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Introduction

A Child Passenger Safety Check-up Clinic is an excellent way to educate families about how they can transport their children more safely using safety seats and safety belts. During these clinics, parents and caregivers bring their motor vehicles and children for an evaluation of safety seat integrity, installation concerns, and correct use of safety seats and safety belts. Trained advocates perform the evaluations of all children in the vehicle who are under 13 years old.

To ensure the quality of check up clinics and limit liability concerns, the Minnesota Child Passenger Safety Program has established guidelines for conducting clinics. This guide represents those guidelines and best practice recommendations.
Staffing

Every check up clinic must have specially-trained persons who will do the actual checking of families’ safety seats and safety belts. Every clinic should have at least one Senior Checker. However, it is recommended that there be one Senior Checker for every three check-up teams to serve families more efficiently. The roles and responsibilities for clinic staff are outlined below.

1. Senior Checker
A Senior Checker is the person who has the most training and/or experience installing and inspecting safety seats. This person should be a nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technician or Technician Instructor. Such a designation requires attendance in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Standardized Child Passenger Safety Technical Training. The Senior Checker should always be available to all other team members. Therefore, it is not recommended that the Senior Checker conduct individual checks.

The roles and responsibilities of the Senior Checker include:

- Supervise checker teams to ensure checks are completed accurately and ensure child safety seats are installed and used correctly. The Senior Checker should do a final brief inspection of every vehicle.
- Assist checkers as needed on “gray issues” or difficult situations and help checkers share appropriate information with parents.
- When several options exist, explain “gray issues” and “best practices” to parents to enable them to make their own, informed choices about how best to transport their child(ren) safely.
- Consult with the clinic sponsor on criteria for distributing a new safety seat.
- Ensure overall process is running smoothly.

2. Check-up Team
A Check-up Team consists of a Checker and a Recorder. The Checker must be a Minnesota certified Child Passenger Safety Practitioner, or a nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technician or Technician Instructor. The Recorder position does not require any specialized training. The Recorder position is a good way for those new to the child passenger safety field to gain more experience before becoming a checker.

It is recommended that there be at least 4-5 Check-up Teams. At many locations, especially metro areas, it will probably be necessary to have at least 8-10 Check-up Teams. This will vary based on appointments, or walk in availability. Use your best judgement.

The roles and responsibilities of the Checker include:

- Take primary responsibility for the inspection of safety seats and proper belt use of older children.
- Follow the check-up form and allow time for recorder to complete the form.
- Instruct parents/caregivers on how to install seats and secure child.
- Consult with Senior Checker on “gray issues” or difficult situations.
- Consult with Senior Checker before offering a new seat.
- Consult with Senior Checker for final review of each vehicle.
The roles and responsibility of the **Recorder** include:

- Responsible for reading check-up form to Checker and recording results.
- Locate instructions for safety seats and vehicle owners’ manual.
- Look up safety seat recalls in the recall list.
- Ensure parents/caregivers have received brochures on child passenger safety including air bag safety information.

3. **Additional Staff**
For a successful and smooth running event, the help of additional persons is critical. The positions and their duties are outlined below.

Traffic Flow Coordinators (2):
- Responsible for moving vehicles safely in and out of designated area.
- One should be assigned to the entrance and another to the exit.
- Ensure all occupants are buckled up when moving from line to check area and when exiting. Do not allow participants to hold children on their lap.

Greeters (1-2):
- Welcome the families, explain the process and ensure first part of check-up form is filled out.
- Two is helpful if there is a long line. One can be assigned at the beginning of the line and the other can walk down the line and keep families informed of how long the wait will be.
- **When figuring the wait time, it takes at least 30-45 minutes per safety seat.**
- If the line is long, invite families to exit their vehicles and guide them to the designated area for waiting.

Runners (1-2):
- Assist Check-up Teams as necessary. (Bring new seats to vehicles or other items as requested).
- Locate families in designated waiting area and guide them back to their vehicle when it is their turn.

Hosts (1-2):
- Staff the designated area for waiting.
- Serve refreshments and distribute brochures, etc.

Child Care Providers (3-4):
- Ensure safety of children when out of their vehicle. Direct stray children back to driver or designated waiting area.
- Entertain and supervise children in designated waiting area.
Location and Instructions for Setting Up

When selecting a location consider the following:
- Is it easy to find?
- Is it near or at a place where families frequently visit?
- Is it away from any highly busy streets that would make pulling into difficult or even dangerous?
- Is there ample space to set up the event?

Check-up Clinics can be held indoors or outdoors. Indoors is sometimes preferred depending on the time of year and weather conditions. An ideal location for indoors is a service garage with drive-through bays either at a car dealership or auto care shop. The bays serve as the check up lanes and usually there is a nice designated waiting area. Another facility that might have drive-through bays is the fire department. There is less equipment needed to set up an event when this type of location is used.

1. Setting up an indoor location.
   - Designate where the vehicles will wait in line. The use of traffic cones may be helpful.
   - If using a dealership service area where individual bays are not available, determine where you will park each vehicle for inspection. The use of traffic cones may be helpful.
   - Determine who will drive the vehicles in the bays, either the employees of the garage or the vehicle owner.
   - Ensure there are no obstacles or safety hazards in the bay areas.
   - Have a table accessible to each Check Up Team. Putting one between lanes works best. This is used for materials such as the safety seat instruction books, locking clips, etc.
   - Designate an area for new safety seats and old or unsafe collected seats.
   - Designate waiting area for families. Have tables in waiting area for refreshments and brochures.
   - Avoid having to drive vehicles in reverse. Ideally the vehicles will enter in one side and exit out the other side of the bay.
For an outdoor location, a shopping center, school or daycare parking lot is an ideal location. Especially if there are stores near by that carry baby and child care products. Such a store might even be interested in partnering with you for the clinic, giving you additional avenues of promotion. Talk to the managers of these stores in your area first to see if such a location is possible. If you need a special permit or other form, be sure to file it promptly.

2. Setting up an outdoor location.
   - Set up in a parking lot or other controllable site out of the flow of traffic.
   - Rope or tape off area to create a contained “safe” zone.
   - If available, use grocery carts (upturned) to help define area and wrap with tape/rope
   - Set up enter and exit signs.
   - Use traffic cones to funnel traffic in and out of “safe” zone
   - Use traffic cones to delineate check lanes.
   - Have a table accessible to each Check Up Team. Putting one between lanes works best. This is used for materials such as the safety seat instruction books, locking clips, etc.
   - Each team will also be responsible for guiding the vehicle into check lane and guiding the car to the exit coordinator.
   - Designate an area for new safety seats and old or unsafe collected seats.
   - Rope or tape off a designated "safe" area for waiting families. Use a tent if possible. Have tables in waiting area for refreshments and brochures.
   - Avoid having to drive vehicles in reverse. They should drive in one end of the lane and out the other.
   - Determine how a vehicle will be allowed to safely get out of line if the family does not want to wait any longer.

**Important:** Be sure the driver has put the vehicle in park and turned off the engine before proceeding with the check up.
**Additional Recommendations**

- New safety seats should be available to replace any seats that are unsafe, too old, have a recall that cannot be repaired or fit very poorly in the participant's vehicle. **No child should have to leave without a safe, properly secured restraint. The goal is for children to leave safer than when they arrived.** Ask the participant to leave the unsafe seat behind. Make sure it is destroyed or marked it carefully for display/teaching purposes only. Safety seats, including boosters, should also be available to provide to children who come without a seat.

These seats could be given to families, a donation could be suggested or the seats families can be asked for replacement cost of the seat. Contact the Minnesota Child Passenger Safety Program for assistance with purchasing low cost safety seats.

If asking for a donation, include a pre-addressed envelope with a seat if the family cannot donate at that time. If seats are given away, a preaddressed, stamped "thank you" postcard could be included with each seat. The family can sign it and send it to the agency or business that provided the free seats.

Conducting a clinic at a store that sells new safety seats allows for easy access for those who can afford to buy a new one to immediately replace their unsafe seat or seat that doesn’t fit in their vehicle.

- Keep control of the occupants of the vehicle, especially small children. Do not allow them to wander away from the vehicle and driver/parent.

- It is always better to have the occupants wait in line than to attempt to help them in an unsafe area. Delivering refreshments and "goodie" bags to vehicles may be one way to keep children happy while waiting in the car. It is also understandable on very hot or very cold days, or if there are long lines to want to get out of the vehicle.

- Consider designating some or all of your check lanes by appointment only. Advertise as such and designate a place to call for appointments. If conducting the clinic at a day care center, post a sign up sheet in the main lobby. Appointments should allow for 30 to 45 minutes per child under 13. This would cut down on the waiting time.

- Never place your hand in the vehicle where you can't see. If the safety belts are buried in the vehicle seat, have the owner get them out.

**Safety should be the number one priority for staff and participant.**
**Tools Needed**

The following tools are a must for a successful event. Tools marked with an * are available from the Minnesota Child Passenger Safety Program.

- Manufacturers’ Instructions for child safety seats*
- Child Safety Seat Identification Guide*
- Child Safety Seat Recall lists*
- Check Up forms*
- Locking clips*
- Child Passenger Safety educational brochures*
- Clipboards, pens/pencils (one for each recorder and greeter)
- Traffic cones (30-60 depending on how many lanes you will have)
- Police tape or rope to designate “safe” areas
- Barricades (helpful in blocking off large areas)
- Exit, Enter and promotional signs
- Tables (one per two lanes and at least two extra)
- New child safety seats (convertible and booster) to replace any seats that are unsafe, too old, have a recall that cannot be repaired or fit very poorly in the participant's vehicle or for children who arrive with no seat.
- Towels, or foam swim "noodles"
  Have plenty of towels, and "noodles" to use to help properly position a rear-facing child safety seat at the correct angle.
- Slip guard for rugs, or rubber shelving
  Works well for slippery vehicle seat surfaces to secure the seat.
- Wet Ones handiwipes or similar product
- Trash cans

Some optional tools that are nice to have include:

- Tent(s)
  Use to cover the lanes and reduce the Check Up Teams' and other volunteers' sun or rain exposure. They can also be used for the designated waiting area.
- Chalk, fabric marking pen, masking tape or sticky dots
  Use to mark the belt for placement of the locking clip.
- Large heavy-duty binder clips
  Use to hold the belt webbing out at the end of the retractor.
- Bungee cords or commercial “belt threaders,”
  To assist in making it easier to thread the vehicle belt through the back of a forward-facing child safety seat. The hook on the end of a bungee cord works as well as a commercial "belt threader" and are less likely to break.
- Hemostat(s)
  For pulling the harness straps through the back of the child safety seat when they need adjusting.
- Rubber gloves (may be necessary if a safety seat is very dirty or wet)
**Marketing Your Clinic**

If you partner with a store or shopping center, ask if their public relations or marketing department can help you with publicity ideas. The Minnesota Child Passenger Safety Program will also promote your clinic on its web site and in program mailings.

**Important:** Be sure to include in all your publicity and promotional materials, a request for participants to bring the instruction book for their safety seat and their vehicle owner's manual.

1. **At least six weeks before:**
   - Write a ten-second public service announcement and send it to the public service director of every radio station in your area. Follow up to make sure they got it and ask when they plan to use it.
   - Ask the public service directors of your local television stations if they will do a station identification PSA (a quick announcement that runs when the station does its required station ID twice an hour).
   - Contact any traffic reporters in your area and ask if they will mention the clinic in their traffic reports the day before and the day of the clinic. Follow up by phone a week before the clinic.
   - Send information about the event to the calendar editor of all newspapers in your area. Follow up by phone a few days later.

2. **About two weeks before:**
   - Send a media advisory to the assignment editors of all newspapers, radio stations and television stations in your area. Include all the critical information (who, what, when, where, why) and a contact name and phone number. Follow up a few days later by phone to make sure they received it and encourage them to help you promote the event. Ask them if they would like to send a reporter or photographer to the event.
   - Design a simple, attractive flyer announcing the clinic with all the same information as above. Take it to a quick-copy shop and make copies on bright paper. Ask merchants and shops in your area to post these flyers in their store windows or on customer bulletin boards. Include stores that, people tend to go to frequently (grocery stores, drug stores, convenience stores, and gas stations).
   - Call the day care centers and preschools in your area and ask if they will give flyers to parents. If they say yes, ask how many families attend and drop off copies for each.
   - Also, ask the principals of your area elementary schools if the flyer can be sent home with kindergartners and first graders (many of whom have younger siblings at home).
   - If your local police department owns a portable variable message board, ask if it is possible to borrow the board for the day and have it posted near the clinic location with a simple message such as, “Safety Seat Check Up 1-4 today at Heartland Mall."
   - Ask stores near the clinic site to make announcements on their public address systems before and during the clinic.
   - You should also ask your police department’s community service officer and others with similar duties for additional ideas on how they promote their activities.
CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY CHECK UP CLINIC
Request for Promotion and Support
(For best service, submit this form at least 6 weeks in advance of the scheduled event)

Day ___________ / Date _______________ ADVERTISED Time __________ to ___________

By appointment only or first-come, first-served or both (circle one)

Location:______________________________________________________________________________

Would you like this event posted on the Department of Public Safety website? Yes or No (circle one)

Is this clinic open to the general public or for a specific audience? (circle one) If for a specific audience, please explain:
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Sponsoring Agency:_____________________________________________________________________

Contact Person:_________________________ Phone Number:________________________ Email:_________________________

This is the person and phone number to be listed in promotional materials.

Senior Checker:__________________________ Phone Number:________________________

Is this clinic part of a CPS training course? [ ] Yes [ ] No If yes, what are the course dates:_________

Please send the support materials indicated for the above-mentioned Check Up Event to:
Name:____________________________________________________________________________________

Address (No PO boxes):_____________________________________________________________________

The materials will be sent 1 week before the scheduled event.

[ ] CPS Check Up forms (25) or (50) [ ] Buckle Up Kids! – English (25) or (50)
[ ] Updated Recall Lists (5) [ ] Buckle Up Kids! – Spanish (25) or (50)
[ ] Child Safety Seat ID & Instruction Guide (CD) [ ] Don’t Skip a Step English (25) or (50)
[ ] LATCH Manual (1) [ ] Don’t Skip a Step – Spanish (25) or (50)
[ ] Locking Clips (5) [ ] Don’t Skip a Step – Somali (25) or (50)
[ ] Air Bag Safety flyer (25) or (50)

On behalf of ________________________________________________ (agency), I certify that all Checkers at this event are current in their certification and the Senior Checker is a nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technician in good standing.

Signed:_________________________________________ Date:_____________________

Print name:_________________________________________ Phone:_____________________

Please return completed form to:
MN DPS OTS – Attention Shannon Ryder
445 Minnesota Street Suite 150
St. Paul, MN 55101
Shannon.Ryder@state.mn.us fax: 651-297-4844

For office use: Date Received _____ Date Materials Sent _____ Date Posted _________
CAR SEAT CLINIC TOTALS
Please Return within 2 weeks of date of the Clinic

Clinic Host ________________________________

Location/ County ________________________________

Date of Clinic ________________________________

Name and Tech # of Senior Checker ______________ tech # ______

Name of person filling out this report if different from the senior checker ______________

Information is correct to the best of my knowledge

Signature ________________________________

Number of seats inspected ________

Number of seats with NO misuse ________

Number of seats arrived UNINSTALLED _____________

Number of seats with documented MIS USE _____________

Number of seats distributed from clinic host ________

Please return completed form to:
MN DPS OTS – Attention Shannon Ryder
445 Minnesota Street Suite 150
St. Paul, MN 55101
Shannon.Ryder@state.mn.us fax: 651-297-4844