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The Burleson Police Department is joining with other law enforcement agencies in Texas to promote Child Passenger Safety Week. The week is hosted by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and supported by Safe Kids USA, a nationwide network of organizations working to prevent unintentional childhood injury.

Child Passenger Safety Week is Sept. 18-24. According to TxDOT, three out of four child passenger safety seats are incorrectly installed. Burleson's public safety officers are not certified to do child safety seat checks, but those checks can be done through Safe Kids by going to www.safekids.org. In your Area, Find a car seat checkup event. You can also find certified checkpoints through www.bucklethemright.org.

Since September 2009, all occupants of a vehicle, no matter their age, must be secured by a safety belt. That includes back seat passengers. The Texas Child Restraint Law requires children younger than 8 years old or shorter than 4 feet 9 inches to be in child restraint seats. Texas families face fines from \$25 to \$200 for non-compliance.

- Birth-12 months: Children under 1 year old should always ride in a rear-facing seat.
- 1-3 years old: A child should stay in a rear-facing seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat's manufacturer. Once a child outgrows the rear-facing seat, they can switch to a forward-facing seat with a harness
- 4-7 years old: A child should stay in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until the child reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat's manufacturer. Once the child outgrows that, switch to a booster seat, but keep the child in the back seat of the car.
- 8-12 years old: A child should stay in a booster seat until the child is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. The lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snugly across the shoulder and chest, not across the neck or face.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and TxDOT research shows that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children 14 years old and younger. Child safety seats reduce the likelihood of an infant (under 1 year old) being killed in a vehicle crash by 71 percent and reduces the likelihood to toddlers (1-4 years old) by 54 percent. Children ages 4-7 years old who use booster seats are 59 percent less likely to be injured in car crashes than children who are restrained only by seat belts.