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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Booster Seat Law Effective New Year's Day

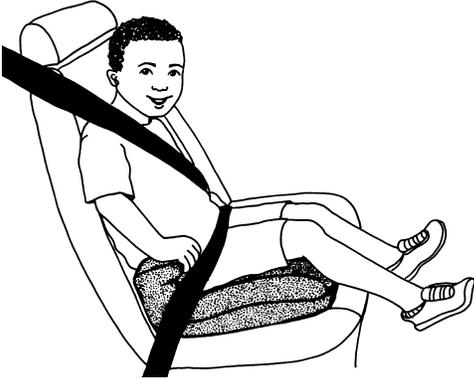
Beginning January 1, 2012, children under age eight must be properly buckled into a booster seat or car seat in the back seat when riding in an automobile. Children age eight or older who are not tall enough for the seat belt to fit properly across the shoulder and pelvis must also ride in a booster or car seat. The previous law required that children remain in a booster seat until the age of six or until they weighed sixty pounds.

“This is an important new law that will save lives and prevent serious injuries among thousands of children. Research shows that keeping children in booster seats until they are taller reduces their risk of death or injury in a car crash by 59%,” stated Dr. Scott McCann, Director of Health Education with the Public Health Department. For each child under 16 who is not properly secured, parents (if in the car) or the driver can be fined over \$475 and get a point on their driving record. Booster seats can be purchased for \$15-20 dollars.

A booster seat raises the child up so the adult-sized seat belt fits the child's body. If the lap belt crosses the child's stomach instead of hip bones, the child risks damage to internal organs and spinal cord injury if involved in a collision (see graphic below). “The seat belt should fit comfortably across the child's upper hips, chest, and shoulder, without touching their face or neck, to function properly and prevent injury. Never let your child put the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back. In a crash, the child could sustain major head and spinal cord injuries. If the child is placing the shoulder belt behind him or her, this may be a sign that a booster is needed,” explained McCann.

Assistance with proper car and booster seat installation is available through the CHP and many fire department stations. For more information about car seats, the new law, or help determining if your child still needs a booster seat, go to www.cdph.ca.gov/vosp or call (805) 681-5270.

Correct Seat Belt Placement with Booster Seat



Incorrect Seat Belt Placement without Booster Seat



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