PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
September 18, 2008

Contact: Capt. Mark Welch
Florida Highway Patrol
(850) 617-2378

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES URGES PARENTS, CAREGIVERS TO GET CHILD SAFETY SEATS INSPECTED

~ Event aims to educate parents and guardians and protect our children ~

TALLAHASSEE – Did you know three out of four child safety seats are improperly installed in vehicles? That is why the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Division of the Florida Highway Patrol, the Florida Department of Transportation and Safe Kids Florida have joined forces with the Florida State University Seminole Boosters to urge parents and caregivers to visit a special booth at Doak Campbell Stadium on Sept. 20 to help kick off *National Child Passenger Safety Week.* Beginning at 2 p.m. before the FSU vs. Wake Forest football game, booths will be set up in the Seminole Village in front of the stadium. Thanks to the partnerships with FSU, DHSMV and DOT will have certified technicians available to provide child safety seat information, educational materials and other resources until 6:30 p.m. as part of *National Child Passenger Safety Week*.

"It is the responsibility of every parent and caregiver to make sure their children are safely restrained – every trip, every time," said Ralph Salvas, Occupant Protection Coordinator at the Florida Department of Transportation Safety Office**.** "We are urging everyone to get their child safety seats inspected."

According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration research, the lives of 8,325 children under age five have been saved by the proper use of child restraints during the past 30 years. Research shows that child restraints provide the best protection for all children up to age eight. After age eight, seat belts provide the best protection.

"When it comes to the safety of a child, there is no room for mistakes," said Kim Jones, Child Passenger Safety Program Coordinator for the Florida Highway Patrol. "For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers should refer to the *4 Steps for Kids* guidelines for determining which restraint system is best suited to protect children based on age and size."

4 Steps for Kids guidelines:

1. For the best possible protection, keep infants in the back seat in rear-facing child safety seats as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until at least age one and at least to 30 pounds.

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2. When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at least age one and at least 30 pounds), they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats in the back seat until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat (usually around age four and 50 pounds).
3. Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats (usually around age four and 50 pounds), they should ride in booster seats in the back seat until the vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age eight or when they are 4'9" tall).

4. When children outgrow their booster seats, (usually at age eight or when they are 4'9" tall), they can use the adult seat belts in the back seat if they fit properly (lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest).

For more information on *Child Passenger Safety Week* (Sept. 21-27), a national effort to remind parents and caregivers of the lifesaving effect child safety seats have in protecting young children, visit www.nhtsa.gov. For more information on the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' Child Passenger Safety Program, please visit www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/CPS.

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