

SAFE RIDERS

**IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE
FOR DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM PARTNERS**



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

Texas Department of State Health Services

Safe Riders

Child Passenger Safety Education and Training Program

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Program Implementation Guide Introduction

About This Guide

This guide replaces the Safe Riders program manual and provides an overview of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)' Safe Riders protocols and guidelines. Distribution program partners implementing the Safe Riders program in local Texas communities must adhere to operating protocols within this guide.

How To Use This Guide

As a distribution partner of DSHS' Safe Riders program, this guide can help you implement your local child passenger safety (CPS) program. It includes guidelines and strategies for providing CPS education and distributing child safety seats.

Please review the entire guide with program staff before beginning your program to understand how to properly operate as a Safe Riders distribution site. Also review applicable sections with specific team members as needed to ensure you set expectations for training, implementation, documentation, tracking, and communication.

Overview

Motor vehicle traffic crashes are a leading cause of death among children. In 2019, an average of three children were killed and an estimated 502 were injured in traffic crashes every day in the U.S., according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).¹ Although child safety seats are proven to be effective in reducing the risk of serious and fatal injuries by 54-71%, it is estimated that 46% of seats are being misused, which could reduce their effectiveness.²

Safe Riders is dedicated to preventing deaths and reducing motor vehicle crash injuries to children. Funded by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to coordinate and manage a statewide distribution, education, and training program, Safe Riders has been successfully implemented for more than 25 years. Safe Riders continues to prioritize CPS safety efforts in Texas.

¹ National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2021, May). Children: 2019 data. (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 813 122). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

² U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Traffic Safety Facts Research Note. June 2015. DOT HS 812 157.

The program supports child safety seat education and distribution in partnership with community organizations and provides child safety seats to Texas families in financial need. During the past 10 years, Safe Riders has distributed more than 30,000 child safety seats to families. In addition, the program supports CPS technicians in Texas by offering recertification opportunities, trainings, and technical assistance.

Evidence-based Strategies

Education and distribution programs are strongly recommended to focus on parents and caregivers, who cannot afford a car seat or need help understanding the importance of using child safety seats. Education about car seats increases child safety seat use when implemented (1) in a range of settings; (2) in a variety of population subgroups; and (3) when providing a free car seat.³ The Texas child passenger safety law with enhanced and high visibility enforcement campaigns demonstrate to be effective in reducing injury and increasing child safety seat use. Programmatically, and in collaboration with law enforcement efforts, strategies such as mobile and car seat inspection stations, and communications and outreach campaigns have also proven to be effective child passenger safety strategies.^{4,5,6}

Safe Riders is designed as a community-based intervention that supports evidence-based interventions in the community. Community-based interventions that use a multi-faceted approach have proven to be effective in reducing the risk and incidence of injury as well as for long-term sustainability of programming.^{7,8}

³ Motor Vehicle-Related Injury Prevention: Use of Child Safety Seats, Distribution and Education Programs. <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/sites/default/files/assets/MVOI-ChildSeats-Distribution-Programs.pdf>. Accessed online on October 2021.

⁴ Evidence-Based Strategies and Readings for Child Safety CoIIN. <https://www.childrensafetynetwork.org/sites/default/files/Evidence-Based%20Strategies%20and%20Readings%20for%20CS%20CoIIN.pdf>. Accessed online on October 2021.

⁵ Countermeasures that work https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2021-09/15100_Countermeasures10th_080621_v5_tag.pdf. Accessed online on October 2021.

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Transportation Safety, What Works: Strategies to Increase Car Seat and Booster Seat Use. https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/child_passenger_safety/strategies.html. Accessed online on October 2021.

⁷ Istre GR, McCoy MA, Womack KN, Fanning L, Dekat L, Stowe M. Increasing the use of child restraints in motor vehicles in a Hispanic neighborhood. *Am J Public Health*. 2002;92(7):1096-1099. doi:10.2105/ajph.92.7.1096

⁸ Nilsen P. (2006). The theory of community-based health and safety programs: a critical examination. *Injury prevention: journal of the International Society for Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention*, 12(3), 140–145. <https://doi.org/10.1136/ip.2005.011239>

Safe Riders Distribution Program Goal and Objectives

Mission

The mission of Safe Riders is to coordinate a statewide, culturally competent, community-based child passenger safety education and child safety seat distribution program using evidence-based, primary prevention practices to help reduce the number of motor vehicle crash (MVC) injuries and fatalities among children.

Goals

1. Reduce the number of unrestrained children riding in motor vehicles in Texas.
 - a. Objective 1: Provide child passenger safety education to communities through certified CPS technicians
 - b. Objective 2: Provide free seats to families in financial need
 - c. Objective 3: Work with local community stakeholders to establish education and car seat distribution programs

2. Serve as an education and training resource for distribution site partners to build capacity and sustainability of child passenger safety programs and services in Texas.
 - a. Objective 1: Provide an implementation guide
 - b. Objective 2: Provide training for distribution partners and CPS technicians

3. Broaden the reach of Safe Riders to additional areas in Texas by using a public health approach to identify and address disparities in child passenger safety.
 - a. Objective 1: Use data to direct initiatives
 - b. Objective 2: Work with community stakeholders to provide child passenger safety services in areas of need

Chapter 1: ELIGIBILITY and COMMITMENT

Program Eligibility and Partners

Texas agencies and organizations that have at least one designated, trained staff and are willing to provide CPS education in their community are eligible to apply to be a Safe Riders child safety seat distribution site. Safe Riders reviews application from hospitals, police and fire departments, and non-profit organizations. Safe Riders sites are in urban and rural areas of Texas and address the unique needs of their community. Following review, Safe Riders will approve or deny whether an applicant is able to operate as a Safe Riders distribution site.

Safe Riders distribution partner organizations must demonstrate capacity and commitment to the following:

1. **Frequency and Scope of Services** – The program must be offered at least twice a month and open to the public, including families experiencing financial hardship.
2. **Capacity and Training** - Maintain certified CPS technicians on staff and support recertification of technicians. In addition, partner site staff must attend “mandatory” trainings specific to distribution partners held by Safe Riders program staff.
3. **Program Logistics** – Establish and maintain effective coordination of program logistics (e.g., scheduling events, returning calls and messages, reporting, providing customer service, ordering, maintaining inventory, etc.).
4. **Program promotion and outreach** – Distribution sites must effectively, strategically, and consistently promote the program to community stakeholders. Sites must continuously seek to identify new and innovative ways to promote their program services in their local community.
5. **Education and distribution** - Child safety seats should be distributed to families in financial need. Services offered must be open to the public and distribution must be accompanied with an educational component. Sites must demonstrate a wide scope of services in child passenger safety.

Safe Riders expects partners to implement the Safe Riders program as outlined in this guide. Each section above will be covered in more detail below and in the chapters ahead. Factors considered when accepting program partners include demonstrated capacity, experience, location, scope of service, leadership support, and involvement in the community.

Frequency and Scope of Services

Distribution site partners must operate the Safe Riders program and be open to the public. The distribution site may not operate as a client-based program for a specific agency or organization. Distribution site partners must make child passenger safety a primary injury prevention topic for education. Each distribution site must offer education with child passenger safety seat distribution services at least twice per month. Distribution site partners must implement Safe Riders within their selected scope of practice for each target area (e.g., geographically by region, county(ies), zip code(s), etc.) selected in the Safe Riders application and agreement, as outlined in this Implementation Guide.

Capacity and Training

Safe Riders requires that each distribution site have a designated program lead and two certified CPS technicians on staff. The lead will manage and coordinate Safe Riders and its various components. Safe Riders requires that the educators providing child passenger safety education and distribution services be nationally certified CPS technicians by [Safe Kids Worldwide](#). Technicians are also expected to help coordinate and complete program activities. It is the distribution site's responsibility to support recertifying program technicians. Technicians are required to attend all mandatory trainings. Safe Riders will announce mandatory meeting dates and times to distribution partners in advance.

Distribution sites may collaborate with CPS technicians in the community, not on staff, to assist in the education of families during inspection station events or classes. It is the responsibility of the distribution program contacts to ensure that volunteer technicians follow all Safe Riders guidelines as outlined in this Guide. The distribution site is responsible for all aspects of education and distribution of car seats. Providing quality child passenger safety services to families is a priority. CPS technicians that will be assisting in educating families should have a minimum of one-year experience in educating families.

Distribution sites are required to keep CPS technicians on staff certified. If sites lose a CPS technician on staff, it will need to be communicated as soon as possible to Safe Riders. In this instance, sites will be allowed to continue providing services for six months or until a newly certified technician is on staff. A plan of action will need to be submitted to address the shortage in staff, if more than six months will be needed.

Logistics – Distribution partner sites must have the capacity and experience necessary to effectively coordinate all the program logistics. Logistics include but are not limited to timely reporting every month to Safe Riders, returning phone calls, scheduling appointments, hosting classes, ordering car seats from Safe Riders for distribution, maintaining car seat inventory, attending trainings, maintaining CPS technician certification(s), etc. It is also important for distribution site staff to communicate challenges and needs for technical assistance.

Promotion and Outreach – Distribution sites must work collaboratively with local stakeholders to promote the services offered. Staff should identify and use various ways to promote services, such as using flyers, websites and social media posts, partnering with health care stakeholders, schools, daycares, churches, etc., to share information about your distribution classes or events. If distribution sites need assistance with facilitating promotion and outreach, notify Safe Riders as soon as possible.

Organizations that receive direct funding from TxDOT for child safety seats may be eligible to participate in the program if efforts through Safe Riders are clearly defined and separate from their other TxDOT funded efforts.

Commitment

Safe Riders staff is committed to working with distribution site partners to implement education and distribution activities. Safe Riders can help build partnerships and support the sustainability of CPS technicians and program efforts. Safe Riders will communicate any program updates or changes via email and will request to meet when needed.

Distribution site partners are expected to submit monthly reports, attend all required trainings and meetings, and communicate regularly with Safe Riders, such as requesting help when needed, addressing program challenges, or discussing any other program needs. All distribution site partners must sign an Agreement to the Terms and Conditions of the program as part of the application.

Chapter 2: IMPLEMENTATION

Child Safety Seat Education and Distribution Guidelines

Safe Riders must provide distribution sites with up-to-date CPS information, resources, and training. Safe Riders supports distribution services in local communities and helps sustain national certification status of CPS technicians by providing trainings and technical assistance as needed. Distribution sites have flexibility to conduct education classes and distribute car seats in a way that best meets their community's and organization's needs.

Education and Distribution Options

Only certified CPS technicians can provide car seat education to families. Distribution sites can offer virtual or in-person education, per DSHS' Safe Riders Protocols (Appendix A). Appendix B includes an education training outline for distribution sites to use. A **video** is available for distribution sites to use as a tool to educate families. Parents or caregivers will receive a child safety seat after learning how to properly use it at a distribution site event. To be most time-efficient, Safe Riders recommends providing education as a scheduled event for multiple families instead of one-on-one education. One-on-one education sessions, if needed, should be reserved for special circumstances or considerations, such as serving a family with a child with a special health care needs, or serving a family with more than two children.

Education can be offered:

1. **In-person** – These are regularly scheduled classes (e.g., same day, time, location, and frequency) that are consistently held each month; families must make an appointment to attend.
 - a. In-person classroom education with distribution (does not include installing car seats)
 - b. In-person classroom education with car seat distribution and installation help

Sites should distribute car seats immediately after in-person classes.

2. **Virtual** – These are trainings held on a virtual platform (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.). Families must make a separate appointment to pick up a car seat within one week of receiving CPS education.
 - a. Virtual education and no-contact car seat distribution
 - b. Virtual education with car seat installation help

3. **Inspection station** – Sites may offer CPS education, and car seat distribution and installation in the family vehicle. These are *regularly* scheduled inspections (e.g., same day, time, location, and frequency) that are consistently held each month; families must make an appointment to attend. Only certified CPS technicians can install car seats.

Distribution sites must provide CPS education and distribute car seats at least twice monthly. Safe Riders requires two CPS technicians per distribution site to offer services and recommends a 5:1 ratio for classes—five attendees for every one technician.

Distribution sites are required to collect a list of attendees for proof of participation at each in-person and virtual education session. For in-person events, distribution sites should collect a sign-in sheet, and for virtual events, sites should download an attendee list from the platform used (i.e. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.). Distribution sites must collect a completed checklist form for each family that visits an inspection station and keep for your records and reporting.

Safe Riders recommends that CPS technicians assist with car seat installation inside a family’s vehicle. However, Safe Riders understands capacity to do so may be limited and therefore this is not a requirement. This decision is at the discretion of each distribution site.

If CPS technicians do not help with installation in the family’s vehicle, sites should refer the family to a local inspection station or checkup event to ensure the car seat is properly installed.

Education with Distribution at an Inspection Station

Distribution sites may offer regularly scheduled inspection stations. This option is for sites that have capacity and have experienced technicians proficient in installing car seats. Only certified CPS technicians can provide education and install car seats.

Guidelines to follow when providing this community service:

1. At least two technicians are present to hold an inspection station.
2. Appointments need to be scheduled in advance.
3. Appointments need to be scheduled far enough apart to thoroughly educate.
 - 1 child = 30 minutes
 - 2 children = 45 minutes
 - 3 or more children = 1 hour

4. Certified technicians educating families on their own (have their own appointments) at an inspection station must have at least two of experience in doing so. Novice technicians (< 2 years' experience) can assist under the leadership of an experienced technician.

Additional Implementation Guidelines to Follow

- All classes and inspection stations must be open to the public and held by appointment.
- Parents or primary caregivers must receive education to receive a child safety seat.
- Distribution sites do not need to report educational classes where car seats are not distributed.
- Safe Riders' scope does not prioritize education and a child safety seat distribution to a family in the hospital prior to discharge. Distribution site partners are not obligated to cater to these types of requests. For these requests, partners may provide community resources following discharge.
- Child safety seats can be provided to multiple children in a single family but only one seat per child is permitted. Seats can be provided to a child once they outgrow a seat or seat has been damaged.
- Distribution sites should consider keeping a waiting list (that includes no more than 10 people) when registration is full. This can help you fill vacancies when families cancel as well as help to identify opportunities to host additional classes.
- Distribution sites should not schedule Safe Riders classes more than two months in advance.
- Distribution sites should consider over-booking the classes by one or two people to account for no-shows.

Where Education Can Take Place

Safe Riders encourages distribution site partners to host CPS education classes or inspection stations in communities in need and in collaboration with agencies such as fire and police stations, churches, or other community stakeholders. Partners willing to host CPS classes, or inspection stations in the community are still required to host at least one service (class or inspection) at a consistent location every month.

Chapter 3: LOGISTICS

Child Safety Seat Delivery, Storage, and Tracking

Selecting a Storage Site

Safe Riders requires that distribution site partners have a secure storage space large enough to house an allotment of approximately 40-50 child safety seats that will be used for distribution. The storage space must be in a location with controlled or limited access, have security features in place, and be climate-controlled to prevent possible weather or environmental damage (e.g., water, fire, rodents, etc.).

Some distribution sites receive a space donation from churches, schools, or community centers. The ideal place for storing child safety seats is in the same location education classes are offered. An off-site retail storage facility with security features is also a good option. Programs may not store child safety seats at private residences

Child Safety Seat Storing Requirements

- Child safety seats should be kept in the original shipping boxes or removed from the boxes and stacked (this method takes up less space). If the distribution site decides to stack the child safety seats, please keep at least half of the original shipping boxes in case there is a need to ship or move the seats.
- Child safety seats should be clearly and visibly marked, on the shell of the car seat, in permanent ink **“not for sale”** before distributing them to families.

Seat Storing Tip

- When storing boxes and seats, please do not stack boxes or seats too high because it may result in injuries to volunteers or staff.
- While in storage, child safety seats must be rotated to ensure older seats are being used first to avoid seats expiring.

Child Safety Seat Delivery

Safe Riders delivers child safety seats at no cost to distribution sites. Delivery drivers will not unload boxes inside the distribution site’s facility. Distribution sites should plan appropriately and have people available to help move boxes indoors or into the storage

space. Distribution sites may want to consider renting, borrowing, or purchasing a dolly to save time.

Requesting Additional Seats

Distribution sites can submit a request once the site's seat inventory is running low for what is needed in the following month of any type of seat. To request additional child safety seats, distribution site partners need to submit a car seat request form, which is provided by Safe Riders. Distribution sites must be in good standing with monthly reporting and have no outstanding concerns or unresolved issues to receive additional seats. Safe Riders will fill car seat requests based on program inventory and cannot guarantee all requests will be filled.

Safe Riders will work with distribution site partners to determine quantity of child safety seats needed. Delivery of child safety seats takes approximately two weeks.

If there is a change to the delivery address, please notify Safe Riders immediately. If a distribution site provides a change of address after delivery is in route, the shipping company will charge a redirect fee, if applicable, which must be paid by the distribution site.

Once car seat shipment arrives:

1. Before signing for the shipment, distribution sites should count the child safety seats (boxes of seats) to ensure that the order is complete. Usually there are multiple seats per box.
2. Distribution sites should email a summary of the car seats received to distributionreports@dshs.texas.gov.
3. For incomplete orders or damaged child safety seats, please call 1-800-252-8255 and email distributionreports@dshs.texas.gov to report it. Any damaged child safety seats should be immediately removed from the inventory.

After receiving all necessary training and a car seat allotment, distribution sites are expected to begin offering classes within two weeks of the car seat delivery.

Tracking Child Safety Seats

All distribution sites must keep an accurate inventory of the child safety seats and document the number of child safety seats as they are added or removed from the storage area. Distribution sites should choose a method for tracking child safety seat inventories and should collect the following information:

- Date child safety seats were added or removed from storage
- Number and type of child safety seats added or removed from storage
- Name of the person or persons that added or removed child safety seats
- Total number of child safety seats stored in the storage area

Safe Riders requires distribution sites to submit their reports no later than the fifth day of the following month.

Child safety seats distributed through Safe Riders are the property of the state of Texas. Distribution site partners agree to distribute the child safety seats on behalf of Safe Riders. Lost seats or seats that cannot be accounted for must be replaced by the distribution site. Failure to replace missing child safety seats may result in distribution site suspension or removal.

Chapter 4: PROGRAM PROMOTION and REFERRALS

Promotion

For a child safety seat distribution site to be successful, it is necessary to adequately promote the program. Safe Riders will assist by referring eligible families to distribution site partners.

Safe Riders has promotional event flyers in English and Spanish available to distribution site partners. Safe Riders encourages distribution sites to promote the program through local community stakeholders, social media, Safe Kids, and traffic safety coalitions.

Options for using the flyer as a promotional tool include:

- Post the flyer in and around the agency
- Email it to other agencies that refer clients to the agency
- Hand it out to interested families
- Cross-promote when working on other projects or programs (ex. WIC offices)
- Send out a media advisory using the media template provided by Safe Riders
- Post a flyer on social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter)
- Ask to speak about Safe Riders at a local coalition or board meeting
- Promote services within the organization so other staff can refer families to the distribution site program.

Distribution sites are encouraged to continuously seek out new and innovative opportunities to promote the program.

Referrals

Safe Riders' toll-free number is 800-252-8255. For families in need of a car seat, Safe Riders will [determine eligibility](#) and make an appropriate referral to a local distribution site. Safe Riders staff are [certified CPS technicians](#) and available to assist families with any CPS needs.



Distribution sites must have a phone number and a voicemail message that informs families that they are calling a Safe Riders distribution site. Safe Riders recommends that families call a direct line if possible. If the distribution site is unable to have a direct line, the agency should ensure that everyone answering the phone knows the process for inquiries about the Safe Riders distribution program.

The distribution site referral phone number provided to Safe Riders should be the same phone number parents and caregivers will call for services. Distribution sites should respond to families within two to three business days. A parent or caregiver should be the one to call and schedule an appointment and receive the education. Social workers, other family members, and friends of the family may not call the distribution site to make an appointment or attend a class on behalf of the parent or caregiver.

A distribution site should email saferriders@dshs.texas.gov if the site is unable to accept referrals for any given month. This may happen if a class is full or there are changes in class frequency.

Voicemail Communication

The outgoing voice message for any answering service should at least include the following:

- The distribution site's name
- Instructions for what information to include in a voicemail (i.e. name, phone number, and email address)
- *Preferred, but not required for outgoing voice message:*
 - When the caller can expect a return call
 - Include a bilingual outgoing message
 - If applicable, refer callers to a website for more assistance or to make an appointment
- If staff are out-of-office for more than a few days, the distribution site should arrange for calls to be handled regarding the distribution program and let Safe Riders know

Not all parents and caregivers that call are eligible to participate in the Safe Riders program, therefore it is helpful to have other referral options available in the local community that offer car seat inspections for ineligible families.

Making Appointments

Eligible parents and caregivers must schedule an appointment for a Safe Riders class or inspection station. This helps to ensure that distribution site staff are getting accurate child information, that there is enough CPS technician support, and that CPS technicians have and distribute the appropriate child safety seat needed. Distribution sites should use the eligibility screening tool (Appendix C) when scheduling appointments.

When scheduling appointments, distribution sites should advise parents and caregivers that your site will provide a child safety seat for the scheduled child(ren) that have an appointment. Additional children who arrive and do not have an appointment will not be guaranteed a seat and sites should communicate with caregivers in advance about this prior to the family making an appointment.

The distribution site should ensure that distribution site partner staff are familiar with organization and program guidelines for answering phone calls.

When making appointments, distribution partner sites should collect:

- Name of the parent or caregiver
- Name, age, height, and weight of the child
- City and zip code
- Phone number and email address

Partner Communication

The distribution site partner is responsible for communicating any changes to their local program (e.g., staff changes, phone numbers, frequency of services, etc.) to Safe Riders, stakeholders, parents, and caregivers. Doing so helps Safe Riders adequately support distribution site partners and assist with addressing challenges. Similarly, Safe Riders will communicate updates or changes to its program via email or will call the distribution site to schedule a meeting.

Chapter 5: ELIGIBILITY for FAMILIES

Child safety seats are provided at no cost to [low-income families or families experiencing financial hardship](#).

Eligibility Requirements

- Families that communicate financial hardship and are unable to purchase a child safety seat are generally [eligible for a seat](#) unless there are indications otherwise that are clearly apparent (e.g., the parent states they do not need assistance or they just purchased a new seat).
- Someone in the household must have a vehicle or say they need a seat to regularly transport their child (e.g., carpool to school or doctor appointments, etc.).
- One of the child's primary caregivers must register and attend a class to receive a child safety seat. Other family members or caseworker(s) cannot make an appointment or attend class on behalf of the child's primary caregiver.
- Pregnant people may schedule an appointment once they are in their **last trimester**. Do not allow pregnant people to take a class early in pregnancy and return later to pick up the seat.

Chapter 6: OTHER TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Social/Case Workers, Agencies that Transport Children (Ex. Day care centers)

Safe Riders is for parents and caregivers that transport their own children in their own vehicle. Safe Riders is unable to provide child safety seats to agencies or businesses that transport children.

Premature Infants

Generally, Safe Riders does not have rear-facing only child safety seats for distribution to infants born prematurely or weighing less than 5 pounds and less than 19 inches in height. Parents of premature children may consider an alternate local resource, borrow a child safety seat, or purchase an appropriate child safety seat.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that infants born at less than 37 weeks gestation be monitored in a child safety seat by the hospital prior to discharge to check for apnea, bradycardia, or oxygen desaturation. The full AAP policy statement, "Safe Transportation of Newborns at Hospital Discharge", can be found at pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/104/4/986.full.pdf.

Chapter 7: REPORTING and DOCUMENTATION

Each site must submit two monthly reports: a distribution report and an in-kind report. All reports are due to Safe Riders no later than the fifth of the following month by emailing it to DistributionReports@dshs.texas.gov.

Distribution Report

Each distribution site must submit a report of the number of child safety seats and seat types being distributed monthly in classes or inspection stations. Safe Riders uses this report to track each distribution site's progress and also reports this monthly to the Safe Riders grant funder, TxDOT, to help validate each program.

When distribution sites request additional seats, each monthly report will be used to review inventory and confirm the need for more seats. It is extremely important for each distribution site to submit monthly reports accurately and on time to ensure proper coordination and support from Safe Riders. Timely reporting avoids any potential delays in delivering seats to distribution sites when needed.

In-Kind Report

An "In-Kind" report is also due each month. In-kind, as it applies to the Safe Riders grant, is defined as the services, materials, equipment, or labor committed, received, or incurred by the distribution partner organization or staff that has a monetary value (e.g., storage fees, classroom space, staff salary, etc.). Safe Riders is required to collect and report in-kind every month to TxDOT. Safe Riders provides distribution sites with the reporting form that should be used.

Chapter 8: COMPLIANCE

As part of the commitment as a Safe Riders distribution site, DSHS expects that each distribution site complies with all distribution guidelines and requirements and remains in “good standing” as outlined below.

Good Standing Criteria

Safe Riders’ definition criteria of “good standing” requires a distribution site to:

- Submit monthly reports correctly and on time
- Communicate regularly with Safe Riders about distribution site needs and changes (e.g., staff changes, referral changes, etc.)
- Attend required Safe Rider trainings
- Maintain a proper inventory of seats
- Adequately and consistently distribute child safety seats and educate families in need
- Maintain trained CPS technicians on staff

Probation

Distribution sites can be placed on probation when there are consistent issues with:

- Reporting delays
- Inaccurate reports
- Seats not being distributed monthly
- Seats not being distributed correctly
- Not reporting (three consecutive months or more)
- Lack of monthly communication (at a minimum) with Safe Riders
- Seat inventory issues (e.g., missing seats)
- Loss of certified CPS technicians

If challenges in reporting arise, the distribution site should communicate in advance with [Safe Riders](#) for help.

Distribution sites that do not maintain regular communication with Safe Riders and do not respond (three times or more) to a Safe Riders request for information by the given deadline may be placed on probation.

If a distribution site loses a certified technician and doesn't provide a plan of action to address the shortage in staff, they could be placed on probation.

All points of contact will be notified via email of probation status and Safe Riders will schedule a meeting with the distribution site. The probationary period will end after the distribution site agrees to the terms and submits a corrective action plan for review. Safe Riders will email the distribution site with instructions to resume following the review.

Dismissal from the Program

Safe Riders may issue an immediate dismissal if child safety seats are not being distributed appropriately, according to a child's age, weight, height, special health care need, manufacturer's instructions, or program guidelines.

If a distribution site is unable to correct a reporting issue after three months, they could be dismissed from the Safe Riders program.

A distribution site that is unable to maintain two CPS technicians on staff for a year or longer, could be dismissed from the program.

If dismissed, the distribution site partner will be responsible for transferring and paying shipping costs to send the remaining child safety seat inventory to another distribution site or back to Safe Riders.

Chapter 9: LIABILITY and FORMS

Many distribution site organizations express concern about being held liable for damages should a child be injured while riding in a child safety seat they provided. Safe Riders distribution site programs should consult their agency's legal representation to ensure policies and procedures are in place addressing liability. DSHS and Safe Riders do not assume liability for distribution sites.

Distribution sites should provide up-to-date national resources to parents and caregivers for additional guidance and instruct parents and caregivers to always follow vehicle and car seat manufacturer's instructions. Below are some good resources:

- Safe Kids Worldwide, [safekids.org](https://www.safekids.org)
- National Child Passenger Safety Board, [cpsboard.org/car-seat-safety/](https://www.cpsboard.org/car-seat-safety/)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, [nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats](https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats)
- American Academy of Pediatrics, [healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Keep Child Passengers Safe, [cdc.gov/injury/features/child-passenger-safety/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/injury/features/child-passenger-safety/index.html)

Child Safety Seat Agreement and Release of Liability Form

Before a distribution site provides a child safety seat, staff should ensure the parent or caregiver signs the liability form. Do not alter the form; only add information where prompted. Distribution sites should retain the original forms for five years. Distribution site staff should ensure that:

1. The parent or caregiver signs and dates the form.
2. Staff answer any questions the parent or caregiver may have.

Safe Rider Distribution Program Checklist

Although there is no general knowledge of a liability award being imposed against a group giving out child safety seats, there are sensible precautions to take. The following checklist can help ensure services are provided using best practices:

- Attend Safe Riders distribution program trainings to receive up-to-date recommendations.
- Examine each child safety seat thoroughly before giving it to a family. It should have all working parts and an instruction booklet.
- Certified CPS technicians should be the only ones educating and assisting parents with installing child safety seats.
- Distribution site staff should disseminate up-to-date recommendations and educational materials and remove any outdated CPS materials from inventory and circulation.
- Distribution sites should not accept payment or take donations for child safety seats provided by Safe Riders.
- Distribution sites should destroy used child safety seats that are replaced for the family. If the distribution site decides to keep any seats for training, it is recommended the distribution site mark the seat “for training only”.

Please send Distribution and In-kind reports to Safe Riders no later than the fifth day of the following month. The report submitted each month will cover the previous month.

Send reports to distributionreports@dshs.texas.gov.

Appendix A: Safe Riders Education and Child Safety Seat Distribution Program Protocol During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Safe Riders Program strives to educate families on proper child safety seat use and provide seats to low-income Texas families in need. DSHS created best practice recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the education and distribution of child safety seats to families in need and the education and training of child passenger safety technicians. The following steps align with safety protocols from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) and recommendations from Safe Kids Worldwide and the National Child Passenger Safety Board.^{9,10}

Prior to Child Passenger Safety trainings or seat distribution events

Safe Riders recommends that distribution sites interested in hosting an event or training safely restart activities based on their organizational or agency protocols or restrictions by following these steps:

- Consult with the hosting entity to ensure protocols and safety guidelines are in place prior to scheduling an event or activity.
- Ensure any safety, training, or distribution needs, as applicable to event, are met and discuss in advance if there are any concerns or questions about the requirements (requirements outlined below).
- Safe Riders will discuss needs related to conducting safe activities during the pandemic. This includes space, social distancing protocols, capacity, and additional items outlined below.

It is recommended that event hosting entities, including Safe Riders distribution sites, provide car seat education virtually to the extent possible prior to the distribution of child safety seats. When providing in-person education and distribution, all hosting

⁹ Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission. Community Mitigation Framework. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated October 29, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/community-mitigation.html>

¹⁰ COVID-19 Mitigation Practices for National CPST Certification Training Courses. National Child Passenger Safety Board. July 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.cpsboard.org/resource-center/classroom-covid-guidance/>

entities should provide a space with adequate air circulation. For example, a storage area with no ventilation would not be acceptable. The area should have sufficient space to allow for any equipment and room for families and students to have at least six feet of space for social distancing.

During CPS Events

Hosting entities with stricter protocols than DSHS will follow their agency established guidelines to ensure everyone's safety and protection.

Recognizing Signs and Symptoms

Safe Riders has established recommendations of COVID-19 screening to reduce the risk that partners and stakeholders are exposed to the disease. The hosting entity will focus on using temperature and symptom screenings.

According to the CDC, a fever can be either subjective (i.e. feeling feverish) or having a recorded temperature of 100 degrees or higher.³ Hosting entity screenings need to include screening of the team. The hosting entity should screen all staff and volunteers that participate in the event. Documentation of this screen should be logged in a tracking document.

Community screenings for event/classes - Hosting entity team staff are encouraged to conduct a health assessment for any COVID-19 symptoms or exposures along with temperature scanning on caregivers, children, child passenger safety technicians (CPSTs), and volunteers as they arrive for the Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Event. No-touch or temple digital infrared thermometers are recommended for assessment screening. These thermometers should be sanitized after each use. Temperatures should be recorded on the attendees' attendance form.

When someone experiences symptoms at an event

If families are experiencing a fever or other COVID-19-like symptoms, reporting a positive exposure, or have a positive COVID-19 test; in-person car seat checks or installations should not be provided; the family should be encouraged to reschedule their appointment. CPSTs or volunteers experiencing a fever or other COVID-19-like symptoms, reporting a positive exposure, or have a positive COVID-19 test should not participate in events. Team members with symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test should

quarantine for two weeks (14 days).¹¹ All classes and events scheduled for the next two weeks should be cancelled. Hosting entity staff shall inform all families who were seen in the two weeks (14 days) prior of a potential exposure.

Social Distancing

Hosting entities should incorporate social distancing (maintaining six feet from others) to reduce exposure due to close contact with individuals who may be exposed or have the disease.¹¹

Indoor: Hosting entities should limit the number of families or students registering for a class and ensure the class is set up for adequate spacing of six feet between people. Hosting entities should not allow people to mingle in the class. Painter's tape, or a similar marking, can be used to mark where people should remain at a six-foot distance between each other. Education can be provided virtually to reduce the risk of exposure.

Outdoor events: Hosting entities should limit the number of families and students at the event or in the checkup area. Appointments should be required in order to limit the number of families at any time. Hosting entities should not allow people to mingle near or around vehicles or seat distribution area. Painter's tape, or a similar marking, can be used to mark where people should remain at a six-foot distance between each other. Verbal education can be provided from a six-foot distance and events or activities may be reduced in size to ensure safety protocols are met. Vehicles will park at a safe distance where families will not mingle.

Face Covering

The CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings, like on public and mass transportation, at events and gatherings, and anywhere they will be around other people.¹²

For all activities or events, CPSTs and hosting entity staff and volunteers should wear a face mask while interacting with families or students to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Face masks worn should comply with the minimum safety standard for each respective hosting entity, agency, or organization, and comply with CDC's Your Guide to Masks.⁴ All attendees (adults and children over 2 years old) shall wear a face mask throughout the duration of the activity or event. Hosting entities should have

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>. Accessed January 2021.

¹² Your Guide To Masks. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>. Accessed on January 15, 2021.

disposable face masks onsite or be prepared to refuse entry if families do not have a face mask.

Proper Hand Hygiene

Hosting entities should practice proper hand washing and use of hand sanitizer immediately before and after handling safety equipment. CPSTs will wear disposable gloves to handle child safety seats. A new set of gloves should be worn by a CPST between appointments to reduce cross contamination during the distribution of seats. Hand sanitizer should be made available by the hosting entity for families or students attending events or classes.

Supplies and Equipment

Hosting entities should discourage the sharing of items or supplies used such as pens, highlighters, clipboards, etc. Supplies should be designated to a person through the duration of the event or activity to avoid cross contamination. All supplies should be cleaned and sanitized after each event or activity.

Post Event

Cleaning and disinfecting

The CDC recommends wearing gloves when cleaning or caring for someone who is sick. Equipment like training seats that were used during an event or activity should be cleaned after each use. Tables used for classroom activities or events should be disinfected after each use. Any child safety seats used for training must be clearly marked for training only and will not be distributed to children.

CDC-recommended Health Assessment:

Safe Riders distribution partners are encouraged to use the health assessment questions below. Participants must answer the following questions in CDC's COVID-19 screening tool. All responses can only be "yes" or "no":

1. Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea?
2. Within the past 14 days, have you been in close physical contact (6 feet or closer for at least 15 minutes) with a person who is known to have COVID-19 or with anyone who has any symptoms consistent with COVID-19?

3. Are you isolating or quarantining because you may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 or are worried that you may be sick with COVID-19?
4. Are you currently waiting on the results of a COVID-19 test?

If participants answer “yes” to any of the above questions, the hosting entity should refuse service and may want to provide further instructions. Participants should reschedule their appointment when they can answer “no” to the questions above.

Appendix B Educational Training Outline

Introduction to Child Passenger Safety and Its Importance (15 mins)

- Instructor(s) and students introduce themselves
- Effectiveness of car seats to keep children safe while traveling in a vehicle
- **Video** - Show **educational video**

Safety Seat Education and Demonstration (30 mins)

Car Seat Selection and Parts

- Explain recommendations for use at each car seat stage: rear-facing, forward-facing, booster seat, seat belt.
- Identify car seat parts and demonstrate how they function:
 - Recline adjustment
 - Harness strap adjuster
 - Harness clip
 - Belt path(s)
 - LATCH system
- Explain the height and weight limits of the child safety seat (when the child will outgrow it.) Point out child safety seat labels.
- Highlight common misuses by car seat type and in the Selection, Direction, location, installation, and harnessing

Direction

- Discuss best practice recommendations for rear and forward-facing car seats
- Emphasize remaining in each car seat stage for as long as possible, until reaching the highest height and weight limitation of each seat

Location

- Discuss seating position with other passengers in mind
- Provide warnings regarding air bags. The back seat is the safest place for children to ride in a vehicle. Children ages 13 and younger should ride in the back seat.

Installation

- Discuss how to securely attach the child safety seat to a vehicle using the safety belt or LATCH system (vehicle owner's manual)
- Encourage parents and caregivers to look in the vehicle manual for safety seat installation instructions for their vehicle.
- Discuss the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles. Discuss law in Texas and provide tips
- Emphasize **consistency** – use the child safety seat during every ride in the car, no matter how brief

Harnessing

- Demonstrate, with a child or doll, how to properly harness a child in the car seat with the harness system according to the car seat instructions.
 - Follow alongside the parent or caregiver as they practice harnessing with a child or doll.

Program Requirements (15 mins) – Information to share with attendees.

- Registration card - Discuss the child safety seat registration card. Ask attendees to complete and mail out the card following the class
- Car seat instructions - Provide a copy of the child safety seat instructions to the family in the appropriate language for the family
- Label car seats - Ensure each child safety seat is clearly marked on the shell "Not for sale," before distributing to a family
- *Child Restraint Agreement and Release of Liability* form – All participants should sign the form. The distribution site should retain the original and provide a copy to each attendee, upon request
- Child safety seats involved in a crash - Explain that if a child safety seat has been involved in a crash, it should be destroyed and disposed of, according to the manufacturer's instructions
- Provide up-to-date educational materials and other helpful resources
- Allow time for questions and answers
- Refer program attendees to a certified CPS technician, checkup event, or inspection station for hands-on assistance

References and Guidance

Resources for Correct Use

Caregivers should reference child safety seat instructions, the vehicle owner's manual, and the resources listed below for guidance.

American Academy of Pediatrics

800-433-9016, [aap.org](https://www.aap.org)

Safe Riders / Texas Department of State Health Services

800-252-8255, dshs.texas.gov/saferiders

Evenflo

800-233-5921, [evenflo.com](https://www.evenflo.com)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)



800-424-9393, [nhtsa.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov)

National Child Passenger Safety Certification Program

877-36-8154, cert.safekids.org

Attend a Child Safety Seat Checkup Event in Your Area

866-SEAT-CHECK, seatcheck.org

safekids.org

dshs.texas.gov/saferiders/checkup

About Safe Riders

Safe Riders has been providing child passenger safety (CPS) leadership in Texas since the passage of Texas' first seat belt law in 1985. It is funded by federal grant funds through the Texas Department of Transportation. Safe Riders is under the Office of Injury Prevention within the Maternal and Child Health Unit at the Texas Department of State Health Services.



Safe Riders is a statewide CPS program in Texas dedicated to preventing deaths and reducing injuries to children due to motor vehicle crashes. Safe Riders is authorized by Texas Health & Safety Code Chapter 45.

Safe Riders has a distribution and training component that develops partnerships with stakeholders in Texas to coordinate, train, educate on child passenger safety (CPS), and distribute car seats to families in need. Over the years, Safe Riders has sustained and referred families to established distribution sites for car seat education and to obtain car seats. Every year on average, Safe Riders and program partners distributed over 5,000 child safety seats in Texas.

Contact Information

For U.S. mail:

Safe Riders - Office of Injury Prevention
Texas Department of State Health Services
P.O. Box 149347, MC 1922
Austin, TX 78714-9347
800-252-8255

distributionreports@dshs.texas.gov
dshs.texas.gov/saferiders

For special mailings, i.e. FedEx, UPS, DHL:
Safe Riders - Office of Injury Prevention
Texas Department of State Health Services
1100 W. 49th Street, MC 1922
Austin, TX 78756

