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GIVE YOUR CHILD THE GIFT OF SAFETY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

~ Safety advocates help parents and caregivers protect their most precious cargo ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of children in the United States. To the surprise of many, most children are not properly buckled up. The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles urges parents to take no chances by having your child's safety seat inspected and properly installed. The Department is hosting an event today to help parents and caregivers do just that.

On Friday, Nov. 13, Nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians from Florida's departments of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Transportation and Health; Leon County Emergency Medical Services; and Safe Kids are working together at DHSMV's headquarters, located at 2900 Apalachee Parkway in Tallahassee, to inspect child safety seats for the public. CPS Technicians will be on site from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. to ensure that all child seats are properly installed. In addition to this service, DHSMV offers low-cost child seats and boosters for low-income parents who qualify.

Last year, as DHSMV implemented credit card transactions in all state-run offices, American Express agreed to donate a quarter for every credit card transaction that used an American Express card to fund child safety seats. As part of today's safety seat event, American Express donated \$10,000 to the Florida Highway Patrol Advisory Board to purchase 200 child safety seats for families in need.

"The Department is pleased to partner with American Express and the FHP Advisory Council on this important program that will protect hundreds of children who travel on our roadways," said DHSMV Executive Director Julie Jones. "As we approach the holiday season, one of the greatest gifts we can give our children is safety."

Approximately eight out of every 10 child safety seats are installed incorrectly, which in a crash could result in the same injuries as not using a seat at all. That is why the Department offers free inspections and installations, like those done at today's event in Tallahassee. To locate a member of the DHSMV team in locations throughout the state who can help check your child's seat and answer questions, visit www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/CPS/. If your child's seat is expired, recalled or in poor condition, the Department recommends getting a new seat. The Department provides child safety seats at a discounted price for those who cannot afford one. For more information about the program, call (850) 617-2379.

Families who wish to have their child's seat inspected should bring the child seat and the vehicle in which the seat is or will be installed.

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles provides highway safety and security through excellence in service, education and enforcement. The Department is leading the way to a safer Florida through the efficient and professional execution of its core mission: the issuance of driver licenses, vehicle tags and titles and operation of the Florida Highway Patrol. To learn more about DHSMV and the services offered, visit www.flhsmv.gov.

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