



NEWS

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ILLINOIS STATE POLICE DISTRICT 15 AND ILLINOIS TOLLWAY SPONSOR 2010 CHILD SAFETY SEAT INSPECTIONS

Free Child Safety Seat Inspections and Installation Assistance Helps Keep Kids Safe, Parents Informed

DOWNERS GROVE, III. – Illinois State Police District 15 and the Illinois Tollway are helping parents and caregivers drive worry free by teaming up again to host free Child Safety Seat Inspection Events throughout Northern Illinois. This year's schedule includes special events at Illinois Tollway Oases in advance of the major summer holidays, as well as additional events with partners including AAA, Pioneer Press and other local organizations. As in past years, Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians will inspect and install child safety seats, and help drivers stay up to date with the latest safety seat information and educational materials.

"Better road trips begin with safety," said Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "Seat belts and safety seats for children save countless lives each year. Our law enforcement partners on the Illinois Tollway know this better than anyone, and that's why we are committed to enforcing seat belt laws and working to educate the public on how to properly secure their children to make every trip a safe trip."

Safety Seat Events are quick, easy and can make a big difference. Properly installed safety seats not only eliminate a potential distraction for drivers, but also significantly reduce the risk of injury or greater tragedy for children in the event of an accident. And yet, 80 percent of child safety seats in Illinois are installed improperly. The events also offer a convenient way for drivers to make sure they comply with Illinois law, which requires that whenever a person is

transporting a child under age 8, the person is responsible for properly securing the child in an appropriate child restraint system.

“District 15 is committed to ensuring safety for drivers and young passengers on the Illinois Tollway. Even small errors can make the difference in whether a child is injured in a car accident,” said District 15 Commander John Jesernik. “Some of the more common problems our inspectors pinpoint include too much slack in harness straps, not properly anchoring the car seat, improper seat size for the child’s weight and the need for, or use of, booster seats for older children.”

Child Safety Seat Inspection Events

In 2009, the Tollway and District 15 successfully teamed up to host nearly two dozen safety seat events, inspecting more than 850 child safety seats and replacing 20 seats that were damaged or outdated. The overwhelmingly positive response prompted the Tollway and District 15 to continue efforts in 2010 to help keep kids safe and educate the public on how to properly secure their children.

The 2010 Child Safety Seat Inspection Events will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at select Illinois Tollway Oases on weekdays in advance of Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day holidays. In addition, safety seat inspections will be offered during the Illinois Tollway’s annual Family Safety Fair in Downers Grove on July 17 and National Seat Check Saturday on September 25. Additional 2010 Child Safety Seat Inspection Event dates, locations, directions and event details are listed on the Tollway Web site www.illinoistollway.com. Dates are available for local organizations and communities that would like to host events in partnership with District 15 and the Tollway.

To participate in the event, bring your child safety seats, children and the vehicle in which the child safety seats will be installed. Information on recalls and recall detection, correct positioning, correct sizing to protect the child most effectively, plus additional safety information and resources will be offered at these events.

Child Safety Seat Basics

The safest place for infants, toddlers, and young children to ride is in the back seat with the appropriate child safety seat for their age and size. The Child Passenger Protection Act was established to protect the health and safety of children through the proper use of approved child restraint systems.

Infants should ride rear facing until at least 20 pounds and 12 months of age, longer if possible to protect their developing muscles and bones. Rear-facing child safety seats protect the growing babies' head, neck and back in a crash. Toddlers and young children up to 4 years old should ride in a child safety seat with an internal harness until they reach the maximum harness limit of up to 40 pounds.

A booster seat is the most effective way to position a safety belt properly on a young child's growing body. Safety belts are designed for adults who are at least 80 pounds and 4 feet 9 inches tall. Until age 8, most children have not developed strong hipbones and their legs and body are too short for the adult safety belt to fit correctly without use of a booster seat.

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 286 miles of interstate tollways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80).

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