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Frederick County Health Department

# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Free In-Person Car Seat Safety Checks and Education on Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**FREDERICK, MD** -- Safe Kids Frederick County announced today that certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians will be offering free in-person car seat safety checks and education to parents and caregivers on Friday, September 23, 2022 at the Maryland Vehicle Administration's Frederick Location, 1601 Bowmans Farm Rd, Frederick, MD from 10 AM to 2 PM. The Friday event is part of Child Passenger Safety Week, which runs Sept. 19-25, and will include instruction on how to install and use car seats correctly. Technicians will also help determine if your child is in the right seat for their size, and explain the importance of registering car seats with their manufacturers so parents and caregivers can be notified if there is a recall.

"We know parents and caregivers have a lot on their plates, so we hope that this car seat check event will be an opportunity to take just an hour or so to ensure your child is safe in their car seat or booster seat," said Jessica Dayal, Safe Kids Frederick County Coordinator. "Unfortunately, two children under 13 were killed every day in 2019, nationally, while riding in vehicles. No parent ever wants to get it wrong when it comes to a child's safety, but we have found that 85% of the car seats we check in Frederick are installed incorrectly. Parents: Don't 'think' you know, 'know' you know that your kids are secure in the vehicle, and are in the right seats for their ages and sizes."

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading killer of children, and the latest research from the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shows that nearly half (46%) of car seats are misused. Using age- and size-appropriate

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car seats and installing them correctly are the best ways to reduce these deaths. More than one-third of children 12 and younger who died in crashes in 2019 while riding in cars, pickups, vans, and SUVs were unbuckled. Many of those kids could have survived if they had been buckled up.

From 2015 to 2019, there were 1,709 “tweens” (8 to 14 years old) killed in passenger vehicles, and in 2019 alone, the 8-12-year-old age group had the highest number of fatalities (229) among children in passenger vehicles. It is critical that parents and caregivers ensure that, if a child is too large or old for a car seat, they are first put into a booster seat until a seat belt can fit correctly.

### Car Seats versus Booster Seats

There is also a deadly misconception that a certain type of vehicle may offer greater protection for your child. In 2019, 47% of unrestrained children killed in vehicle crashes were riding in vans, followed closely by SUVs (42%), and light trucks (42%). Children are safest when correctly secured in the right car seats or booster seats for their ages and sizes — no matter the vehicle type. No matter how safe you think your vehicle may be, it is never safe, nor legal, to let your child ride unbuckled.

NHTSA recommends keeping children rear-facing as long as possible, up to the top height and weight allowed by their particular seats. It's the best way to keep them safe. Once a child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, he or she is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether. After outgrowing the forward-facing car seat, a child should be placed in a booster seat until tall enough to fit in a seat belt properly.

Booster seats are an essential step between car seats and seat belts. These transitional seats position the seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body. Don't feel pressured to put your child in a seat belt too soon. If your child is ready to use a seat belt, ensure the seat belt fits correctly. Bottom line: The safest place for all kids under 13 is buckled up in the back seat.

### Learn About Car Seat Safety

Frederick County's Seat Check event is being held at the Maryland Vehicle Administration's Frederick Location, 1601 Bowmans Farm Rd, Frederick, MD from 10 AM to 2 PM. Parents and caregivers are invited to attend this free event by making an appointment by calling 301-600-3326, texting “MVA Appointment” to 240-877-2087, or emailing [SafeKids@FrederickCountyMD.gov](mailto:SafeKids@FrederickCountyMD.gov) with the Subject Line: MVA Appointment. Online appointment booking can be made at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b094aa5a92aa5f49-carseat5>.

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While the COVID-19 pandemic may change the availability of the certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians, they may be available in your community. These men and women will explain how to use car seats, booster seats, and seat belts correctly. Free of charge, the technicians will help educate consumers on choosing the correct car seat, installing that seat correctly, and using that seat correctly every time. Find out if a Technician is available in your community by visiting <https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats#install-inspection>. You can also check for virtual appointment availability in your community by selecting the option under the Car Seat Inspection finder on the website.

For those who are seeking virtual options, check out the list of free, online resources available at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats>:

- [\*\*Car Seat Types\*\*](#): Determine whether your child fits best in a rear-facing car seat, forward-facing car seat, booster seat, or seat belt.
- [\*\*Car Seat Recommendations\*\*](#): Review NHTSA's recommendations for the best car seat for your child's age and size.
- [\*\*Find and Compare\*\*](#): Find and compare car seats with NHTSA's handy car seat finder, which also searches specific brands.

For more information on child car seat safety, as well as how to find other car seat check events, go to [www.nhtsa.gov/therightseat](http://www.nhtsa.gov/therightseat).

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