

SAFE RIDERS

**2023 IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE
FOR DISTRIBUTION SITE 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

The Program Implementation Guide provides an overview of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Safe Riders protocols and guidelines. Distribution site 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 Safe Riders distribution site partner, this guide will 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 your staff before beginning your application to understand how to properly operate as a Safe Riders distribution site. Review sections with all team members to set expectations for training, implementation, documentation, tracking, and communication.

DSHS Overview

DSHS primary focus is public health. Our job is to promote and protect the health of Texans, and the communities where they live, learn, work, and play. We understand no single entity working by itself can improve the health across the state. We must all work together to create a better system that includes prevention, intervention, and effective partnerships.

About Safe Riders

Since the passage of Texas' first seat belt law in 1985, Safe Riders has provided CPS leadership in Texas. It is funded by federal grant funds through the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Safe Riders is under the Injury Prevention Unit at DSHS.

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

Safe Riders has a distribution and training component that develops partnerships with Texas stakeholders to coordinate, train, educate on CPS, and distribute child safety seats to families in need. Over the years, Safe Riders has referred families to established

distribution sites for child safety seat education and car seats. Last year, Safe Riders and program partners distributed over 3,600 child safety seats in Texas.

Child Passenger Safety Overview

Motor vehicle traffic fatality is the leading cause of child deaths. From 2018 to 2020, 3,862 child passengers ages 15 years and younger died in motor vehicle crashes (MVC) and more than 374,000 child motor vehicle injuries were recorded in the U.S.¹

In Texas, unintentional injury, including MVC, remains the number one cause of death among children ages 15 and younger and there were 502 MVC fatalities between 2018-2020.² Child restraints are effective in reducing serious and fatal child MVC injury risks by 54-71%.³ However, a substantial number of families use child restraints incorrectly. The most recent national estimates indicate that 46% of child safety seats had some sort of misuse, increasing a child's risk of serious injury or death in a crash.⁴

Safe Riders is dedicated to preventing deaths and reducing child MVC injuries. Funded by the TxDOT to coordinate and manage a statewide distribution, education, and training program, Safe Riders has successfully implemented the program for more than 30 years. Safe Riders continues to prioritize Texas CPS safety efforts.

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. Over the past 10 years, Safe Riders distributed more than 30,000 child safety seats to families. In addition, the program supports Texas CPS technicians by offering recertification opportunities, trainings, and technical assistance.

Evidence-based Strategies

Safe Riders strongly recommends that education and distribution programs focus on parents and caregivers who cannot afford a child safety seat or need help understanding the importance of using child safety seats. Child safety seat education increases correct use when implemented (1) in a range of settings; (2) in a variety of population

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2022.

² National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2021). People Killed, by State and Age Group, 2019.

³ CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Transportation Safety - Get the Facts: Risk Factors.

⁴ U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Traffic Safety Facts Research Note. June 2015.

subgroups; and (3) when providing a free child safety seat.⁵ The Texas child passenger safety law with enhanced and high visibility enforcement campaigns demonstrates effectiveness in reducing injury and increasing child safety seat use. Programmatically, and in collaboration with law enforcement efforts, strategies such as mobile and child safety seat inspection stations, and communications and outreach campaigns have also proven to be effective child passenger safety strategies.^{6,7,8}

Safe Riders is a community-based program that supports evidence-based interventions in the community. Community-based interventions that use a multi-faceted approach are effective in reducing MVC injury risk and incidence as well as for long-term programming sustainability.^{9,10}

Safe Riders Distribution Program Goal and Objectives

Mission

Safe Riders mission is to improve Texans' health, safety, and well-being through good stewardship of resources, and a focus on community-based child passenger safety education using evidence-based, attempt to prevent injury before it ever occurs to help reduce the number of child MVC injuries and fatalities.

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 child safety seats to families in financial need; and

⁵ Motor Vehicle-Related Injury Prevention: Use of Child Safety Seats, Distribution and Education Programs. thecommunityguide.org/sites/default/files/assets/MVOI-ChildSeats-Distribution-Programs.pdf. Accessed online on October 2021.

⁶ Evidence-Based Strategies and Readings for Child Safety CollN. childrenssafetynetwork.org/sites/default/files/Evidence-Based%20Strategies%20and%20Readings%20for%20CS%20CollN.pdf. Accessed online on October 2021.

⁷ Countermeasures that work nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2021-09/15100_Countermeasures10th_080621_v5_tag.pdf. Accessed online on October 2021.

⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Transportation Safety, What Works: Strategies to Increase Car Seat and Booster Seat Use. cdc.gov/transportationsafety/child_passenger_safety/strategies.html. Accessed online on October 2021.

⁹ 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

¹⁰ 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. doi.org/10.1136/ip.2005.011239.

- c. Objective 3: Work with local community stakeholders to establish education and child safety seat distribution programs.
- 2. Serve as an education and training resource for distribution site partners to build capacity and child passenger safety program and services sustainability in Texas.
 - a. Objective 1: Provide an implementation guide; and
 - b. Objective 2: Provide training for distribution site partners and CPS technicians.
- 3. Broaden Safe Riders' reach to additional Texas areas by using a public health approach to identify and address child passenger safety disparities. A public health approach identifies the problem, determines how to prevent the problem, implements effective strategies on a large scale, and evaluates the impact.
 - a. Objective 1: Use data to direct initiatives; and
 - b. Objective 2: Work with community stakeholders to provide child passenger safety services in areas of need.

Chapter 1: Expectations and Commitment

Program Partners

Safe Riders distribution site partner organizations are expected to commit to the following:

1. **Services Frequency and Scope** – The program must offer at least twice a month services that are open to the public, including families experiencing financial hardship.
2. **Capacity and Training** – The program must maintain certified CPS technicians on staff and support technician recertification. In addition, distribution site partner staff must attend Safe Riders mandatory trainings.
3. **Program Logistics** – The program must establish and maintain effective program logistics coordination (e.g., scheduling events, returning calls and messages, reporting, providing customer service, ordering, maintaining inventory, etc.).
4. **Program promotion and outreach** – The program must seek effective, strategic, and consistent program promotion to community stakeholders. Distribution site partners must continuously seek to identify new and innovative ways to promote their program services in their local community.
5. **Education and distribution** – The program should distribute Safe Riders child safety seats to families in financial need. Services offered must be open to the public and distribution must be accompanied with an educational component. Distribution site partners must demonstrate a wide scope of child passenger safety services.
6. **Other funding** – Organizations receiving TxDOT direct funding for child safety seats may be eligible to participate in the Safe Riders program if efforts through Safe Riders are clearly defined and separate from their other TxDOT-funded efforts.

Safe Riders expects distribution site partners to implement the Safe Riders program as outlined in this guide. Each section above will be covered in more detail in the following sections.

Frequency and Scope of Services

Distribution site partners must be open to the public and may not operate as a client-based program for a specific agency or organization. Each distribution site must offer education with child safety seat distribution services at least twice per month.

Distribution site partners must implement education and distribution services at each

site (geographically by region, county[ies], zip code[s], etc.) as proposed in the Safe Riders application and agreement.

Capacity and Training

Safe Riders requires each distribution site have two Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs) on staff and they must serve as the program's points of contact. One CPST will serve as the designated program lead and will manage and coordinate Safe Riders and its various components. Only CPSTs can coordinate child safety seat education with distribution services at the local distribution site. CPSTs are expected to conduct and report monthly on all program activities. CPSTs must attend all Safe Riders mandatory trainings, which Safe Riders will announce to distribution site partners in advance.

Distribution sites may collaborate with CPSTs in the community to assist with education. The distribution site partner is responsible for all aspects of education, distribution, and reporting regardless of partnerships.

Distribution site agencies are required to keep their staff CPSTs certified. If a site loses a staff CPST, they must communicate it immediately to Safe Riders and provide an action plan. In this instance, sites may continue providing services for six months or until another CPST is hired. If more than six months is needed, the distribution site partner will need to meet with Safe Riders to discuss options.

Logistics – Distribution site partners are responsible for submitting monthly Safe Riders reports, returning phone calls, scheduling appointments, hosting classes, ordering Safe Riders child safety seats, maintaining child safety seat inventory, attending Safe Riders trainings, maintaining CPS technician certification(s), etc. Therefore, it is important for distribution site partner staff to communicate with Safe Riders regularly.

Promotion and Outreach – Distribution site partners must work collaboratively with local stakeholders to promote the offered services. Staff should identify and use various ways to promote program services. Promotion examples include program flyer distribution to colleagues and the community, program information postings on websites and through social media, partnerships with health care stakeholders, schools, daycares, churches, etc., to share information about your distribution classes or events. If distribution site partners need assistance with promotion and outreach, notify Safe Riders as soon as possible.

Commitment

Safe Riders is committed to working with distribution site partners to implement education and distribution activities. Safe Riders can help build partnerships and support CPST and program sustainability efforts. Safe Riders will communicate any program updates or changes via email and will request to meet with programs as needed. Distribution site partners are expected to submit monthly reports, attend all required Safe Riders 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

Safe Riders distribution site partners have flexibility to conduct education classes and distribute child safety seats in a way that meets their community's needs and fits their organization's needs and capacity.

Child Safety Seat Education and Distribution Guidelines

Only certified CPSTs can provide child safety seat education to families. **Appendix A** includes an education training outline for distribution site partner use. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia videos are available for distribution site partners to use as a family education tool. Parents or caregivers will only receive a child safety seat after a proper education.

Education and Distribution Options

The CPST must offer child safety seat education with distribution regularly (e.g. same day, time, location, and frequency) each month, by appointment. Options available:

1. **Educational Sessions**

In-person –

- a. Classroom education with child safety seat distribution* and installation help in the family's vehicle. *BEST PRACTICE OPTION*
- b. Classroom education with in-class demonstration and distribution* (does not include installing child safety seats in the family vehicle).

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

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 child safety seat within one week of receiving CPS education. Families receive child safety seat installation help in the family's vehicle.

2. **Inspection station** – CPS education, child safety seat distribution, and seat installation in the family vehicle. *BEST PRACTICE OPTION*

Distribution site partners must provide CPS education and distribute child safety seats at least twice a month. Safe Riders requires two CPSTs per distribution site to offer services and recommends a 5:1 ratio for classes—five attendees for every one CPST.

Distribution site partners are required to collect an attendee list for participation proof at each in-person and virtual education session. For virtual events, distribution site

partners should download an attendee list from the platform used (i.e., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) Distribution site partners must collect a completed checklist form for each family that visits an inspection station and keep this checklist form for site records and reporting.

Safe Riders recommends that CPSTs assist with child safety seat installation inside a family's vehicle. Safe Riders understands that sites may not have staff or space to assist parents with installation, so this is not a requirement. This decision is at the discretion of each distribution site partner.

If CPSTs do not help with installation in the family's vehicle, distribution site partners should refer the family to a local inspection station or checkup event to make sure the child safety seat is properly installed.

Education with Distribution at an Inspection Station

Distribution site partners may offer regularly scheduled inspection stations. This option is for sites that have adequate CPSTs, time, and space to conduct an inspection station.

Best practice guidelines to follow when providing this community service:

1. At least two CPSTs are present to hold an inspection station;
2. Appointments are scheduled in advance;
3. Appointments are scheduled far enough apart to thoroughly educate the parent or caregiver:
 - 1 child = 30 minutes;
 - 2 children = 45 minutes; or
 - 3 or more children = 1 hour.
3. Certified CPSTs educating families on their own (have their own appointments) at an inspection station must have at least two years of experience in doing so. Novice CPSTs (< 2 years' experience) can assist under an experienced technician's leadership.

Additional Implementation Guidelines to Follow

- All classes and inspection stations must be open to the public and by appointment.
- Parents or primary caregivers must receive education to receive a child safety seat.
- Distribution site partners are not obligated to fulfill requests for a child safety seat to a family in the hospital for delivery or before discharge, as this falls outside of Safe Riders' scope of services. For these requests, distribution site partners may provide community resources after discharge.

- More than one child in a family may receive a child safety seat, but only one seat per child. Once a child has outgrown a seat or if their child safety seat gets damaged, they can receive another seat.
- Distribution site partners should consider keeping a waiting list for education classes (that includes no more than 10 people) when registration is full. This can help fill vacancies when families cancel as well as help identify opportunities to host additional classes.
- Do not schedule Safe Riders classes more than two months in advance.
- 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 local agencies such as fire and police stations, churches, or other community stakeholders. Distribution site 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 with an option to mobilize services into communities.

Chapter 3: Logistics

Child Safety Seat Delivery, Storage, and Tracking

Selecting a Storage Site

Distribution site partners must have a secure storage space. The space should be large enough to hold about 40-50 child safety seats. 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 site partners receive donated space from churches, schools, or community centers. The ideal child safety seat storage space is in the same location as the education classes. 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

- Keep child safety seats in the original shipping boxes. Distribution site partners can also remove seats from the boxes and stack them (this method takes up less space). If you decide 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.
- Clearly and visibly mark on every child safety seat's shell, 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 as it may result in volunteer or staff injuries.

Store the oldest child safety seats at the front of the storage space. This helps to make sure that the oldest child safety seats get distributed first.

Child Safety Seat Delivery

Safe Riders delivers child safety seats at no cost to distribution site partners. Delivery drivers will not unload boxes inside the distribution site's facility. Distribution site partners should plan appropriately and have people available to help move boxes indoors or into the storage space. Distribution site partners may want to consider renting, borrowing, or purchasing a dolly to save time.

Requesting Additional Seats

Distribution site partners can submit a request once the site's child safety seat inventory is running low. To request additional child safety seats, distribution site partners submit a Safe Riders child safety seat request form. Distribution site partners must be in good standing with monthly reporting and have no outstanding concerns or unresolved issues to receive additional seats. Safe Riders will fill child safety 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.

Distribution site partners will provide a shipment address and details with child safety seat orders. Once the shipment is in route, address changes will not be permitted.

Child safety seat shipment arrival

1. Distribution site partners must count the child safety seats (boxes of seats) to verify the order is complete before signing for the shipment. Usually there are multiple seats per box.
2. Distribution site partners must email a summary of the child safety seats received to distributionreports@dshs.texas.gov.
3. For incomplete orders or damaged child safety seats, call 1-800-252-8255 or 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 child safety seat allotment, distribution site partners are expected to begin offering classes within two weeks of the child safety seat delivery.

Tracking Child Safety Seats

All distribution site partners must keep an accurate child safety seat inventory and document child safety seat numbers added or removed from the storage area.

Distribution site partners should choose a method for tracking child safety seat inventory and collect the following information:

- Date child safety seats were added or removed from storage;
- Child safety seat numbers and types added or removed from storage;
- Name of the person or persons that added or removed child safety seats; and

- Total child safety seat numbers stored in the storage area.

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. Safe Riders will ask the distribution site partner to replace lost or unaccounted-for seats. Failure to replace missing child safety seats will result in distribution site suspension or removal.

Chapter 4: Program Promotion and Referrals

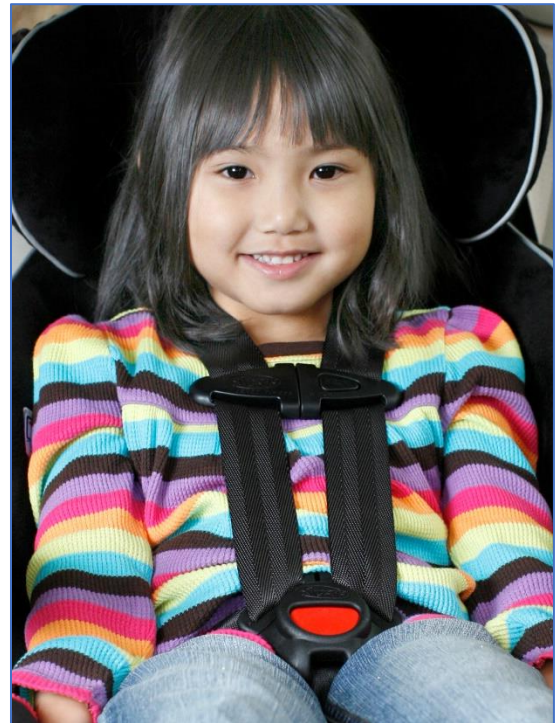
Promotion

For a child safety seat distribution site partner 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 and encourages distribution site partners to promote the program through local community stakeholders, social media, Safe Kids, and traffic safety coalitions.

Flyer use options as a promotional tool include:

- Post the flyer in and around the agency;
- Email it to other agencies who refer clients;
- Hand it out to interested families;
- Cross-promote when working on other projects or programs (e.g., WIC offices);
- Send out a media advisory using the Safe Riders media template;
- 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; and
- Promote services within the organization so other staff can refer families to the distribution site program.



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

Referrals

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

Distribution site partners 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 partner is unable to have a direct line, the agency must train everyone answering the phone to know the process for Safe Riders distribution program inquiries.

The distribution site referral phone number provided to Safe Riders should be the same phone number parents and caregivers call for services.

Distribution site partners must respond to families within two to three business days. A parent or caregiver must 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 make an appointment or attend a class on behalf of the parent or caregiver.

Email saferiders@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 distribution site's outgoing voice message for any answering service should at least include the following:

- The distribution site partner's name;
- Instructions for what information to include in a voicemail (e.g., 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; and
 - 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, let Safe Riders know, and the distribution site must arrange to take and respond to voicemails for the program.

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

Making Appointments

Eligible parents and caregivers must schedule a Safe Riders class or inspection station appointment. This helps distribution site staff get accurate child information, schedule enough CPST support, and know that CPSTs can distribute the appropriate child safety seat needed. Distribution site partners should use the eligibility screening tool (Appendix A) when scheduling appointments.

Distribution site partners should advise caregivers when scheduling appointments that the site will provide a child safety seat for the scheduled child(ren). Additional children who arrive and do not have an appointment will not be guaranteed a seat.

Communicating with caregivers about this before making an appointment will help the visit run smoothly.

Distribution site partner staff should be familiar with the program guidelines for answering phone calls.

Collect the following information when making appointments:

- The parent or caregiver's name;
- The child's name, age, height, and weight;
- City and zip code; and
- Phone number and email address.

Partner Communication

The distribution site partner is responsible for communicating any changes in 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 through a meeting.

Chapter 5: Eligibility for Families Receiving a Child Safety Seat

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 (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.
- Expectant mothers may schedule an appointment once they are in their **last trimester**. A parent/caregiver may not take a class early in their pregnancy and return later to pick up the seat.

Chapter 6: Other Transportation Needs

Social/Case Workers, Agencies that Transport Children (Example: Day care centers)

Safe Riders helps 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 purchasing a rear-facing only seat, borrowing a rear-facing only child safety seat, or seeking another local resource for assistance because a Safe Riders seat may not fit their needs.

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 AAP publication, “Safe Transportation of Preterm and Low Birth Weight Infants at Hospital Discharge”, can be found at preventinjury.pediatrics.iu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Safe-Transportation-of-Preterm-and-LBW-Infants-at-Hospital-Discharge.pdf.

Chapter 7: Reporting and Documentation

Each distribution site partner must submit a monthly report. Safe Riders will send out an email with a link each month that will need to be completed for the previous month's activities. Distribution site partners must complete and submit reports by the fifth of each month.

Each distribution site partner must submit a report of child safety seat numbers and types of seats distributed monthly in classes or inspection stations, as well as any in-kind contribution. Staff time incurred working on the Safe Riders program and storage space used to hold the child safety seat inventory have monetary value and are considered in-kind and should be reported monthly.

Safe Riders uses this report to track each distribution site partner's progress. This information is also reported monthly to the Safe Riders grant funder, TxDOT, to help validate each program.

Timely reporting avoids any potential child safety seat delivery delays to distribution site partners.

Please complete monthly report no later than the fifth day of the following month. The report submitted each month will cover the previous month.

Chapter 8: Compliance

Through the Safe Riders program, DSHS expects that each distribution site partner will comply with all distribution guidelines as outlined below and in the application agreement form submitted with the site application. By doing this, a site will be in good standing with Safe Riders.

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 mandatory Safe Riders trainings;
- Maintain a tracking system for all the inventoried child safety seats;
- Consistently provide education and distribution services every month; and
- Maintain trained CPS technicians on staff.

Probation

Safe Riders may place distribution site partners on probation when there are consistent issues:

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

If challenges arise, the distribution site partner must communicate them to [Safe Riders](#) in advance.

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

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

Safe Riders will notify all points of contact via email of probation status. The probationary period will end after the distribution site partner agrees to the terms and submits a corrective action plan for review. Safe Riders will email the distribution site partner 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 partner is unable to correct a reporting issue after three months, they could be dismissed from the Safe Riders program.

A distribution site partner 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 paying shipping costs to send the remaining child safety seat inventory to another distribution site or back to Safe Riders. The distribution site partner will be responsible for replacing any unaccounted-for child safety seats.

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 check that policies and procedures are in place addressing liability. Neither DSHS nor Safe Riders assumes liability for distribution site partners.

Distribution site partners should provide parents and caregivers up-to-date national resources for additional guidance and instruct them 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/;
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 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; and
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Keep Child Passengers Safe, 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 have the parent or caregiver sign the liability form. Do not alter the form; only add information where prompted. Distribution site partners should retain the original forms for five years. Distribution site staff should check that:

1. The parent or caregiver signs and dates the form.
2. The parent or caregiver has the opportunity to ask questions.
3. 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 distribution site partners provide services 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.
- Only Certified CPSTs should educate and assist parents with installing child safety seats.
- Disseminate up-to-date recommendations and educational materials and remove any outdated CPS materials from inventory and circulation.
- Do not accept payment or take donations for Safe Riders child safety seats.
- Destroy used child safety seats that are replaced for the family. If the distribution site partner decides to keep any seats for training, it is recommended the distribution site mark the seat “for training only”.

Appendix A: Educational Training Outline

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

- Instructor(s) and students introduce themselves;
- Instructor(s) educate on child safety seat effectiveness to keep children safe while traveling in a vehicle; and
- Instructor(s) show [video\(s\)](#) and/or provide demonstration.

Child Safety Seat Education and Demonstration (30 mins)

Child Safety Seat Selection and Parts – the instructor(s) should

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

Direction – the instructor(s) should:

- Discuss best practice recommendations for rear and forward-facing child safety seats.
- Emphasize that the child should remain in each child safety seat stage for as long as possible, until reaching the highest height and weight limitation of each seat.

Location – the instructor(s) should:

- Discuss seating location and position with other passengers in mind.
- Provide air bag warnings. 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 – the instructor(s) should:

- Discuss how to securely attach the child safety seat to a vehicle using the safety belt or LATCH system (vehicle owner’s manual).
- Encourage parent 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 – the instructor(s) should:

Demonstrate, with a child or doll, how to properly harness a child in the child safety seat with the harness system according to the 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 child safety seat instruction booklet to the family in the family’s appropriate language.
- Label child safety 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 partner should retain the original and provide a copy to each attendee if requested.

- 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

Safe Riders / Texas Department of State Health Services

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

Evenflo

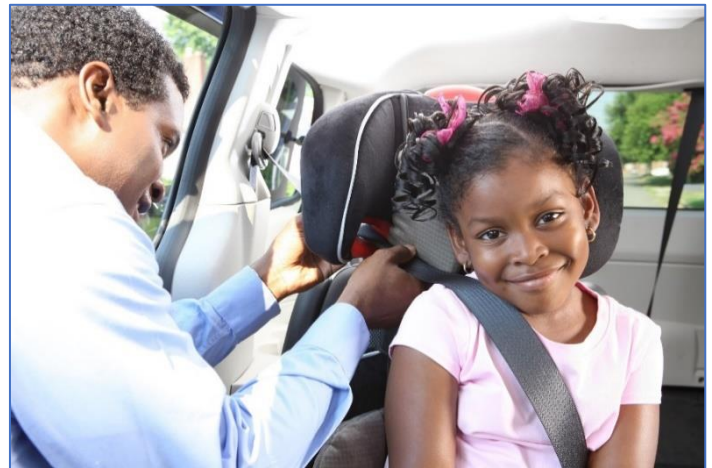
800-233-5921, evenflo.com

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

800-424-9393, nhtsa.gov

Contact Information

If you have any questions, contacting Safe Riders via email at Saferiders@dshs.texas.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

Texas Department of State Health Services Safe Riders

dshs.texas.gov/saferiders