

## Proper Use of Child Safety Seat Restraints

- Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death from accidental injury among children ages 14 and under.
- The total annual cost of deaths and injuries of motor vehicle occupants who are children ages 14 and under in Texas is approximately \$214 million.
- Although safety belts and child restraints are the single most effective tool in reducing deaths and injuries, less than half of children killed in vehicle crashes in Texas were known to be restrained. Minority children are at a greater risk of being unrestrained.
- Misuse and non-use of child restraints remains high, with children ages 5 to 9 having the lowest usage rate, at just 34.9%.
- Research shows that child restraints, when used properly, reduce the risk of fatal injury by up to 71%.
- Most parents think they are using child safety seats correctly, but studies show that an estimated 73% of seats are used incorrectly.

## AgriLife Extension's Response

- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's *Passenger Safety Project* works to reduce childhood deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes by increasing the use of child safety seats across Texas.
- The project conducts the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's 3½-day Child Passenger Safety Technician Course, which trains and certifies technicians to assist parents with child safety seat education.
- Child safety seat checkup events are conducted



primarily in underserved rural areas to educate parents on the correct usage of safety seats.

- The *Passenger Safety Project* has overseen the inspection of more than 25,901 child safety seats in Texas, 99% of which were being used incorrectly or were unsafe or inappropriate for the age and weight of the child.

## Economic Impacts

- Proper use of child safety seats reduces the risk of injury and death, which in turn reduces medical costs, avoids the loss of future earnings, and improves quality of life. For each new child safety seat distributed, economic benefits are estimated at \$2,159 per child age 0 to 4 years and \$2,606 per child age 4 to 7 years. For every misuse of a child safety seat that is corrected, economic benefits are estimated at \$622.
- For the 2,166 safety seats inspected in 2015, the economic benefit is an estimated \$2.9 million. Since the program's inception in 1999, the total economic benefit of the *Passenger Safety Project* is estimated at \$30.3 million.

## Extending Knowledge | Providing Solutions

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