

MEDIA RELEASE

Learn more about child passenger safety

Burnaby, B.C. / June 10, 2010 - June is the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation's Child Passenger Safety Month. This is a good opportunity for parents and caregivers to refresh their knowledge about keeping children safe in vehicles.

In British Columbia there are laws and safety guidelines for children riding in a vehicle. All drivers are responsible for transporting all children in a secure age- and weight-appropriate child car seat or booster seat until their 9th birthday or 145 centimeters (4' 9") in height.

If you are the adult responsible for transporting a child in a vehicle, select a child car seat that is appropriate for the child's age and weight; meets Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards – look for the CMVSS label on the seat; fits the vehicle and can be installed correctly; and is easy to use. The car seat manufacturer's instructions and the vehicle's owner's manual provide helpful information with this.

The foundation also warns, that while Cross border shopping in the U.S. may be cheap and convenient, when it comes to buying a car seat or booster seat for use in Canada it is illegal. A child seat bought in the U.S., or any other country for that matter, is not legal for use in Canada. It will not carry the CMVSS label and does not comply with Canadian standards.

It is also important to know that there are four car seat stages that children grow through in their first nine years, and it is fundamental to choose the car seat that is best for the child.

From their first ride home to at least one year and 9 kg (20 pounds), a child must be restrained in a rear-facing car seat. After one year and 20 pounds to 18 kg (40 pounds) the child can ride in a forward-facing child seat.

Stage three is when the child has outgrown a forward-facing car-seat and is at least 18 kg (40 pounds). This stage is when the child requires a booster seat. The booster seat lifts the child up so that the seat belt fits correctly.

At stage four, the child is at least 9 years old, or at least 145 cm (4' 9") tall, and at the appropriate size for a seat belt.

Marg Deibert, manager of the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation's Child Passenger Safety program stresses the importance of child car seat safety.

"I would like to re-enforce that if you are transporting children, on a long trip or short, you must ensure that every child in the vehicle is correctly secured in an appropriate child or booster seat," she says, adding, "It is also the parent or caregiver's responsibility to be aware of best practices regarding transporting children."

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation encourages parents with questions to call 1-877-247-5551 to speak to a certified child passenger safety educator, or visit the child passenger safety website ChildSeatInfo.ca.

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About BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. For more information visit www.BCAATSF.ca or call 604-298-5107.

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For further information, contact:

Lennea Durant

Media Relations

BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation

Tel: 604-875-1182

E-mail: lenneadurant@shaw.ca