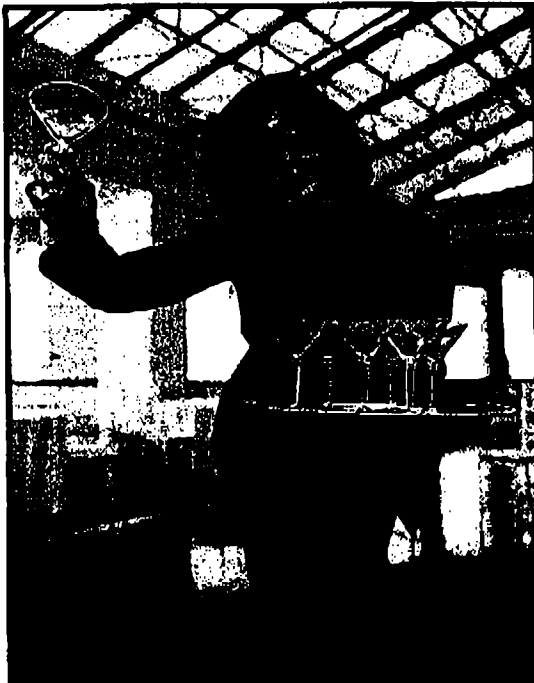
Startups

Entrepreneurship at the University of Illinois at Chicago, first surveyed 1,000 college students on whether they hoped to have their own business, 52% did. By last year, that number had soared to 72%.

The real-world impact is a bit harder to assess; until recently, no one tracked business formations by the founder's age. But there are plenty of indications youthful entrepreneurship is surging. Take the membership of The Executive Committee, an organization of 5,500 CEOs of companies with at least \$750,000 in sales. From 1986 to 1998, the number of members under 40 grew by 714%, and those under 30 grew 600%. Total membership increased 500%. Another sign: The Young Entrepreneurs Organization (YEO), whose members must be under 40 with revenues of at least \$1 million, has grown to 2,300 since its launch in 1987. In the first phase of a major long-term study, the National Federation of Independent Business found 40% of those who started new businesses in 1997 were under 35, and 23% were under 30. Early data suggest they're succeeding and failing at about the same rate as older and presumably more experienced business owners.

TECH-SAVVY. What's driving this trend? More than anything else, it's the video-game generation's ease with technology. Take Gregory Carson, 27. The owner of \$8 million Echolink Interactive Inc. started programming computers in the third grade. His big break came as a computer-science student at 21, when he started his Web design and consulting business. He launched the San Diego firm with nothing more than a computer, a borrowed office, and \$1,000, but he shares with many of his peers a heady sense of history: "We're revolutionizing the retail business and the distribution of information," says Carson.

The Internet lets less technically oriented people "start a company and make a difference in the world," says Ted R. Dinter-Smith, general partner at Boston-based Charles River Ventures, which invests in Web companies. What's



PARTY ON: Event planner Jennifer Gilbert started out with a database

important is not the bits and bytes, but understanding how to use the Web as a tool to serve a market.

For example, two years ago, Charles River and two other venture capitalists backed 25-year-old Stacey A. Lawson and her partner, whose business offered engineering firms an online database of valves, gears, and other components in three-dimensional view. Lawson developed the concept as an academic exercise at Harvard business school, then realized its value. Recently, she sold the

company, InPart Design—in which she held a 10% stake—to Parametric Technology Corp. in Waltham, Mass., for about \$45 million. Lawson is still a bit stunned at her rapid-fire success. "If there had been no Internet," she says, "I would have taken a more traditional route in technology or software and climbed the ranks."

FACADE. The low cost of technology helps savvy young people grab other, non-Web markets—and create surprising business models. The simple but crucial technology behind Jennifer P. Gilbert's New York-based event-planning business, "save the date," is a PC database with about 800 entries. Gilbert worked for an event-planning firm and started her own business at age 25, matching clients at no cost to appropriate venues and vendors who pay her a commission. Like Carson, she began with a phone, a fax, and a computer, covering expenses by pledging a percentage of future profits to her landlord.

As a side benefit, voice mail, E-mail, and other technologies provide a great facade for a young face. "People don't see that you're 20 years old," says Verne C. Harnish, founder of YEO and owner of a management-training series for entrepreneurs.

Technology isn't the only youthquake out there, of course. There's one on campus, too. Kids want to study entrepreneurship, and 120,000 of them are doing it. More than 1,400 U.S. colleges now offer courses, up from 1,050 in 1991. For some students it's a way to check out this career option; others know what

they want from the start, such as Dan R. Frey, 27, who studied entrepreneurship at the J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University. His goal was to say, "I made that happen." Now he has. A 1997 graduate, he just founded the University Alumni Funds LLC, which plans to package investment products for alumni associations and then market them online.

How did he get launched so quickly? Frey's generation is setting sail on a sea of money. For Frey, it

Youthful Influences

The young entrepreneurs of the '90s are a new breed, but they didn't invent themselves. Recent trends in business and technology have helped make entrepreneurship hot.

BUSINESS TREND

THE COMPUTER REVOLUTION

THE INTERNET

DOWNSIZING

OUTSOURCING

COLLEGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS

ABUNDANT FINANCING

IMPACT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Puts a tech-savvy generation ahead of its elders

Creates easy access to new markets and allows cheap, sophisticated research

Lessens interest in corporate career ladders

Produces opportunities for small businesses

Gives students basic skills

Makes startups viable

started with \$250,000, raised from several angel investors he met through personal connections. While the amount of angel capital can't be quantified, venture funds are at an all-time high, with \$12.2 billion invested in 1998. Easy bank credit and the growing availability of credit cards help too. And young entrepreneurs are tapping their friends and family, who are flush with unprecedented stock market gains.

FULFILLMENT. Plentiful capital aside, there are social reasons for this risk-taking. Delayed child-rearing, for one, become the norm, leaving more time for budding entrepreneurs to build their dream. And the economic boom has fostered an optimism untouched by memories of war or the Depression. For many of today's young people, the priority is personal fulfillment. "They no longer want to be a cog in a wheel," says Fordham University professor of entrepreneurship Kate A. McKeown.

Yet for all the generational differences, young entrepreneurs show remarkable appreciation for their elders, whom they collect as advisers and corporate officers. "They are savvy enough to understand the value in diversity of thought," says Laurie Moss, national marketing director in Growth Company Services at Deloitte & Touche.

Take A. Marley Majcher, who earned an undergraduate degree in marketing and worked for a food wholesaler before starting Ahiento Restaurant & Catering in Pasadena, Calif., five years ago at age 23. In a generational switcheroo, she hired her father, a gastroenterologist and real estate investor, as part-time CFO. As Majcher's sole source of initial capital, he had a vested interest in the company's success.

This generation of entrepreneurs, steeped in the modern culture of self-help, has embraced networking—and it pays off. Such associations as YEO and TEC provide practical tips and psychological support for often isolated entrepreneurs. YEO member Justin Fallon recalls how three years ago, at the tender age of 26, he was "burnt out." At 18, he had started Access Marketing Inc., which sells tickets to major sporting and entertainment events, and he was weary of the day-to-day grind. In a postgrad course and at YEO, he learned how to build a management team. "It renewed my energy," he says.

Burned out at 26? Renewed at 27? Sounds crazy, but it probably means this is one trend with some strong, young legs to run on.

By Hilary Rosenberg in New York

For more on young entrepreneurs, click Online Extras at enterprise.businessweek.com

ENTERPRISE

Marketing



SCHMOOZE CONTROL

Need to network? Here's how to find the right group

Don't look for Gerald Reaster at the local Chamber of Commerce meeting. It's not cutting-edge enough for this 58-year-old retired Navy officer, who runs a four-year-old Web design firm called Tink's Web Pages from his home in Escondido, Calif. The chapter resisted using E-mail to communicate with members and recently canceled many of its events for home-based businesses.

Instead, Reaster prefers the weekly meetings of the North County Business Exchange (NCBE), one of a new breed of networking groups, which has about 20 members. "The small-business groups are where it's at," he says. "I've gotten more business and referrals there, and we share more information."

Hundreds of smaller and more intimate networking groups like NCBE have sprung up over the past decade, fol-

lowing the rising tide of entrepreneurship. Well-established national networking groups, which set up small local chapters for small businesses, are growing, too. Founder Ivan Misner says Business Network International, a 14-year-old San Dimas (Calif.)-based organization with some 1,200 chapters, opened more chapters in the first

CONNECTIONS 10 months of last year than it did in its first 10 years. His group lets business owners exchange sales leads and other information.

Of course, large groups like industry trade associations or the Chamber of Commerce can still fit into your networking strategy. But some entrepreneurs complain these organizations focus more on political lobbying and the needs of larger companies. Moreover, it's tough for most entrepreneurs to make successful connections at these large

RISEING TIDE: Hundreds of smaller and more intimate groups have sprung up over the past decade



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Saturday, February 27, 1999

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President Clinton Announces Safety Standard Requiring Universal Child Safety Seat Attachments

Following up on his February 1997 proposal, President Clinton today announced a major step forward in improving auto safety for America's children.

The U.S. Department of Transportation will require all auto manufacturers, beginning in September 1999, to start phasing in a universal system for attaching child safety seats in cars and light trucks. All new vehicles will be required to have the system by September 2002.

Child safety seat manufacturers will be required to comply with the new standard beginning with seats manufactured after September 1999.

"There is nothing more important to the future of America than our children," President Clinton said. "This new requirement will make children as safe as possible when we buckle them into their car safety seats and will continue our record of achievement in safety, our highest transportation priority."

The President's announcement came as stakeholders from government, industry and safety organizations throughout the United States are preparing for the first National Transportation Safety Conference, which will take place Tuesday and Wednesday, March 2-3, in Washington, D.C.

According to the U.S. Transportation Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the new system could prevent as many as 50 child deaths and 18,000 injuries each year.

With so many different child safety seat models and so many different vehicle systems, many parents find that the present process for attaching child safety seats can be frustrating, cumbersome and confusing.

The new rule will require installation of universal systems for attaching child seats in two rear seats of vehicles. Each system will have three anchorages, two lower and one upper.

The lower anchorages are two one-inch long steel bars spaced a foot apart and positioned where the vehicle seat cushion and seat back meet. The upper anchorage is a ring.

New child seats will have components that snap or hook onto these anchorages. In older vehicles, these new child seats can be installed with vehicle seat belts.

February 27, 1999

Universal Child Seat Anchorages

The phase in schedule calls for 20 percent of cars and light trucks manufactured between Sept. 1, 2000, and Aug. 31, 2001, to comply with the lower anchorage requirement; 50 percent by Aug. 31, 2002; and all manufactured after Sept. 1, 2002.

Beginning on Sept. 1, 1999, all universal child safety seats must meet new, more stringent child head protection requirements and thus must be equipped with an upper tether attachment. Likewise, all child safety seats manufactured after Sept. 1, 2002, will be required to have the two lower attachments for the universal system.

Starting Sept. 1, 1999, 80 percent of new cars must be equipped with the tether attachment points, and by Sept. 1, 2002, all new vehicles (cars and light trucks) must be equipped with the tether attachment points. The lower anchorages are phased in over three years, covering 20 percent of vehicles by Sept. 1, 2000; 50 percent of vehicles by Sept. 1, 2001; and all vehicles after Sept. 1, 2002.

Upon issuing this rule, the United States became the first country to adopt requirements for a universal, three-point anchorage system. To the extent consistent with safety, NHTSA has sought to harmonize its rule with requirements being considered by standard bodies and regulatory authorities in Europe and elsewhere.

In developing the standard, the United States also worked closely with Canada. The U.S. standard includes requirements that are the same as recently-issued Canadian standards for the upper anchorage point.

The new universal child safety seat attachment rule results from extensive NHTSA efforts to involve the public in improving child seat safety, including a Blue Ribbon panel of experts and a public workshop to promote convergence of different improvement proposals from around the world. Input was obtained from domestic and foreign manufacturers of autos and child seats, child safety and medical experts, and parents.

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Safety Fact Sheet

Universal Child Safety Seat

Anchorage System phase-in

Percentage of passenger car and light truck production sold in the United States that will have to meet the new standard:

Upper anchorage system (tether):

- ☐ 80% of new cars manufactured on or after Sep. 1, 1999 will be equipped with the tether attachment points
- ☐ 100 percent of all new vehicles (cars and light trucks) manufactured on or after Sep. 1, 2002 will be equipped with the tether attachment points
- ☐ 100 percent of Universal Child Safety Seats manufactured on or after Sep. 1, 1999 must meet new, more stringent child head protection requirements, thus will be equipped with an upper tether attachment.

Lower anchorage system:

- ☐ 20 percent of all new vehicles manufactured from Sep. 1, 2000 to Aug. 31, 2001
- ☐ 50 percent of vehicles manufactured from Sep. 1, 2001 to Aug. 31, 2002
- ☐ 100 percent of vehicles manufactured on or after Sep. 1, 2002
- ☐ 100 percent of Universal Child Safety Seats manufactured on or after Sep. 1, 2002 will be equipped with the two lower attachments.



Safety Fact Sheet

Universal Child Safety Seat

Fact Sheet

Current Child Safety Seats Problem

- Annually, motor vehicle crashes result in 600 children less than 5 years old fatalities and 70,000 injured. Even though child safety seats are very effective in reducing death and injury to the child occupant, in actual use their effectiveness is substantially reduced due to incorrect use and their incompatibility with the vehicle seat and belt systems.
- Parents are generally dissatisfied with the current vehicle belt system for attaching child seats because of the complexity and difficulty to tighten the child seat.

Previous Efforts to Remedy the Problem

- The Federal vehicle occupant protection standard was amended on October 13, 1993, to require that vehicle lap belt be lockable to tightly secure child seats. However, it still often results in excessive movement of child seat and child occupant.
- Voluntary industry guidelines were developed by the Society of Automotive Engineers but have not proven to be sufficient to solve the problem of assuring compatibility between the vehicle seat belts and child seats.
- In February 1995, the agency set up a Blue Ribbon Panel of experts to recommend ways to install and use child safety seats. In May 1995, the Panel recommended to undertake an evaluation of and develop a universal system to attach child safety seats.
- President Clinton's February 15, 1997 radio address announced a proposal to require motor vehicles and child restraints to be equipped with a standardized means independent of vehicle safety belts for securing child seats to the vehicle seats.

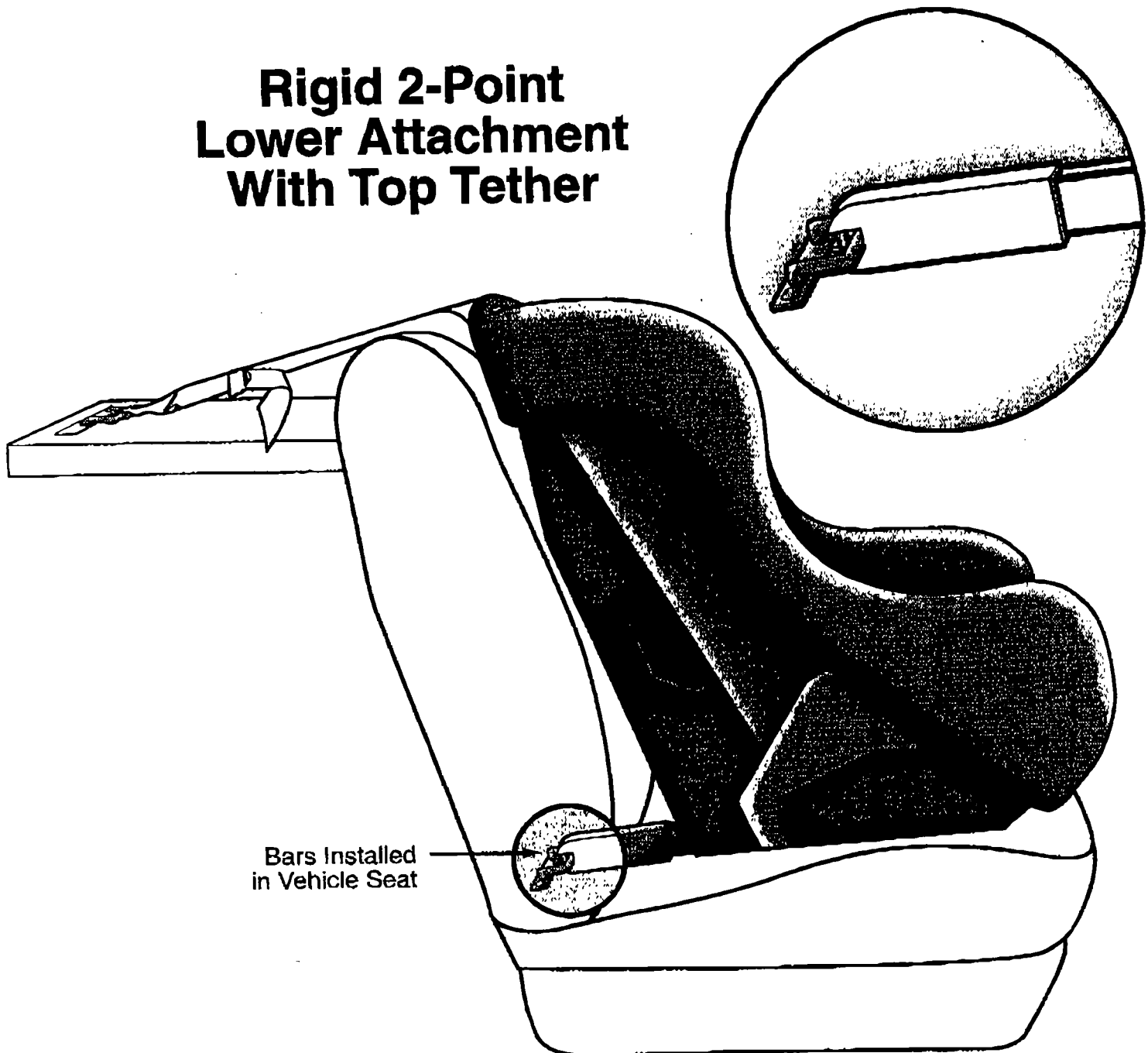
Received Public Comments

- Over 70 comments were received in response to the rulemaking proposal. Because the international community is considering adoption of a standard for a universal, independent child seat anchorage system, comments were also received from foreign governments as well as domestic entities.
- All commenters agreed with the need for a universal independent child seat attachment system and overwhelmingly concurred with the proposed upper tether attachment.

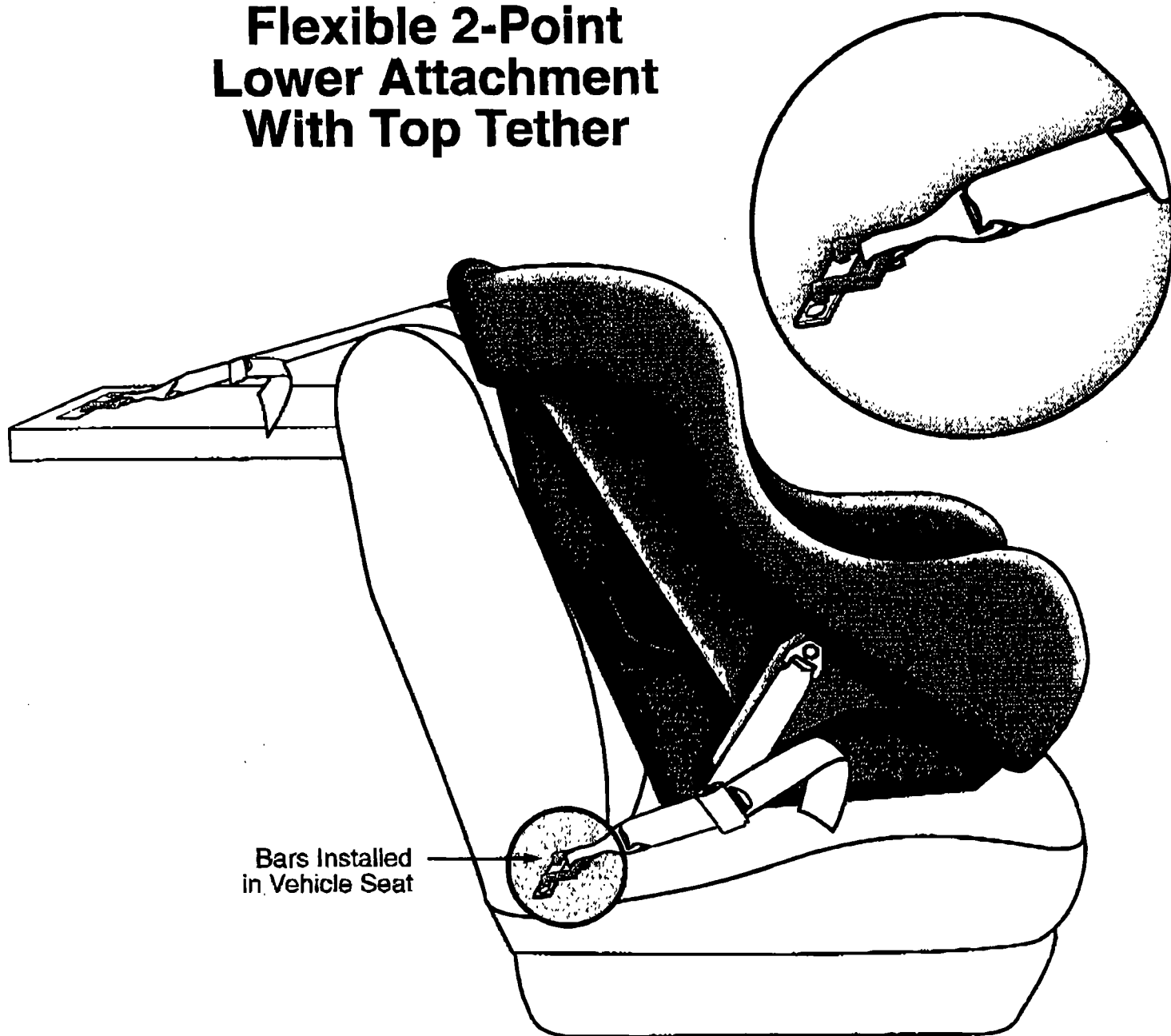
New Universal Child Restraint Safety System

- The system is universally compatible with all passenger cars and light trucks and is also universal in terms of its potential for international adoption.
- Typically, vehicles will be required to install 2 systems in the rear seat. Each system will consist of a ready-to-use, visible and accessible upper anchorage to which the child seat tether hardware will attach. The vehicle seat will have two, 1-inch long bars spaced a foot apart and positioned where the vehicle seat cushion and seat back meet, to which the child seat lower hardware attaches.
- New child seats will be required to have this new system also remain installable with regular vehicle seat belts.
- The expected child benefits are about 50 deaths and 20,000 injuries per year once these systems become widespread. The added costs to consumers are as low as \$15 for a new child seat and \$3 per vehicle.
- Starting September 1999, the majority of the new model vehicles will be equipped with the top attachment and by September 2002 all new vehicles will be equipped with the complete system.

Rigid 2-Point Lower Attachment With Top Tether



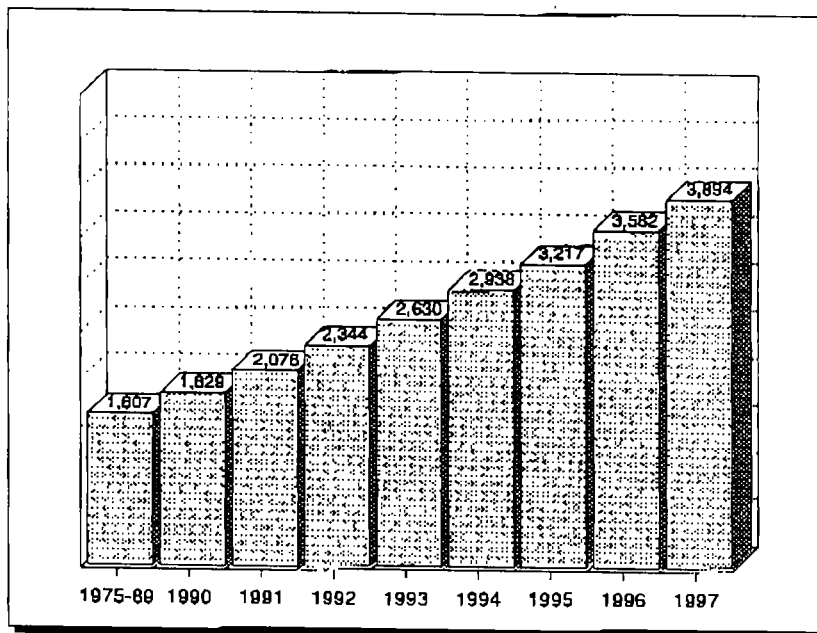
Flexible 2-Point Lower Attachment With Top Tether



At 100 percent child safety seat use for children under 5, an estimated 495 lives (that is, an additional 183) could have been saved in 1997.

Over the period 1975 through 1997, an estimated 3,894 lives were saved by child restraints.

Figure 2. Cumulative Estimated Number of Lives Saved by Child Restraints, 1975-1997



Mary Smith

"From 1975 through 1997, an estimated 3,894 lives were saved by child restraints."

Restraint Use

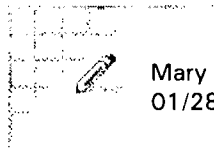
According to observational surveys conducted by the states and reported to NHTSA, 69 percent of passenger vehicle occupants used their safety belts in 1997.

The reported restraint use rate among all occupants of passenger cars involved in fatal crashes was 56 percent in 1997. The use rate for drivers was higher (60 percent), and the highest use rate was reported for children age 4 and under (68 percent).

In 1996, NHTSA conducted the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS). The overall observed shoulder belt use rate was 61.5 percent, compared to 58.0 percent observed in 1994.

For more information:

Information on occupant protection is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NRD-31, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Telephone inquiries should be addressed to Ms. Louann Hall at 1-800-934-8517. FAX messages should be sent to (202) 366-7078. General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/nca>. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-800-424-9393.



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Subject: AP: Child Seats
Author: Bill S. Adams at OSTPO
Date: 1/28/99 2:34 PM

AP v5138 rw 3exec Child Seats,605

01-28 2:29p

Feds to announce common anchorage system for child seats
With AP Graphic CHILD SEAT
By CATHERINE STRONG
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - All child safety seats would be anchored by the same, simple system in new cars under a rule federal regulators will issue within a few weeks.

The rule has passed its final hurdle, review by the Office of Management and Budget, and awaits only the formal announcement. Department of Transportation officials said they have not yet set a date, in part because they are coordinating with the White House.

Canada also will require the system, and Transport Canada is coordinating its announcement with the U.S. one, government officials said.

Clinton to Unveil Child Seat Rule

Universal System Aims to End Confusion Over Using Restraints

By WARREN BROWN
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Clinton, in a long-expected move, will unveil on Saturday a universal system for installing child safety seats in cars and light trucks.

The new regulation, approved by the Department of Transportation, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Office of Management and Budget, is designed to eliminate a frustrating experience for parents and ensure that more children are properly secured in passenger vehicles.

Consumer and auto safety advocates have fought for such a rule for eight years, citing reports that parental confusion over how to install child seats puts 80 percent of the children strapped into them at risk, because the seats often are improperly installed.

Janet Dewey, executive director of the Washington-based Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign, said the new rule is a major contribution to child safety, but only a partial solution to the highway mayhem that annually kills 600 children and injures 70,000 more—all younger than 5 years old.

An estimated 60 percent of the children who died in those crashes were not strapped into seats at all, allowing their bodies to be thrown outside of vehicles or slammed around inside them, Dewey said.

"We have cases of 1-year-old and 2-year-old babies, who would have fit perfectly into child safety seats, but who were killed because they were riding on their parents' laps," Dewey said.

The Clinton administration has tried to address the issue of unbuckled children by campaigning for state and local seat belt laws that would penalize adults for riding or driving unbuckled, or for transporting improperly restrained children. The idea, the administration says, is that children tend to buckle up when they see their parents using their seat belts.

Clinton will present details of the new seat-belt-anchoring rule in his weekly radio address Saturday, according to administration.

Under the rule, every child safety seat would be required to fit in every passenger car or truck the same way—as early as this year in some models—thus eliminating the current mishmash of 100 varieties of child seats and myriad

installation systems in 300 different passenger vehicles on the market.

Older child seats would be able to use the new anchors, with special modifications.

Canada and Europe have long had uniform child-restraint-anchoring requirements. The U.S. rule combines aspects of both of those approaches.

Specifically, the rule requires three dedicated anchors—two at the bottom and one at the top—to be installed in the rear passenger seats of new cars and trucks. Federal auto safety officials believe that the anchors will hold child safety seats firmly in place, and would eliminate the belt-routing nightmare that has foiled so many parents in the past.

In theory, this would mean an end to guessing which seat belt goes through which loop in a child safety seat that may not, after all, be usable in a particular car or truck.

Putting the same anchors in the same place the same way should dispel the confusion, according to sources familiar with the new design, called the Isofix Hybrid.

The Isofix Hybrid system will require a redesign of child safety

seats so that they can be plugged into or snapped onto the new anchors.

Older seats would require an adapter belt to attach the seats to at least the two lower anchors. While that would not be as secure as using all three anchors, safety experts believe that it would be more secure than most seats installed under the current system.

The new anchoring system is expected to appear later this year in cars manufactured by Germany's Volkswagen AG, and by next year in a variety of other manufacturers' vehicles, according to government and industry sources. "I cannot give you the exact dates of implementation; but I can tell you that our schedule for implementation will be very aggressive," said a U.S. auto industry executive.

Initially, it is expected that many families with children will buy an adapter belt to be used with child safety seats now in their possession or currently available in stores. The newer safety seats eventually would replace those old models on the market. The Isofix Hybrid anchor could add about \$60 to the overall retail cost of a child-restraint system, most of it in the car, according to some government and industry estimates.

Eventually, some federal auto safety officials say, the Isofix Hybrid system could become a worldwide standard for child seat anchors.

Standardizing Child Safety Seats

Saying Current Confusion Can Be Deadly, U.S. to Unveil New System

By WARREN BROWN
Washington Post Staff Writer

A

After nearly eight years of debate, the Clinton administration plans to unveil a universal system next month for installing child safety seats, a step designed to eliminate a frustrating experience for parents and ensure that more children are properly secured.

Under the plan, every seat would be required to fit in every car the same way—as early as next year in some models—thus eliminating the current mishmash of 100 varieties of child seats and myriad installation systems in 300 different passenger vehicles now on the market. Older child seats would be able to use the new anchors, though it isn't clear whether older models of cars could be retrofitted with the new system.

The plan, which government and industry sources said will be announced Dec. 14 by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, would have broad implications for the safety of infants and small children, who often are at risk of death or serious injury in passenger vehicles because they are either unrestrained—neither in a child safety seat nor secured by a seat belt—or improperly secured.

NHTSA and other Department of Transportation officials declined to comment.

About 80 percent of the children strapped into safety seats are at risk because those seats are im-

SEATS, From A1

properly connected, according to NHTSA officials.

Officials hope a universal system would not only ensure that seats are properly secured but also encourage greater use of child seats, since 60 percent of the children who die in vehicle accidents every year aren't strapped in at all. About 600 children younger than 5 years old are killed and more than 70,000 are injured in vehicle crashes every year.

U.S. auto safety officials have long despaired over those grim statistics, but they have been debating since 1990 which system would provide the right combination of safety, ease of use and low cost. In the meantime, both the Canadians and the Europeans have moved ahead with their own universal systems. The announcement next month would end a federal rule-making process that started in June 1996.

Under a plan that combines aspects of the Canadian and European systems, the rear passenger seats of new cars would have three dedicated anchors—two at the bottom and one at the top—to hold child safety seats firmly in place. Officials hope this would eliminate

the belt-routing nightmare that has foiled so many parents in the past—trying to guess which seat belt goes through which loop in a child safety seat that may not, after

"The difficulty of installing these seats certainly has been a deterrent to using them."

— Joan Claybrook,
president of Public Citizen

all, be usable in a particular car or truck.

"In the past, we've made the proper installation of child safety seats way too complicated," said Chuck Hurley, spokesman for the National Safety Council, a consumer advocacy group in Washington. "People need a doctorate in beltology in order to get those seats in properly." He noted that many parents or guardians try to accomplish that task while rushing off to work or some other appointment.

Putting the same anchors in the

same place the same way should dispel the confusion, according to sources familiar with the planned new design, known as the Isofix Hybrid.

The Isofix Hybrid system will require a redesign of child safety seats so that they can be plugged into or snapped onto the new anchors. Older seats would require an adapter belt to attach the seats to at least the two lower anchors. While that would not be as secure as using all three anchors, officials believe it would be more secure than most seats installed under the current system.

The new anchoring system is expected to appear next year in cars manufactured by Germany's Volkswagen AG and by 2000 in a variety of other manufacturers' vehicles, according to government and industry sources who declined to speak on the record.

Initially, it is expected that many families with children will buy an adapter belt to be used with child safety seats now in their possession or currently available in stores. Eventually, the newer safety seats would replace those old models in the market.

The Isofix Hybrid anchor could add about \$60 to the overall retail cost of a child restraint system, most of it in the car, according to some

government and industry estimates.

Eventually, officials expect, this hybrid plan is likely to become the worldwide standard.

Clarence Ditlow, executive director of the Center for Auto Safety in Washington, said the compromise plan isn't perfect. "But we can't get caught up in the paralysis of perfection," he said. "We need to make child safety seats more compatible with cars than they are, and this is a step in the right direction."

Joan Claybrook, who served as NHTSA administrator under President Carter and now is president of Public Citizen, a public interest lobbying group in Washington, agreed. "The difficulty of installing these seats certainly has been a deterrent to using them," she said. The use of the three-point anchor system "is a very good idea that could help parents" install the seats more easily, Claybrook said.

But she said the government and the auto industry need to do more, and to make built-in child safety seats standard equipment in new vehicles. Built-in seats "means you wouldn't have to worry about mixing and matching child safety seats with belts or anchors," Claybrook said. Such seats are available in some cars sold by AB Volvo and Chrysler Corp.

The Washington Post

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1998

See SEATS, A10, Col. 1

cc: Chris
OK
from
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**PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES NEW RULE
TO IMPROVE SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN VEHICLES
February 27, 1998**

In his radio address today, President Clinton will announce a major step to protect our traveling children -- a new rule requiring a single standardized system for installing child safety seats in cars and light trucks. Under the rule, each new child seat will have three attachments -- one on top and two at the base. All new cars and light trucks will required to be equipped with standard anchors in the back seat designed specifically to link to the child seat attachments. The rule is expected to prevent as many as fifty child deaths and 20,000 injuries each year.

New Rule Makes Installation Easier and Will Save Lives

Currently, installing a child safety seat is complicated by the fact that there are over a hundred models of child seats requiring many different methods for installation in over 900 models of passenger cars now on the road. Moreover, not all models of car seats fit in all models of vehicles. Even when child seats do fit, the current method uses the vehicle seat belts to install child seats, which is often a cumbersome process because seat belt designs are built for adult protection not child seat installation. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, over 70 percent of children strapped into safety seats are at risk because those seats are improperly installed.

How the New System Works

For the child safety seats, there will be three attachments, a tether on top and two at the base. For vehicles, new standard anchors will be installed in the back seat which are designed to link to the new child seat attachments. Typically, vehicles will be required to install 2 systems in the rear seat so that two child seats can be anchored. Each system will consist of a ready-to-use, visible and accessible upper anchorage to which the child seat tether hardware will attach. The vehicle seat will have two one-inch long bars spaced a foot apart and positioned where the vehicle seat cushion and seat back meet to which the child seat lower hardware will attach.

Effective Date of Rule for Vehicles and Child Seats

For vehicles, eighty percent of new cars will be equipped with the top tether attachment points starting September 1, 1999. All new vehicles (cars and light trucks) will be equipped with the top tether attachment points by September 1, 2000. The lower anchorages are phased in over 3 years, covering 20% of vehicles beginning September 1, 2000, 50% of vehicles by September 1, 2001, and all vehicles after September 1, 2002.

For the child seats, starting September 1, 1999, all new child seats will be equipped with an upper tether. All new child seats will be equipped with the two lower attachments by September 1, 2002. New child seats will also remain installable with regular vehicle seat belts to assure compatibility with older vehicles and aircraft.

Builds on the President's Efforts to Protect Children in Vehicles

This step is one of a series of actions by President Clinton to promote safety for children on the road. Two years ago, on February 15, 1997, the President announced the proposed rule regarding

child safety seats in his weekly radio address. Today's announcement reflects comments the Department of Transportation received in order to improve the safety and provide one universal method of installing the child seats. On November 19, 1998, the Administration announced a Blue Ribbon Passenger Safety Panel that will recommend strategies to increase the use of booster seats for children 4 to 8 years and the use of seat belts for children 8 to 16 years. This group of children typically is currently not covered by state child seat use laws.

John
Dun
Mark
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Child Restraint Q&As
2/24/99

Q: What did the President announce today?

A: The President announced a final rule to require a new universal way for installing child safety seats in cars and light trucks. Currently, parents use the vehicle seat belts to install child seats. There are a variety of models of child seats and they require different methods for installation. Parents have found attaching child safety seats using the vehicle's seat belts often is cumbersome and difficult. In the future, each new child seat will have three attachments (one top tether and two at its base). New cars and light trucks will be equipped with standard anchors in the back seat designed specifically to link to the child seat attachments. Each system will consist of a ready-to-use, visible and accessible upper anchorage to which the child seat tether hardware will attach. The vehicle seat will have two one-inch long bars spaced a foot apart and positioned where the vehicle seat cushion and seat back meet to which the child seat lower hardware will attach.

Q: How many lives will this rule save? How many injuries will this rule prevent?

A: Annually, motor vehicle crashes result in 600 child fatalities and 70,000 injuries for children less than five years old. Even though child safety seats are very effective in reducing death and injury, their effectiveness is substantially reduced due to incorrect use and occasional incompatibility with the vehicle seat and belt systems. This rule is expected to prevent as many as 50 child deaths and 20,000 injuries each year.

Q: When will this rule take effect for cars and light trucks? For child seats?

A: For vehicles, eighty percent of new cars will be equipped with the top tether attachment points starting September 1, 1999. All new vehicles (cars and light trucks) will be equipped with the top tether attachment points by September 1, 2000. The lower anchorages are phased in over 3 years, covering 20% of vehicles beginning September 1, 2000, 50% of vehicles by September 1, 2001, and all vehicles after September 1, 2002.

For the child seats, starting September 1, 1999, all new child seats will be equipped with an upper tether. All new child seats will be equipped with the two lower attachments by September 1, 2002. New child seats will also remain installable with regular vehicle seat belts to assure compatibility with older vehicles and aircraft.

Q. How effective are child safety seats?

A. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), when

properly used, child safety seats reduce the risk of fatality for infants by 70% and for toddlers by over half.

Q: How much will child seats increase in price as a result of this rule? How much will vehicle prices increase?

A: According to NHTSA, the additional amount that consumers will have to spend on a new child seat will be as low as \$15. Typically, child safety seats range in price from \$50 to \$100. The vehicle additional cost is estimated at between \$3 and \$7.

Q: What previous efforts has the Administration taken to address this problem?

A: On October 13, 1993, the Federal vehicle occupant protection standard was amended to require, effective September 1, 1995, that vehicle seat belts on new passenger vehicles be lockable to tightly secure child seats.

In February 1995, the Department of Transportation set up a Blue Ribbon Panel of experts to recommend ways to install and use child safety seats. In May 1995, the Panel recommended the evaluation and development of a universal system to attach child safety seats.

In February 1997, the President announced the proposed rule regarding child safety seats in his weekly radio address. Today's announcement reflects comments the Department of Transportation received in order to improve the safety and provide one universal method of installing the child seats.

Q: How does this differ from what the Administration proposed earlier?

A: The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), announced by the President on February 15, 1997, proposed that every vehicle and child safety seat be equipped with either dedicated "mini-seat belts" solely for installing child safety seats, or two fixed rigid one-inch bars in the vehicle's back seat to which a child seat would attach with a variety of types of connectors. The final rule requires solely the latter approach. People commenting on the NPRM overwhelmingly favored having the government deciding on one attachment system. The final rule and NPRM are similar as to the requirements for vehicle to accommodate an upper tether attachment for the child seat.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 15, 1997

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Today I'm pleased to announce a major new step in our efforts to protect America's children -- a universal system for attaching child safety seats in cars. This system, developed by a blue-ribbon commission of industry and consumer groups, will make safety seats easier to install and more secure on the road. It will save young lives.

In my State of the Union address, I issued a call to action to all Americans to prepare our people for the 21st century. Building strong families is central to that mission. That's why we must do all that we can to help parents do all that they can to live up to one of the greatest responsibilities anyone can have -- to care for a child.

Parents are always on the lookout to make sure their children are safe. That's especially true when you get in the car. Thousands of children are killed in car accidents every year; tens of thousands more are injured.

Even though America's cars and roads are the safest in the world, we must make them safer. That's why today -- the final day of National Child Passenger Safety Week -- I'd like to talk with you about the steps we're taking to save more lives on the road.

First, we will continue to stress the fundamental rules of safety: seat belts, safety seats for small children, children 12 and under buckled up and in the back seat. Last month, I instructed the outgoing Transportation Secretary, Federico Pena, to develop a plan to get more Americans to wear seat belts. I'm delighted to be joined today by our new Transportation Secretary, Rodney Slater, who came to us from the Federal Highway Administration. He knows a lot about this issue and he will present that plan to me in March. When he does, I will be ready to review it and act on it.

We must also continue to support law enforcement in its effort to increase compliance with safety laws.

Second, we have taken action to make it clear that, on America's roads, there is no room for alcohol or drugs. We fought to make it illegal for all young people under 21 to drive with any alcohol in their blood, and 34 states now have these zero-tolerance laws. We're also developing a plan to make teens pass a drug test as a condition of getting a driver's license.

Third, we've worked to make air bags, one of our most important safety tools, safer for children. All cars and safety seats now come with warning labels to remind drivers to keep children in the back seat. Plans are underway to permit manufacturers to install less powerful air bags and to phase in a new generation of "smart" air bags.

Air bags have saved a lot of lives. With these improvements, they'll save even more.

And today, we're taking a fourth step -- we will make child safety seats safer. These seats are the most effective safety device to protect very young children. In car crashes, they reduce the risk of death or serious injury to infants by 70 percent. They cut the fatality and injury rate for children aged 1 to 4 in half. But while all 50 states have car seat laws, studies show that 40 percent of the time young children do not even ride in safety seats; and even when they are placed in child safety seats, 80 percent of the time children are either not fully secured or the car seats are not properly attached.

The fact is, despite parents' best efforts, car seats are hard to install. Not all 100 models of car seats fit in all 900 models of passenger cars. And even when they do, it's no simple task to put them in place. Seat belts are not designed primarily to hold child safety seats. Anyone who's wrestled with a car seat knows what I'm talking about. Thousands of frustrated parents have called our Transportation Department hotline with questions about how to use car seats properly.

Parents are not alone in their concerns -- automobile and car seat makers, consumer organizations, the medical community all have felt there was too much confusion surrounding child seat safety. In response to this problem, my administration convened a blue-ribbon panel, with representatives from all these groups, to find ways to make it easier for parents to protect their children with safe, secure car seats.

Today, I am pleased that we are acting on the panel's number one proposal -- a universal system for attaching car safety seats. Under a Transportation Department plan, every car safety seat would have two standard buckles at its base. Every car would be equipped with standard latches in the back seat designed specifically to fasten to these buckles. There would also be universal attachments to secure the top of the safety seat to the car's interior, so car seats would be locked in from top to bottom.

This plan will go out for public comment next week. If approved, the new safety system could be on the market by 1999.

A car seat can protect a child from the violence of the worst crashes. So today, we are acting to solve a problem that's been around for too long -- we're taking steps to make sure that your child's car set will stay put in your car every time. With this plan, we're moving closer to the day when safe, well-attached car seats will be the rule of the road.

Together, these efforts represent a new spirit of cooperation in America -- with industry and government working with the American people to support our families as they seek to make life safer and better for our children.

Thanks for listening.

END

Draft 2/25/99

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PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS ON CHILD SAFETY SEATS
FEBRUARY 26, 1999

Good Morning. One of the most fundamental duties government has is to keep our people safe -- to protect them from dangerous products, and to spur businesses to make goods as safe as possible for consumers. America's efforts to regulate auto safety has been one of our most important consumer protection success stories. Over the years, we have required automakers to include so many of the safety features that we now take for granted -- from bumpers to seat belts to air bags. And as a result, hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved.

But the challenge of keeping our children safe in our cars and on our roads is a neverending one. Today, I want to talk about our latest efforts to make car travel even safer for our smallest and most vulnerable passengers.

Every day, whether for quick errands to the grocery store, or long journeys across America, millions of parents strap their young children into car seats in the backs of their cars. For two decades now, child car seats have had a proven record of success. They have reduced the risk of serious injury or death to infants by 70 percent, and cut the injury and fatality rate for children ages 1 to 4 in half.

But all too often, despite our parents' best efforts, car seats do not protect children as well as they should. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration estimates that up to 80 percent of all children riding in car seats are at risk of injury because their seats have not been properly installed. There are many reasons for this. Today, there are more than 900 models of passenger cars traveling on our roads. And not all 100 models of car seats can fit them. When they do, the steps for installing seats are often complex and very difficult to execute. Seat belts, for instance, were never designed to hold child safety seats in the first place.

For Joe Collela's family, the results of a poorly installed seat were tragic. Five years ago, Joe's sister and her three daughters were involved in a head-on collision with a pickup truck. His three-year old niece Dana, who should have been the best protected because she had been strapped into her car seat, was killed. Ever since, Joe has worked full-time to prevent the same tragedy from befalling other families by teaching thousands of parents how to install and use their car seats safely.

A few years ago, my Administration appointed Joe to a blue ribbon panel of activists, consumer groups, medical professionals, car and seat makers to look into ways to make car seats safer and easier to install. Today, I am pleased to announce that their top recommendation -- a simple, universal system for attaching car safety seats -- will become the standard for every new car and light truck sold in our country. By the year 2002, the Department of Transportation will require every safety seat to have three standard attachments designed to fit three standard anchors

in the back seat of every car. With this new rule, we can save as many as 50 lives and prevent 18,000 injuries each year.

America's cars and roads are the safest in the world. But there is always more we can do. We must press forward in our fight to keep more drunk drivers off our roads by lowering the national drunk driving to standard to .08. We must continue our nationwide efforts to encourage all drivers and passengers to buckle up their seat belts. I look forward to hearing a new blue ribbon panel's recommendations for encouraging more parents to use booster seats and seat belts for their older children. Together we can work to bring more Americans traveling on our roads safely back home to their families and loved ones.



*Child
Safety
Seat*

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NHTSA
400 7th Street, SW., Room 5220, Nassif Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20590
FAX #202-366-2106

DATE:

11/17/98

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REMARKS:

See attached.



People Saving People

DRAFT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, February 15, 1997

NHTSA -97

Contact: Tim Hurd

Tel. No.: (202) 366-9550

**PRESIDENT CLINTON UNVEILS NEW
UNIVERSAL CHILD SEAT ATTACHMENT SYSTEM
TO MAKE INSTALLATION SAFER, EASIER**

President Clinton today announced a proposed rule for a universal child safety seat attachment system, which will make child safety seats much easier to install in motor vehicles, eliminating incompatibility problems and saving lives by making child seats more secure and easier to use.

"A car seat can protect a child from the violence of the worst crashes," President Clinton said. "Everything you love best depends upon that car seat. So today we are acting to make sure that car safety seats work. We will make safe, well-attached car seats the rule of the road. We will give parents the peace of mind that comes from knowing that your car seat will stay put in your car every time."

President Clinton made the announcement in a radio address taped Friday at the White House just after he swore in Rodney E. Slater as the nation's 13th Secretary of Transportation.

"You should not need an engineering degree to be sure a child safety seat is attached properly," Secretary Slater said. "This innovation will remove a source of frustration and unease for millions of parents and help increase the number of young children using safety seats."

The Department of Transportation's rule proposes that, in two years, all new cars, light trucks and vans be required to have uniform, universal "soft" attachment points in a standard location. A top-attaching tether will provide a secure connection between the top of the seat and the vehicle. All child safety seats will have attachment points to match those in new vehicles.

Department of Transportation checkpoints show that up to 80 percent of child safety seats are misused. There are more than 900 vehicle models with different types of safety belts, and there over 100 models of child safety seats on the market today. The number of possible combinations of child seats with vehicle seats has caused compatibility problems and consumer confusion.

-more-

"Assuming the seat fits, conscientious parents then must work through complicated instructions and study owners manuals. The difficulty of installing current child seat designs may lead some to simply give up on their use," said Ricardo Martinez, M.D., administrator of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

A uniform method for attaching child safety seats was the number one recommendation of a Blue Ribbon Panel commissioned last year by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"We brought together a broad coalition -- automobile and child seat manufacturers, parents, consumer advocates, medical experts -- to work on behalf of our children to find ways to improve car seat safety," President Clinton said. "Today I am pleased that we are acting on their number one proposal."

NHTSA statistics show that every day an unrestrained child under the age of 5 is killed in a traffic crash. Child safety seats, when used properly, are the most effective safety device available. They reduce the risk of fatality for infants by 70 percent and for toddlers by over half.] X

Dr. Martinez, M.D., noted that while the new seating system may take two years to be fully available, there are millions of child seats in use now that do not have these features. He urged parents and care givers to be sure that all children are properly restrained. Children belong in the back seats, buckled up in the safety equipment appropriate for their size.

He also warned that far too many children, 40 percent, are riding with no child seat or seat belt at all. He called on the public to support strict enforcement of child passenger safety laws that require all children to be properly restrained.

There will be a 90-day comment period on the proposal, after which a final rule will be issued incorporating any necessary changes.

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Note to news media:

-- The text of the President's radio address and the press release from the White House can be retrieved from the World Wide Web at <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

-- The text of the universal child safety seat attachment proposal and a photograph of the system are posted on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Web site, <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>.

-- A broadcast quality videotape showing installation of the new seating system is available by calling (202) 366-6918. Voice mail will be monitored regularly.

-- An electronic version of this document can be obtained via the World Wide Web at: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/index.htm>

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

Embargoed For Release
Until 10:06 A.M. EST
Saturday, February 15, 1997

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Today I'm pleased to announce a major new step in our efforts to protect America's children -- a universal system for attaching child safety seats in cars. This system, developed by a blue-ribbon commission of industry and consumer groups, will make safety seats easier to install and more secure on the road. It will save young lives.

In my State of the Union address, I issued a call to action to all Americans to prepare our people for the 21st century. Building strong families is central to that mission. That's why we must do all that we can to help parents do all that they can to live up to one of the greatest responsibilities anyone can have -- to care for a child.

Parents are always on the lookout to make sure their children are safe. That's especially true when you get in the car. Thousands of children are killed in car accidents every year; tens of thousands more are injured.

Even though America's cars and roads are the safest in the world, we must make them safer. That's why today -- the final day of National Child Passenger Safety Week -- I'd like to talk with you about the steps we're taking to save more lives on the road.

First, we will continue to stress the fundamental rules of safety: seat belts, safety seats for small children, children 12 and under buckled up and in the back seat. Last month, I instructed the outgoing Transportation Secretary, Federico Pena, to develop a plan to get more Americans to wear seat belts. I'm delighted to be joined today by our new Transportation Secretary, Rodney Slater, who came to us from the Federal Highway Administration. He knows a lot about this issue and he will present that plan to me in March. When he does, I will be ready to review it and act on it.

We must also continue to support law enforcement in its effort to increase compliance with safety laws.

Second, we have taken action to make it clear that, on America's roads, there is no room for alcohol or drugs. We fought to make it illegal for all young people under 21 to drive with any alcohol in their blood, and 34 states now have these zero-tolerance laws. We're also developing a plan to make teens pass a drug test as a condition of getting a driver's license.

Third, we've worked to make air bags, one of our most important safety tools, safer for children. All cars and safety seats now come with warning labels to remind drivers to keep children in the back seat. Plans are underway to permit manufacturers to install less powerful air bags and to phase in a new generation of "smart" air bags. Air bags have saved a lot of lives. With these improvements, they'll save even more.

MORE

And today, we're taking a fourth step -- we will make child safety seats safer. These seats are the most effective safety device to protect very young children. In car crashes, they reduce the risk of death or serious injury to infants by 70 percent. They cut the fatality and injury rate for children aged 1 to 4 in half. But while all 50 states have car seat laws, studies show that 40 percent of the time young children do not even ride in safety seats; and even when they are placed in child safety seats, 80 percent of the time children are either not fully secured or the car seats are not properly attached.

The fact is, despite parents' best efforts, car seats are hard to install. Not all 100 models of car seats fit in all 900 models of passenger cars. And even when they do, it's no simple task to put them in place. Seat belts are not designed primarily to hold child safety seats. Anyone who's wrestled with a car seat knows what I'm talking about. Thousands of frustrated parents have called our Transportation Department hotline with questions about how to use car seats properly.

Parents are not alone in their concerns -- automobile and car seat makers, consumer organizations, the medical community all have felt there was too much confusion surrounding child seat safety. In response to this problem, my administration convened a blue-ribbon panel, with representatives from all these groups, to find ways to make it easier for parents to protect their children with safe, secure car seats.

Today, I am pleased that we are acting on the panel's number one proposal -- a universal system for attaching car safety seats. Under a Transportation Department plan, every car safety seat would have two standard buckles at its base. Every car would be equipped with standard latches in the back seat designed specifically to fasten to these buckles. There would also be universal attachments to secure the top of the safety seat to the car's interior, so car seats would be locked in from top to bottom.

This plan will go out for public comment next week. If approved, the new safety system could be on the market by 1999.

A car seat can protect a child from the violence of the worst crashes. So today, we are acting to solve a problem that's been around for too long -- we're taking steps to make sure that your child's car seat will stay put in your car every time. With this plan, we're moving closer to the day when safe, well-attached car seats will be the rule of the road.

Together, these efforts represent a new spirit of cooperation in America -- with industry and government working with the American people to support our families as they seek to make life safer and better for our children.

Thanks for listening.

END

GOAL/POSITIONING: The proposed rule for a universal child safety seat attachment will make child safety seats much easier to install in motor vehicles, eliminating incompatibility problems and saving lives by making child seats more secure and encouraging to use. This innovation will remove a source of frustration and unease for millions of parents and caregivers. A uniform method for attaching child safety seats was the number one recommendation of a Blue Ribbon Panel commissioned by NHTSA Administrator Dr. Ricardo Martinez. On Saturday, February 15, 1997, the President hailed the public/private partnership between government and industry which identified the issue, brought together problem-solving experts, and created a consensus for the design of a universal attachment to be used in all new cars and trucks. The rule proposes that in two years, all new cars, light trucks and vans will be required to have uniform, "soft" attachment points in a standard location. There will be a 90 day comment on the proposal, after which a final rule will be issued incorporating any necessary changes.

The Universal Attachment will be a big boon to parents and caregivers. The attachment will:

Make child safety seats much easier to install in motor vehicles.

Eliminate incompatibility problems.

Save lives by making child seats more secure.

Encourage child safety seat use.

We identified the issue.

Public/private partnership.

Brought together problem solving experts.

Created a consensus for the universal design.

90 day comment period on proposal, after which a final rule will be issued.

Current safety

risk: Effectiveness of Seats

80 percent of child safety seats are misused.

Every day, 8 kids under 14 are killed and 932 are injured.

Child safety seats reduce the risk of fatality for infants by almost 70 percent and for toddlers by almost half.

There are many million child seats on the road. Parents and caregivers need our help to make them as effective as possible.

Rule will require that in two years all new cars, light trucks and vans will be required to have uniform, universal, "soft" attachment points in a standard location.

Cost to consumer is 14 dollars for the seat, and in the vehicle, if just one in front seat, just \$4, and \$8 for two seats.

Radio Address Talking Points

The safest place for a child in a car is in the back seat properly restrained in a safety seat. Remember, kids in back.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children of every age from 5 to 14 years old. Every day, eight children under the age of 14 are killed and 932 are injured in traffic crashes.

Child safety seats, when used properly, are the most effective safety device available. They reduce the risk of fatality for infants by almost 70 percent and for toddlers by almost half.

All fifty states and the District of Columbia have noted this effectiveness and passed laws requiring safety seat use. The first law was passed by the state of Tennessee back in 1978. Regrettably, seats are still not used often enough. Forty percent of children are riding without any child safety seats or belts at all. When used, child seats are often installed or attached improperly. Checkpoints have shown up to 80 percent misuse.

In 1995, 350 children under the age of five, completely unrestrained, were killed in crashes. Many of these deaths could have been avoided if the children had been buckled up in seats. In that same year, NHTSA estimates that 279 children 0-5 were saved by occupant restraints. If every child under 5 years old had been restrained, 200 more children would have survived motor vehicle crashes in 1995.

The benefits of child safety seats are well understood by the public. Hospitals and community organizations join in making them available to the needy and in educating young parents on their use. Yet there is major dissatisfaction with current safety seats.

Why? Because of the difficulty in installing them and fitting them to automobiles. Parents learn that some seats cannot be used at all in certain cars. Assuming the seat fits, conscientious parents then must work through complicated instructions and study owners manuals. Using a child seat can be a frustrating experience, leading some to give up on their use.

Clearly, a new approach was needed. Two years ago, Secretary Peña and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration convened a "Blue Ribbon Panel" of experts on child safety to develop and recommend solutions. It was led by Philip Haseltine, of the American Coalition for Traffic Safety. A key participant was Mr. Joseph Colella, whose own niece died as a result of a misattached child restraint.

The panel's top recommendation was for a uniform, easy-to-use system for attaching child seats to motor vehicles.

NHTSA worked with industry and other interested parties in workshops and a public meeting to present and discuss engineering solutions for the key issue of a uniform and easy-to-use attachment system. Gradually, in this spirit of cooperation in the service of America's children, a consensus emerged. Under NHTSA's leadership, a single proposal has been formulated.

NHTSA is proposing that all new cars be required to have uniform, universal "soft" attachment points - just like safety belts - in a standard location. A top-attaching tether will provide a secure connection exceeding that of current designs. Seats will have matching attachment points - just like the other part of a safety belt.

No longer will it be necessary to worry about differing methods of installing seats. The awkwardness of wrestling a seat from one car into another will be substantially reduced.

This is one of those things that seems simple in retrospect -- what took us so long? A single method of attaching seats to cars is logical, necessary, and long overdue. In an industry full of competitive innovation, sometimes we lose sight of the goal of simplicity -- but that is what reinventing government is about. We seek to identify the underlying concerns and work together with all our partners to make things better.

In the meantime, NHTSA is taking many steps to make everyone aware that proper child seat and safety belt use can save lives and to teach parents how to install child seats properly. For example, NHTSA is producing an easy-to-use CD-ROM that matches every child seat with every recent model car. It shows which seats fit in each seat position and gives complete installation instructions. Also, NHTSA has just produced a video showing new parents how to transport their babies safely. "Protecting Your Newborn" will be available in hospitals, pre-birth classes, and many auto dealers.

Finally, in cooperation with the Air Bag Safety Campaign, NHTSA has mounted intensive public education activities to inform everyone that children belong in the back seat, properly buckled up in the child seat or belt appropriate for their size.

Far too many children -- that 40% mentioned earlier -- are riding with no restraints at all. This is unfortunate, and the public should support strict enforcement of existing laws. For parents who cannot afford seats, many organizations have instituted loaner programs.

Child seats and safety belts save the lives of younger and older riders alike. Already, they are saving 10,000 riders a year. If we could increase use from the current level (68%) to 90%, 5,000 more lives a year would be saved.

That's why last month the President directed DOT to prepare a national plan to increase safety belt use and report back within 45 days.

We urge Governors and legislatures to renew their commitment to protecting their citizens from one of the leading causes of death -- motor vehicle crashes. We urge the passage of laws that will make failure to wear a safety belt in itself a matter for appropriate enforcement.

Background on Universal Attachment Child Restraint System

Motor vehicle crashes are a major cause of death of children ages five and under in the United States and abroad. In the U.S., these crashes result in 600 deaths and 70,000 injuries yearly of children in this age group. Child seats are very effective in reducing the chance of death and serious injury if properly installed and used. Unfortunately, a large number of seats are not used properly, resulting in a substantial reduction in their effectiveness. These child seats rely on the vehicle belt system to be restrained to the vehicle seat. These belts are built to protect all sizes of adults passengers but also a wide range of ages of children. It is a very difficult task to design and build these belts and to accommodate all these age groups without compromising some safety protection.

The effectiveness of child seats is also reduced by incorrect securing of children and child restraints. To properly install child seats, devices such as lockable retractors, locking clips, and supplemental belts must be used in many cases. Many people installing a child seat are either unfamiliar with the use of these devices, or unable to understand instructions concerning their proper use. People generally are frustrated about the difficulty in installing child seats correctly in vehicle seats.

In February 1995, the National Highway Administration announced the formation of a Blue Ribbon Panel of safety experts to recommend ways to install and use child seats. The agency undertook an extensive evaluation program of the various solutions to this problem. In turn, more than 20 US and foreign manufacturers of motor vehicles and child seats have petitioned to require a universal system dedicated to only attach child seats to motor vehicles.

On October 16 and 17, 1996, DOT held a meeting with about 100 representatives from the US, Canada, Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. The findings of the meeting showed that all options seemed to improve the current situation, but a system proposed by a group led by General Motors, consisting of 14 manufacturers of motor vehicles and child seats, offers the most advantages to solving this problem with the lowest cost impact to consumers. The system uses a "buckle and latchplate" similar to that currently used in motor vehicles. The system also uses an upper attachment or tether.

NHTSA is proposing a universal attachment child seat system that is based on the GM concept that uses two lower flat latchplates located where the seat back and cushion come together and an upper ring on the package shelf. Current child seats would be modified to have two belts with a buckle on each side of the seat and a belt with a hook to attach the child seat to the top anchor. A second child seat system that is predominantly supported by European manufacturers but is more costly, would be allowed as long as it has an adapter to allow it to attach to the proposed universal attachment system. The proposal requires that vehicles -- all passenger cars, light trucks and vans-- have two seating positions equipped with the universal attachment system. It requires that child seats equipped with a universal attachment system also be usable in current vehicles that are not equipped with a universal attachment system.

The proposal requires a two-year lead time and is expected to save 24 to 32 lives and prevent 2187 to 3615 serious injuries of children of ages less than five yearly. The proposal would result in increasing the price of a child seat by about \$14 and the vehicle by \$4 to \$8. The system has been harmonized with the international safety community and is expected to have the support of all US child restraint manufacturers and child safety organizations.

Background on Child Passenger Safety Issues

Child and youth transportation safety issues have received enormous media attention as of late, and have been the subject of various White House and Administration initiatives. In the last two years, the President has used radio addresses to personally announce initiatives on teen drinking and driving (calling for zero tolerance laws), teen drug use and driving (calling for pre-license testing and other measures), and, most recently, NHTSA rulemakings to improve the performance of airbags. In that last address, the President delivered the key airbag safety messages--i.e., for parents to place children 12 and under in the back seat, and for all occupants to always use proper restraints. Also, the President directed DOT to report back on ways to increase seat belt use in this country. DOT's report is due March 9, 1997.

The President's announcement of NHTSA's proposal for a universal means of attaching child safety seats in automobiles will continue this focus on child and youth transportation safety, and offer the President a particularly timely opportunity--in light of this week being National Child Passenger Safety Week--to reiterate the airbag safety messages noted above. Some background information follows.

1. The Child Transportation Safety Picture Generally

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death of persons aged 5-27 in the U.S., and are a significant cause of death to children aged 0-5. Specifically, about 600 children aged 0-5 die and about 70,000 such children are injured each year in highway crashes. Tragically, a significant number of the deaths and injuries could be avoided by the proper use of child safety seats. Such seats are 70% effective in preventing death and injury to infants (up to 1 year old) and 50% effective for toddlers (ages 1-5). While the use of child seats is relatively high for infants (over 85%), use for toddlers is no more than 60%. Indeed, in 350 of the 600 annual child fatalities, the child is completely unrestrained. NHTSA estimates that proper use of child seats saves close to 300 children aged 0-5 a year, and an additional 200 children could be saved if use was at 100%.

2. The Current-Day Problem with Child Safety Seats

While highly effective when properly used, child safety seats are often difficult to use properly. Currently, there are over 900 separate makes and models of vehicles, and over 100 separate models of child seats, sold in the U.S. Not all seats fit in all cars, and until the recent creation by NHTSA of a CD-ROM database on the matter, there was no place to go to find out definitively which seats fit in which cars.

Moreover, even assuming a seat fits the dimensions of a vehicle, it is often an extremely complicated to attach the seat to the vehicle.

The result has been widespread consumer confusion and frustration. Child seat checkpoints and clinics routinely report misuse rates of 80% and higher. (Misuse includes placement of seats in improper positions, mis-attachment of seats, and use of an inappropriate seat for the size and age of the child.) Misuse of seats results in significant degradation of their safety potential. Focus groups and clinics reveal parents to be extremely frustrated with the situation.

3. DOT's Initiative to Solve the Problem

About 2 years ago, DOT set about to address the issues of child seat incompatibility. NHTSA Administrator Dr. Ricardo Martinez convened a blue ribbon panel of experts in the field--auto manufacturers, child seat manufacturers, child safety groups, medical groups, etc., to develop and recommend solutions. The panel included one individual whose niece had died as a result of a misattached child seat.

While the panel acknowledged that the overall situation was complex, requiring a variety of educational and technical undertakings to solve, the panel's central recommendation was the need for NHTSA to mandate a uniform and easy-to-use system of attaching child seats to vehicles. Over time, the panel considered a number of such options. Ultimately, the vast majority of panel members concurred on a system involving mini-seat belts, with the buckle part attached to the child seat and the latch part attached to the car. Also, most panel members recommended the use of tethers attaching the top of the child seat to the shelf behind the vehicle seat (as required in Canada). Consumer clinics showed parents to strongly favor this system over current systems. NHTSA tests showed the system to be safe. NHTSA has prepared a rulemaking proposal which would require the system to be placed on child seats and new passenger vehicles within 2 years of the rule becoming final. NHTSA believes, based on consumer comments in clinics on the matter, that the additional estimated costs of \$14 per seat and \$4-8 per vehicle will not pose an impediment to consumers. While the agency does not have authority to require retrofitting of existing vehicles, it has been encouraged by the fact that some of the major vehicle manufacturers have expressed a desire to offer retrofit kits.

NHTSA estimates that the proposal, once fully instituted, will save 24-32 lives and prevent 2,200-3,600 injuries a year. It will significantly reduce consumer frustration. In turn, it hopefully will increase child seat use.

4. The Relationship of the Child Seat Issue to the Airbag Situation

To date, 35 children aged 9 and under have died from passenger side airbag injuries. Nine of the 35 were in rear-facing infant seats, which should never be placed in front of a passenger side airbag. The remaining 26 in almost all cases were either not restrained at all, or improperly restrained (e.g., shoulder belt behind back, should have been in child seat instead of using seat belt).

NHTSA has a comprehensive program designed to reduce the immediate risk from the existing fleet of vehicles and the vehicles delivered before advanced designs can be implemented. The agency is in the midst of rulemaking that would allow automakers to take some power out of the air bags and allow consumers to have their air bags disconnected. This comes on top of two

rules that are already final. One gives automakers two more years to install air bag shut-off switches, the other requires big, bold warning labels on all vehicles and child safety seats sold in this country.

Also, the Administration is working hard to spread the key airbag safety messages--i.e., children 12 and under must be in the back, rear-facing infant seats should never be in front of a passenger airbag, and all occupants must use proper restraints. Summary of three step regulatory plan: 1) Depower; 2) Cutoff; 3) Smart Air Bag. Among other things, the Administration urged the creation of a coalition of auto and airbag manufacturers, insurance companies, and safety organizations to improve public education on the matter, also to seek stronger seat belt laws and better enforcement of those laws so as to increase restraint use, and reduce airbag risks, in the U.S.

To date, the coalition has raised \$14 million for these efforts. At present, the coalition is particularly focused on seeking stronger enforcement of the child seat use laws in this country. While fully 38 states only allow secondary enforcement of adult seat belt use laws, all 50 states have primary enforcement laws which require parents to transport children in child safety seats. Traditionally these laws have not been vigorously enforced. If they were, child seat use by parents likely would increase significantly.

A call on Governors and States to do their part to improve child transportation safety by strongly enforcing their child passenger safety laws would fit in well with the President's announcement of NHTSA's child seat attachment proposal. Along with a call on parents to insist on restraint use by the entire family, the message shows the Administration crafting a comprehensive solution--involving both mechanical and behavioral components--to the child safety problem. Also, improved enforcement of both child and adult restraint laws certainly will be a matter recommended by DOT in its March 9 report to the President on increased seat belt use. The President's message to parents will be consistent with the theme of personal responsibility--i.e., that families must take greater responsibility for their own health and safety.

Finally, increased restraint use will have a dramatic impact on the nation's health care costs. The average cost of treating unrestrained drivers admitted as inpatients is \$5,000 greater than the cost for those using restraints. A sizable portion of these costs are born by the public through Medicaid and Medicare. Increasing restraint use by all occupants from the current level of 68% to 90% would save over 5,500 lives a year.

**Questions and Answers
On Universal Attachment Child Restraint System**

What is NHTSA proposing as a Universal Attachment Child Restraint System?

NHTSA is proposing a standard method of attaching child safety seats to vehicles. The hardware will always be the same, whether in a passenger car, light truck, or van. (An illustration of the system will be provided on a separate page.) In the vehicle, there will be two flat latch plates for the lower attachment, and there will be a ring on the top shelf for a tether anchorage. On the child restraint, there will be a hook on the top for anchoring the tether. Below, on each side, there will be a belt with a buckle to attach to the vehicle latch plate.

Two rear seating positions will be required to have the Universal Attachment Systems. If the vehicle has a method of deactivating the passenger side air bag -- a cutoff switch -- then one seating position in the front seat would be allowed to have the universal attachment points.

New child seats with the universal attachment system must also be capable of safe, secure installation in existing vehicles that do not have the attachment points.

When will the rule take effect?

The rule proposes to require the new systems as part of all new child safety seats and to be installed in all new motor vehicles two years after publication of the final rule. The detailed proposal will be published in the Federal Register during the week of February 17. There will be a 90 day comment period, and these comments will be included in the final rule as appropriate.

Why is NHTSA doing this?

Each year, crashes kill 600 children less than 5 years old. There are 70,000 non-fatal injuries annually in this age group. Forty percent of children are observed to ride completely unrestrained -- no child seats or belts at all. Child seat usage is high for infants, but drops off rapidly for older children.

Properly installed child seats are highly effective 70% for infants, 50% for toddlers) in reducing the chance of death and serious injury -- but in practice their effectiveness is considerably reduced because of problems fitting the seat to the vehicle. The difficulty of installing child seats leads to improper use. In fact, checkpoints have shown that up to 80 percent of child seats are misused. Tragically, there have been deaths because well-meaning people simply misunderstood how their seats should be attached. Understandably, parents and care givers are very dissatisfied with the current seats.

Why did NHTSA pick this particular system?

In February 1995, Secretary Peña and the administrator of NHTSA, Dr. Ricardo Martinez,

convened a Blue Ribbon Panel of experts including automobile and safety seat manufacturers, and the medical and safety communities, to recommend ways to solve the problems associated with the installation and use of child safety seats. The top recommendation was to come up with a uniform system of attaching child seats to motor vehicles. Many vehicle and child seat manufacturers in the U.S. and in other countries worked with NHTSA, culminating in a meeting with more than 100 participants in October, 1996. Focus groups and clinics helped the agency converge on the best solution -- easy-to-use "soft" or flexible attachment points with a top tether for increased safety.

What are the estimated benefits of the system?

The new universal attachment system will vastly reduce the difficulty and frustration owners have with current child seat designs. There will be corresponding gains in proper, effective use. NHTSA conservatively estimates that the proposed system itself will save 24 to 32 lives each year, and prevent up to 3,600 injuries.

What is the cost to the consumer?

NHTSA estimates that at the retail level, the new system will add about \$14 to the cost of a child safety seat. The added cost for a motor vehicle would be between \$4 to \$8.

This is for future vehicles -- what advice can you give parents now?

Just as with other products designed to protect children's health, the adults responsible must read instruction sheets diligently. Both the seat instructions and the motor vehicle manual must be carefully reviewed. Take note of how belts should be routed to hold the seat for optimum security. If additional hardware is supplied with the seat, learn how to attach and use it.

NHTSA operates a toll-free Hotline number, 1-800-424-9393. While NHTSA cannot provide instruction on individual seats, the agency can send helpful printed information and the contact phone numbers for manufacturers. Local hospitals can often provide information or referrals to child safety organizations.

What is DOT doing to stop air bags from killing and injuring children?

DOT has announced a seven step approach to reduce air bag dangers:

- new, bold warning labels in vehicles
- new warning labels on child safety seats
- phase-in schedule for the next generation or "smart" air bags
- extend time period for existing policy of permitting cut-off switches in vehicles with no rear seat
- allow manufacturers to take some power out of air bags
- allow owners of existing vehicles to have their air bags disconnected
- increase public awareness



U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

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Sant*

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

FAX TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET

DATE: 1/13/99

TO: Mary Smith

FAX NO: 456-7431

FROM: Carrie Hyun
Deputy Chief of Staff
Office: (202) 366-6800
Fax: (202) 366-3956

Number of pages transmitted, including cover sheet: 5

Message:

Here's what we have to date.

Child Passenger Safety Week
February 14-20, 1999

What is it?

National Child Passenger Safety Week, February 14-20, is a dedicated week that brings public attention to the problems of safe transportation for young children. Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of death for children of every age from 6 to 14. The week provides an opportunity for states, communities, national organizations and advocates to conduct activities designed to promote seat belt, child safety seat, and bicycle helmet use and good safety habits for young pedestrians. Begun in 1983, and historically focused on child safety seats, this year the program has been expanded to include other issues related to the safe transportation of children.

Who are our partners?

American Academy of Pediatrics
Air Bag and Seat Belt Safety Campaign
Emergency Nurses Association
National Safe Kids Campaign
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies
Association of Women Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses
Department of Health and Human Services/Maternal and Child Health

Doctors associated with the effort

Dr. Marilyn Bull
Riley Hospital for Children
Indianapolis, IN.

Dr. Flaura Koplin Winston
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA.

Dr. Murray Katcher
Chair, Committee on Injury and Poison Prevention (AAP)
Madison, WI.

Dr. Scott Berns
Rhode Island Hospital
Providence, Rhode Island

Dr. Barbara Barlowe
Harlem Children's Hospital
New York, N.Y.

Dr. Phyllis Agran
University of California - Irvine
Anaheim, CA.

Overview of Activities

Satellite Media Tour: Dr. Martinez will participate in a satellite media tour in 6-10 markets during CPS week.

Capital Kids: During this week, kids will take the message about the importance of primary seat belt laws and strong enforcement of those laws to state capitals across the country. Sponsored by the Air Bag and Seat Belt Safety Campaign, the national press event will be in Washington D.C. and will kick off the week. Local media events are planned in targeted states.

Presidential Radio Address and Proclamation (requested): NHTSA is requesting that President Clinton dedicate his weekly radio address to child passenger safety and announce the progress made on increasing national seat belt use and reducing child fatalities.

Author: Carrie Hyun at OSTEXEC
Date: 1/11/99 11:42 AM
Priority: Normal
TO: Harold Gist at OSTCENTRAL
Subject: Congressional involvement in UCRA

Here's the latest from NHTSA, I already sent a heads up to Frazier.

Forward Header

Subject: Congressional involvement in UCRA
Author: Charlotte Hrnair<NHTSA> at CCHUB
Date: 1/11/99 10:10 AM

Suggestions for inclusion in roll-out.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee - co-chair of Children's caucus. (was going to come to blue ribbon panel announcement on Forgotten Children)

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen - co-chair of Children's Caucus

Rep. Steny Hoyer - staff has called and expressed interest in participating - has worked with us on child safety seat issues.

Rep. Frank Pallone - Member of House Commerce (oversight of motor vehicles) recently contacted us regarding a child safety seat issue involving his child.

Rep. Frank Wolf - Very active in the promotion of the NHTSA video on the safe transportation of newborns from the hospital.

Sen. Abraham - sponsor of the Child Passenger Protection Education Grants in T EA-21

Rep. Morella - minority staff mentioned her interest in the issue.

Sen. Dodd - Co-chair of Senate Children's Caucus

Sen. Specter - Co-Chair of Senate Children's Caucus

Chairman and Ranking of Oversight Committees

Rep. Wolf

Rep. Sabo

Rep. Shuster

Rep. Oberstar

Sen. Shelby

Sen. Lautenberg

Sen. Chafee

Sen. Baucus.

Will send you information on advocacy groups and others later today.

Author: Nancy DiModica at ostnovp

Date: 1/12/99 3:33 PM

Priority: Normal

Receipt Requested

TO: Carrie Hyun at OSTEXEC

Subject: Universal attachment for child safety seats

Mary (!)

- C

Mr. Conti forwarded your e-mail to me in Policy's Office of Policy Development, Safety Team regarding a possible WH domestic policy event during Child safety week. You asked for ideas for attendees. Since the Department emphasizes the work it does for its customers, I believe we should invite a few mothers with their children from the general public who will be using these seats.

Nancy DiModica, P-140 Policy Safety Team

Draft 12-03-98 2:00pm

**PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES NEW RULE WHICH WILL
PROTECT THIS NATION'S CHILDREN BY IMPROVING
THE INSTALLATION OF CHILD SAFETY SEATS IN VEHICLES
December 7, 1998**

Today President Clinton will announce a major new step to protect our traveling children -- a new universal way for installing child safety seats in cars and light trucks. This rule will require each new child seat to have three attachments -- one on top and two at the base -- by September 1, 2002. By 2002, all new cars and light trucks will be equipped with standard anchors in the back seat designed specifically to link to the child seat attachments. This rule is expected to prevent as many as fifty child deaths and 18,000 injuries each year.

Improved Method of Installation Will Save Lives

This rule requires new features on both vehicles and child safety seats. For the child safety seats, there will be three attachments, a tether on top and two at the base. For vehicles, new standard anchors will be installed in the back seat which are designed to link to the new child seat attachments. Typically, vehicles will be required to install 2 systems in the rear seat so that two child seats can be anchored. Each system will consist of a ready-to-use, visible and accessible upper anchorage to which the child seat tether hardware will attach. The vehicle seat will have two one-inch long bars spaced a foot apart and positioned where the vehicle seat cushion and seat back meet to which the child seat lower hardware will attach.

Currently, parents use the vehicle seat belts to install child seats which often is cumbersome and difficult because seat belt designs have been optimized in recent years for adult protection not child seat installation.

Effective Date of Rule for Both Vehicles and Child Seats

For vehicles, eighty percent of new cars will be equipped with the top tether attachment points starting September 1, 1999. All new vehicles (cars and light trucks) will be equipped with the top tether attachment points by September 1, 2000. The lower anchorages are phased in over 3 years, covering 20% of vehicles by September 1, 2000, 50% of vehicles by September 1, 2001, and all vehicles after September 1, 2002.

For the child seats, starting September 1, 1999, all new child seats will be equipped with an upper tether. All new child seats will be equipped with the two lower attachments by September 1, 2002. New child seats will also remain installable with regular vehicle seat belts to assure compatibility with older vehicles and aircraft.

Builds on the President's Efforts to Protect Children in Vehicles

These steps are just a few of President Clinton's efforts to promote safety for children on the road. Most recently, on November 19, 1998, the Administration announced a Blue Ribbon Passenger Safety Panel that will recommend strategies to increase the use of booster seats for children 4 to 8 years and the use of seat belts for children 8 to 16 years. This group of children typically is currently not covered by state child seat use laws. Children of this age group have low restraint use rates with the result that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of

Draft 12-03-98 2:00pm

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Today President Clinton will announce a major new step to protect our traveling children -- a new universal way for installing child safety seats in cars and light trucks. This rule will require each new child seat to have three attachments -- one on top and two at the base -- by September 1, 2002. By 2002, all new cars and light trucks will be equipped with standard anchors in the back seat designed specifically to link to the child seat attachments. This rule is expected to prevent as many as fifty child deaths and 18,000 injuries each year.

Improved Method of Installation Will Save Lives

This rule requires new features on both vehicles and child safety seats. For the child safety seats, there will be three attachments, a tether on top and two at the base. For vehicles, new standard anchors will be installed in the back seat which are designed to link to the new child seat attachments. Typically, vehicles will be required to install 2 systems in the rear seat so that two child seats can be anchored. Each system will consist of a ready-to-use, visible and accessible upper anchorage to which the child seat tether hardware will attach. The vehicle seat will have two one-inch long bars spaced a foot apart and positioned where the vehicle seat cushion and seat back meet to which the child seat lower hardware will attach.

Currently, parents use the vehicle seat belts to install child seats which often is cumbersome and difficult because seat belt designs have been optimized in recent years for adult protection not child seat installation.

Effective Date of Rule for Both Vehicles and Child Seats

For vehicles, eighty percent of new cars will be equipped with the top tether attachment points starting September 1, 1999. All new vehicles (cars and light trucks) will be equipped with the top tether attachment points by September 1, 2000. The lower anchorages are phased in over 3 years, covering 20% of vehicles by September 1, 2000, 50% of vehicles by September 1, 2001, and all vehicles after September 1, 2002.

For the child seats, starting September 1, 1999, all new child seats will be equipped with an upper tether. All new child seats will be equipped with the two lower attachments by September 1, 2002. New child seats will also remain installable with regular vehicle seat belts to assure compatibility with older vehicles and aircraft.

Builds on the President's Efforts to Protect Children in Vehicles

These steps are just a few of President Clinton's efforts to promote safety for children on the road. Most recently, on November 19, 1998, the Administration announced a Blue Ribbon Passenger Safety Panel that will recommend strategies to increase the use of booster seats for children 4 to 8 years and the use of seat belts for children 8 to 16 years. This group of children typically is currently not covered by state child seat use laws. Children of this age group have low restraint use rates with the result that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of

death.

Standardizing Child Safety Seats

Saying Current Confusion Can Be Deadly, U.S. to Unveil New System

By WARREN BROWN
Washington Post Staff Writer

AW

After nearly eight years of debate, the Clinton administration plans to unveil a universal system next month for installing child safety seats, a step designed to eliminate a frustrating experience for parents and ensure that more children are properly secured.

Under the plan, every seat would be required to fit in every car the same way—as early as next year in some models—thus eliminating the current mishmash of 100 varieties of child seats and myriad installation systems in 300 different passenger vehicles now on the market. Older child seats would be able to use the new anchors, though it isn't clear whether older models of cars could be retrofitted with the new system.

The plan, which government and industry sources said will be announced Dec. 14 by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, would have broad implications for the safety of infants and small children, who often are at risk of death or serious injury in passenger vehicles because they are either unrestrained—neither in a child safety seat nor secured by a seat belt—or improperly secured.

NHTSA and other Department of Transportation officials declined to comment.

About 80 percent of the children strapped into safety seats are at risk because those seats are im-

SEATS, From A1

properly connected, according to NHTSA officials.

Officials hope a universal system would not only ensure that seats are properly secured but also encourage greater use of child seats, since 60 percent of the children who die in vehicle accidents every year aren't strapped in at all. About 600 children younger than 5 years old are killed and more than 70,000 are injured in vehicle crashes every year.

U.S. auto safety officials have long despaired over those grim statistics, but they have been debating since 1990 which system would provide the right combination of safety, ease of use and low cost. In the meantime, both the Canadians and the Europeans have moved ahead with their own universal systems. The announcement next month would end a federal rule-making process that started in June 1996.

Under a plan that combines aspects of the Canadian and European systems, the rear passenger seats of new cars would have three dedicated anchors—two at the bottom and one at the top—to hold child safety seats firmly in place. Officials hope this would eliminate

the belt-routing nightmare that has foiled so many parents in the past—trying to guess which seat belt goes through which loop in a child safety seat that may not, after

"The difficulty of installing these seats certainly has been a deterrent to using them."

— Joan Claybrook,
president of Public Citizen

all, be usable in a particular car or truck.

"In the past, we've made the proper installation of child safety seats way too complicated," said Chuck Hurley, spokesman for the National Safety Council, a consumer advocacy group in Washington. "People need a doctorate in beltology in order to get those seats in properly." He noted that many parents or guardians try to accomplish that task while rushing off to work or some other appointment.

Putting the same anchors in the

same place the same way should dispel the confusion, according to sources familiar with the planned new design, known as the Isofix Hybrid.

The Isofix Hybrid system will require a redesign of child safety seats so that they can be plugged into or snapped onto the new anchors. Older seats would require an adapter belt to attach the seats to at least the two lower anchors. While that would not be as secure as using all three anchors, officials believe it would be more secure than most seats installed under the current system.

The new anchoring system is expected to appear next year in cars manufactured by Germany's Volkswagen AG and by 2000 in a variety of other manufacturers' vehicles, according to government and industry sources who declined to speak on the record.

Initially, it is expected that many families with children will buy an adapter belt to be used with child safety seats now in their possession or currently available in stores. Eventually, the newer safety seats would replace those old models in the market.

The Isofix Hybrid anchor could add about \$60 to the overall retail cost of a child restraint system, most of it in the car, according to some

government and industry estimates.

Eventually, officials expect, this hybrid plan is likely to become the worldwide standard.

Clarence Ditlow, executive director of the Center for Auto Safety in Washington, said the compromise plan isn't perfect. "But we can't get caught up in the paralysis of perfection," he said. "We need to make child safety seats more compatible with cars than they are, and this is a step in the right direction."

Joan Claybrook, who served as NHTSA administrator under President Carter and now is president of Public Citizen, a public interest lobbying group in Washington, agreed. "The difficulty of installing these seats certainly has been a deterrent to using them," she said. The use of the three-point anchor system "is a very good idea that could help parents" install the seats more easily, Claybrook said.

But she said the government and the auto industry need to do more, and to make built-in child safety seats standard equipment in new vehicles. Built-in seats "means you wouldn't have to worry about mixing and matching child safety seats with belts or anchors," Claybrook said. Such seats are available in some cars sold by AB Volvo and Chrysler Corp.

The Washington Post

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1998

See SEATS, A10, Col. 1

NHTSA

BR

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cc: Chris

The rule would require auto makers to outfit new cars with a single type of anchorage system to hold child seats so parents can avoid the struggle to cinch the seat with a seat belt.

Auto makers will be given lead time to install the anchors in rear seats. It will take years for all child seats and cars to have the system, since it will be required only on new products.

With dozens of child seats on the market, parents have been frustrated by the difficulty of finding the right ones for their cars, which have a wide variety of seats and seat-belt designs. The transportation agency says about 80 percent of child cars seats are not properly installed.

If all children using child seats were restrained properly, 68 more lives would be saved annually, according to a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimate.

The NHTSA has decided to make auto makers install rigid metal bars behind the rear seats of new cars to serve as a universal anchor for child seats, according to government and industry officials and safety groups familiar with the plan.

Child seat manufacturers would be allowed flexibility in designing attachments on the child seat that would hook onto the anchoring system, officials said. That would allow for cheaper systems, such as traditional seat-belt webbing attached to the child seat bottom on either side that would be secured to the anchors with hooks, the safety groups said. However, there could be more expensive options such as rigid rods on the child seat to snap onto the quarter-inch-thick metal bars.

A tether strap would secure the top of a forward-facing child seat near the child's head to another pin on the vehicle's rear package shelf, transportation officials said. The tether is intended to prevent head and neck injuries by keeping a child's head from moving too far forward in an accident.

Almost two years has passed since the government announced the proposed uniform child seat in a speech by President Clinton. Since then, the design of the seat anchorage has changed, in part to try to ensure auto makers could use the same anchor system in vehicles sold in other countries.

Child seats now cost from \$40 to \$220, safety experts say. The agency, in a study last year, had estimated a new, universal latching system would add \$10 to \$65 to those costs.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, a research group backed by insurers, published illustrations of the new seat this month in their safety report. Institute researcher Elisa Braver said the group had expected the federal government to announce the new child seats in December, and they did not expect to publish information on it in advance.

"Every time you have a month's delay (in the rule), there's three-quarters of a million new cars being produced that are not going to be equipped with the devices," Braver said.

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... "There will be a ripple effect," says

... initiatives are available to voters in 24
... states, 17 of them west of the Mississippi
... River. The five that use them the most
... are in the West: Colorado, California, Ar-
... izona, Oregon and Washington. Waters
... says those states account for 56% of the
... 1,900 initiatives placed on ballots since
... South Dakota first did it in 1898.

... key to lawmak-
... state legislatures, is lost at the bal-
... lot box.
... "The problem with the petition pro-
... cess is, you get one up-or-down vote,
... take it or leave it," says Karl Kurtz, di-
... rector of state services for the Denver-
... based National Conference of State Leg-
... islatures. "You can't hammer it out.
... (There's no room for) bargaining, nego-
... tiation, complexity, nuance."
... Doug Kristensen, speaker of Nebras-

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... toward an ultimate goal of repla-
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... He argues that the court's message is
... that "any restraint" to putting initiative
... questions on the ballot is unconstitution-
... al. He contends that having to gather
... signatures door-to-door is a restraint.
... It's "a 17th-century method," he says.
... "It's obsolete."

Campaign: Buckle kids up, and not just in cars

By Jayne O'Donnell
USA TODAY

Frustrated with delays in getting its child-safety proposals adopted, the National Transportation Safety Board launches a campaign today to get babies buckled on planes, children restrained on school buses and kids of all ages seated in the back seats of cars.

NTSB Chairman James Hall also will propose that permanent checkpoints be set up around the nation to make sure child seats are properly in-

stalled in cars. Hall will make the announcements at a National Safe Kids Campaign conference in Washington.

NTSB is an independent agency that investigates transportation accidents and makes safety recommendations to government and industry. The board, best known for air crash probes, already has issued specific recommendations to improve the safety of children on buses and planes and to require that kids be seated in the back seats of cars. But Hall wants to spur faster action.

The Federal Aviation Administration asked for comments last February on possible rules requiring that children under 2 be restrained on airplanes, but the agency hasn't proposed rules. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has begun a research program on the benefits of safety belts on school buses.

"We still investigate crashes where students are tragically thrown from the bus or tossed around in the bus and are killed or seriously injured," Hall said recently. "We need to

know whether properly designed lap and shoulder belts for school buses could prevent ejections and serious injuries, infrequent as they are."

Safety experts say that, even if requiring kids to be buckled on planes and school buses did not save many lives, it would train children to buckle up in cars.

"You're trying to get kids to develop habits for life and have a glaring omission of seat belts on school buses," says Phil Hasetline, president of the American Coalition for Traffic Safety.

Under law, any child 2 and older must be restrained in a separate seat on commercial airplanes. Parents are allowed to hold children under 2 in their arms, although FAA-approved child seats are highly recommended. Most airlines offer discounted fares so children under 2 can have their own seats.

"Everything in an airplane has to be buckled down securely but an infant," Hall said. He will push his plan in meetings with industry and government officials.

Child Safe Seats

**NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC
SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

Office of Public and Consumer Affairs
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590
Phone: 202-366-9550
Fax: 202-366-5962



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On the Road for a Healthier Future

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

FAX COVER SHEET

Date 2/24/99

To MARY Smith

Organization White House

Phone _____

Fax 456-7431

From Tim Hurd

Number of pages (including this cover sheet) _____

Message:

Auto Safety Hotline

(800) 424-9393

Wash., D.C. Area (202) 366-0123



Safety Fact Sheet

Universal Child Safety Seat

Fact Sheet

Current Child Safety Seats Problem

- Annually, motor vehicle crashes result in 600 children less than 5 years old fatalities and 70,000 injured. Even though child safety seats are very effective in reducing death and injury to the child occupant, in actual use their effectiveness is substantially reduced due to incorrect use and their incompatibility with the vehicle seat and belt systems.
- Parents are generally dissatisfied with the current vehicle belt system for attaching child seats because of the complexity and difficulty to tighten the child seat.

Previous Efforts to Remedy the Problem

- The Federal vehicle occupant protection standard was amended on October 13, 1993, to require that vehicle lap belt be lockable to tightly secure child seats. However, it still often results in excessive movement of child seat and child occupant.
- Voluntary industry guidelines were developed by the Society of Automotive Engineers but have not proven to be sufficient to solve the problem of assuring compatibility between the vehicle seat belts and child seats.
- In February 1995, the agency set up a Blue Ribbon Panel of experts to recommend ways to install and use child safety seats. In May 1995, the Panel recommended to undertake an evaluation of and develop a universal system to attach child safety seats.
- President Clinton's February 15, 1997 radio address announced a proposal to require motor vehicles and child restraints to be equipped with a standardized means independent of vehicle safety belts for securing child seats to the vehicle seats.

Received Public Comments

- Over 70 comments were received in response to the rulemaking proposal. Because the international community is considering adoption of a standard for a universal, independent child seat anchorage system, comments were also received from foreign governments as well as domestic entities.
- All commenters agreed with the need for a universal independent child seat attachment system and overwhelmingly concurred with the proposed upper tether attachment.

New Universal Child Restraint Safety System

- The system is universally compatible with all passenger cars and light trucks and is also universal in terms of its potential for international adoption.
- Typically, vehicles will be required to install 2 systems in the rear seat. Each system will consist of a ready-to-use, visible and accessible upper anchorage to which the child seat tether hardware will attach. The vehicle seat will have two, 1-inch long bars spaced a foot apart and positioned where the vehicle seat cushion and seat back meet, to which the child seat lower hardware attaches.
- New child seats will be required to have this new system also remain installable with regular vehicle seat belts.
- The expected child benefits are about 50 deaths and 20,000 injuries per year once these systems become widespread. The added costs to consumers are as low as \$15 for a new child seat and \$3 per vehicle.
- Starting September 1999, the majority of the new model vehicles will be equipped with the top attachment and by September 2002 all new vehicles will be equipped with the complete system.

**NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC
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To MARY SMITH Date
Organization
Phone
Fax 458-7431
From
Number of pages (including this cover sheet)
Message:

Auto Safety Hotline
(800) 424-9393
Wash., D.C. Area **(202) 366-0123**



HOLD FOR RELEASE:
Embargoed until 9:30 a.m., Feb. 11, 1999

Contact: Julie Vasquez
202-662-0600

LARGEST NATIONAL CAR SEAT STUDY TO DATE REVEALS MOST COMMON PATTERNS OF MISUSE

National SAFE KIDS Campaign Releases Study in Observance of Child Passenger Safety Week (February 14-22, 1999)

(Washington, D.C.) — Although it is known that the 40 percent of children who ride unrestrained suffer the greatest danger of dying in a car crash, children whose car seats are misused may also be at serious risk. A nationwide study on car seat misuse released today by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign finds that as many as 85 percent of parents and caregivers continue to install and use car seats incorrectly. The majority of car seats observed had two or more mistakes — leaving children dangerously loose in their restraints and vulnerable in the event of a crash.

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign based its study, *Child Passengers at Risk in America: A National Study of Car Seat Misuse*, on analysis of over 17,500 child restraints using car seat observation data obtained at Check Up events held over a 17-month period of time. The study identified the most frequent misuses of rear-facing, forward-facing and booster seats. Specific findings include the following:

- 63 percent of children were in restraints with the safety belt not holding the seat in tightly;
- 33 percent of children were in restraints with loose harness straps; and
- 20 percent of children were in restraints with the harness straps not correctly routed.

Egregious errors that are more likely to result in serious injury or death in the event of a crash also were observed:

- 11 percent (696 cases) of infants under 1 year and/or 20 pounds were observed riding in forward-facing instead of rear-facing car seats; and
- 0.2 percent (12 cases) of infants were placed rear-facing in front of an active airbag.

"We know that in the event of a crash, these seemingly small mistakes can lead to tragic consequences for children," said Heather Paul, Ph.D., executive director, National SAFE KIDS Campaign. "In addition to reminding parents and caregivers about the importance of proper restraint on every ride, we need to provide better education on proper car seat use and installation."

To address these common misuses, the Campaign recommends that parents and caregivers take the following steps:

- Secure the car seat tightly to the vehicle so that it does not move more than one inch;
- Keep harness straps snug so that only one finger fits between the straps and the child's collarbone; and
- Route the harness straps correctly through the back of the car seats, according to the car seat instructions.

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign®
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
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Message:

1. LISTING of 203 CURRENT
CAR models
2. PAGE from Rule CITING
Government STUDY — 802 1996

Auto Safety Hotline
(800) 424-9393

Wash., D.C. Area (202) 366-0123

commenters to detail their primary arguments in a concise fashion.

If a commenter wishes to submit certain information under a claim of confidentiality, three copies of the complete submission, including purportedly confidential business information, should be submitted to the Chief Counsel, NHTSA, at the street address given above, and two copies from which the purportedly confidential information has been deleted should be submitted to Dockets. A request for confidentiality should be accompanied by a cover letter setting forth the

information specified in the agency's confidential business information regulation. 49 CFR part 512.

All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated above for this document will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Comments on this document will be available for inspection in the docket. NHTSA will continue to file relevant

information as it becomes available for inspection in the docket after the closing date, and it is recommended that interested persons continue to examine the docket for new material.

Those persons desiring to be notified upon receipt of their comments in the rules docket should enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard in the envelope with their comments. Upon receiving the comments, the docket supervisor will return the postcard by mail.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 33101, 33102 and 33104; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THEFT RATES OF 1997 MODEL YEAR PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES STOLEN IN CALENDAR YEAR 1997

Manufacturer	Make/model (line)	Thefts 1997	Production (Mfr's) 1997	1997 (per 1,000 vehicles produced) theft rate
1 SUZUKI	SWIFT	16	1,724	9.2807
2 HONDA	ACURA INTEGRA	277	30,048	9.2192
3 CHRYSLER CORP	PLYMOUTH NEON	749	82,880	9.0372
4 MITSUBISHI	MIRAGE	497	58,218	8.5369
5 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE NEON	928	115,456	8.0204
6 TOYOTA	SUPRA	13	1,829	7.9804
7 HYUNDAI	TIBURON	37	4,758	7.7764
8 SUZUKI	ESTEEM	55	7,116	7.7291
9 MITSUBISHI	MONTERO SPORT	202	28,592	7.5963
10 BMW	8	6	791	7.5853
11 TOYOTA	LEXUS SC	41	5,570	7.3609
12 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE STRATUS	711	97,227	7.3128
13 NISSAN	MAXIMA	949	131,602	7.2111
14 CHRYSLER CORP	STRATUS 1	3	429	6.9930
15 MITSUBISHI	MONTERO	82	12,249	6.6944
16 CHRYSLER CORP	INTREPID 1	4	616	6.4935
17 NISSAN	STANZA ALTIMA	1,157	179,501	6.4456
18 CHRYSLER CORP	PLYMOUTH BREEZE	423	70,899	5.9831
19 MITSUBISHI	3000GT	38	6,399	5.9384
20 GENERAL MOTORS	GEO METRO	374	64,933	5.7598
21 MITSUBISHI	ECLIPSE	439	77,556	5.6604
22 MITSUBISHI	GALANT	282	50,259	5.6109
23 TOYOTA	TERCEL	277	49,527	5.5929
24 CHRYSLER CORP	NEW YORKER/LHS	203	36,622	5.5431
25 FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY MYSTIQUE	126	23,321	5.4029
26 FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY TRACER	354	65,867	5.3745
27 SUBARU	SVX	2	384	5.2083
28 MERCEDES BENZ	140 (S-CLASS)	85	16,348	5.1994
29 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE INTREPID	775	151,603	5.1120
30 MERCEDES BENZ	129 (SL-CLASS)	36	7,172	5.0195
31 CHRYSLER CORP	SEBRING CONVERTIBLE	280	56,004	4.9996
32 HYUNDAI	SONATA	90	18,035	4.9903
33 HONDA	ACURA SLX	5	1,003	4.9850
34 SUZUKI	SIDEKICK	110	22,312	4.9301
35 TOYOTA	COROLLA	1,091	222,055	4.9132
36 GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET CAMARO	270	55,037	4.9058
37 FORD MOTOR CO	MUSTANG	490	100,259	4.8873
38 HYUNDAI	ACCENT	174	37,755	4.6087
39 NISSAN	PATHFINDER	382	83,550	4.5721
40 GENERAL MOTORS	GEO PRIZM	285	62,800	4.5382
41 BMW	M3	35	7,976	4.3882
42 CHRYSLER CORP	CIRRUS	121	28,008	4.3202
43 CHRYSLER CORP	JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE	1,122	259,946	4.3163
44 GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC FIREBIRD/FORMULA	133	30,819	4.3155
45 FORD MOTOR CO	ASPIRE	161	37,398	4.3050
46 ASTON MARTIN	DB7	1	234	4.2735
47 ISUZU	HOMBRE PICKUP TRUCK	52	12,177	4.2703
48 HONDA	ACCORD	1,604	375,973	4.2663
49 CHRYSLER CORP	SEBRING COUPE	140	33,163	4.2218
50 SUZUKI	X-90	9	2,182	4.1247

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THEFT RATES OF 1997 MODEL YEAR PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES STOLEN IN CALENDAR YEAR 1997—Continued

Manufacturer	Make/model (line)	Thefts 1997	Production (Mfr's) 1997	1997 (per 1,000 vehicles produced) theft rate
51 NISSAN	240SX	15	3,655	4.1040
52 FORD MOTOR CO	CONTOUR	327	79,945	4.0903
53 NISSAN	SENTRA/200SX	628	154,689	4.0598
54 GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE ACHIEVA	201	49,879	4.0298
55 CHRYSLER CORP	NEON	3	751	3.9947
56 TOYOTA	4-RUNNER	512	128,659	3.9795
57 HYUNDAI	ELANTRA	178	44,936	3.9612
58 GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC GRAND AM	834	211,009	3.9524
59 FORD MOTOR CO	ESCORT	1,264	323,413	3.9083
60 MAZDA	826/MX-6	320	82,223	3.8919
61 GENERAL MOTORS	GMC JIMMY S-15	284	73,493	3.8643
62 HONDA	DEL SOL	25	6,719	3.7208
63 FORD MOTOR CO	PROBE	62	16,823	3.6854
64 MERCEDES BENZ	202 (C-CLASS)	44	11,949	3.6823
65 GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK SKYLARK	212	57,716	3.6732
66 CHRYSLER CORP	EAGLE TALON	36	9,827	3.6634
67 ISUZU	RODEO	190	52,937	3.5892
68 CHRYSLER CORP	EAGLE VISION	21	5,888	3.5686
69 GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET CORVETTE	32	9,072	3.5273
70 MAZDA	MILLENNIA	58	17,130	3.3859
71 MITSUBISHI	DIAMANTE	95	28,208	3.3678
72 NISSAN	INFINITI I30	92	27,606	3.3326
73 FORD MOTOR CO	TAURUS	1,322	398,720	3.3156
74 NISSAN	INFINITI QX4	54	16,558	3.2613
75 ISUZU	TROOPER	34	10,616	3.2027
76 FORD MOTOR CO	LINCOLN TOWN CAR	328	104,969	3.1247
77 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE AVENGER	101	32,698	3.0889
78 GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET CAVALIER	969	316,265	3.0839
79 TOYOTA	TACOMA PICKUP TRUCK	333	109,056	3.0535
80 CHRYSLER CORP	JEEP WRANGLER	382	125,276	3.0493
81 KIA	SEPHIA	130	42,709	3.0439
82 FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY SABLE	340	114,227	2.9765
83 MAZDA	MX-6 MIATA	55	18,538	2.9672
84 GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET BLAZER S10/T10	624	212,327	2.9389
85 FORD MOTOR CO	LINCOLN MARK VIII	48	16,339	2.9378
86 HONDA	PRELUDE	48	16,584	2.8944
87 GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC SUNFIRE	305	105,493	2.8912
88 GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC DEVILLE	274	95,151	2.8796
89 VOLVO	960	52	18,140	2.8666
90 PORSCHE	911	18	6,289	2.8621
91 HONDA	PASSPORT	62	21,693	2.8581
92 HONDA	CIVIC	933	335,167	2.7837
93 MAZDA	PROTEGE	159	57,153	2.7820
94 FORD MOTOR CO	EXPLORER	1,105	398,992	2.7695
95 FORD MOTOR CO	WINDSTAR VAN	98	38,315	2.6986
96 JAGUAR	XJ6	21	7,899	2.6588
97 VOLKSWAGEN	GOLF/GTI	59	22,684	2.6010
98 ACURA	TL	55	21,441	2.5652
99 TOYOTA	CAMRY	935	385,752	2.5564
100 GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC BONNEVILLE	186	74,182	2.5073
101 TOYOTA	PASEO	8	3,194	2.5047
102 TOYOTA	PREVIA VAN	12	4,840	2.4793
103 CHRYSLER CORP	PLYMOUTH PROWLER	1	404	2.4752
104 BMW	THUNDERBIRD	43	17,788	2.4174
105 FORD MOTOR CO	OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS SUPREME	178	73,812	2.4115
106 GENERAL MOTORS	LEXUS ES	127	53,434	2.3768
107 TOYOTA	CHEVROLET LUMINA/MONTE CARLO	138	59,344	2.3254
108 GENERAL MOTORS	210 (E-CLASS)	696	304,270	2.2874
109 MERCEDES BENZ	PASSAT	114	50,101	2.2754
110 VOLKSWAGEN	JETTA	26	11,437	2.2733
111 VOLKSWAGEN	PICKUP TRUCK	208	91,809	2.2656
112 NISSAN	3	286	42,643	2.1881
113 BMW	ACURA CL	93	44,955	2.1801
114 HONDA	PLYMOUTH VOYAGER	98	49,874	2.1881
115 CHRYSLER CORP	GMC SAFARI VAN	68	31,873	2.146
116 GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET ASTRO VAN	213	100,116	2.127
117 GENERAL MOTORS	INFINITI J30	23	10,817	2.126
118 NISSAN				

7948

Federal Register / Vol. 64, No. 31 / Wednesday, February 17, 1999 / Notices

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THEFT RATES OF 1997 MODEL YEAR PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES STOLEN IN CALENDAR YEAR 1997—Continued

Manufacturer	Make/model (line)	Thefts 1997	Production (Mfr's) 1997	1997 (per 1,000 vehicles produced) theft rate
119 TOYOTA	LEXUS LS	38	17,900	2.1229
120 GENERAL MOTORS	GMC SONOMA PICKUP TRUCK	82	38,759	2.1158
121 JAGUAR	XJR	1	473	2.1142
122 TOYOTA	RAV4	154	73,321	2.1004
123 BMW	S	86	41,665	2.0641
124 TOYOTA	T100 PICKUP TRUCK	62	30,389	2.0402
125 TOYOTA	CELICA	26	12,901	2.0153
126 GENERAL MOTORS	GEO TRACKER	49	24,400	2.0082
127 GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE BRAVADA	54	27,722	1.9479
128 CHRYSLER CORP	CONCORDE	99	51,119	1.9367
129 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE CARAVAN	559	290,007	1.9275
130 GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC GRAND PRIX	275	144,767	1.8986
131 KIA	SPORTAGE	44	23,500	1.8723
132 JAGUAR	XK8	15	8,242	1.8199
133 TOYOTA	AVALON	132	73,991	1.7840
134 GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC ELDORADO	34	19,307	1.7610
135 GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK RIVIERA	31	18,175	1.7056
136 VOLVO	850	72	42,596	1.6903
137 SAAB	9000	9	5,449	1.6517
138 PORSCHE	BOXSTER CONVERTIBLE	9	5,458	1.6487
139 BMW	Z3	34	20,636	1.6476
140 CHRYSLER CORP	JEEP CHEROKEE	141	86,303	1.6338
141 FORD MOTOR CO	RANGER PICKUP TRUCK	478	296,746	1.6108
142 VOLKSWAGEN	CABRIO	15	9,473	1.5834
143 GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET S-10 PICKUP TRUCK	298	190,835	1.5816
144 AUDI	A6	12	7,736	1.5512
145 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE DAKOTA PICKUP TRUCK	195	128,661	1.5156
146 FORD MOTOR CO	AEROSTAR VAN	78	53,721	1.4519
147 NISSAN	INFINITI Q45	18	12,398	1.4518
148 MAZDA	MPV	19	13,302	1.4284
149 FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY COUGAR	50	35,273	1.4175
150 MAZDA	B SERIES PICKUP TRUCK	50	35,496	1.4086
151 NISSAN	QUEST	73	62,071	1.4019
152 GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC SEVILLE	52	37,187	1.3983
153 GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET MALIBU	138	100,661	1.3511
154 FORD MOTOR CO	LINCOLN CONTINENTAL	43	32,204	1.3352
155 CHRYSLER CORP	TOWN & COUNTRY MPV	103	78,662	1.3094
156 GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC CATERA	34	26,109	1.3022
157 SUBARU	IMPREZA	34	26,817	1.2879
158 GENERAL MOTORS	SATURN SC	84	66,456	1.2640
159 GENERAL MOTORS	SATURN SL	251	199,018	1.2612
160 VOLKSWAGEN	EUROVAN	2	1,602	1.2484
161 SUBARU	LEGACY	115	92,310	1.2458
162 FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY VILLAGER MPV	64	61,417	1.0421
163 GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE EIGHTY-EIGHT	68	65,879	1.0322
164 GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE AURORA	26	25,579	1.0165
165 GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC TRANS SPORT VAN	47	47,627	0.9868
166 AUDI	A4	16	16,400	0.9756
167 FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY GRAND MARQUIS	124	127,973	0.9690
168 SAAB	900	22	23,152	0.9502
169 HONDA	ACURA RL	15	16,377	0.9159
170 FORD MOTOR CO	CROWN VICTORIA	107	123,814	0.8642
171 AUDI	A8	2	2,377	0.8414
172 GENERAL MOTORS	SATURN SW	20	27,129	0.7372
173 GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK LESABRE	155	211,904	0.7315
174 GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS	13	18,112	0.7178
175 HONDA	ODYSSEY	14	22,243	0.6294
176 ISUZU	OASIS	1	1,602	0.6242
177 HONDA	CR-V	44	73,948	0.5950
178 GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE SILHOUETTE VAN	12	20,827	0.5734
179 GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET VENTURE VAN	38	71,649	0.5304
180 GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK CENTURY	27	53,706	0.5027
181 GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK PARK AVENUE	28	59,549	0.4702
182 GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK REGAL	7	21,828	0.3207
183 AUDI	CABRIOLET	0	1,201	0.0000
184 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE VIPER	0	1,537	0.0000
185 FERRARI	F355	0	622	0.0000
186 FERRARI	456	0	70	0.0000

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THEFT RATES OF 1997 MODEL YEAR PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES STOLEN IN CALENDAR YEAR 1997—Continued

Manufacturer	Make/model (line)	Thefts 1997	Production (Mfr's) 1997	1997 (per 1,000 vehicles produced) theft rate
187 FERRARI	550	0	94	0.0000
188 GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK FUNERAL COACH/HEARSE	0	548	0.0000
189 GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC LIMOUSINE	0	445	0.0000
190 GENERAL MOTORS	SATURN EV1	0	2,000	0.0000
191 HONDA	ACURA NSX	0	322	0.0000
192 JAGUAR	VANDEN PLAS	0	2,536	0.0000
193 LAMBORGHINI	DB132/DIABLO	0	74	0.0000
194 LOTUS	ESPRIT	0	121	0.0000
195 ROLLS-ROYCE	BENTLEY AZURE	0	81	0.0000
196 ROLLS-ROYCE	BENTLEY BROOKLANDS	0	135	0.0000
197 ROLLS-ROYCE	BENTLEY CONTINENTAL T	0	40	0.0000
198 ROLLS-ROYCE	BENTLEY TURBO R	0	54	0.0000
199 ROLLS-ROYCE	SILVER DAWN	0	21	0.0000
200 ROLLS-ROYCE	SILVER SPUR	0	113	0.0000
201 ROLLS-ROYCE	PARK WARD LIMOUSINE	0	1	0.0000
202 TOYOTA	LEXUS GS	0	187	0.0000
203 VECTOR AUTO	AVTECH SC/M12	0	4	0.0000

These vehicles were manufactured for sale only in U.S. territories under the Chrysler name plate.

Issued on: February 10, 1999.

L. Robert Shelton,
Associate Administrator for Safety
Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 99-3671 Filed 2-16-99; 8:45 am]

MAILING CODE 4810-SB-P

In these cases, the seat belt may not tightly hold the child restraint and it can easily move from side to side. By providing a means for attaching child restraints that is independent of the vehicle belts, this final rule will improve the lateral stability of child restraints on the vehicle seat.

(3) Some vehicle seats are not wide enough or long enough to accommodate child restraints properly. This final rule will accommodate child restraints on these seats by providing an independent means of stability.

Efforts to make vehicle belt systems more effective for teenagers and adults have also resulted in the belt systems becoming more complex. Lap/shoulder belts replaced lap belts. On older vehicles, these belts need to be used with an accessory item, such as a locking clip, for use with child restraints. A locking clip impedes movement of the sliding latchplate on the lap/shoulder belt, which better restrains a child restraint when the car is maneuvering or changing its velocity. Since September 1, 1995, lap belts on new passenger vehicles are lockable without a locking clip, but the belt must be maneuvered in a special manner not always understood by consumers to engage the locking feature.

Due in part to these complexities, the rate of incorrect usage of child restraints is high. A four-state study done for NHTSA in 1996 examined people who use child restraint systems and found that approximately 80 percent of the persons made at least one significant error in using the systems. ("Patterns of Misuse of Child Safety Seats," DOT HS 808 440, January 1996.) Observed misuse due to a locking clip being incorrectly used or not used when necessary was 72 percent. Misuse due to the vehicle seat belt being incorrectly used with a child seat (unbuckled, disconnected, misrouted, or untightened) or used with a child too small to fit the belts was 17 percent.

People are not only not using child restraints as correctly as they should, they are also frustrated with the effort needed to attach a child restraint. Consumer clinics conducted in the U.S.⁶ and Canada⁷ found that virtually all the people surveyed in the studies expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with conventional means of attaching child restraints in vehicles. NHTSA's Consumer Complaint Hotline received approximately 19,792 calls in 1996, 10,326 calls in 1997, and 14,292 calls in the first half of 1998, from people asking about child seat compatibility with a particular vehicle or how to correctly install a child seat, including requests for step-by-step guidance in installing their child seats. When an article appears in the media about compatibility problems between child restraints and vehicle seats, those calls typically increase to over 500 a day.

NHTSA is concerned that because of frustrations associated with vehicle to child restraint compatibility problems and the difficulties with installing child restraints, consumer confidence in the safety of child restraint systems could be eroding. A consumer clinic held in April 1998 showed that the number one consumer safety concern was with how tightly (secure) participants could get the child restraint installed in the vehicle. NHTSA estimates that about 35 percent of the rear seats of new passenger cars having seat belt anchorages 4 inches or more away from the seat bight. The agency is concerned that declining consumer confidence in child restraint systems could result in less use of child restraints. Being able to tightly secure a child restraint by way of an independent child restraint anchorage system provides consumers with confidence

⁶ "An Evaluation of the Usability of Two Types of Universal Child Restraint Seat Attachment Systems," General Motors Corporation, 1996.

⁷ "The ICBC Child Restraint User Trials," Rona Kinetics and Associates Ltd. Report R96-04, prepared for the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, December 1996.

Q&A's

UNIVERSAL CHILD SAFETY SEAT ATTACHMENT SYSTEM

Q1: *What did the President announce today?*

A1: The President announced a major new step to protect our traveling children - a new universal way for installing child safety seats in cars and light trucks. Currently, parents use the vehicle seat belts to install child seats. Attaching child safety seats using the vehicle's seat belts often is cumbersome and difficult, as seat belt designs have been optimized in recent years for adult protection not child seat installation. In the future, each new child seat would have three attachments (one on top and two at its base). New cars and light trucks will be equipped with standard anchors in the back seat designed specifically to link to the child seat attachments. JH

Q2: *How does this final rule differ from the NPRM?*

A2: The NPRM, announced by the President on February 15, 1997, proposed that every vehicle and child safety seat be equipped with either dedicated "mini-seat belts" solely for installing child safety seats, or two fixed rigid 1-inch bars in the vehicle's back seat to which a child seat would attach with a variety of types of connectors. The final rule requires solely the latter approach. Commenters on the NPRM overwhelmingly favored having the government deciding on one attachment system. The final rule and NPRM are similar as to the requirements for vehicle to accommodate an upper tether attachment for the child seat.

Q3: *How many lives will this rule save? How many injuries will this rule prevent?*

A3: The rule is expected to prevent as many as 50 child deaths and 20,000 injuries each year, once all vehicles on the road and all child seats have the new system.

Q4: *What other benefits does this rule have?*

A3: Parents are generally dissatisfied with the current vehicle belt system for attaching child seats because of the complexity and difficulty to tighten the child seat. Lap/shoulder belts often require use of a clip (which is typically misused), and the belt anchorages often are too far forward, resulting in child seats not being tightly installed. The rule will eliminate these problems and make child seat installation much more convenient to parents.

Q5: *When will this rule take effect for cars and light trucks? For child seats?*

A5: Starting September 1, 1999, 80% of new cars will be equipped with the tether attachment points and by September 1, 2002 all new vehicles (cars and light trucks) will be equipped with the tether attachment points. The lower anchorages are phased in over 3 years, covering 20% of vehicles by September 1, 2000, 50% of vehicles by September 1, 2001, and all vehicles after September 1, 2002.

For the child seats, starting September 1, 1999, all child seats will be equipped with an upper tether attachment. Also, on and after September 1, 2002, all child seats will be equipped with the two lower attachments.

**NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC
SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

Office of Public and Consumer Affairs
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590
Phone: 202-366-9550
Fax: 202-366-5962



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FAX COVER SHEET

Date 1-7-99

To Mary Smith

Organization White House

Phone _____

Fax _____

From Rae Tyson

Number of pages (including this cover sheet) 30

Message:

Auto Safety Hotline
(800) 424-9393
Wash., D.C. Area (202) 366-0123

TO: Phil Recht
Bill Schulz

FROM: Mike Russell
Rae Tyson

DATE: December 2, 1998

RE: Possible White House event to announce the new child seat anchor rule

*This was the
earlier memo
Rae*

The event:

- Secretary Slater: Opening remarks
- Safety advocate: Joseph Callela of the Dana Foundation
- President Clinton: Announces the rule
- Secretary Slater demonstrates the anchor on a bench seat, closes the press conference

Cars equipped with anchors, car seats will be on display; children ages 3-4 and their parents will be in attendance under all possible event scenarios.

Possible locations

- White House, South lawn (weather permitting) Advantages: Good visuals; easy access for POTUS, S1 and press. Alternate foul weather location: White House, room 450.
- Smithsonian Museum of American History. There is a day care center at the Smithsonian for children ages 3-4. There is a patio suitable for a press conference, weather permitting. The display vehicles will fit on the patio. Advantages: Good visuals (Washington Monument in the background), easy to secure, kids are nearby. Disadvantages: Given the short period of time, logistics will be difficult. Alternate foul weather location: Automotive section of the museum or an auditorium.
- Department of Transportation, L'Enfant Plaza. The event would be staged in the courtyard. Children would be transported from nearby day care centers. Advantages: Good visuals, easier to arrange on short notice. There also is ample space for display vehicles.
Alternative foul weather site: Room 450, White House.

Joe Collela of the Dana Foundation

Joe Collela's niece Dana was killed in a crash in 1995. Findings from the crash indicated that there was a compatibility problem between the vehicle belt system and the child safety seat.

As a result of their tragic loss, Joe and his father, an emergency physician, formed the Dana Foundation, named after Dana. The Foundation continues to educate the public on the problems of misuse of child safety seats. The compatibility issue that will be solved by the new child seat anchor rule has been a goal of the Foundation.

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Press Journal (Vero Beach, FL)

December 26, 1998, Saturday

SECTION: Wheels; Pg. E3

LENGTH: 229 words

HEADLINE: STUDY SHOWS DEPOWERED AIR BAGS WORK

BYLINE: HARRY STOFFER Automotive News

BODY:

WASHINGTON - Evidence is mounting that depowered air bags are working as hoped.

Barry Felrice, director of regulatory affairs for the American Automobile Manufacturers Association, said he can find no case in which one of the new, depowered air bags failed to protect a mid-sized or larger adult in a crash.

At the same time, The Associated Press reported last week that its analysis of 25 low-speed crashes involving short or slight-statured women in vehicles equipped with depowered air bags found that none was killed or injured seriously.

Although statistically valid conclusions cannot be drawn from such a small sample, Felrice noted, automakers are encouraged that depowered air bags will be shown to be less of a threat to children and small adults than previous designs, while continuing to provide protection to others.

Data from depowered air-bag crashes, which the industry is helping to collect for the government, could play a role in National Highway Traffic Safety Administration decisions.

Automakers have asked National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to revise proposed rules on advanced air-bag designs so that maximum deployment forces would be comparable to depowered airbags, which started going into cars and trucks a year ago.

Otherwise, they say, they would be forced to revert to more powerful systems.

LOAD-DATE: December 28, 1998

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

The materials in the AP file were compiled by The Associated Press. These materials may not be republished without the express written consent of The Associated Press.

December 13, 1998, Sunday, BC cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 310 words

HEADLINE: Florida tops list for air bag deaths

DATELINE: ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.

BODY:

Florida leads the nation in deaths attributed to the force of exploding automobile air bags, with federal statistics showing 12 people killed this decade.

Six children and six adults have been killed by air bags in Florida since 1990, according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. That's as many as in California, New York and Illinois combined.

Air bags explode at speeds of 150 to 200 mph - the force of a Category 5 hurricane - but are more forgiving than a steering wheel or windshield. However, the devices have killed 68 children and 53 adults this decade.

The death toll is pushing automakers to rethink these highly touted safety devices.

At the heart of the problem is that air bags were designed to protect the average man - a 5-foot-8, 171-pound crash-test dummy. Most adult deaths are short female drivers sitting too close to bags that deployed in low-speed crashes.

On the other hand, the government estimates nearly 3,500 Americans are alive today because of the more than 2.6 million air bags that have deployed.

"There have been deaths, but overwhelmingly, air bags are providing a benefit to a great majority of people," said Julie Rochman, vice president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. "It's an evolving technology. There's a lot of talk about what the next generation of air bags will look like."

Under consideration are bags that inflate at varying speeds depending on how severe the collision is, infrared sensors that stop the bag from deploying if the passenger is too close, or seat sensors that gauge a passenger's weight and shut off the bag if it's a child.

Automakers have until 2002 to start complying and until 2005 to put advanced air bags in every new car and light truck.

Most air bag injuries can be prevented if adults buckle up and children ride in the back seat.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: December 13, 1998

Copyright 1998 Times Publishing Company
St. Petersburg Times

December 13, 1998, Sunday, 0 South Pinellas Edition

SECTION: CITY & STATE; Pg. 1B

DISTRIBUTION: CITY & STATE; METRO & STATE; TAMPA & STATE

LENGTH: 1102 words

HEADLINE: Air bag flaws fuel efforts for improvement

BYLINE: MIKE BRASSFIELD

BODY:

What happened to Lindsay Pennington isn't rare.

The Dade City 6-year-old was riding unrestrained in the front seat of her mother's car last month when a collision set off an air bag. Exploding with the force of a Category 5 hurricane, the bag knocked out teeth and caused a concussion. Lindsay drifted in and out of consciousness as she was airlifted to a hospital.

It could have been worse.

Lindsay survived, but a Fort Lauderdale 2-year-old died last year when an air bag snapped his neck and spinal cord. A Pompano Beach 7-week-old was killed in 1996 by a bag that deployed into her rear-facing child-restraint seat. She is one of four Florida children to die that way.

Florida leads the nation in air bag deaths, deaths that are pushing automakers to rethink these highly touted safety devices. The problem is, air bags were designed for men, not short women and children.

Now, automakers are sparring with the government over "smarter" air bags that are supposed to go into all new cars and trucks by 2005.

"There have been deaths, but overwhelmingly, air bags are providing a benefit to a great majority of people," said Julie Rochman, vice president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. "It's an evolving technology. There's a lot of talk about what the next generation of air bags will look like." Hurricane force

Air bags are a drastic last chance. They explode at speeds of 150 to 200 mph but are more forgiving than a steering wheel or windshield.

Calls to fix air bags or shut them off came in the wake of publicity about children and short people being hurt by them.

Since 1990, air bags have killed six children and six adults in Florida - as many as in California, New York and Illinois combined, according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration.

Nationally, the devices have killed 68 children and 53 adults, mostly short female drivers sitting too close to bags that deployed in low-speed crashes.

On the other hand, the government estimates nearly 3,500 Americans are alive today because of the more than 2.6-million air bags that have deployed.

Those who deal with car crashes for a living see the difference air bags make.

"It used to be that when a trooper went to a head-on collision, we were prepared to call the medical examiner," said Florida Highway Patrol Lt. Mike Guzman. "We've worked head-ons this year where people have gotten out of their cars.

"The air bag deploys and knocks the wind out of them, then they realize they're okay. They walk away."

Most air bag injuries can be prevented if adults buckle up and children ride in the back seat. Safety experts have been trumpeting this advice for years.

But it's hard to change a culture where two out of five people don't use seat belts, parents don't want their babies out of sight, and children try to call "front seat!" before their siblings do.

"This is not getting through to the critical audience of new parents," said Janet Dewey of the nonprofit Air Bag Safety Campaign. The group's survey this year found more infants riding in front than in years past.

Also, small female drivers remain at risk with or without a seat belt because they sit so close to the bag. So the push is on to make air bags better.

Air bags were designed to protect the average man - a 5-foot-8, 171-pound crash-test dummy. But bags that powerful can hurt smaller people.

The NHTSA wants air bags to protect a wider range of bodies, a "family" of 1-, 3- and 6-year-old child test dummies and a small female dummy.

Barry Felrice of the Big Three's American Automobile Manufacturers Association said carmakers are considering:

Bags that inflate at varying speeds depending on how severe the collision is;

Infrared sensors that stop the bag from deploying if the passenger is too close;

Seat sensors that gauge a passenger's weight and shut off the bag if it's a child.

How well these ideas will work remains to be seen. Automakers have until 2002 to start complying and until 2005 to put advanced air bags in every new car and light truck.

Carmakers have until Thursday to comment on the proposed rules. They're fighting NHTSA's plan to require air bags to once again be tested by crashing vehicles into a solid wall at 30 mph.

Automakers prefer the "sled test," putting a car on a sled and accelerating it backward to simulate a crash. They say using this test let them "depower" air bags by as much as a third beginning with the 1998 model year.

Last week, NHTSA released data on 115 crashes involving depowered air bags, which seem to be performing well. They're designed to avoid killing shorter women in minor crashes. Federal regulators had feared the bags would be too weak to protect unbelted men in high-speed crashes, but so far that hasn't been the case. On or off?

Something else that changed a year ago was the government's policy on switches that turn air bags off and on. Now they're allowed for some car owners, if they or their children have certain medical conditions or if the drivers are 4 foot 6 or shorter.

But getting government permission for a switch is a picnic compared with getting a mechanic to actually install one. NHTSA had approved more than 50,000 on/off switches by Oct. 31, but fewer than 3,400 had been put in cars.

Because mechanics fear lawsuits, fewer than 400 of the country's 25,000 dealerships and garages will install the switches, and some businesses that once did have changed their minds.

The NHTSA has posted a list of willing garages on the Internet. On the list are Florey's Automotive in Largo and Lokey Kia of Clearwater, which no longer are willing.

"The liability is just brutal on it. It's just scary," said Mark Florey.

"I'm not going to disable an air bag," said Jerry McDaniel, Lokey's service director. "If somebody gets hurt, who's liable?"

The only local shops that handle on/off switches are Stone Buick GMC Truck in Clearwater and Palm Harbor; Bob Clarke Tire & Auto in Brandon; Castriota Chevrolet in Hudson; and Roberto's Auto Repairs in Bradenton. Their customers tend to be older people with heart conditions or fragile bones, who fear an impact with an air bag. - Times researcher Kitty Bennett contributed to this report. On the Web

For a list of businesses that install air bag on/off switches, see <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/airbags/weblist.html>

For answers to common air bag questions, see <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/supplbag.qa.html>
CHART TEXT FOR AIRBAG DEATH STATISTICS IN FLORIDA AND OTHER STATES NOT PROVIDED FOR ELECTRONIC LIBRARY. PLEASE SEE MICROFILM.

GRAPHIC: BLACK AND WHITE CHART; lists airbag death statistics for Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Mississippi, Virginia and nationwide will illustration of how an airbag inflates

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: December 17, 1998

Copyright 1998 Gannett Company, Inc.
USA TODAY

December 11, 1998, Friday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: MONEY;

Pg. 10B

LENGTH: 407 words

HEADLINE: Early data: Less-forceful air bags are safe, effective

BYLINE: Jayne O'Donnell

BODY:

Less-forceful air bags allowed in 1998-and-later model cars don't seriously harm children and small women, yet protect adult men who don't wear safety belts, new government data shows.

Automakers said the less-powerful bags were needed to prevent serious injuries and deaths to children and small women.

But the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and some consumer advocates were concerned that hundreds of unbelted men could die each year because they were not getting the protection of a full-power air bag.

However, results of 170 accidents reviewed by NHTSA found no apparent increase in danger to unbelted men from the depowered bags.

"It's still anecdotal data, but it clearly does not show the problem the agency anticipated," says Barry Felrice, regulatory chief for the American Automobile Manufacturers Association.

NHTSA officials would not comment on the data, which was quietly released on the agency's Internet site last month.

The data is preliminary and could change as more investigations are completed. NHTSA and automakers are still investigating 148 cases.

A 4-year-old child sitting on an adult's lap was killed by a depowered air bag this year. But few ever expected the new bags could be so benign that they wouldn't hurt a child right against the bag when it deployed.

Crash investigators are not finding evidence that unbelted adults are faring much worse with depowered air bags. The spleen of a 22-year-old man who was not wearing his safety belt was ruptured in a crash when he hit the steering wheel. But investigators don't know whether the less-forceful air bag was to blame.

Federal regulators currently are discussing plans for "smart" air bags, which some believe will reduce the need for depowered air bags.

The new advanced air bags will detect whether a child or small adult is seated behind the bag and adjust the power of the deployment or turn the bag off altogether.

When the new bags are required, NHTSA plans to discontinue use of a special crash test it adopted so bags could be depowered and still pass safety requirements. But auto industry officials

don't want the test dropped because they want to continue using the depowered air bags.

More-complete accident reports from auto trade groups and State Farm Insurance also show depowered air bags are not eliminating facial injuries common when bags deploy.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: December 12, 1998

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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December 9, 1998, Wednesday, PM cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 687 words

HEADLINE: Less forceful air bags appear to be protecting adults without killing them

BYLINE: By CATHERINE STRONG, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Air bags recently designed to deploy less forcefully in crashes are not causing deaths or serious injuries to shorter women, a group vulnerable to more powerful air bags in low-speed accidents, new government data shows.

And the less-powerful air bags also are not too weak to protect adult males who fail to wear seat belts in high-speed crashes, a potential tradeoff federal officials had feared.

Federal officials have made public some information on 115 cases of crashes involving so-called depowered air bags installed in most new autos over the past year. The cases provide government and industry officials their first snapshot of how the less-forceful air bags are performing in crashes.

Air bags have been blamed for the deaths of at least 121 people - mostly children and small-statured women - in lower-speed accidents they otherwise should have survived, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They also have saved an estimated 3,600 lives.

Last year, NHTSA officials eliminated a required crash test that automakers said prevented them from installing the less-powerful air bags. Domestic automakers responded by quickly putting them in cars.

The depowered air bag cases, so far, seem to support the longtime argument of domestic automakers that less-forceful bags would virtually eliminate the deaths of short-statured women from the devices in low-speed accidents they otherwise should have survived.

"This information certainly does not contradict the argument that depowered air bags are helping short-statured adults," said Adrian Lund, a senior researcher at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

NHTSA officials acknowledged the less-forceful bags appeared to be performing well but declined to elaborate on the data, stressing that investigations into other cases were continuing.

There were 25 women who were 5 feet, 4 inches or shorter in lower-speed accidents with the less-forceful air bags. None were killed or seriously injured. All but four were wearing seat belts.

In contrast, in auto crashes since 1990 with all types of air bags, 33 women who were 5 feet, 4 inches in height or shorter died. Nearly half were wearing seat belts.

However, government and industry officials caution that although the less-powerful air bags appear to be working well, the data sample is still small. And another 73 cases are in the pipeline; officials have yet to release important details in those cases such as injuries and crash speeds.

Government and industry safety experts also have been looking for any evidence that the "weaker" air bags were not providing enough protection for adult males who failed to wear seat belts in higher-speed crashes.

"It doesn't appear that has been a problem," said Dr. Jeffrey Augenstein, national medical director of the government-financed Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network. "It's early data. But in the cases we've looked at, we just don't see it."

Lund agreed, saying there was little evidence that heavier, unbelted adults were hitting the steering wheel instead of being cushioned by a less-forceful air bag. But he cautioned that NHTSA has listed dozens of pending cases without providing details.

Information is available on five cases of higher-speed accidents with unbelted adults. Safety experts say only one of those cases could possibly indicate a weak air bag: An unbelted male ruptured his spleen on the steering wheel rim in a 28 mph accident. However, officials are still studying the case.

A 4-year-old child was killed this year by a depowered air bag, officials said. The child was sitting on an adult's lap and was thrust close to where the air bag deployed by pre-crash braking.

But automakers have never argued that less-forceful air bags would prevent the deaths of unrestrained children, who are often nearly on top of a deploying air bag when the driver brakes before a crash.

To cut the number of child deaths, automakers are developing more advanced technology to either suppress an air bag when a child is in the passenger seat, or deploy an air bag with even less force.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: December 10, 1998

Copyright 1998 The San Diego Union-Tribune
The San Diego Union-Tribune

December 05, 1998, Saturday

SECTION: AUTO Pg. WHEELS-5

LENGTH: 382 words

HEADLINE: Automakers seek changes in air bag rules

SOURCE: AUTOMOTIVE NEWS

BYLINE: Harry Stoffer WASHINGTON

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- The automobile industry still favors putting so-called smart air bags in its products but has asked the federal government to rewrite proposed rules on how the systems would be tested and expected to perform.

"We want advanced air bag rule-making. Maybe not this one," said Barry Felrice, director of regulatory affairs for the American Automobile Manufacturers Association.

Operating despite plans by the former Big 3 to dissolve it month, the AAMA asked recently that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration prepare a revised version of the rules by early next year.

Felrice said a requirement that air bags be tested for compatibility with any of the hundreds of child-safety seats that have been sold over the last decade would be impossible to meet.

Likewise, George Parker, vice president of the Association of International Automobile Manufacturers, warned. "The test matrix for the development and certification of any vehicle line would become so complex and time-consuming as to be impracticable and market restrictive."

In other words, car companies would have difficulty getting new products on the market.

The companies also continue to have a fundamental philosophical difference with the traffic safety administration over the rules. The automakers say the agency's plan to resume 30-mph crash tests into solid barriers with unbelted midsized male dummies would require them to return to installing more powerful air bags.

Overly forceful deployments have been cited as one cause of air bag-related deaths and injuries.

One consolation for concerned manufacturers is that the traffic safety administration has just begun to consider what others think of the rules. A public hearing was held during the last week of November. Written comments are to be accepted until midmonth.

On the other hand, the agency and the industry have little time to spare. A federal law says the rules are to be adopted by early 2000 and says the advanced air bag systems must be phased into new cars and trucks during model years 2003-06.

Advanced air bags are supposed to be capable of tailoring their responses to different kinds of crashes and occupants.

The agency's records demonstrate starkly the complexity of the undertaking.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: December 5, 1998

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December 04, 1998, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: FINANCIAL; Pg. D01; THE REGULATORS: CRASH COURSE IN RULE-MAKING

LENGTH: 881 words

HEADLINE: Testing to Let Some Wind Out of the Air Bags

BYLINE: Cindy Skrzycki, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

This is all about power.

On Dec. 17, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will begin to decide the final shape of a rule that will determine how automobile air bags must perform to protect drivers and passengers in on-the-road crashes, beginning in 2002. The agency has been under pressure to change the old rule because of deaths and injuries caused by air bags that inflate too powerfully. In September it proposed a variety of tests and criteria for new air bags.

Even before car manufacturers, air-bag suppliers, consumer groups and the insurance industry submit their official views on the proposal, they are jockeying for position, disagreeing on fundamental issues such as how powerful the bags must be and arguing over what kinds of tests best show how the bags can be expected to perform.

"The question is what precisely will be the details," said Brian O'Neill, president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

The details come down to the types of tests and how many NHTSA will require. The battle lines were formed last year when the agency let manufacturers use a less powerful test — called the sled test — that simulates a crash by suddenly moving a dummy on a sled-like device on a track and having the air bag deploy at a precise time.

NHTSA allowed the sled test as a temporary measure if car companies could develop "depowered" air bags expeditiously. The result has been a less forceful air bag that reduces the threat to children and small-statured women who sit dangerously close to it or who are in an unbelted position.

The sled test supplanted the "barrier" test, which many safety advocates consider more realistic. That test called for a vehicle to be slammed into a wall at speeds of up to 30 mph and the air bag inflating upon impact against an unbelted dummy built to resemble a medium-size man.

Auto manufacturers are pushing hard to prevent the return of the barrier test, contending it would again force them to install air bags that are too powerful. They insist that the only safe way to go is with a depowered air bag and sled-type testing.

"Depowering is good for safety, and there is no evidence it is harming unbelted occupants," said Barry Felrice, director of regulatory affairs for the American Automobile Manufacturers Association.

Joan Claybrook, president of Public Citizen and a former NHTSA administrator, said: "The sled test is a meat-ax approach, and it doesn't measure the [damage] to the structure. And there is a test better than the sled test."

Claybrook argues that it's not just the level of power that counts, but how the power is managed. That's where she believes advanced technology, such as sensors that allow for dual and triple levels of inflation, will play a role.

Early indications are that NHTSA is no lover of the sled test.

"We want to get away from the sled test and back to a crash test, but we're open to alternatives to the barrier test," said a high-ranking NHTSA official. He said there are "real-world safety issues," such as what happens to infants, petite females and 3- and 6-year-olds when an air bag deploys.

Or, as NHTSA Administrator Ricardo Martinez has put it, it's not the technology or the test that is most important, but what happens to the people inside the vehicle.

Besides considering an array of other tests at various speeds, the agency also is looking at whether a "second-generation" air bag that is depowered can pass the tougher barrier test.

NHTSA has performed a very limited test with depowered bags and a barrier and found that most of the bags would work in a high-speed crash. The auto industry disagrees and thinks bags developed to that standard would be dangerous.

Domestic and foreign-car manufacturers also complain that the agency's proposed rule calls for too many tests, is vague and "exceeds the bounds of what is necessary." The American Automobile Manufacturers Association has promised NHTSA that it will propose an "alternative total test regime."

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, which doesn't think the barrier test is realistic, wants to make sure the new rule results in a leap forward in air-bag technology and improvements in the structure of vehicles.

"As long as you're going to add tests, add meaningful tests. Don't just set a new line in the sand and the manufacturers just jump over it. Do something where the dummy gets thrown around prior to impact — like a human would," said Julie Rochman, vice president of the institute.

DOES THIS MEAN the Rest Area Forum is canceled, too?

The Federal Highway Administration has pulled the plug on its National Truck and Bus Safety Summit on Monday and Tuesday, an event mentioned in this column on Nov. 20.

The agency told participants, who had their bags packed: "Rather than sponsor a summit with [sic] could be construed as not totally inclusive, it was decided that FHWA support would be withdrawn."

Safety advocacy groups assume the event was kaput because they griped loudly about their lack of representation at the summit, citing it as evidence that there is a cozy relationship between the industry and the FHWA.

The American Trucking Associations pronounced itself "puzzled" by the decision.

GRAPHIC: Illustration, keith bendis for The Washington Post

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: December 04, 1998

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THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE (RIVERSIDE, CA.)

November 26, 1998, Thursday , ALL ZONES

SECTION: A SECTION;

Pg. A01

LENGTH: 899 words

HEADLINE: Inland boy, 10, killed by air bag;
A freeway fender-bender causes the device to deploy in the face of Christian Jones of Moreno Valley.

BYLINE: Joe Gutierrez, The Press-Enterprise

BODY:

MORENO VALLEY

It was the type of accident that occurs every day during rush hour. An accident that should do nothing more than dent some fenders and maybe cause a few bruises.

But it killed 10-year-old Christian Jones when it forced an air bag to deploy in his face, causing massive head injuries, according to a deputy coroner.

His family took him off life support at Riverside County Regional Medical Center in Moreno Valley Tuesday evening.

"He leaves home, and within 15 minutes, he's laying comatose," said the boy's aunt, Nichole Vernon. "He was brain-dead, and it was just a regular fender-bender. "

The death of a child who loved basketball and teaching his neighbors sign language again focuses attention on a device that can claim the lives it was designed to save.

An air bag can move up to 200 mph in the fiftieth of a second it takes to inflate, according to a federal study. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 113 people, 66 of them children, have been killed by air bags since they were required in new cars in 1990. Children 12 and younger are advised to ride in the back seat.

Though federal statistics show that air bags have saved nearly 3,500 lives, changes are already being made to make them safer.

According to the CHP, Christian was riding with his father, Kingsley Jones, 41, in the family's 1995 Plymouth Voyager van.

Christian, Vernon said, was on vacation from school and was going with his father to work at a photocopier company in Riverside.

Traffic on westbound Highway 60 near Day Street in western Moreno Valley was typical for a Monday morning at 8:15. Heavy.

Slow-moving. Stop-and-go. CHP investigators believe - they are not certain - that Christian may not have been wearing his shoulder-lap seat belt. When Kingsley momentarily took his eyes off the road and said something to his son, he didn't see the 1991 Eagle Premier stopped in front of him, CHP Officer Howard Lester said.

The van hit the Premier at an estimated 15 to 20 mph. The Premier hit a 1987 Toyota Celica ahead of it. And that pushed the Celica into a 1994 Toyota Paseo.

The collision caused the Voyager's air bags to inflate.

Christian, who was apparently reaching down for something, was hit by the device, Vernon said.

"It's hard to say what extent a failure to wear a seat belt would have had," Lester said. "It may have lessened his forward motion, but I'm not an expert in these matters. "

The experts, with what the CHP calls its Multi-Disciplinary Accident Investigation Team, may soon take over the probe, he said.

Meanwhile, as the nation celebrates a day of thanksgiving, the Jones family is left to deal with its grief.

Christian's parents were too distraught to talk about their second of four sons, Vernon said. Family and friends streamed into their Moreno Valley home to offer support and help make funeral arrangements for the 10-year-old who would have celebrated his 11th birthday next month.

On top of the television was a school picture of Christian the family had just framed last week.

"He was a real happy-go-lucky kid," Vernon said. "He loved to play basketball all the time, and he used to teach people how to sign. "

Signing was one way Christian communicated. He wore a hearing aid behind each ear after a case of measles at age 15 months robbed him of 75 percent of his hearing.

His family moved to Moreno Valley from Baldwin Hills in Los Angeles about 15 months ago to be closer to Christian's school, the California School for the Deaf in Riverside, where Christian starred on his class basketball team.

Vernon said the accident has made the family think about a device many people take for granted.

Complaints about air bags led federal officials to allow the installation of air bag on-off switches in January 1998. But

motorists must first receive authorization from the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration and qualify as an at-risk motorist. The switches can be installed at dealerships or authorized companies.

To be eligible, a motorist must have a medical condition that could be aggravated if struck by an air bag; be unable to adjust the driving position to be at least 10 inches from the steering wheel; drive in a car pool that requires a child 12 or younger to ride in the front seat; or be unable to avoid putting a rear-facing infant seat in the front seat.

Federal officials are also requiring the development of more advanced air bags with more sophisticated crash sensors to detect the speed of a crash and determine the height, weight and position of a passenger and if they are wearing a seat belt.

"People need to think about it before putting their kids in the car," Vernon said.

Air bag safety tips

- * Anyone sitting in the front seat can reduce the risk of air-bag injury by buckling the seat belt.

- * Keep at least 10 inches between the air bag cover and body.

- * Children 12 and under should be in appropriate restraints and ride in the back seat. The back seat is always the safest place to ride.

- * Babies in rear-facing child seats should never be placed in the front seat of an air-bag equipped vehicle because their heads are too close to the air-bag cover.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
The Press-Enterprise.

NOTES:

Includes info box

GRAPHIC: MUG SHOT

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: November 27, 1998

Copyright 1998 The Detroit News, Inc.
The Detroit News

November 25, 1998, Wednesday

SECTION: Business; Pg. Pg. B3

LENGTH: 333 words

HEADLINE: Less forceful air bags pushed: Depowered devices are safer for elderly, teens, car firms say.

BYLINE: By Kenneth Cole / Detroit News Washington Bureau

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- Air bags that deploy with less force benefit elderly vehicle occupants, whose brittle bones often break under more forceful wallops, automakers argued Tuesday.

They said the depowered bags -- which the feds allowed automakers to begin installing in 1998 model year vehicles -- have been a boon to teen-age motorists, too.

Teens buckle up less than more mature occupants and, consequently, are more likely to be sitting awkwardly in a crash, raising their risk for injury from a powerfully inflating air bag.

Such arguments underscored the car companies' plea to federal auto safety regulators to drop a proposal requiring air bags to protect passengers in more rigorous crashes.

They made the pitch at a public meeting on future performance rules for air bags, which, as of Nov. 1, had killed 121 motorists and been implicated in 35 other deaths.

"Depowered bags provide clear benefits by reducing out-of-position occupants' injury risks," said Barry Felrice, director of regulatory affairs for the American Automobile Manufacturers Association, which represents domestic automakers.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration -- charged with writing rules governing the performance of future air bags -- wants the safety devices to inflate in time to protect unbelted occupants in a vehicle driven 30 mph into a concrete wall.

But automakers insist the would-be crash test will compel them to return air-bag deployment force to a dangerously high level for the sole purpose of complying with government regulations.

Clarence Ditlow, executive director of the Center for Auto Safety in Washington, said automakers simply don't want to pay for the more expensive crash test.

"But when one looks at the profits of car companies, the cost of the test should be insignificant to them," Ditlow said.

NHTSA hopes to adopt its advanced air bag rules next year. Automakers would begin installing the state-of-the-art bags in some vehicles by Sept. 1, 2002.

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United Press International

November 23, 1998, Monday, BC cycle

SECTION: Domestic News

LENGTH: 411 words

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Nov. 23

BODY:

The debate over air bags enters a new arena as federal regulators begin two days of public hearings on their plan to require so-called "advanced" air bags in new cars and trucks beginning in 2002. The hearings in Washington today and Tuesday focus on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's plans to broaden its crash tests and require air bags that protect small women and children as young as 1 year old. The agency would also require air bag protection for vehicle occupants not wearing seat belts. Last year, Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater relaxed NHTSA standards by approving on-off air bag switches for motorists with children, medical conditions or other special needs. Slater's decision was a compromise between the government and automakers aimed at reducing the risk of death and injury linked to the deployed safety devices' explosive force. Data from an ongoing NHTSA study released Nov. 1 lists 121 deaths in minor or moderate crashes involving air bag deployments since 1993, including 48 drivers, five adult passengers, 53 children and 15 infants. Most of the children died from brain, neck or spinal cord injuries. Infants who died were strapped in rear-facing child seats. Automakers began installing de-powered air bags in 1998 models. Some newer models are also equipped with side-mounted air bags in doors or above windows. Last year, pressure from the auto and insurance industries prompted Slater to back off from a previous plan to let any motorist voluntarily deactivate air bags.

Now the government thinks automakers can develop and phase in advanced air bags with special sensors that "read" the size and position of drivers and passengers. The sensors would affect the speed and direction of air bag deployment according to the person being protected. NHTSA says, "Our proposals include several new performance requirements to ensure that the advanced air bags do not pose unreasonable risks to out-of-position occupants." NHTSA wants to require the new air bags in some new cars and light trucks beginning in September 2002. All new vehicles would have to have them by September 2005. New crash tests would involve test dummies representing children ages 1, 3 and 6, as well as small women. Currently, air bags are tested only on dummies representing medium-size men. ---

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November, 1998

SECTION: Pg. 86; ISSN: 0161-7745

IAC-ACC-NO: 53221466

LENGTH: 284 words

HEADLINE: Small Female Crash Dummy Added to Test Air-Bag Safety.

BODY:

U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater recently announced proposed design and performance specifications for a new crash dummy representing small women, one of the key steps in the development of advanced air-bag rules.

"Improved safety for smaller women will result from this new scientific tool," said Ricardo Martincz, M.D., National Highway Traffic Safety Administration administrator.

The 5th percentile female dummy with advanced instrumentation, proposed by the department, is the latest addition to the Hybrid III crash dummy family that began with the 50th percentile Hybrid III male dummy in June 1986. This summer, NHTSA proposed a 6-year-old Hybrid III child dummy. Other "family" members will include a Hybrid III 3-year-old and a 12-month-old Child Restraint Air Bag Interaction dummy--all designed to assess injury potential to a range of occupant sizes.

The proposed female Hybrid III dummy has been used for general research purposes for some time, but the need for its certification for official compliance testing has become more urgent because of safety problems that air bags may pose for small women.

The new 5th percentile female dummy has a multisegment and highly instrumented neck that is better at mimicking human neck responses and measuring injury potential. This is critical because most short women killed by air bags died of neck injuries. The dummy also measures chest compression, spinal injury and seat-belt effectiveness.

The rules announced in September propose a phase-in schedule for the newly designed air bag. Under the proposal, manufacturers are required to comply with the new standard beginning with Model Year 2003 vehicles.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

IAC-CREATE-DATE: November 16, 1998

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Money

November, 1998

SECTION: FEATURES/AIR BAGS; Pg. 130

LENGTH: 4024 words

HEADLINE: Is That A Bomb In Your Dashboard?
AIR BAGS WERE TOUTED AS LIFESAVERS. THEN THEY WERE CRITICIZED AS KILLERS. HOW DID THIS FIASCO HAPPEN?

BYLINE: Peter Carbonara Analysis

BODY:

It's hard to imagine gentlemen denying a civil request from a polite older lady, but that's what kept happening to Esther Burns. The mother of five grown children, she lives with her husband near Boston. A few months ago, she decided she wanted to have some work done on her car, a 1993 Buick station wagon. "I talked to a lot of people about doing it," she says, "and they just didn't want to be bothered." She wasn't interested in mag wheels. All she had in mind was a key-activated on/off switch connected to the air bag in her car's steering column. "I'm only five feet tall," she explains, "and I was right on top of the wheel. I'd heard all these stories about people getting killed, and I was very worried."

Last December, following a wave of publicity about children and short adults being injured or killed by air bags, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal agency that regulates auto safety, decided to allow mechanics to install the switches. Mrs. Burns filled out and mailed the form NHTSA requires, and about six weeks later got a letter "authorizing" her to have the work done. But even with this permission slip in hand, it took her nearly five months to find someone willing to sell her the switch and hook it up. The mechanics she and her husband approached said they were terrified about being sued should anyone be hurt in her car, she says. Their lawyers, professional associations and insurance companies were simply telling them not to touch air bags.

The result, according to NHTSA figures, is that while the agency had approved 45,254 air bag on/off switches as of Aug. 29, just 2,307 had actually been installed. (See the box on page 134.) Only about 390 of the country's 25,000 car dealers and repair shops have declared themselves willing to do the work.

Burns finally did find a compliant garage: Clay Chevrolet Buick, a dealer in nearby Newton, sold her the switch for \$490 installed. Of air bags, Clay general manager John Simcox says: "Customers have been saying for years, 'I want 'em, I want 'em, I want 'em.' Now they've got them and they're asking, 'Hey, can you turn this off for me?' It's sort of like the pair of pants that's one size fits all. They fit most people but not everybody."

Let's see if we can get this straight: The U.S. Government, alone among nations, tells car makers they must install air bags because they save lives. But because air bags sometimes kill people, the government now says you can have yours turned off—but only if you've got about \$500 and lots of time to find a mechanic either brave or stupid enough to do the work. Got that? The fundamental lesson here is that when the question involves air bags, the last thing the consumer can expect is a straight answer.

Air bags have been an ongoing public-policy fiasco in the United States for nearly 30 years, but the auto-safety police—both duly deputized and self-appointed—claim that will all be over soon. Since last spring, car makers have had government permission to sell cars with "depowered" and supposedly safer air bags. This summer NHTSA proposed guidelines for new side-impact bags. And in September the government proposed rules requiring "advanced air bags" on some new cars by September 2002 and in all new cars and light trucks by September 2005.

None of these measures, though, will do anything about the air bags already on the road. For instance, just this July, General Motors had to recall nearly 1 million late-model Chevrolets, Pontiacs and Cadillacs whose driver- and passenger-side air bags had a way of inflating for no reason at all. NHTSA is investigating similar reports about cars by other makers.

And a certain skepticism is probably in order when it comes to talk about "advanced air bags." After all, better, safer living through technology was the extravagant promise made when air bags were introduced in the 1970s and mandated by Congress in the 1990s. Then kids started to get killed.

THE DEATH TOLL

Right now, 79 million cars and trucks in America—less than half the total on the road—have air bags. For most people most of the time, this is a good thing. Since driver and front-passenger air bags appeared in significant numbers on the American road, they've deployed 2.6 million times and saved an estimated 3,400 lives, according to NHTSA figures. That is, however, far fewer lives saved than NHTSA originally predicted. And far worse, as of this September, air bags had been directly responsible for the deaths of 113 people, 66 of them children. Almost all died in low-speed crashes they should have been able to walk away from.

The reason is simple: People can be injured or killed if they are too close to air bags when they go off. To be effective, the bags have to inflate in fractions of a second, and some can fly straight toward an occupant at speeds up to 200 miles per hour. That's why short drivers and kids in the front passenger seat are at risk. And the grim result is that air bags have killed more kids than they have saved.

One widely reported nightmare involved Alison Sanders, a seven-year-old Maryland girl who was rendered brain dead two years ago by the passenger-side air bag in a 1995 Dodge Caravan minivan. While her father, attorney Robert Sanders, was driving in Baltimore street traffic, Alison had slipped out of the shoulder strap of her seat belt to try to tune in a Redskins game on the radio. Sanders hit another car in an intersection at 9.3 mph. The braking of the car caused Alison to lurch forward as the air bags inflated (the air bags in most American cars are triggered by crashes at speeds as low as 8 to 15 mph).

The collision was minor, and neither Sanders nor his two sons in the back seat were injured. Alison, though, never recovered consciousness; she died the next day. Robert Sanders has since channeled his grief into a lawsuit against manufacturer Chrysler and into lobbying NHTSA, Congress and the media as director of Parents for Safer Airbags.

Stories like Alison's shocked the public when they started showing up in newspapers and on television in the early 1990s. And little wonder. Consumers' image of air bags had been shaped by slow-mo television ads in which air bags gently and benevolently billowed out of steering wheels. Federal regulators, in no hurry to puncture that fantasy, waited until 1993 (by which time 13 people had been killed) to begin requiring warning labels in cars with air bags. (Not that the stickers--warning of the danger of death or serious injury should you fail to buckle up or let a child 12 years old or younger sit in the front seat--seem to be doing all that much good. When researchers at Harvard's Center for Risk Analysis in the School of Public Health polled 1,000 adults this spring on their attitudes about air bags, 80% of respondents thought it was safe to have a child under age 13 in the front seat.)

But while it may have been news to most consumers that children could be literally decapitated by air bags, the potential dangers of the devices had been very well known to car makers, regulators and safety lobbyists for years. As early as 1969, GM had publicly fretted about the risks to kids. In February 1970, in remarks presented to Secretary of Transportation John Volpe, Chrysler vice president of engineering Sydney Terry noted gm's misgivings and asked: "How would you like to pay \$150 extra for a device to protect passengers in the front seat in the event of an accident and have it actually be responsible for the death of your child in a minor accident in which no one else is injured?"

And there were plenty of test data behind that fear. In January 1970 in an internal memo, for instance, a Chrysler engineer described tests using 40- to 50-pound baboons: "When the [air bag] was inflated the baboon was thrown completely into the rear seat of a standard passenger car body. The G levels on the head of the subject were of the

order of 130Gs. Having a child directly in front of the bag when it inflates could prove fatal." In 1974, Volvo had similarly gruesome results in crash tests involving 30-pound baby pigs.

When Howard Willson, a Chrysler safety engineer since 1966 who is now an executive responsible for compliance with federal safety standards, was deposed earlier this year by lawyers representing the family of a nine-year-old Texas boy who was killed by an air bag, he was asked: "What was your reaction to learning in 1995 that someone had been killed in an accident involving a passenger-side air bag? Did that come as a surprise to you?"

"I can't say that it was a surprise," Willson answered.

"Why would it not have been a surprise? Is that something that you knew was going to happen sooner or later?"

"Yes," Willson said.

"POSITIVE PERCEPTION"

So how did such potentially lethal devices wind up in cars? Science, it should come as no surprise, was only one factor in the tangled saga of air bags in America. Money and politics have always been at least as important. GM, for instance, offered air bags on a few models in the early 1970s. Americans, most of whom at the time couldn't be bothered to wear their seat belts, weren't interested; the bags were commercial failures.

But sensing a change in the public mood at the decade's end, GM announced that it would reintroduce air bags in some 1981 models. The company then abruptly reversed course, telling NHTSA that it was concerned about the possible hazards to children. Not long afterward, then NHTSA administrator Joan Claybrook, a protege of that avenging angel of the American consumer Ralph Nader and a passionate air-bag enthusiast, gave a speech about auto safety during which she lambasted GM for this reversal. She accused the company of denying the public an important safety feature and called the worrisome test data it had compiled "fragmentary and speculative." GM subsequently changed its position yet again, saying that it had found a way to build safe air bags.

During the 1980s, realizing that safety can sell, other car makers followed suit. But doubts about air-bag safety did not go away. In October 1991, just before President Bush signed the legislation that would eventually require driver-side air bags, an NHTSA safety engineer wrote a now infamous memo to his boss, noting that "NHTSA is aware of a half dozen or so cases in which it is believed that the air bag caused the death of the occupant, as these were...low severity crashes. All the manufacturers agreed with NHTSA's concern that the potential for bad press on these few cases could cause a lot of harm to the public's positive perception and receptiveness to air bags and that NHTSA/industry needed to work together to share information and develop a statistical basis of understanding."

By the early 1990s, all the interested parties—industry, government and consumer lobbyists—were on the same side. So anxious were the spiritual sons of both Henry Ford and Ralph Nader to get air bags into American cars that any nagging worries had to be squelched—or at least not made too loudly public.

The car makers have little to be proud of here, but then neither does the safety lobby. They won the battle for air bags but threw away much of their hard-won credibility in the process. Claybrook, for example, now head of the Naderite lobbying group Public Citizen, has long been an influential and unequivocal supporter of air bags, notwithstanding the voluminous research raising serious safety questions about the devices. In the past year or two, she has taken a thrashing in the press on the subject—an industry-sponsored campaign to shift blame, she claims. She insists—reasonably enough—that the real responsibility lies with the car makers: "I had no idea what they were going to produce." Still, as the deaths mounted, Claybrook and longtime allies like Clarence Ditlow of the Center for Auto Safety didn't qualify their position on air bags. Instead, they continued to show up in the usual places—congressional hearings and press conferences—doing the usual thing: blaming it all on Detroit. For about \$900, Ditlow is offering for sale a cache of air-bag documents. Among the takers, Ditlow says, have been car makers themselves, as well as plaintiffs' lawyers interested in suing them.

DETROIT BLAMES "THE HOLY GRAIL"

A key question in all this is why air bags needed to be so powerful in the first place. The answer, car makers say, is a bit of highly technical language buried in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, specifically Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 208--FMVSS 208 to initiate, or sometimes just 208. FMVSS 208 requires that all cars to be sold in the U.S. be subjected to a crash test into a solid barrier at 30 mph with a 170-pound unbelted dummy in the front passenger seat. During the crash, damage to the dummy is measured against such indexes of destruction as a "head injury criterion" scale, "chest Gs" and "femur loads." If the dummy's scores don't fall below certain limits, the manufacturer can't certify to NHTSA that the car complies with FMVSS 208, and the car cannot be sold in the U.S. In other words, all new cars on the U.S. market must be built so that an unbelted adult male passenger could survive a 30-mph head-on crash into a brick wall without serious injury.

And that, U.S. car makers say, means new cars must have air bags that come out fast and hard--which is fine if you're built like NHTSA's test dummy and you're in a relatively high-speed crash. It's not so fine if you're a kid like Alison Sanders and you're in a less severe crash. A car in such a crash experiences what engineers call a soft crash pulse; it comes to a halt more slowly, which means you have more time to be thrown forward before the sensors in the car's front end set off the air bag.

No one complained very much about 208's unbelted crash test requirement when it was introduced back in the early 1970s, says Philip Haseltine, a senior Department of Transportation official in the early 1980s and now president of the industry-sponsored American Coalition for Traffic Safety. "Air bags were viewed at that time as a replacement for seat belts," he says. But now car makers pin the defense of their air bags on what they regard as the standard's unreasonable requirements.

Their critique has two parts: The first and more convincing is that 208 supposes a scenario that occurs infrequently in reality. Most crashes occur at angles rather than head on and involve hitting obstacles that give somewhat on impact. The second, weaker argument is that 208 actually requires the industry to make dangerous air bags. According to American Automobile Manufacturers Association director of regulatory affairs Barry Felrice, a former NHTSA associate administrator, the unbelted crash test "leads to the very high energy levels that have been associated with some of these problems."

But the unbelted barrier crash test is, in the words of one Big Three lobbyist, "the holy grail" of the auto-safety lobby. Claybrook, for one, has called fmvs 208 "the most important auto-safety standard ever enacted." The fact that air bags that meet this standard have killed people stems not from the rule, she says, but from the way car makers have complied only with its bare minimum requirements--protecting an unbelted, average-size male, and to hell with everybody else. (Although the Big Three have used child-size dummies in some of their R&D efforts, they are not currently required to do so in FMVSS 208 crash tests.)

By early 1997, the air-bag body count had risen sufficiently high that something dramatic needed to be done. In March, with the grudging acquiescence of the safety lobby, NHTSA granted a request by the industry lobbying group aama to allow "depowered" air bags in new models. Car makers were given a choice: They could either continue to use the 30-mph unbelted barrier crash test or they could switch to a less demanding method in which a mechanical "sled" yanks a test car backward to simulate the abrupt deceleration of a crash. The sled method allowed car makers to meet the 208 standards with less forceful bags, and about 90% of new American cars on the market since last autumn now sport them.

But if depowered bags are less dangerous in low-speed collisions, aren't they necessarily less useful in more severe ones? Although real-world statistics on depowered bags are too scanty to be conclusive yet, NHTSA seemed to think so. Nonetheless, the agency's primary interest seemed to remain public relations. The agency's final ruling on the sled test contained this particularly craven statement: "Ultimately, the continued availability of any safety device is dependent on consumer acceptability. The agency believes that air bags which fatally injure occupants, particularly children in low-speed crashes, place the concept of air bags at risk, despite their overall net safety benefits. Accordingly, to help ensure that air bags remain acceptable to consumers ...the agency believes that it is reasonable to accept some short-term safety trade-offs associated with depowering while better solutions are being developed." NHTSA also called for a return to the 30-mph unbelted barrier test by 2002.

ARE ALL AIR BAGS EQUAL?

All of which leaves unanswered this tantalizing question: If federal regulations require dangerous bags, why is it that the air bags in some makes of cars have not killed anyone? NHTSA statistics list air-bag deaths in Fords, Chryslers, Toyotas, Volkswagens, Pontiacs, Jaguars and several other makes. There are no Hondas or BMWs in that tally. Safety advocates like Claybrook say that's because air bags in the latter cars are simply better—and more safely—designed. Some shoot up along the windshield rather than straight out at the occupant, or they employ more sophisticated sensing and triggering systems. BMW's air-bag system, for instance, detects whether the occupant is belted and adjusts the power and timing of the air bag's deployment accordingly. In spring 1999, the next Mercedes S Class will debut air bags that deploy with different amounts of force depending on the severity of a crash.

Both NHTSA and the car makers, though, are loath to draw distinctions between makes. Last August, the agency rejected a request by Claybrook and other safety types to rate air-bag safety by automaker, saying there were too many variables to make such a calculation meaningful. On the industry side, an auto- and insurance-sponsored conference early this year held that rating air bags "by comparisons of selected design characteristics would be meaningless and misleading," because air bags "are only part of a vehicle's total, integrated occupant protection system and they must be 'tuned' to individual vehicles."

Scott Upham, president of Providata, a Detroit automotive-industry consulting firm, says, "There's no conclusive evidence that one kind of air bag is safer than any other." And even car makers with good air-bag safety records seem nervous about taking too much credit. Mercedes, for example, is often cited by auto-safety lobbyists for its superior air-bag design. According to NHTSA, only one person has been killed in the U.S. by a Mercedes air bag—a driver who was not wearing a seat belt. Mercedes spokesman Fred Heiler attributes Mercedes' relatively clean bill of health partly to the fact its air bags aren't aimed directly at occupants. "That seems to be a no-brainer," he says. But he also says Mercedes doesn't like the 30-mph unbelted test requirement of FMVSS 208 any more than its American counterparts do. "We think the risk exists for any manufacturer," he says.

99% SOLUTIONS

This May, representatives from the Big Three and aama sat down with Claybrook and other safety activists in a meeting brokered by the American Insurance Association to hammer out the deal that ultimately found its way into this year's federal highway bill. The industry agreed to make advanced air bags—which it has been developing anyway. The advocates agreed to a longer timetable for implementation and to a provision that the sled-test option be subject to reconsideration—rather than automatic elimination—by NHTSA late in 2001.

"Advanced air bags" is a catchall that includes a wide variety of systems, from air bags that deploy with different amounts of force depending on the severity of the collision to infrared sensors that can prevent the bag from deploying if the passenger is too close. Just how well any of these will work in the real world remains to be seen. Engineers have fretted about the unreliability of sensors embedded in car seats to measure a passenger's weight and location. There are a number of good technologies, says Providata's Scott Upham, but so far there is no perfect fix. "Everybody's got a 99% solution," he says. "But that's not good enough because of the liability issue."

This September NHTSA released its proposed new rules for advanced air bags. The agency said it planned to require car makers to test air bags not only with the 170-pound male dummy currently mandated but also with dummies simulating a one-year-old in a car seat, a three-year-old, a six-year-old and a 110-pound woman. NHTSA called for a crash test into a deformable barrier that mimics the real-world situation of hitting, say, the hood of another car. Further, NHTSA proposed an eventual return to the controversial 30-mph unbelted fixed-barrier test. Among the car makers, Ford and Chrysler immediately denounced the move. People on both sides of that issue agree that hammering out a final rule is likely to be, in Claybrook's words, "very contentious."

Claybrook and others will have at least a year in which to lobby NHTSA, and automakers will have another two years to implement the rules. In the meantime, one thing is certain: Whatever the merits of advanced bags, the air bags already on the road will continue to kill people. In the words of Patrick Bedard, a former engineer who is now a

columnist for Car & Driver and a vociferous air-bag critic: "The toll taken by air bags is going to keep rising. It's a toxic spill that's going to be out there for a long time."

BOX STORY:

LOOKING FOR A SWITCH? GOOD LUCK

Some light trucks these days come with air-bag on/off switches made (like the air bags themselves) by big automotive suppliers such as TRW, Siemens and Takata. But the federal government's decision to permit already installed air bags to be fitted with on/off switches has produced a smaller-scale cottage industry.

Perhaps the largest of these operations is AirBag Options in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, run by mechanic J.P. Malone. He first got into the field running a sort of flying circus of switch installers. Taking up the slack from local mechanics unwilling to do the work, Malone and his crew traveled around the country, installing the switches and moving on--a kind of Lone Ranger for the age of passive restraint.

Malone now confines himself to making and selling switches, a small key-activated black box that mounts on the dashboard and has a warning light to tell you whether the bag is on or off. "It's not rocket science," he says. "I could probably talk you through it." It doesn't appear to be big business either. Malone claims he and his associates have installed about 3,000 switches over the past several months. (NHTSA, which is supposed to be notified of installations, reports only about 2,300 total nationwide.)

Malone's New England dealer, a cheerfully self-promoting Boston garage owner named George "Junior" Damato, guesses he's installed more than 100 switches in the past six months, at \$305 a pop. It takes about an hour, he says, sometimes three on Japanese cars whose electronics are tougher to get at. Damato also says that while he's not worried about potential liability, he carries a \$1 million insurance policy on the switches--just in case.

BOX STORY:

FYI For a list of dealers and repair shops that will install on/off switches, see the National Highway Transportation Safety Board's Website at www.NHTSA.dot.gov.

GRAPHIC: COLOR ILLUSTRATION: PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANASTASIA VASILAKIS, [Photo-collage of crash test dummy in car behind air bag, one hundred dollar bill, rulers, and excerpt from air bag warning]; COLOR ILLUSTRATION: PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANASTASIA VASILAKIS, [Photo-collage of Capitol building, pedestrian crossing street, on/off switch and calendar]; COLOR ILLUSTRATION: PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANASTASIA VASILAKIS, [Photo-collage of Alison Sanders, cars and highway]

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BYLINE: Nina Padgett

BODY:

Although air bags have saved thousands of lives since they were first mandated in passenger cars and light trucks, they are not foolproof. As of Sept. 1, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration confirmed 113 air bag-related deaths. Sixty-six of them involved children seated in either rear- or forward-facing seats. Forty-two adult drivers and five adult passengers were also killed. Only 13 of the adults killed were wearing seat belts.

In order to reduce the risk of air bag deaths among small children as well as adults, NHTSA has proposed legislation that would require manufacturers to develop a new generation of air bags and pass a wider variety of crash tests. The new air bags would either have to be compatible with children in child safety seats and small adults who need to position the seat further forward than is now considered safe, or the air bags would have to shut off in these situations.

The initiative to reduce air bag-related injuries began in 1995, when NHTSA allowed automakers to install air bag on/off switches in new cars and light trucks with no rear seat, or a rear seat too small to accommodate a child safety seat. In 1997, NHTSA approved production of less powerful air bags and let consumers with special medical conditions buy on/off switches.

One quarter of all cars and light trucks would have to qualify under the new standards by October, 2002, and all of them by October, 2005. Compliance includes:

Full crash test: The current test involves a 30 m.p.h. crash into a barrier, or an optional sled test that does not destroy the car. Both tests are done using one average male dummy in the driver's seat. The new test would be a full car crash.

Rear-facing infant seats: Automakers would have the option of turning off the air bag when a rear-facing infant seat is present, or demonstrating a low risk of injury.

Children in forward-facing child seats and booster seats: Automakers would have the option of turning off the air bag or demonstrating a low risk of injury in tests using a 6-year-old child dummy and a 3-year-old child dummy.

Out of position adults: In a situation where the adult is too close to the air bag, automakers would have the option of turning off the air bag or demonstrating a low risk of injury. These tests would be conducted using a small female adult dummy.

In spring, NHTSA began an outreach program, soliciting information from automakers on their research and development experiences concerning air bags. At the same time, NHTSA asked NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to evaluate air bag technologies.

The NHTSA proposal "will improve safety and give automakers maximum flexibility to pursue effective technological solutions," said NHTSA Administrator Ricardo Martinez. However, NHTSA spokesmen stress that the advanced air bags will not eliminate the need for seatbelts and that air bags can only be fully effective if the driver and passengers in the vehicle are properly restrained.

Nina Padgett is a certified mechanic and Phoenix, Ariz.-based auto writer. If you have a service question for Nina, write to her c/o Chicago Sun-Times, Fourth Floor, 401 N. Wabash, Chicago 60611. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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