FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September

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Southern Maryland Law Enforcement Agencies and Partners to Hold ‘Seat Check’ Events

Certified technicians will help parents and caregivers check car seats for proper installation

Law enforcement agencies from Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s Counties, along with Maryland State Police and in partnership with local advocates announced today they will conduct a “National Seat Check” event as part of Child Passenger Safety Week. The event will be held Sept. 16-22 and is free to the public.

Certified child passenger safety technicians will be on hand to check car seats for proper installation and advise parents and caregivers how to choose the right car seats and install them properly in their vehicles.

As of October 1, 2012, the child passenger safety laws will no longer include a weight limit, but will require all children up to age 8 to be restrained in a proper child safety seat – to include booster seats. Best practice information will be provided. These practices include rear-facing seats over an extended time for maximum benefit of the head, neck and spine protection and using a 5 point harness system for longer periods prior to moving into a booster seat.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 13. Crash data from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for 2010 shows that about 2 children aged 12 or younger were killed and 325 were injured each day in passenger vehicles.

“You can never predict or control what other drivers might do or how the weather might change the safety of a roadway,” said Captain Michael Spaulding, Maryland State Police – Southern Troop Commander.
“The best way to protect your kids is to put them in the right car seats for their age and size and use those seats correctly on every trip, every time. By attending these car seat events, parents and caregivers can be sure their kids are riding as safely as possible,” added Sheriff Tim Cameron of the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office.

“As officers, and first responders, we urge parents to follow the NHTSA’s car seat recommendations which recommend parents and caregivers keep children in proper car restraints in accordance with manufacturer instructions before moving them to the next level,” said Sheriff Rex W. Coffey of the Charles County Sheriff’s Office.

As a final reminder for maximum safety, a parent or caregiver should have the car seat installation inspected by a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician to ensure their children are in the right seats for their age and size. Children 12 and under should always ride in the back seat.

The first checkpoint was held Monday, September 17th, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. in partnership with Medstar St. Mary’s Hospital at the back parking lot of the new Outpatient Pavilion

Upcoming FREE child safety seat check is scheduled for:

- Sunday, September 23rd, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in partnership with the Waldorf Jaycees in the Waldorf Jaycees building parking lot at the corner of Route 301 and Route 5 in Waldorf;

Remember:

- Select a car seat based on your child’s age and size, choose a seat that fits in your vehicle, and use it on every trip, every time.
- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer’s instructions; read the vehicle owner’s manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or LATCH system; and check height and weight limits.
- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer’s height and weight requirements.
- Keep your child in the back seat at least through age 12.

For more information on car seat safety, Child Passenger Safety Week and to find other seat check events, visit [www.safercar.gov/therightseat](http://www.safercar.gov/therightseat).