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News Release

For Immediate Release: September 24, 2018

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KPD hosts free car seat check as part of Child Passenger Safety Week

LĪHU'E – In recognition of National Child Passenger Safety Week, the Kaua'i Police Department (KPD) will be hosting a free car seat safety inspection on Saturday, Sept. 29, from 9 a.m. to noon at Walmart in Līhu'e.

"In order to be effective, car seats must be the right fit for both your child and vehicle, and they must be properly installed," says Acting Deputy Chief Robert Gausepohl. "Car seat installation can be a complicated process, which is why we urge all parents and guardians to take advantage of this free event on Saturday to help ensure your child's safety."

Specially trained officers will inspect car seats and installations, and make the necessary recommendations or adjustments right there on the spot.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), car crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 13. Research has shown that properly installed child safety seats can reduce the risk of infant fatalities by 71 percent, and by 54 percent for toddlers, ages 1 to 4 years old.

In 2016, statistics showed that among 826 children who were killed in a fatal crash that year, 289 were unrestrained.

"Tragically, that means more than one-third of children killed in 2016 while riding passenger vehicles were not buckled in at all," adds Acting Deputy Chief Gausepohl. "Please don't make the same preventable mistake. Properly buckling up your keiki is not only required by law, but it can save your child's life."

Hawai'i state law requires children under the age of 4 to ride in a child safety seat, and children under the age of 8 to ride in a child passenger restraint or booster seat. Violators could face a fine of up to \$500, and may be required to take a child passenger safety course.

Safety officers additionally advise that children remain in a booster seat until they are big enough to fit in a seat belt properly, even if they are over the age of 8. According to NHTSA, a proper seat belt should lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snugly across the shoulder and chest, and not across the neck or face.

For tips to increase your child's car seat safety, visit www.nhtsa.gov.

National Child Passenger Safety Week runs from Sept. 23 through 29.

For more information on car seat inspections, please call KPD's Traffic Safety Section at 241-1611.

To request an ASL interpreter, materials in an alternate format, or other auxiliary aid support, or an interpreter for a language other than English, please contact Sgt. Jason Overmyer at 241-1611 before the event.

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