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Child Passenger Safety Week September 23-29

The Ventura Police Department is supporting efforts by the California Office of Traffic Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to help parents and caregivers make sure their children ride as safely as possible every time they get in the car.

“Using car seats properly that are age and size-appropriate is the best way to keep your children safe,” said Commander Rick Murray. “Car seats matter. They save lives when used the right way.”

In passenger cars, car seats reduce the risk of an infant being killed in a crash by 71 percent, and toddlers by 54 percent. While many children are buckled in properly in the correct car seats for their age and size, more than half (59 percent) are not. Sadly, car crashes are the leading cause of death for children. In 2016, 35 percent of children under 13 killed in crashes were not restrained in car seats, booster seats or with seat belts. NHTSA data also shows that as children get older they are less likely to want to buckle up. Over the past 5 years, 1, 552 kids between the ages of 8 and 14 died in a car, SUV and van crashes – of those who died, almost half were not buckled up.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to review important safety tips to assure that every child is safely secured:

- **Get the right car seat:** Rear-facing, forward-facing or booster seat depending on your child’s age, weight and height, and the manufacturer’s recommendations on the seat.
- **Know the Law:** California law requires specific child restraint system based on child’s age, weight and height.
- **Read the manufacturer’s instructions and vehicle owner’s manual:** Pay attention to how you adjust the car seat’s harness for a proper fit.
- **Register your seat right away:** Mail in the registration card that came with the seat or register online to receive important safety recall updates.
- **Rear-facing as long as possible:** Keep a child in a rear-facing seat up to the top height or weight allowed by the car seat’s manufacturer. Research shows that children are safest when rear-facing.
- **Forward-facing car seats:** Once your child outgrows a rear-facing seat, keep your child in a forward-facing seat with a harness and tether as long as possible before transitioning to a booster seat. Tethers should always be used for forward-facing car seats.
- **Back Seat Safety:** Children under 13 should always ride in the back seat and always be buckled up.

Car seat safety checks are available at every California Highway Patrol Office. The Ventura CHP Office offers installation on Tuesdays by appointment. Parents and caregivers can call 805-662-2640 to schedule.