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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OHS Coordinates Child Safety Seat Checks and Enforcement for National Child Passenger Safety Week (Feb 11 – 17)

Dover – Approximately 7,500 lives have been saved by the proper use of child restraints during the past 20 years according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Yet, motor vehicle crashes still remain the number one killer of children ages 4 to 14 in America. The reason? Too often it is the improper use or non-use of child safety seats and booster seats.

That's why the Delaware Office of Highway Safety is joining with NHTSA and state child passenger advocates nationwide to observe National Child Passenger Safety Week (Feb. 11-17). CPS Week is dedicated to promoting the correct and consistent use of child safety seats. Planned activities for the week include community car seat check events, booster seat distributions to identified families, and enforcement of the state's child restraint law.

OHS and highway safety offices nationwide will kick off CPS Week on Sunday, February 11, with the first-ever National Seat Check Sunday. The event will be held at the Hispanic Church of God in Seaford from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. and will include a "blessing of the car seats" by the church's minister at 2:30 p.m. Certified child passenger safety technicians will be available to provide parents with one on one assistance and help them with correct installation techniques.

The Delaware Office of Highway Safety is holding several more child safety seat check events during National CPS Week to make sure children are secured properly and in the appropriate seat. Stop by any of the following locations and have your child's car seat inspected by a nationally certified technician. These inspections are free and open to the public, no appointments are necessary.

1) Sunday February 11th (Seat Check Sunday) – 2 p.m. – 4 p.m., Hispanic Church of God, Seaford

- 2) Tuesday February 13th – 2 p.m. – 5 p.m., DAFB fire station for DAFB personnel, staff and their families only.
- 3) Thursday February 15th – 2 p.m. – 6 p.m., CP Diver, Rt. 1 North in Lewes across from Home Depot
- 4) Friday February 16th – 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Concordville Nissan/Subaru, Rt. 202 Concordville, PA just over DE line, sponsored by SAFE KIDS DE

OHS is also working with a Head Start center in Wilmington and an elementary school in Laurel to provide booster seats, along with education and installation assistance to pre-identified low income families at each site. The booster seats are being provided by SAFE KIDS Delaware, Risk Watch and the Think First – Boost ‘Em Up project. While 98 percent of America’s infants and 93 percent of children ages 1 to 3 are regularly restrained, not enough children ages 4 through 7 are restrained properly for their size and age. Only 10 to 20 percent of children ages 4 through 7 who should be using booster seats to protect them are actually in them. But children ages 4 to 8 who are placed in booster seats are 59 percent less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a seat belt, according to a study by Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

In addition to these educational activities, 13 state and local police agencies will conduct child restraint checkpoints and roving patrols looking for drivers who fail to restrain children riding with them in accordance with Delaware law. The law states that all children up through age 6 or 60 pounds in weight must be properly secured in a child safety seat. All children ages 7 or 60 pounds in weight up to age 16 must be properly secured in a seat belt. And no child under age 12 or 5’5” may sit in the front seat when the vehicle is equipped with an airbag in front of the passenger seating position. Violations will result in a \$25.00 citation, plus court fees.

Participating police agencies include Clayton Police, Delaware State Police, Dover Police, Georgetown Police, Felton Police, Laurel Police, New Castle City Police, New Castle County Police, Newport Police, Ocean View Police, Selbyville Police, Seaford Police and Wyoming Police.

For information on National Child Passenger Safety Week events including car seat check events, the location of car seat Fitting Stations in Delaware, scheduled enforcement activities and tips parents can use visit the OHS website at www.state.de.us/highway and click on the CPS Week button or www.boosterseat.gov. In 2006, OHS Fitting Station Coordinators inspected and helped re-install 4,206 child safety seats.

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