

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROMOTES STATEWIDE CHILD SAFETY SEAT PROGRAM**

**Richmond, Va.** –Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the number one cause of unintentional injury death of children between 1 and 8 years old in Virginia. Crash data for 2008 shows that 58% of children who were killed in a car crash were not properly restrained.

“It’s important that parents and caregivers understand the necessity of child safety seats and how to use them correctly” said State Health Commissioner, Karen Remley, MD, MBA., FAAP “The Safety Seat Check Station program saves the lives of children by helping parents learn how to properly secure their children in motor vehicles.”

Virginia established the Safety Seat Check Program in 1999 and since 2006 has checked over 10,000 safety seats. This service thrives on the dedication of fire companies, police agencies and other community service groups to bring this free state-wide resource to all parents, grandparents and caregivers in Virginia. This program is funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration through a grant from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

“The Safety Seat Check Stations are staffed by nationally certified technicians who are ready to walk parents and caregivers through the steps to ensure that safety seats are installed properly,” said Shannon Wright, child passenger safety education coordinator at the Virginia Department of Health. “Parents, grandparents and other caregivers can find out if their children’s safety seats are installed correctly, if the seat they are using is appropriate, get answers to their questions and receive hands-on help to learn how to install safety seats correctly.”

To make an appointment with a Safety Seat Check Station near you, visit [www.safetyseatva.org](http://www.safetyseatva.org) or call 1-800-732-8333 to obtain contact information for your local station. After making an appointment with a station, parents should attempt to install the safety seat in their vehicles. It’s important for parents to bring their vehicle and safety seat manuals with them. Also, if possible, it’s a good idea to bring their children with them as well. After completing a brief form, a technician will review the installation of the seat and how well the child is secured in the seat. The technician will then help parents correct any errors and will answer any other questions about child passenger safety. Proper safety seat installation takes approximately 20 minutes per safety seat.

To speak with a nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technician regarding child safety seat use, call 1-800-732-8333. VDH also hosts community seat check events throughout the year. Visit [www.safetyseatva.org](http://www.safetyseatva.org) for instructional child passenger safety videos, information on accessing free safety seats and to view the calendar of upcoming events.

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