



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Jesse White Encourages Parents To Get Child Safety Seats Properly Installed— *Message Kicks-Off National Child Passenger Safety Week*

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White encouraged parents and caregivers to make sure children are properly secured in appropriate child safety seats, including booster seats, as studies show the vast majority are improperly installed. White made the announcement during National Child Passenger Safety Week.

"The leading cause of death and injury for children is automobile crashes," White said. "Making sure our children are properly secured will give parents and caregivers the peace of mind that their little ones are well-protected. Also, as adults, let's set a good example by securing ourselves with a safety belt."

In Illinois, three out of four child safety seats are improperly installed, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

- Child safety seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71% for infants and by 54% for toddlers in passenger vehicles, according to NHTSA.
- In 2009, 5,386 people in Illinois were ticketed for not having their children restrained.
- In 2009, among children under 5 years old in passenger vehicles, an estimated 309 lives were saved by restraint use, according to NHTSA.
- The Illinois Child Passenger Protection Act states that children under the age of 8 years old must be secured in an appropriate child restraint system, including booster seats.
- Children should be rear-facing for a minimum one year and weigh 20 pounds. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children ride rear facing as long as possible, until 2 years old, if possible. According to AAP, children are 75% safer rear-facing than forward-facing.

White marked the week by holding a press conference at the Chicago Police Department, where he was joined by officials from Illinois Department of Transportation, NHTSA, NorthShore University HealthSystem, and Safe Kids USA.

"Nothing is more troubling than when we see injuries to young children that could have been avoided, and studies show that these new guidelines to keep children rear-facing until the age of two will help prevent injuries," said Kenneth Fox, MD, a pediatrician with NorthShore University HealthSystem.

White said people are often unaware that booster seats must be used with a lap/shoulder belt. Parents should never place the rear-facing safety seats in the front passenger seat if the car is equipped with a passenger airbag that has not been shut off, White said. White also suggests that parents put children aged 12 and under in the back seat, where they are the safest.

The Secretary of State's office, through its Kids In Safe Seats program, has seven fitting stations in Illinois where motorists can set up appointments or be referred to technicians in their area who can show them how to install their child safety seats properly. Safety seat technicians install more than 50 child safety seats a month in the Chicago metro area.

To make an appointment or get more information, please call 866-247-0213 or visit www.cyberdriveillinois.com.