



News Release

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KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN THE VEHICLE DURING NATIONAL CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK SEPTEMBER 16-22

Free child safety seat inspections by Child Passenger Safety Technicians.

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA, September 10, 2012 – In the United States during 2009, 1,314 children ages 14 years and younger died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes, and approximately 179,000 were injured, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. However, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), approximately 9,310 lives have been saved from 1975 to 2009 by the proper use of child safety seats.

During National Child Passenger Safety Week (September 16-22), AAA Tidewater Virginia is reminding parents and caregivers to ensure their children are secured properly in the correct seats – every trip, every time. AAA will be joining community partners for a child safety seat check up event from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM Saturday, September 22, 2012 at the Lowe's located 2403 Virginia Beach Boulevard in Virginia Beach. Parents can have their safety seat checked for proper fit by nationally certified child passenger safety technicians and instructors.

According to NHTSA, nearly three out of four child safety seats are not used properly, which is a grave risk when traveling. "Securing your children properly in age and size appropriate child safety seats – in the back seat of your vehicle – is the most effective thing you can do to protect them in the event of a crash. Additionally, AAA recommends that all child passengers under age 13 should ride securely restrained in the back seat where they are the safest," commented Georjeane Blumling, spokesperson for AAA Tidewater Virginia. "In motor vehicle crashes, child safety seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71 percent for infants and by 54 percent for toddlers."

AAA now advises parents of infants and young toddlers to secure their children in rear-facing child safety seats for as long as possible, maxing out the upper weight or height limits of the car seat. Researchers indicate that toddlers are 75 percent less likely to die or be seriously injured in a crash when they ride in a rear-facing car seat up to their second birthday. "We have a critical opportunity to save young lives by empowering parents to follow these new guidelines," said Blumling.

AAA recommends the following child passenger safety best practices:

- Always read the car seat manufacturer's instructions and vehicle owner's manual.
- Keep children rear-facing as long as possible until they reach the upper weight or height limit of their rear-facing convertible seat. This will usually be around 30-35 pounds.
- Once children outgrow the upper weight or height limit of their rear-facing convertible seats, they can ride in a forward-facing child safety seat.
- Children should use a forward-facing child safety seat until they reach the maximum weight (usually 40-65 lbs.) or height for the harness.
- Children should ride in a booster seat until age 8 or older unless they are 4'9" tall.
- Move children to adult lap/shoulder belts when they are at least 4' 9" tall (which usually happens between ages 8 and 12) and vehicle safety belts fit properly.
- For all children under age 13, the back seat is the safest place.

Consulting an expert can be critical to ensure that children are secured in the safest manner possible. Parents and caregivers can visit the auto club's website www.AAA.com and click on the Traffic Safety Initiatives link for additional information on child safety seats and resources for finding a certified technician to inspect their child's safety seat and provide hands-on advice and instruction.

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Come join us this Saturday, September 22, 2012 at the Lowe's located 2403 Virginia Beach Boulevard in Virginia Beach, AAA Tidewater Virginia will be joining community partners for a child safety seat check event from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM.

As part of North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit AAA.com and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATWnews](https://twitter.com/AAATWnews).

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