

Half of all children under 8 years old in Saskatchewan are not properly restrained when they're in a vehicle. As a result, in 2004, there were 184 children under the age of eight injured while riding in a vehicle, 28 of them were not properly restrained in a child restraint. An additional 80 were restrained by a seat belt that may have been inappropriate for the child. (www.sgi.ca).

As many car seat technicians have seen, many parents can be overwhelmed and confused by the proper way to use a car seat. Some of the most common mistakes seen include:

- using a rear-facing only seat as a forward facing seat,
- turning a child forward facing prior to meeting all three necessary developmental benchmarks,
- moving a child from a forward facing seat into a booster sooner than is recommended or safe for the child
- not having the car seat's harness system tight enough, therefore reducing the effectiveness of the seat

Parents and professionals alike within our Health Region are fortunate to have many trained car seat technicians to use as resources, providing advice in the correct use of car seats. Car seat technicians are:

- trained during a two day intense course, including an exam and practical component,
- receive ongoing education and advice on car seats, including recalls,
- are required to check a certain number of seats each year as well as run clinics in their communities,
- are required to update their training every 3 years,
- formally recognized by St. John Ambulance as trained technicians,
- able to use other technicians as a resource.

All technicians within the region are eager to field questions on the proper use of all child safety seats. Please encourage parents to contact a car seat technician for information. Contact information for all car seat technician in Saskatchewan can be found at www.sgi.sk.ca, by following the "Road Safety" link and choosing "Child Car Seats". SGI provides the most up to date contact information for qualified car seat technicians.

Also included are websites which provide child safety seat information and the contact information for Community Health Offices which have pamphlets on child safety seats.

Please do not hesitate to contact Bonita Brick or Kim Tradewell at 820-6217 if you have any questions or concerns related to this information.

Web Based Resources

The Saskatchewan Prevention Institute: <http://www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca/>.

SGI Saskatchewan: http://www.sgi.sk.ca/sgi_pub/road_safety/child_restraints.htm.

Transport Canada: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/childsafety/menu.htm>.

Alberta's Safe Roads Program: <http://www.saferoads.com/vehicles/childseats.html>