

2009 Nat'l Lifesavers Conference Pre- CPS Session On : Manufacturer's Products

Manufacturers' Update

A packed pre-conference session allowed attentive child passenger safety technicians and instructors to hear 12 manufacturers' representatives present the newest in their child restraint technology. Innovative technology features in various child restraint models include but are not limited to:

- new construction methods, such as steel rods in the shell to prevent twisting motion
- additional harness slots
- rebound energy management systems (such as a panel against the seatback to keep a rear-facing CR from rebounding backward)
- flip-up armrests on some boosters to reduce potential for threading the seat belt over instead of under the armrests
- increased side-impact protection
- crash-tested infant rear-facing CR handles in locked upright positions for travel

Interesting and convenient features on various products include:

- quick LATCH release
- improved features for point-of-sale sizing information (Though some retailers want plastic bags, not boxes, meaning less room for information is available on the packaging)
- tether extender
- built in lock-offs to eliminate the need to lock a switchable retractor
- angle indicators that can be viewed from both sides
- folding boosters
- harness indicators which produce an audible "click" to assure locked mode
- model names on labels
- more rigid LATCH options
- no-rethread harnesses
- CR manufacturer-supplied infant inserts to accommodate smaller babies
- LATCH attachment straps with a midway insertion point allowing pivoting to change easily from rear-facing to forward-facing belt paths
- improved LATCH storage
- extra-wide belt paths
- convertibles that fit smaller vehicle
- strollers to accommodate convertibles up to 40 pounds
- color-coded labels to distinguish between rear-facing or forward-facing modes

Note: New preemie and 4-foot 9-inch sized demo dolls used to show correct CR and seat belt fit to parents/caregivers and in child passenger safety classes are available through www.huggableimages.com.

Emphasis from Manufacturers

- Please read and follow all manufacturer instructions.
- Refer to and follow the angle indicators on child restraints.

- Not every child restraint will fit every vehicle, and not every angle will be appropriate for every child.
- Encourage caregivers to use lock-offs when available on child restraints. Lock-offs eliminates the need to place a switchable retractor in the automatic locking mode (ALR) or use another locking mechanism. While using the ALR mode may not affect the child restraint, the manufacturer's instructions should always be followed. If directions permit the handle to be up on an infant-only CR, follow these directions and do not offer personal opinions.
- Advise parents/caregivers to follow the weight limitations on various items that come with some CRs, such as infant inserts and removable head-positioning pads.
- Call the manufacturer's customer service number if in doubt about correct use.

For more information on this session, please visit www.cpsboard.org/techupdate.htm and click on the Summer 2009 issue.