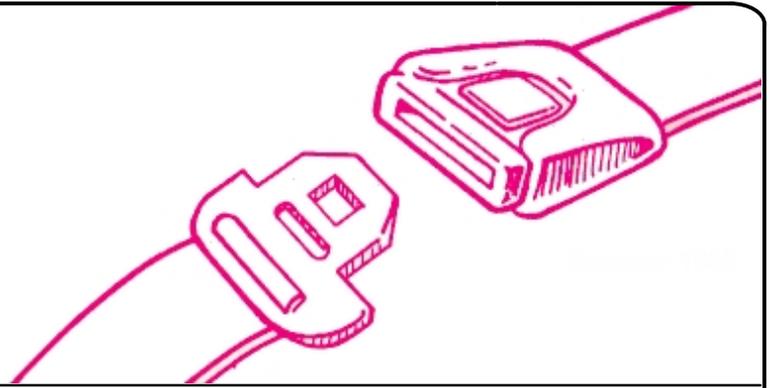


The Buckle Update



North Dakota Department of Health

Fall 1999

Division of Maternal and Child Health

Legislature Passes New Passenger Safety Law

As of Aug. 1, 1999, North Dakota drivers must adhere to two major changes in the state's child passenger safety law. The new law requires three-year-old children to ride in car safety seats. Previously, three-year-olds legally could ride buckled in seat belts. The other major change affects older children, who are now required to buckle up until age 18. The previous law covered children only through age 10.

The legislation was introduced at the request of the North Dakota Department of Health and was supported by health, medical, safety and law enforcement groups from throughout the state, as well as private citizens. One such citizen was John Finstad of Lisbon, N.D., whose daughter Amy was killed in a single-vehicle rollover in December 1998. Amy was not buckled up. John is adamant that no other parent should suffer such a needless tragedy.

The new law requires:

- Children younger than age 4 must be properly secured in a federally approved car safety seat.
- Children ages 4 through 17 must be properly secured in a car safety seat or buckled correctly in a seat belt.

- The law applies to all drivers in any motor vehicle that was equipped with seat belts when manufactured, including pick-ups.
- The law applies to all seating positions, front seat and back seat.
- The law is a primary enforcement law, which means law enforcement officers may stop a driver who travels with an unrestrained child younger than age 18.
- The penalty for violation is one point assessed on the license of the driver.

Dr. Todd Twogood from the North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics testified in support of the law, saying, "Seat belts are not appropriate for a three-year-old child. The shoulder belt crosses the neck, and the lap portion rides high across the tummy, not down on the hips where it should be. Young children need the protection of a car safety seat."

Health and safety officials believe the new law will have an impact on reducing deaths and injuries to North Dakota teens. From 1994 through 1997, 62 children in the state died in motor vehicle crashes and another 6,018 were injured. Fifty-six of the deaths and over 5,000 of the injuries occurred to children ages 10 to 17.

Give Your Child a Boost!

In October 1998 the North Dakota Department of Health introduced a campaign called "Give Your Child a Boost" to encourage the use of auto booster seats by children who weigh more than 40 pounds. As part of the campaign, the Department of Health provides educational materials for distribution to parents of young children and distributes booster

seats through public health agencies for a nominal fee.

Any funds generated from the program are used to purchase additional booster seats. For more information about the program call 800.472.2286 or your local public health unit.

Choosing a Car Safety Seat

Because most car crashes happen within 25 miles of home, children need to be securely buckled in car safety seats for all trips. In the United States, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 5, and correct use of car seats could save many children's lives.

The variety of car safety seats on the market can make selection difficult. The following outlines which seats are appropriate for children:

- *Birth to 1 year of age AND 20 pounds.*
Rear-facing only infant seat or rear-facing convertible seat (a convertible seat can be used in two positions, forward facing and rear facing)
- *Children 1 year of age and older, 20 to 40 pounds.*
Forward-facing convertible seat.
Forward-facing only toddler seat with harness.
- *Children 40 to 60+ pounds.*
High-back booster without harness.
Low-back booster.

For more information call the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2286.

Child Passenger Safety Certification Training

The North Dakota Department of Health and the Grand Forks Safe Kids Coalition are offering a National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration Standardized Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Training in Grand Forks, N.D., September 14 through 17.

The technician training is a certification course that includes a written and a hands-on test as well as a child restraint check-up. Participants will learn how to install car safety seats correctly, use safety belts correctly, choose correct seats for different sizes of children, etc.

To become certified technicians, participants need to be present all four days, pass both written and hands-on tests and participate in the car seat check-up. To become certified technician instructors, participants need to become certified technicians, participate in car seat checks and assist in instructing a CPS technician four-day course.

For more information, please call 800.472.2286.

As Baby Grows

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, infants should ride in rear-facing car safety seats until they are 1 year of age **and** 20 pounds. Infants have large and heavy heads, weak neck muscles and flexible shoulders. They cannot withstand the forces of a crash in a forward-facing position.

Many babies reach 20 pounds and outgrow their infant car seat before they are 1 year of age. These babies need to ride rear facing in convertible car seats with rear-facing weight limits of 30 to 32 pounds. Not all convertible car seats have this feature, so consumers should read labels carefully to make sure the car seat is right for their baby.

The following convertible car seats have rear-facing weight limits of 30 to 32 pounds:

Manufacturer	Model Seat Name
Britax	Elite Roundabout
Century	Bravo Smart Move
Evenflo	Hosizon V Medallion (manufactured after Jan. 4, 1999)
Cosco	Touriva (manufactured after February 1999 Alpha Omega)

For more information on "big" baby car seats, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 1.800.472.2286.

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What Is a Tether?

What is a tether? It's a strap that anchors the top of a child's car seat to the body of the vehicle. When used with a safety belt, it helps reduce injury in a severe crash. Tether straps are available as an option for many forward-facing car seats. For better protection in any vehicle, adding a tether reduces the possibility of serious head and neck injuries, which can cause lifelong disabilities or death.

If a car seat does not come with a tether, check with the car seat manufacturer to order one. To find out where you would use the tether in a car, check the vehicle owner's manual for tether location. If your vehicle is not set up for a tether, check with your local dealer to order a tether kit.

Universal Child Safety Seat System

The Universal Child Safety Seat System (UCSSS) is a uniform anchorage system (attachment) for motor vehicles and child safety seats. This new system will make installation of car seats easier and will keep children safer because the seats will be more secure.

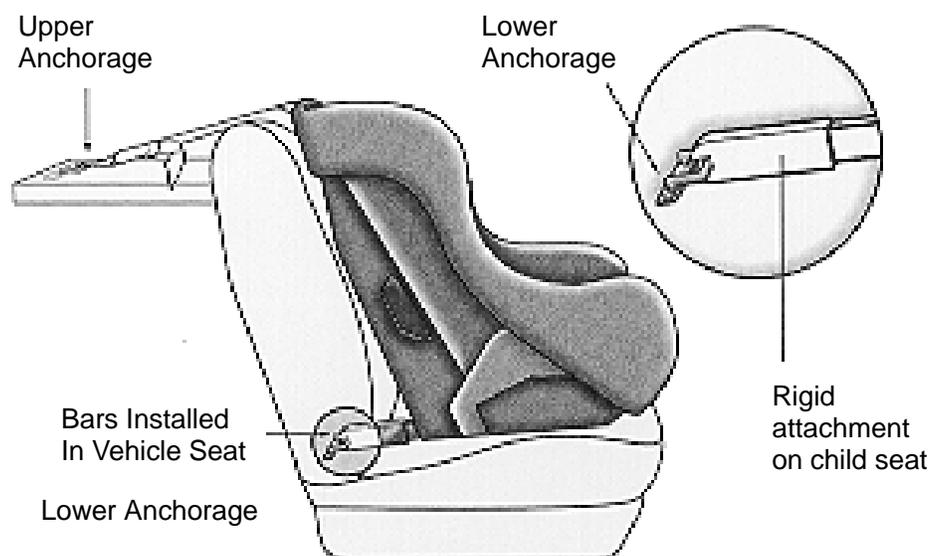
The system has two lower attachments and one upper attachment. Each lower attachment has a rigid, round rod or bar located where the vehicle seat cushion meets the seat back. The upper attachment has a ring-like object that is permanently attached to the vehicle at the top of the rear seat.

Each new car safety seat will have a hook, buckle or other connector that snaps onto the lower attachments

in the vehicle. A tether strap from the top of the car safety seat will attach to the upper attachment.

Beginning Sept. 1, 1999, car manufacturers will be required to install tether strap attachments in cars manufactured after that date. The UCSSS will be phased in during the next three years. By Sept. 1, 2002, all new vehicles and child safety seats will be equipped with the new system.

The UCSSS is estimated to save about 50 lives and prevent 3,000 injuries every year. For more information call the toll free Auto Safety Hotline at 1.888.DASH.2.DOT



Infant Car Safety Seats Recalled

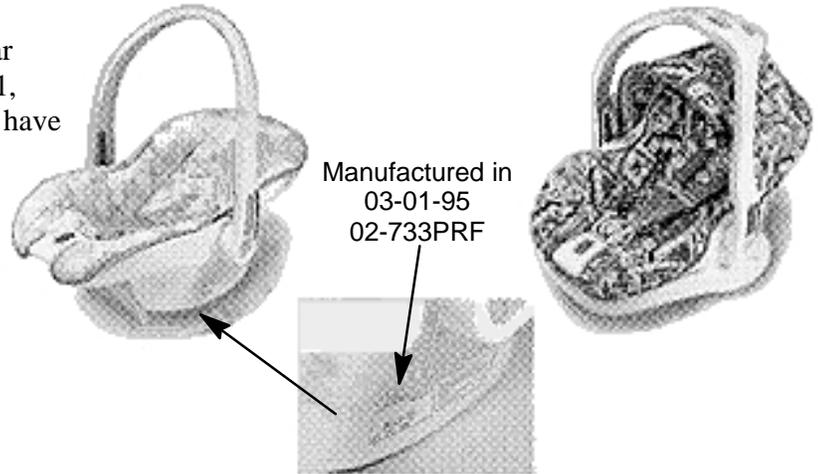
In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Cosco Inc. is announcing the recall of approximately 670,000 Arriva and Turnabout infant car seats/carriers.

When the seat is used as an infant carrier, the handle locks on each side can unexpectedly release, causing the seat to flip forward. When this happens, the infant can fall to the ground and suffer serious injuries.

The recall involves Arriva and Turnabout infant car seat/carrier models manufactured between March 1, 1995 and September 9, 1997. The car seat/carriers have the following model numbers:

Arriva	Turnabout
02-665	02-758
02-732	02-761
02-756	02-764
02-729	02-759
02-733	02-762
02-757	02-765
02-732	02-760
02-751	02-763
	02-667

Consumers should continue using these car seats but should not use the carrying handle until a repair kit has been installed. Cosco will provide free repair kits that will make the handles stronger. The repair can easily be done in the home. To receive a free repair kit or for more information call Cosco at 800.221.6736.



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