

SAFE RIDERS

2026 DISTRIBUTION PARTNER SITE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
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Program Implementation Guide Introduction

About This Guide

The Safe Riders 2026 Distribution Partner Site Implementation Guide provides an overview of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Safe Riders protocols and guidelines. Distribution partners implementing the Safe Riders program in their community must adhere to this guide's operating protocols.

How To Use This Guide

Safe Riders distribution partner sites should use this guide to implement local Safe Riders child passenger safety (CPS) program activities. This document includes guidelines and strategies for providing CPS education and distributing child safety seats (CSSs).

Distribution partners must review the guide in its entirety and review it with all staff and volunteers participating in the program before submitting a distribution partner site application. All staff or volunteers must understand the Safe Riders guidelines and local Safe Riders distribution partner site operation protocols. By reviewing with all team members, organizations will set expectations for training, implementation, documentation, tracking, and communication.

Child Passenger Safety Overview

Motor vehicle traffic fatality is the leading cause of child deaths ages 5-14. In 2023, there were 44,762 traffic fatalities in the U.S.; 1,262 (2.41%) were children ages 14 and younger.¹

In Texas, unintentional injury, including motor vehicle crashes (MVCs), remain the number one cause of death among children ages 1-14, and there were 424 unintentional fatalities for children ages 14 and younger in 2023.² Child safety seats (CSSs) are effective in reducing fatal injury risks by approximately 71% for infants and 54% for toddlers when compared to children unrestrained.³ However, a substantial number of families use child restraints incorrectly. The most recent national estimates indicate 46%

¹ *Age Group Comparisons* (2023). National Safety Council (NSC); injuryfacts.nsc.org. **Motor Vehicle: Age Group Comparisons - Injury Facts**. Accessed 10/16/2025.

² *WISQARS Leading Causes of Death Visualization Tool* (2023). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. **WISQARS Leading Causes of Death Visualization Tool**. Accessed 10/16/2025.

³ *Occupant Protection Child Restraint*. National Safety Council (NSC); injuryfacts.nsc.org. **Child Restraint - Injury Facts**. Accessed 10/16/2025.

of CSSs had some sort of misuse, increasing a child's risk of serious injury or death in a crash.⁴

Evidence-based Strategies

Safe Riders distribution partner sites focus on distributing resources to parents and caregivers who cannot afford a CSS or are under financial hardship and need assistance. Based on research, child passenger education improves proper CSS use by caregivers when:

- 1) Implemented in a range of settings;
- 2) Provided in a variety of population subgroups; and
- 3) Paired with a free CSS.⁵

The Texas Occupant Restraint laws with enhanced and high visibility enforcement campaigns also demonstrate effectiveness in reducing injury and increasing CSS use.

Programmatically and in collaboration with law enforcement efforts, strategies such as mobile events, CSS inspection stations, and communications and outreach campaigns are proven effective CPS strategies.⁶

Organizations implement the Safe Riders program at the community-level to support evidence-based interventions. Multi-faceted community-based intervention approaches are effective in reducing MVC injury risk and incidence, as well as providing long-term program sustainability.^{7,8}

About Safe Riders

Since the passage of the first Texas seat belt law in 1985, Safe Riders has provided CPS leadership in Texas. The Safe Riders Child Passenger Safety program receives Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) federal funds.

⁴ Greenwell, N.K. (2015, May). Results of the national child restraint use special study. (Report No. DOT HS 812 142). Washington, DS: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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 October 2021.

⁶ What Works in Increasing Car Seat and Booster Seat Use (2024, May). U.S. Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. [What Works in Increasing Car Seat and Booster Seat Use | Child Passenger Safety | CDC.](#)

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. doi.org/10.1136/ip.2005.011239.

Authorized by Texas [Health and Safety Code, Chapter 45](#), Safe Riders is a statewide CPS program dedicated to preventing child deaths and reducing child injuries due to MVCs. For 40 years, Safe Riders has successfully implemented the program and continues to build partnerships and expand CPS efforts.

In fiscal year (FY) 2025, Safe Riders partnered with 66 Texas distribution partners to educate families on CPS and distribute 7,185 CSSs to families in need.

Safe Riders Distribution Program Site Goals

Goal 1: Reduce the number of unrestrained Texas children riding in motor vehicles.

Goal 2: Serve as an education and training resource for distribution partner sites.

Goal 3: Build CPS workforce capacity in Texas to address CPS disparities.

Chapter 1: Expectations and Commitment

Distribution Partner Sites

Each Safe Riders distribution partner is selected based on location and capacity. Distribution partner sites will collaborate with program staff to implement and advance CPS efforts in their local communities following program guidelines. To effectively implement the program, Safe Riders expects distribution partner site organizations to follow specific eligibility guidelines:

1. **Frequency and Scope**
2. **Capacity and Training**
3. **Program Logistics**
4. **Program Promotion and Outreach**
5. **Implementation (Education and Distribution)**

Frequency and Scope of Services – Distribution partner sites must be open to the public and may not exclusively operate as a client-based program for a specific agency, organization, or location. Each distribution partner site must provide at least one monthly CPS educational session with installation assistance during CSS distribution. Service options can be found in [Chapter 2: Implementation](#).

Capacity and Training – Safe Riders requires each distribution partner site have two certified child passenger safety technicians (CPSTs) on staff who serve as the program's primary and secondary points of contact. CPST instructors (CPSTIs) are permitted to serve in this role as well. One CPST will serve as the designated distribution partner site lead and will manage and coordinate program logistics. Only CPSTs can conduct CSS education with distribution services at the local distribution partner site. Distribution partner site primary and secondary contacts must attend Safe Riders' mandatory quarterly trainings. Safe Riders will send advanced notice of the mandatory trainings to distribution partner sites.

Distribution partner sites may collaborate with other CPSTs in the community to assist with education and distribution. The distribution partner site is responsible for all aspects of education, distribution, inventory, and reporting regardless of external partnerships. Distribution partner sites will be responsible for replacing any seats that are lost, unaccounted for, or expire while in their possession regardless of external partnerships.

Distribution partner site agencies must keep their CPST staff certified. If a site loses a CPST, they should immediately inform Safe Riders and provide an action plan. In this

instance, distribution partner sites may continue providing services with one CPST on staff after the site reaches an agreement with Safe Riders on the time frame until another CPST is hired and trained. If a distribution partner site needs six or more months to hire or train the second CPST, the site will meet with Safe Riders to discuss options.

Logistics – Distribution partner sites must submit monthly Safe Riders reports, return phone calls, schedule appointments, conduct regular educational sessions with CSS distribution, order Safe Riders CSSs, track CSS inventory, attend Safe Riders mandatory trainings, and maintain CPST certification(s).

Promotion and Outreach – Distribution partner sites must work collaboratively with local stakeholders to promote Safe Riders program services. Promotion includes posting distribution partner site information on websites or social media; sharing with local coalitions; and conducting outreach to stakeholders, schools, day cares, churches, etc. If a distribution partner site needs assistance with promotion and outreach, they should notify Safe Riders as soon as possible.

Safe Riders is committed to working with distribution partner sites to provide technical assistance, support CPST retention, and support program sustainability.

Safe Riders expects distribution partner sites to communicate any changes in their local program (e.g., staff changes, referral phone numbers, registration links, frequency of services, location, etc.), to stakeholders and the community as soon as possible. Any changes to a distribution partner site's staff members, contacts, referral phone numbers, registration links, or site locations must be reported to Safe Riders using the appropriate form. An updated form can be accessed by existing distribution partner sites on Basecamp. Basecamp is a public website designed specifically for Safe Riders partners to find resources and documents to implement their program.

Similarly, Safe Riders will communicate program updates via email or at a quarterly meeting. All new distribution partner sites must sign the Safe Riders "[Agreement to the Terms and Conditions of the Program](#)" as part of the application.

Chapter 2: Implementation

Safe Riders distribution partner sites have the flexibility to conduct CPS services and distribute CSSs in a way that meets their community's needs and fits their organization's needs and capacity.

CPS Education and CSS Distribution Guidelines

Only certified CPSTs can provide CPS education to families. [Appendix A](#) includes an education training outline for distribution partner site use. The Safe Riders [website](#) and Basecamp resource site also provide videos, a general CPS slide deck for distribution partner sites to use as a family education tool, implementation guidelines for conducting outdoor activities, and more. A distribution partner site may only give parents or caregivers a CSS after they receive the proper education and installation assistance.

Examine each CSS thoroughly before giving it to a family. Each CSS should have all working parts and an instruction manual. Please provide the instruction manual to the caregiver when distributing the CSS. When distributing a CSS, discuss the CSS registration card and its importance with the caregiver. Following the class, ask attendees to complete the registration card or the distribution partner site can mail out the card for the caregiver. This is at the discretion of the distribution partner site.

Distribution of CSSs

A CSS can be provided to a family or replaced only when at least one of these reasons is true:

- 1) Family is eligible (see Chapter 5, eligibility section).
- 2) CSS is damaged, recalled affecting the safety of the seat, or has missing parts.
- 3) CSS is not adequate for the child (height, weight, or development).
- 4) CSS is used and history is unknown.
- 5) CSS has been in a moderate to severe crash; for a minor crash, follow the CSS manufacturer's guidance.

For what constitutes a minor crash, refer to the NHTSA guidelines for [Car Seat Use After a Crash: Replacing Car Seats](#).

Always follow vehicle manufacturer's instructions.

Distribution partner sites are not obligated to fulfill CSS requests for a family already at

the hospital for delivery or before discharge, as this falls outside of Safe Riders' scope. Distribution partner sites are allowed to assist in these cases if the organization has the capacity to accommodate those requests. It is at the discretion of the distribution site. For these requests, distribution partner sites may refer to other community resources or ask the parent or caregiver to make an appointment after discharge.

Education and Distribution Options

The CPST must offer consistent CPS education with distribution each month by appointment to eligible families. Service options include:

1. **Virtual Class** – The distribution partner site holds virtual platform trainings (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams). Families must make a separate appointment to pick up a CSS within one week of receiving the virtual education. **CPSTs must provide hands-on CSS installation assistance in the family's vehicle at pick-up. *GOOD OPTION***
2. **In-person Class** – The distribution partner site holds classroom education (can include a slideshow presentation, a video presentation, demonstration, and/or CPST-led discussion with CSS distribution and installation assistance immediately after the class). **CPSTs must provide hands-on CSS installation assistance in the family's vehicle.** Safe Riders recommends a maximum 5:1 ratio for in-person classes – five attendees for every one CPST. ***BETTER OPTION***
3. **Inspection Station/Checkup event** – The distribution partner site provides one-on-one car-side education to families. Car-side education includes tailored hands-on CSS installation assistance in the family's vehicle. ***BEST OPTION****

*Safe Riders provides safety tips for partners to consider when working outdoors in elevated temperatures.

Distribution partner sites should follow best practice guidelines when providing checkup events:

- Schedule appointments in advance;
- Complete a checklist form for each appointment. Agencies can use their own checklist form with their own liability statement, use the **National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCF)**, or download a template from Basecamp;
- Schedule family appointments with enough time to thoroughly educate each parent or caregiver. Examples of amount of time that may be needed:

- For 1 child, block at least a 30-minute appointment;
 - For 2 children, block at least a 45-minute appointment; or
 - For 3 or more children, block at least a 1-hour appointment.
- Certified CPSTs should work alongside other technicians when providing car-side education to families.

Safe Riders requires distribution partner sites to collect an attendee list at each educational session. For virtual education, distribution site partners should download an attendee list from the platform used (i.e., Zoom, Microsoft Teams). Distribution partner sites should store paper or digital copies of the attendee lists for five years.

Chapter 3: Logistics

CSS Delivery, Storage, and Tracking

Selecting a Storage Site

Distribution partner sites must have a secure storage space large enough to hold three to four months' worth of CSS distribution inventory at a time. It is advised to keep this in mind when deciding on a storage location and if you are considering expanding your reach and scope of service. The storage space location must have controlled or limited access, security features in place, and be climate-controlled to help prevent possible weather or environmental damage (e.g., excessive heat, water, fire, rodents, etc.)

Some distribution partner sites receive donated space from churches, schools, or community centers. Distribution partner sites may opt to store CSSs at an off-site retail storage facility with security features. Programs cannot store CSSs at private residences.

CSS Storing Requirements and Tips

- Distribution partner sites must provide Safe Riders an in-kind letter of storage location and value. If any storage updates occur, a new form must be completed and emailed to Safe Riders.
- Distribution partners should keep any Safe Riders seats separate from seats received through any other funding sources. Distribution numbers submitted through Qualtrics should only count Safe Riders seats.
- Safe Riders requires distribution partner sites to mark **“Not for Sale”** clearly and visibly in permanent marker on every CSS shell prior to distributing them to families. Please do not write over any important information on the seat.
- Distribution partner sites must store the oldest CSSs at the front of the storage space, so they get distributed first. Seats should not expire if distribution partner sites are storing seats in this manner and not ordering more than necessary.
- Safe Riders recommends keeping each CSS in the original shipping boxes. Distribution partner sites can also remove seats from boxes and stack them (this method takes up less space). If an agency decides to stack the CSSs, Safe Riders asks the agency to keep at least half of the original shipping boxes to ship or move seats as needed.
- When storing boxes and seats, Safe Riders recommends not stacking boxes or CSSs too high as they may tip over and result in staff injuries or

damage to the CSSs.

Requesting Additional Seats

Safe Riders asks distribution partner sites to place CSS orders for three to four months of inventory at a time with a 10-seat minimum order each time. Distribution partner sites may submit new requests once the site's CSS inventory is running low. To request additional CSSs, distribution partner sites must submit a Safe Riders CSS request form found on Basecamp to distributionreports@dshs.texas.gov.

Safe Riders will approve order requests based on average monthly seat distribution numbers for each site and availability by seat type. Safe Riders may work with distribution partners to alter the number of CSSs requested as needed. In some cases, Safe Riders may need to limit the quantity and frequency of CSS order requests and cannot guarantee to fill all requests. Distribution partner sites must be in good standing with monthly reporting and have no outstanding concerns or unresolved issues to continue to receive seat shipments. See [Appendix B](#) for CSS types offered by Safe Riders.

Safe Riders will work with each distribution partner site to determine CSS quantities needed. Distribution partner sites should anticipate approximately three weeks for a CSS delivery when placing an order. Distribution partner sites must provide a shipment address and any necessary details regarding delivery (point of contact, acceptable delivery times, location of a loading dock, etc.) with each CSS order placed. Once the shipment is in route, Safe Riders cannot permit address changes.

CSS Shipments

Safe Riders ships CSSs at no cost to approved distribution partner site locations. Delivery drivers will deliver boxes on pallets at an entry door of the distribution partner site's facility. Further movement within the facility is the responsibility of the distribution partner site agency, so sites must plan accordingly and have people available to move boxes into the storage space. Distribution partner sites may want to consider renting, borrowing, or purchasing a dolly to facilitate moving boxes.

CSS shipment arrival

1. Distribution partner sites must count the total number of CSSs by seat type to verify the order is complete before signing for the shipment. Usually there are multiple seats per box. When reviewing the order, the distribution partner site

should check for any damage that occurred during the delivery process or incomplete orders.

2. Distribution partner sites must send an email confirmation following each CSS delivery to distributionreports@dshs.texas.gov.
3. For incomplete orders or damaged CSSs, distribution partner sites should email distributionreports@dshs.texas.gov to report the issue immediately. Distribution partner sites should take any damaged CSSs out of service until Safe Riders gives further instruction. Distribution partner sites should **not** dispose of any damaged CSSs until Safe Riders confirms the appropriate action(s).

Safe Riders expects distribution partner sites to begin offering classes within two weeks of receiving all necessary training and the first CSS delivery.

Tracking CSSs

All distribution partner sites must keep an accurate CSS inventory, and track all CSSs added or removed from the storage area. Distribution partner sites should choose a method for tracking CSS inventory and collect the following information:

- Date each CSS was added or removed from storage;
- Number of CSSs added or removed from storage by seat type;
- Name of person(s) who added or removed CSSs; and
- Total CSS inventory in the storage area.

Distribution partner sites **must** conduct regular physical CSS inventory counts every month to confirm reporting accuracy.

Safe Riders CSSs are the property of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Distribution partner sites agree to distribute CSSs on behalf of Safe Riders. Safe Riders expects distribution partner sites to replace lost, missing, or expired seats and properly dispose* of those seats. Failure to replace CSSs will result in distribution partner site suspension or dismissal.

Proper disposal of CSS*

To dispose of an expired or damaged seat, the harness should be cut out of the shell, and the cover removed and disposed of in a dumpster so that it can no longer be used.

Chapter 4: Program Promotion and Referrals

Promotion

Safe Riders distribution partner sites must adequately promote the program to be successful. Safe Riders will assist by referring eligible families to distribution partner sites.

Safe Riders encourages distribution partner sites to promote the program through local community stakeholders, social media, and traffic safety coalitions. Safe Riders has English and Spanish promotional event flyers on the Safe Riders [website](#) toolkit and on Basecamp. See [Appendix C](#) for additional Safe Riders resources.

Promotional options include:

- Post the Safe Riders flyer in and around the agency;
- Email the Safe Riders flyer to other agencies that refer clients;
- Hand out program flyers to interested families;
- Cross-promote when working on other projects or programs (e.g., WIC offices, community events, during other safety initiatives);
- Send out a media advisory using the Safe Riders media template;
- Post a Safe Riders flyer on social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and X);
- Share DSHS content (Safe Riders social media posts, handouts, flyers);
- 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 partner site.



Safe Riders encourages distribution partner sites to continuously seek out new and innovative opportunities to promote the program.

If requesting to use the Safe Riders text mark for promotional materials, distribution partner sites must submit a draft document for DSHS review and approval. DSHS will need at least four weeks to review and approve.

Referrals

Safe Riders maintains a toll-free number (1-800-252-8255). Safe Riders staff are available to assist families with CPS questions and make referrals to distribution partner sites.

Distribution partner sites must have a phone number and voicemail message informing families they are calling a Safe Riders distribution partner site. Safe Riders recommends distribution partner sites provide families with a direct line to the program if possible, with a message in English and in Spanish with instructions. If the distribution partner site does not have a direct line, the agency must train everyone answering the phone to know how to handle Safe Riders distribution program inquiries and referrals process.

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

Distribution partner sites should email saferiders@dshs.texas.gov if the site is unable to accept referrals for a particular month. This may happen if classes are full, there are changes in class frequency, or there is staff turnover. Distribution partner sites must also notify Safe Riders if sites are overwhelmed with referrals and are having trouble meeting the demand, or if there are changes to program contacts, referral number, registration sites, or class location.

Voicemail Communication

At a minimum, the distribution partner site's outgoing voice message should include:

- The distribution partner site's name;
- Bilingual caller instructions for what information to include in a voicemail (e.g., name, phone number, and email address);
- *Preferred, but not required, for the outgoing voice message:*
 - When the caller can expect a return call; and
 - If applicable, a website where callers can visit to make an appointment.

If staff are unable to return phone calls within three (3) business days, the distribution partner site must email saferiders@dshs.texas.gov. Distribution partner sites are still responsible for responding to voicemails for the program upon staff's return.

Making CSS Appointments

Distribution partners should only schedule appointments for eligible parents and caregivers. While assessing eligibility for an appointment, distribution partner site staff can gather child information ahead of time. This information can help schedule enough CPST support and ensure appropriate CSSs and equipment is available. Distribution partner sites should screen all callers for eligibility to receive a car seat. See [Chapter 5](#) below.

Distribution partner sites should consider keeping a waiting list for appointments/classes when registration is full to help fill vacancies when families cancel. A waiting list can also highlight opportunities to host additional classes. Distribution partner sites should not make appointments for educational classes or inspection stations more than two (2) months in advance to avoid no-shows.

When scheduling appointments, distribution partner sites should advise caregivers to make an appointment for all children needing a CSS, otherwise the program cannot guarantee additional seats for children who arrive without an appointment. Communicating with caregivers about this before making an appointment will help the visit run smoothly and avoid delays.

It is recommended to collect the following information when making appointments:

- The parent or caregiver's name;
- Each child's name, age, height, and weight;
- Phone number and email address; and
- Any special health care need or disability of the child.

Chapter 5: Eligibility for Families Receiving a CSS

The Safe Riders program provides CSSs at no cost to **low-income families or families experiencing financial hardship**. More than one child in a family may receive a CSS, but families may only receive one seat per child. Once a child outgrows a seat or if their CSS gets damaged, a distribution partner site can provide another seat, if that family is still eligible.

Eligibility Requirements

- Families that communicate financial hardship and are unable to purchase their own CSS are generally **eligible for a seat** unless there are indications otherwise (families self-declare). See ineligibility section below.
- 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).
- One of the child's primary caregivers must schedule an appointment and attend an educational session to receive a CSS. Other family members or caseworker(s) cannot make an appointment on behalf of the child's primary caregiver. Other family members or caregivers are welcome to attend the educational session alongside the 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 CSS.

Distribution partner sites must verify eligibility when scheduling an appointment with each parent or caregiver.

Ineligibility

All families are eligible to receive CPS education. However, not all parents and caregivers are eligible to receive a Safe Riders CSS. Distribution partner sites should have other local referral options available for ineligible families. Families who are not eligible for a Safe Riders CSS include:

- Non-Texas residents;
- Families who can afford to purchase a seat (self-declare) or already have an appropriate CSS for the child;
- Families who only need help learning how to use and install their own seat;
- Families who want a second CSS for a child (i.e., a parent wants a second CSS for a second vehicle);

- Family members (e.g., grandparents) that are not a primary caregiver/legal guardian of the child; or
- Pregnant mothers not in their third trimester.

Chapter 6: Other Transportation Needs

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

Safe Riders helps parents and caregivers transport their own children in their own vehicles. Safe Riders does not have the capacity to provide CSSs to agencies or businesses that transport children. Distribution partner sites should request that these agencies refer individual families to call Safe Riders for eligibility assessment and assistance. Safe Riders recommends the parent or caregiver provide a seat to the agency to use if/when transporting their child.

Premature Infants

Generally, Safe Riders does not have infant CSSs for infants weighing less than 5 pounds and/or less than 19 inches in height. Parents of premature children should purchase an infant seat, borrow one from a trusted source, or seek another local resource for assistance. Safe Riders has rear-facing only guidelines to help distribution partner sites assess if an infant qualifies for a rear-facing only CSS. These guidelines can be found on Basecamp.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends infants born at less than 37 weeks gestation be monitored in a CSS by the hospital prior to discharge to assess 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 [Safe Transportation of Preterm and Low Birth Weight Infants at Hospital Discharge | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

Children with Special Transportation Needs

Many times, a child with a disability can ride in a conventional CSS. If the child’s technician assessment determines the disability prevents them from riding in a conventional seat, the distribution partner site can refer the family to their medical specialist/provider or a local children’s hospital program for an initial evaluation. Distribution partner sites should contact saferriders@dshs.texas.gov for provider location assistance to accommodate the family.

Chapter 7: Qualtrics Reporting and Documentation

Each distribution partner site must submit a monthly report. Each month, Safe Riders will send an email with a Qualtrics reporting form link that distribution partner sites must complete on the previous month's activities. To ensure accuracy, distribution partner sites should conduct a physical count of all seats in their inventory before completing the report every month. Distribution partner sites must complete and submit reports no later than the fifth day of the following month. If the fifth falls on a weekend or a holiday, then the report must be instead submitted on the business day that precedes the weekend or holiday. Any reports submitted after the fifth are considered late.

Distribution partner sites will report CSS inventory, distribution tracking, and in-kind staff hours monthly. The value on the initial in-kind letter collected is reported monthly as in-kind contribution for the Safe Riders program; however, if there are any updates to a distribution partner site's storage, this must be communicated to Safe Riders as soon as possible.

Safe Riders uses monthly reports to track each distribution partner site's progress, report monthly totals to the Safe Riders grant funder, TxDOT, and validate each program.

Timely reporting avoids any potential CSS delivery delays. Send any reporting questions to distributionreports@dshs.texas.gov.

Please complete monthly report no later than the fifth day of the following month. Each monthly report is for the previous month's activities.

Chapter 8: Compliance

DSHS expects each distribution partner site to comply with all Safe Riders guidelines as outlined in this document and in the agreement form submitted with the application. By doing this, sites remain in good standing with Safe Riders.

Good Standing Criteria

Safe Riders' definition of "good standing" requires that a distribution partner site:

- Submit monthly reports correctly and on time;
- Communicate program updates or distribution partner site needs and changes to Safe Riders as soon as possible (e.g., staff changes, referral changes, etc.);
- Attend mandatory Safe Riders meetings and trainings;
- Maintain a CSS inventory tracking system;
- Provide consistent education and distribution services every month; and
- Maintain at least two trained CPSTs on staff.

External Review

Safe Riders may place distribution partner sites on an external review status for consistent issues including:

- Report delays;
- Inaccurate reports;
- Seats not distributed monthly;
- Seats not distributed correctly;
- No reports for two or more consecutive months;
- Unresponsive to three Safe Riders communication or meeting attempts;
- Not attending distribution partner site trainings;
- Seat inventory issues (e.g., missing or unaccounted seats); or
- No corrective action plan submitted to address non-compliance issues (i.e., loss of certified CPST).

Safe Riders will notify all points of contact via email of external review status. The external review period will end after the distribution partner site agrees to the terms and submits a corrective action plan for review. Safe Riders will email the distribution

partner site with permission to resume services following the Safe Riders-approved corrective action plan review.

Dismissal from the Program

Safe Riders may issue an immediate dismissal if a distribution partner site:

- Does not distribute CSSs appropriately according to a child's age, weight, height, special health care need, manufacturer's instructions, or program guidelines;
- Is unable to correct a reporting or inventory issue after three months; or
- Is unable to maintain at least two CPSTs on staff after the six-month grace period, without communicating an action plan to the Safe Riders team.

If dismissed, the distribution partner site is responsible for covering shipping costs to send the remaining CSS inventory to another distribution partner site or back to Safe Riders. The distribution partner site is responsible for replacing any unaccounted-for CSSs.

Chapter 9: Liability and Forms

Many distribution partner site organizations express concern about being held liable if a child is injured while riding in an organization-provided CSS. Safe Riders distribution partner sites should consult their agency's legal representation to check that liability policies and procedures are in place. Neither DSHS nor Safe Riders assumes liability for distribution partner sites.

CSS Agreement and Release of Liability Form

Before a distribution partner site provides a CSS to a family, staff should have the parent or caregiver read and sign a liability statement. CPST must complete a checklist form that includes a liability statement signed by the caregiver. An example of a checklist form with a liability statement can be found on Basecamp. Distribution partner sites should **not** alter these forms. Only add information when prompted and applicable. Distribution partner sites may use their own agency's liability form; however, Safe Riders asks that the form be emailed to Safe Riders to allow for program review and approval. Distribution partner sites should retain the forms (original or digital) for five years.

Safe Riders Distribution Program Checklist

In addition to liability forms, there are additional distribution partner site precautions. The following checklist can help distribution partner sites provide services using best practices:

- Attend Safe Riders distribution program trainings to receive up-to-date recommendations;
- Allow only certified CPSTs to educate and assist parents with installing CSS;
- Disseminate up-to-date recommendations and educational materials and remove any outdated CPS materials from inventory and circulation;
- Refuse payment or donations for Safe Riders services or CSSs; and
- Destroy and dispose of used CSSs the program replaces for the family. This consists of cutting all harness straps, removing the seat pad, and disposing it in a dumpster. If the distribution partner site decides to keep any seats for training,

Safe Riders recommends the distribution partner site mark the seat “for training only.”

Chapter 10: Resources

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

- Safe Riders Basecamp Distribution Partner Folder
NOTE: Basecamp is an online platform where distribution partner sites can find the most updated forms, educational materials, toolkit resources, and reporting documentation available for download. Upon approval, distribution partner sites will be granted access to Basecamp.
- Safe Kids Worldwide
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
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Keep Child Passengers Safe
cdc.gov/injury/features/child-passenger-safety/index.html
- Instruction Manuals for Evenflo Child Safety Seats
evenflo.com/pages/instruction-manual

Appendix A: Educational Training Outline

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

- Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) educators and students introduce themselves.
- CPST educates on child safety seat (CSS) effectiveness to keep children safe while traveling in a vehicle.
- CPST uses up-to-date information and materials to share with families.

The CPS Education and CSS Demonstration (30 mins)

For CSS Selection and Parts, CPST(s) should:

- Explain recommendations for CSS use at each stage for as long as possible – rear-facing, forward-facing, booster seat, and seat belt.
- Identify CSS parts and demonstrate how they function:
 - Recline adjustment
 - Harness strap adjuster
 - Splitter plate and harness slots
 - Chest clip
 - Belt path(s)
 - Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH) system
- Explain the CSS height and weight limits to educate on when the child will outgrow the seat.
- Point out CSS manufacturer labels.
- Highlight common misuses by CSS type and in the selection, direction, location, adjustment, and installation of the seat.
- Share the Texas child passenger safety law.
- Explain pre-owned or expired CSS usage risks.
- Explain unsafe non-approved product use.
- Encourage seat belt use for everyone in the vehicle.

For Direction, the CPST(s) should:

- Emphasize the child should remain in each CSS stage for as long as possible, until reaching the highest height and weight limitation of each seat.
- Review CSS height and weight limitations being distributed, if applicable.
- Check the proper belt path for the direction the CSS is used.

For Location, CPST(s) should:

- Discuss CSS location and position with other passengers in mind.
- Provide air bag warnings and review where to find these in vehicles.
- Emphasize the back seat is the safest place for children to ride in a vehicle. All children ages 13 and younger should ride in the back seat.

For Adjustment and Fit, CPST(s) should:

- Demonstrate, with a child or doll, how to properly select a harness slot for direction (rear-facing and forward-facing) and harness the child or doll in the CSS according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Observe the parent or caregiver as they practice harnessing with a child or doll.
- Demonstrate a snug fit by using the "pinch" test.
- Explain the danger of using bulky jackets.
- Explain proper seat belt placement over the body if using a booster seat or vehicle seat belt.

For CSS Installation or Seat Belt Fit, CPST(s) should:

- Provide hands-on car side installation assistance in the family's vehicle.
- Discuss how to securely attach the CSS in a vehicle using the vehicle seat belt or LATCH system (refer to both the vehicle owner's manual and the CSS manual).
- Explain that proper installation should include less than one-inch of movement of the CSS at the belt path (front-to-back and side-to-side) and that the CSS is at the correct angle.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to look in the vehicle manual for CSS installation instructions.
- Discuss the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles.

- Emphasize **consistency** – use the CSS during every ride in the car, no matter how brief.

Program Requirements (15 mins) – Information to Share with Attendees:

- Registration card: Discuss the CSS registration card and its importance. Ask attendees to complete and mail out the card following the class or the distribution partner site can mail out the completed card for the caregiver.
- Car seat instructions: Provide a CSS manual/instruction booklet to the family in the family’s appropriate language, if available.
- Label CSS: Mark on the CSS shell “**Not for sale**” before distributing to a family.
- Disposal of CSSs: CSSs involved in a moderate to severe crash, expired, or have a recall making CSS unsafe to use, should be destroyed and disposed of according to the manufacturer’s instructions. See page 13 for proper disposal of CSSs.
- Educational materials: Provide up-to-date educational materials and other helpful resources.
- Allow time for questions and answers.

Appendix B: Child Safety Seats Specifications

Evenflo LiteMax – Rear Facing Only (RFO):

- Height – 15.7-32 inches (in.)
- Weight – 3-35 pounds (lbs.)
- Eligible only for post-partum distribution by Safe Riders-approved programs.
- See RFO Guidelines in Appendix D.

Evenflo Titan 65 – Convertible:

- Rear-facing:
 - Height – 19-40 in.
 - Weight – 5-40 lbs.
- Forward-facing:
 - At least 2 years old.
 - Height – 28-54 in.
 - Weight – 22-65 lbs.
- LATCH weight limitations – The vehicle seat belt should be used for children weighing more than 55 lbs.
- Available to all Safe Riders distribution partner sites.

Evenflo Tribute – Convertible:

- Rear-facing:
 - Height – 19-37 in.
 - Weight – 5-40 lbs.
- Forward-facing:
 - At least 2 years old.
 - Height – 28-40 in.
 - Weight – 22-40 lbs.
- Available to all Safe Riders distribution partner sites.

Evenflo Secure Kid – Combination:

- Five-point harness:
 - At least 2 years old.
 - Height – 28-50 in.
 - Weight – 22-65 lbs.

- Booster mode only available for children over age 4:
 - Height – 43.3-57 in.
 - Weight – 40-110 lbs.
- Available to all Safe Riders distribution partner sites.

Evenflo GoTime Booster:

- Height – 44-57 in.
- Weight – 40-120 lbs.
- Child must be over age 4 to use this CSS.
- Available to all Safe Riders distribution partner sites.

Appendix C: Safe Riders Toolkit

The Safe Riders toolkit of resources is available on the Resources and Material tab on the Safe Riders website – dshs.texas.gov/injury-prevention/safe-riders/safe-riders-resources.

Distribution Partner Highlight Video:

[Safe Riders Child Passenger Safety | Texas DSHS](#)

Distribution Partner Site Location Map:

[Texas Safe Riders Car Seat Distribution Site Locations](#)

Pediatric Vehicular Heatstroke Information and Resources:

[Pediatric Vehicular Heatstroke Dangers in Texas | Texas DSHS](#)

Upcoming Texas CPS Webinars:

[Resources for Child Passenger Safety Technicians | Texas DSHS](#)

Recertification Steps:

[Resources for Child Passenger Safety Technicians | Texas DSHS](#)

References and Guidance

Resources for Correct Use

Caregivers should reference child safety seat instructions, their 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/injury-prevention/safe-riders

Evenflo
800-233-5921, evenflo.com

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
800-424-9393, 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/injury-prevention/safe-riders/child-safety-seat-calendar

Contact Information

If you have any questions, contact Safe Riders at saferiders@dshs.texas.gov.

Safe Riders Distribution Program

***[dshs.texas.gov/injury-
prevention/safe-riders](https://dshs.texas.gov/injury-prevention/safe-riders)***