



News Release
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Boost 'Til 8 Campaign Aims to Protect Kids

Child Safety Groups Urge Families to Prepare for New Child Restraint Law

(Salt Lake City, UT) – This year it is estimated that 19 Utah children under 8 years of age will die in a motor vehicle crash. This is now a largely preventable tragedy thanks to a new law that will require children to be properly restrained until age 8. The “Boost 'Til 8 Campaign” was introduced during a news conference today to educate families about the law that goes into effect May 5 and requires children up to age 8 to be restrained in a booster seat or a car seat.

According to the Utah Department of Public Safety's 2005 Utah Crash Summary, safety restraint usage among children involved in crashes decreases as children grow older. The report shows that 88.1% of children ages 0-1 were in a child safety seat at the time of the crash, compared to 73.9% of 2-to-4 year olds, and only 18.8% of 5-to-8 year olds.

“We still have a lot of room for improvement in Utah in our efforts to educate parents and caregivers about the importance of using appropriate car seats and booster seats,” said Christi Fisher, Director of Safe Kids Utah and a health educator with the Utah Department of Health Violence and Injury Prevention Program. “With this new law in place, families have a safe guideline to help protect their children from unnecessary injury or even death.”

In support of the new booster seat law, 300 booster seats purchased by the Highway Safety Office, Ken Garff Automotive Group and Primary Children's Medical Center, were distributed to the public at Rose Park Elementary on Saturday.

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A car seat check point was also sponsored by Safe Kids Salt Lake County.

On March 17, 2008, Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. signed House Bill 140, the Child Restraint Devices Amendments, into law. The law requires the operator of a motor vehicle to provide protection of a person younger than 8 years of age by using an appropriate child restraint device like a car seat or a booster seat. Previously, the law required only child under age of 5 to use an approved child restraint device. The new law now protects children from 5 up to 8 years of age through use of a booster seat or car seat. However, children younger than 8 who are at least 57 inches tall are exempt from the law and may use a regular seat belt.

Children placed in approved and properly used child safety seats and seat belts have an 80 percent lower risk of fatal injury than those who are unrestrained. “Booster seats have also been proven to be 60% safer than seat belts alone, and can save children’s lives and minimize their injuries in car crashes,” said Utah State Representative Tim Cosgrove, primary sponsor of the legislation.

“Utah now joins the roster of 43 states with a booster seat law,” said Janet Brooks, Child Advocacy Manager at Primary Children’s Medical Center, and Vice-president of Safe Kids Utah. “We are excited about what this means for Utah children and appreciate the leadership of Representative Cosgrove in passing this important legislation.”

Release of the “Boost ‘Til 8” campaign also coincides with National Safe Kids Week, April 26–May 3, 2008. Safe Kids Week events are being held in many Utah communities by local Safe Kids Coalitions and public health departments to educate parents and children about the new booster law and other risks children may encounter in the upcoming summer months. For more information about Safe Kids or the new booster seat law, please visit <http://www.utahsafekids.org>

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