

*Child Safety Seat*  
**BOUNTY PROGRAM**  
**GUIDE**



***Rural Passenger Safety Education***

**Texas AgriLife Extension Service**

*in cooperation with*

**The Texas Department of Transportation**



**Save a Life™**

# CHILD SAFETY SEAT BOUNTY PROGRAM GUIDE

*Produced by*

**Rural Passenger Safety Education**



*In cooperation with*

**The Texas Department of Transportation**

**2000**



# *Acknowledgments*

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# Introduction

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The Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Rural Passenger Safety Education Project (RPSE) offer outreach education in occupant protection to people throughout Texas. The goal of the Rural Passenger Safety Education Project is to reduce motor vehicle crashes, fatalities, injuries, and associated costs. The strategy to reach the goal is to increase safety belt and child safety seat restraint use rates for children, youth, and adults through programming and collaboration. Extension serves 254 Texas counties with educational programs designed to meet the needs of local citizens. County Extension agents work as community educators and facilitators to deliver these educational programs. Collaboration with the Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Department of Health–Safe Riders, and others add to the success of educational efforts.

In an effort to meet project goals, team members collaborate with county Extension agents to conduct child safety seat checkup events. In addition, county agents may work with community leaders to host a checkup event, or they may work through a SAFE KIDS grant. One of the results of every checkup event is a pile of child safety seats that are taken from vehicles and discarded because they do not meet current safety standards. The challenge is to destroy those seats so that no one else uses them. But what about the families who did not attend the checkup event? What about child safety seats that are sitting in attics or garages? And what about the child seat that is passed around in families for years? To answer those questions, some communities have started bounty programs.

What is a bounty program? According to Webster’s dictionary, a bounty is a reward or subsidy usually associated with capturing an outlaw in the wild west. In this case, the outlaw is the child safety seat that does not meet acceptable safety standards. A bounty program is designed to collect and destroy child safety seats that are unsafe to use. In addition, the program educates the public about why some child safety seats are considered unsafe to use and focuses attention and energy on the importance of child passenger safety issues.

Many consumers use the Web to sell and purchase used child safety seats, but even more consumers search for used child safety seats in yard sales, flea markets, and thrift stores. With that in mind, the need to educate the public about possible safety problems with used child safety

seats is greatly increasing. When considering how to protect young passengers, parents and care givers need as much information as possible to assist them in the decision making process regarding the level of protection a child safety seat will provide.



Here is the bottom line—a bounty program removes unsafe child safety seats from circulation. In addition, it provides the news media with a fresh approach to child passenger safety. It brings new partners to the table, increases awareness concerning child safety seat recalls and defects, and educates the public about replacing seats that have been involved in a collision.

*Source #1*

### Why is There a Need for a Bounty Program?

In general, the public may believe all child safety seats provide equal protection and may not realize the dangers of unsafe seats. A bounty program provides child passenger safety advocates an opportunity to increase awareness and educate the public. It also provides a way of removing unsafe seats from circulation. (A Used Child Safety Seat Checklist is provided in the Appendix in a reproducible format.)

Reasons to remove seats from circulation may include:



- Child safety seats manufactured prior to 1981 fail to meet current federal safety standards. These same safety standards were upgraded in 1996 and 1999, leaving numerous older seats that probably do not meet the current standard.

- The age of a child safety seat can affect its structural integrity due to heat or cold as well as wear and tear.
- Child safety seats are continually being tested, and occasionally defects are discovered. These defects, if not corrected, can compromise the ability of seats to provide the best protection. In many cases, defects can be corrected. In a few cases, the severity of the defect requires destruction of the seat. Defects surface due to complaints to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and to child safety seat manufacturers.
- The manufacturer may no longer be in business. If the manufacturer is no longer in business, a parent or care giver cannot get replacement parts or instruction manuals for the child safety seat.
- A child safety seat involved in a vehicle crash may have sustained unseen structural damage. There is no visible way to determine if the seat



is able to perform adequately in a second collision.

- As child safety seats are passed from family to family, parts, instructions, and recall information may be lost. (Source: Source #1)

The *Child Safety Seat Bounty Program Guide* is designed to be a blueprint to assist community leaders and child safety advocates in planning and implementing a child safety seat bounty program at the grassroots level. Each community should assess needs and formulate an action plan that most clearly meets its needs and goals. This guide is intended as a reference and need not be followed exactly.

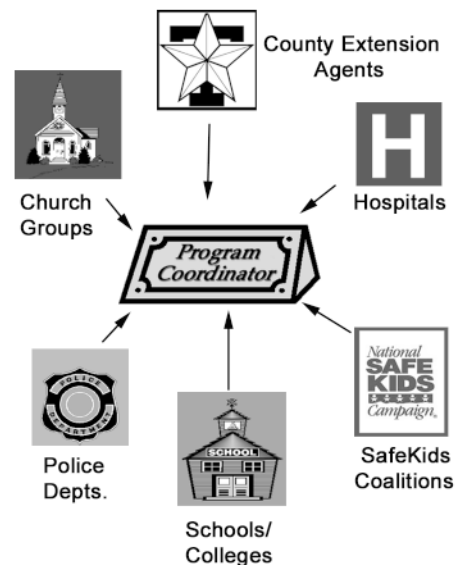
## Program Coordination

To ensure a successful program, coordination is extremely important. The program coordinator is key to the success of a bounty program. Likely candidates to consider for program coordinator may be from such organizations as:

- Local hospital community outreach office
- College advocacy groups
- Parent Teacher Organization
- Local churches
- Police Departments
- County Extension Agents
- Health Department
- Safe Kids Coalition

Program coordination responsibilities may include:

- building partnerships and involving volunteers
- developing a time frame
- increasing public awareness of program benefits
- selecting sites for unsafe seats to be collected
- providing technical assistance to collection sites and teaching employees how to identify unsafe seats
- partnering with media outlets to inform the public, cover the event
- conducting a follow up about program results
- educating the public about unsafe seats by explaining why the seats are potentially dangerous
- recruiting new partners



- soliciting businesses/organizations to contribute “bounty” rewards (coupons or gifts)
- coordinating the pick up of seats from all collection sites at the conclusion of the program
- coordinating the destruction of the unsafe seats

## Coalition Building

Many civic organizations and agencies express interest in child passenger safety issues. Potential involvement is unlimited! Program partners may include but are not limited to:

Law Enforcement Agencies	Retail, resale, and thrift stores
Safety Seat Loaner Programs	Health Departments
Automobile Dealerships	Chamber of Commerce
Insurance Companies	Service Clubs
Hospitals	Newspaper, radio, and television
EMS/Fire Departments	Public Works



Coalition building with local businesses and agencies is an essential part of the bounty program. Partnerships allow individuals to work together for a common purpose to make more effective and efficient use of resources. To maximize the interest of local agencies and civic organizations, invite community leaders and interested individuals to a kickoff meeting with the goal of infusing each person with the desire to develop a safer community. Once the representative knows the purpose and benefits of a child safety seat bounty program, they will be off and running.

## Collection Sites

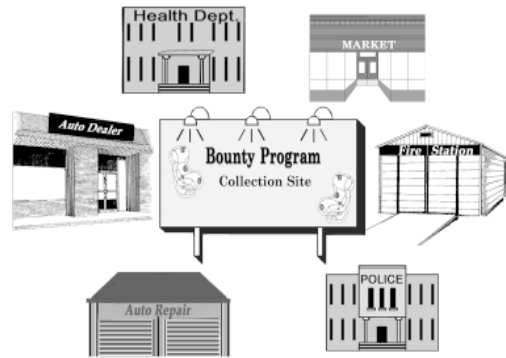
The community is interested; a game plan is in place, and all is ready for the big event. Where will parents and care givers take child safety seats to determine their safety? The next step is to develop a network for collection sites. Easy accessibility to community agencies or organizations is ideal. Previous projects have found that fire stations, police

stations, health departments, grocery stores, vehicle dealerships, and automotive repair shops are excellent locations. These organizations not only serve as a collection site but also as a place to distribute educational materials and encourage people to claim their “bounty.”

Things to consider when choosing collection sites include:

- sufficient sites to ensure people do not have to travel long distances
- businesses/agencies with an interest in child passenger safety
- easy accessibility by citizens of the community
- a large amount of space to store unsafe seats
- employees interested in participating in the program
- businesses willing to take the time to distribute the rewards
- businesses willing to pass out educational literature
- businesses with the ability to destroy unsafe seats

*Source #1*



## Media Involvement

Child passenger safety makes headlines everyday someplace in America. When seeking the support of local media for the bounty program, emphasize that the program is a unique and resourceful way to get unsafe child safety seats out of circulation. Also, discuss the benefits for the local media as they participate in the life-saving endeavor. One benefit for media is the role they play as providers of safety education by raising awareness of child passenger safety issues and promoting the program.

The participation of media ensures that the community understands:

- Unsafe child safety seats may pose risks to children in motor vehicle collisions.
- Unsafe child safety seats need to be destroyed.
- There are shocking statistics regarding unsafe child safety seats.
- Children need to ride correctly restrained.
- It is important for children to use a booster seat prior to using a safety belt.
- Manufacturers have improved the design of child safety seats.

## Radio and Television and the Public Service Announcement (PSA)

### Use Radio & TV



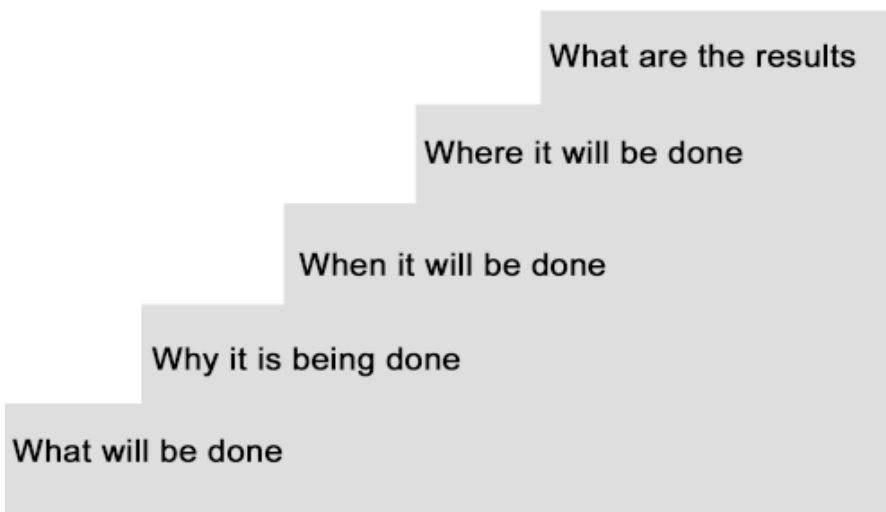
There are a couple of ways to initially involve the radio or television outlet in a community. Consider approaching the station manager and requesting support in recording and providing free air time for a 45-second PSA. (A sample PSA is included in the Appendix of this guide.) Appropriate air time on the radio might be during the morning and evening commute. A television station may consider using a morning show format or a spot during the evening news cast. If a media outlet cannot provide free recording and air time, work with the program department to schedule an opportunity to be a guest.

## Newspapers



Local newspapers may be used to promote the program as well as to provide educational articles to the public. A sample promotional article and an article to educate the public about the dangers of used child safety seats have been included in the Appendix of this guide. A promotional flyer for distribution at local businesses or to be used as a poster is also included in the Appendix in a reproducible format.

Remember, it is important to utilize local media for publicizing the program before and after the event. Invite the media to participate in coverage of the destruction of the unsafe seats. A basic outline to keep in mind for the newspaper may be a step-by-step approach. Tell the public:



# Protocol for Destruction of Unsafe Seats

Once a child safety seat has been deemed unsafe for use, it must be destroyed. The cooperation of the person who will destroy the unsafe seats is necessary. Unsafe seats must be destroyed—not simply discarded. Locating a company or individual with a bulldozer or garbage truck to crush the seats, or a local landfill to smash and bury the seats, is not only desirable but is an integral part of a successful program. Another option for destroying seats is to collaborate with a local plastic recycling center. Before destroying seats, follow these simple steps:

- Remove the harness straps and padding from the seats, and cut them up.
- Throw away all harness straps at one location.
- Throw away all padding at a second location.
- If available, a local recycling center may recycle the plastic shell, or a car crusher may crush the plastic shell.
- If all else fails, sledge hammers may be used to destroy the plastic shell.

Source #1

## A child safety seat must be destroyed if:

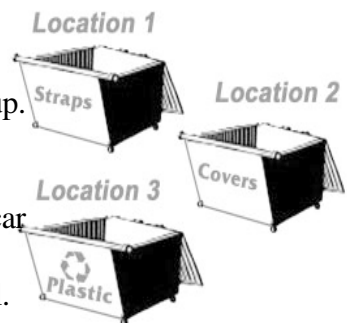
- the seat was manufactured prior to January 1, 1981
- the seat is not labeled to meet federal safety standards
- the seat has ever been involved in a collision
- the seat is recalled by the government and not repaired or cannot be repaired
- the seat has no date of manufacture and/or model number
- the seat is older than five years in Texas
- the seat is rusted, cracked, or has a broken shell or frame
- the seat has missing parts such as the buckle, retainer clip, shield, or pad
- the instruction booklet is missing and the manufacturer has gone out of business
- the history of the seat is unknown

Source #3

It is not enough to collect the child safety seats and destroy them. Each community should develop a protocol for surrendering or turning in unsafe child safety seats. Careful documentation must be followed, and signatures and release from liability are critical. It is recommended that any form developed for a program be reproduced on carbonless, or NCR paper.



## Disposal





The original copy should be filed with the program coordinator, and the carbon copy should be given to the person surrendering the unsafe seat. A form to use for surrendering unsafe child safety seats is included in the Appendix of this guide; it may be reproduced or used as a model and customized for your particular needs.

## Bounties

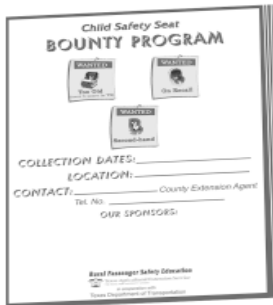
A reward or “bounty” is offered to anyone who turns in an eligible child safety seat. Bounties are distributed by individuals at the collection site. Bounties may include but are not limited to the following:



- free or discount coupons for pizza or other food items
- free dinner at local restaurants
- a ticket for a drawing (such as gift certificate, TV, or clothing)
- free school supplies
- free movie ticket(s)
- discount coupon for the purchase of a new child safety seat

*Source #1*

## Bounty Program Materials



Handbills, “reward” posters, flyers, and other materials that define unsafe seats and promote child passenger safety must be produced and distributed. A recognizable reward voucher (coupon for a free item) may be developed, or businesses may already have a coupon they prefer to use.

*Source #1*

The following materials are included for use with the bounty program:

- A telephone number or Web address for getting a recall/defect list.
  - NHTSA Auto Safety Hotline 1-888-DASH-2-DOT
  - [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)
  - [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org).
- A promotional flyer for rounding up used/unsafe child safety seats.
- A news article to promote the event.
- A news article to educate the public on the dangers of used child safety seats.
- A fact sheet about used child safety seats (included in the Appendix).

*Source #3*

Free child safety seat literature on correct selection, use, and installation may be obtained by contacting:

- Rural Passenger Safety Education Office at (979) 458-3428 or toll free at 1-877-SNUG-FIT
- Texas Department of Health–Safe Riders at 1-800-252-8255
- Texas Department of Transportation District Office
- County Extension agent with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service
- Texas Department of Public Safety - Safety Education Service

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

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1. What are collection sites, and what purposes do collection sites serve? How many sites are needed? Are people at collection sites knowledgeable about child safety seats?

Any business, agency, or organization that is easily accessible to the public and has storage space can be a collection site. The number of collection sites needed is based on the area served by the program. It is important to have enough sites so people won't have to drive long distances to turn in seats. A program serving a large metropolitan area or one operated statewide needs more locations than one serving a small town. People working in collection sites need not be familiar with child safety seat technology. Collection sites simply provide a place for people to bring unsafe child safety seats in exchange for a reward. Other ways collection sites can be involved include displaying posters, advertising the program, talking about the program, distributing educational materials, and hosting destruction events.

2. Does it cost a lot of money to implement a bounty program?

No, it does not have to be an expensive program. Sponsors are not hard to find.

3. How long should a bounty program run?

There is no ideal length of time. Some communities have continued to





collect and destroy seats as an ongoing activity with or without rewards. When deciding how long you wish to operate a program, consider the following:

- How much time does the committee think is necessary to collect a reasonable number of child safety seats?
- Will the drop sites have sufficient space to store the collected child safety seats for the duration of the program? If not, can storage space be arranged elsewhere?
- Does the public have enough time to become familiar with and participate in the program?

NOTE: Regardless of the length of the program, people will continue to bring in seats many months after the program has ended.

4. Must all the seats be destroyed, or can those in better condition be recycled?

It is not recommended that a loaner program be added to the original objective of the bounty effort. A bounty effort and a loaner program are two separate and distinct projects and should not be combined into one. There is a real liability if child safety seats are not destroyed but recycled.

5. Can the metal or plastic parts of the bounty seats be recycled?

In theory, yes, the parts may be recycled. However, most businesses who collect the child safety seats and safety advocates are not interested in recycling parts of child safety seats.

6. Are there liability concerns in operating a bounty program?

Probably not if all the seats are destroyed and the collection of child safety seats is carefully documented.

7. Should a limit be placed on how many “rewards” any one person can collect? What if a thrift or secondhand store wants to turn in seats?

Other bounty programs have found it useful not to place any limits on the number of rewards a person can collect. Encourage thrift stores and secondhand stores to examine their inventory and to participate in the program.

*Source #1*

## Sources

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1. NHTSA Safe & Sober Planner on Bounty Programs. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Planner 18, February–May, 1999 and Planner 21, February–May, 2000.
2. Child Passenger Safety List Serve, selected responses from various individuals and organizations with experience conducting bounty programs.
3. NHTSA CPS Standardized Curriculum National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Child Passenger Safety, 2000.
4. <http://www.childsafety.org/bounty2.html>

Certain portions of this guide were adapted from a variety of sources.

# ***Child Safety Seat Bounty Program Guide***

## ***Appendix***

## Used Child Safety Seat Checklist

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Does the child safety seat have a label showing it is manufactured after January 1, 1981?  | " YES: May continue to use<br>" NO: DISCARD the seat!   |
| 2. Does the child safety seat have a label showing that it meets all federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards?  | " YES: May continue to use<br>" NO: DISCARD the seat!   |
| 3. Has the child safety seat ever been involved in a car crash?   | " NO: May continue to use<br>" YES: DISCARD the seat!   |
| 4. Has the child safety seat been recalled for a safety defect? (To find out, call the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-DASH2DOT, and give the model number and date of manufacture of the seat.) | " NO: May continue to use<br>" YES: Have the defects been corrected?  |
| 5. Are there any cracks, bends, or breaks in the plastic shell or metal frame, or is the buckle rusted?   | " NO: May continue to use<br>" YES: DISCARD the seat!   |
| 6. Are the manufacturer's instructions present?   | " YES: May continue to use<br>" NO: Call Auto Safety Hotline for telephone number of manufacturer to request instructions |
| 7. Does the child safety seat have all its parts: harness straps, chest clip, padding, and buckle?  | " YES: May continue to use<br>" NO: DISCARD or obtain replacement parts from manufacturer                                 |
| 8. Is the child safety seat more than five years old (in Texas)?  | " NO: May continue to use<br>" YES: DISCARD the seat!   |
| 9. Are the harness straps frayed?   | " NO: May continue to use<br>" YES: DISCARD the seat or obtain replacement parts from the manufacturer.                   |
| 10. Is the history of the child safety seat known?  | " YES: May continue to use<br>" NO: DISCARD the seat!   |
- Source #1*



## Sample Public Service Announcement

Tell me, did you buy your child safety seat at a garage sale? No, you borrowed it from your cousin or next door neighbor. Did you do it to save money? Everyday, someone in America does just what you did. So what's the big deal? The child safety seat may not be so safe! It could be on recall, have been in a crash, or just be too old!

This is Chief/Deputy (name) inviting all (town/county) residents to participate in the first annual Child Safety Seat Bounty Program. Local child safety advocates and businesses are working together to collect and destroy child safety seats that are judged unsafe for your child. Rewards will be given for each unsafe seat collected. Bring your old, borrowed, or secondhand safety seat to one of the following collection sites: (list collection sites).

For more information, call your local county Extension agent at: (phone number). This message has been brought to you by (organization's name), local law enforcement, and this radio station to get unsafe child safety seats out of circulation.

Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.  
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

## **Sample Promotional News Article Wanted! Old and Used Child Safety Seats!**

It is the law in Texas that children must be properly restrained when in a vehicle. One of the best methods to properly restrain children is to use child safety seats that have been specifically designed to protect young passengers in motor vehicles. Is your child at risk in an unsafe seat? If the child safety seat was purchased secondhand from another person via the Web, a yard sale, flea market, or thrift store, your child could be at risk. Parents may believe all child safety seats provide equal protection; however, they may not realize some child safety seats are unsafe.

There are many hidden dangers when using a secondhand child safety seat. To help determine what some of those dangers are, ask the following questions. Do you know if the child safety seat has been involved in a car crash? Has the child safety seat been recalled by the government? Is the child safety seat labeled to meet motor vehicle safety standards? Do you know the original owner and the complete history of the child safety seat? How old is the seat?

To help answer some or all of these questions, local child safety advocates are coming together to collect and destroy child safety seats that are judged unsafe for use. A reward will be given for each unsafe seat surrendered. The (sponsoring agency) is sponsoring a Used Child Safety Seat Rally, and the residents of (city / county) are encouraged to be a part of this life-saving event. Unsafe seats will be collected and destroyed throughout the month of (month).

Everyone is encouraged to bring their child safety seat to (names of businesses) to determine just how safe it is. Trained individuals from participating businesses and agencies will go over a checklist with parents and care givers to determine if the child safety seat is safe or if it needs to be destroyed.

For more information, call (name and phone number of a contact person).

## Sample News Article for Educational Purposes How Safe are Used Child Safety Seats?

Have you ever surfed the Web or visited an auction site and considered buying a used child safety seat? Have you ever considered buying a child safety seat at a garage sale? Thinking about borrowing one from family or friends to save money? You're not alone. Unknowingly, many parents and grandparents purchase or borrow used child safety seats that are actually unsafe. There are many factors to consider before you use a secondhand or borrowed child safety seat.

The following are some questions to ask before borrowing or buying a used child safety seat. Do you know the history of the child safety seat? Has the child safety seat been involved in a crash—even a low speed crash? Are all parts of the child safety seat present and in good condition, such as the harness straps, retainer clip, buckles, and padding? Are all of the labels present on the child safety seat? How old is the seat? Is the manufacturer's instruction booklet present? What happens if the answer to any of these questions is no? Then the child safety seat is probably unsafe for your child or grandchild.

If the child safety seat was involved in a crash, **do not use it**. Possible unseen damage may make the child safety seat less effective in a second crash. Manufacturers emphasize that all crashed seats must be replaced and then destroyed.

Are all of the parts present? If they aren't, do not use the seat. If a part is missing, can it be replaced by the manufacturer? A simple phone call to the manufacturer will tell for sure.

Labeling on child safety seats is critical. Every child safety seat must have a label that states that it meets federal safety standards. If this label is missing, do not use the seat. Labels also state the date of manufacture and the model number of the seat. This information is needed to determine if a child safety seat has been recalled.

To find out if a child safety seat has been recalled, call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-DASH-2-DOT or visit the Website at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov). When calling, have the date of manufacture and the model number available for the customer service representative. If the seat has been recalled, have the necessary repairs been completed? If repairs have not been completed, do not use the seat.

Why does it matter if a child safety seat is more than five years old? Due to hot weather in Texas, the recommended life of a child safety seat is five years or less. Seats may have suffered from exposure to heat, sunlight, or even severe cold over those five years. It is impossible to know the effect of this exposure on the straps and the shell, plus they may not meet current federal safety standards.

And why is an instruction booklet needed? The booklet gives valuable information on how to install the child safety seat and other important information. Label instructions may not be complete or adequate to assure correct use.

Confused if your child safety seat is the best it can be for your child? Then contact your local county Extension agent or bounty program coordinator for more information at (phone number).

# Child Safety Seat BOUNTY PROGRAM



**COLLECTION DATES:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT:** \_\_\_\_\_ *County Extension Agent*

Tel. No. \_\_\_\_\_

**OUR SPONSORS:**

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The Texas Department of Transportation

## Surrender of Unsafe Child Safety Seat Form

Bounty Program for the County/Community of \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating in this worthwhile project. Please provide your name, address, and phone number for our records. Please print legibly.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*street*

*city*

*zip code*

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, voluntarily surrender for destruction the child safety seat described below. I affirm that I am the owner of the child safety seat and am at least 18 years of age. I release \_\_\_\_\_ of any liability and fully understand the intent of the program.

How did you hear about the bounty program?

" Radio " Television " Newspaper " Friend

.....  
This portion to be filled out by bounty program representative.

Brand name of child safety seat: \_\_\_\_\_

Check appropriate line:

\_\_\_\_\_ Infant seat \_\_\_\_\_ Model number, if available

\_\_\_\_\_ Convertible seat \_\_\_\_\_ Date child safety seat surrendered

\_\_\_\_\_ Booster seat \_\_\_\_\_ Date child safety seat destroyed

\_\_\_\_\_ High back

\_\_\_\_\_ Shield

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of person  
receiving child safety seat*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed name of person  
receiving child safety seat*

## Used/Secondhand Child Safety Seats

**NEVER** purchase or borrow a used child safety seat under the following conditions:

- the seat was manufactured prior to January 1, 1981
- the seat is not labeled to meet federal safety standards
- the seat has ever been involved in a collision
- the seat is recalled by the government
- the seat has no date of manufacture and/or model number
- the seat is older than 10 years (five years in Texas)
- the seat is rusted, cracked, or has a broken shell or frame
- the seat has missing parts such as the buckle, retainer clip, shield, or pad
- the instruction booklet is missing and the manufacturer has gone out of business
- the history of the seat is unknown and cannot be found out

Source: *Standardized Child Passenger Safety Training Program, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2000.*

Developed by Rural Passenger Safety Education. 2000.

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The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

## ***Notes***

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