

**Destroy:**  
Farmington Hills  
firefighters Paul  
Cusac, Steve  
Biebel and John  
Kastran use the  
Jaws of Life tool  
to destroy recalled  
and defective child  
restraint seats.

STAFF PHOTO BY  
BILL BOWEN



### Tips to keep kids safe inside vehicles

- Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat with a passenger side air bag.
  - The safest place for all children under 12 years old is in the back seat.
  - Infants must remain in a rear-facing car seat until they are at least 1-year-old and 20 pounds. If infants weigh more than 20 pounds before age 1, they should be in a convertible car seat that is "combination" infants more than 20 pounds in a rear-facing position.
  - Children under 40 pounds need to be in an approved car seat. Children between 40-70 pounds need to be in appropriate booster seat, since seatbelts don't fit kids correctly.
  - Always read the directions that come with your child's car seat, and the directions that come with your car, to make sure you are using it right.
  - Send in the registration form that comes with the car seat so you can be notified if the car seat is recalled. To find out if a seat has been recalled, phone 1-800-424-9393.
  - Never use a car seat that has been involved in a crash.
  - Make sure the car seat is tight in the car. You may need to use a locking clip (the H-shaped metal piece that comes with the seat) to get a tight fit. Check your vehicle owner's manual.
- Source: Oakland County Health Division

## Seats from page A1

tions - by appointment only - 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday the first and third week of the month at the health department's Southfield, Walled Lake or Pontiac sites.

The city of Farmington Hills could soon offer its own child safety seat check-ups. Hills Fire Department Lt. Mike Garr is taking classes to become a certified inspector.

"When they do it at an auto dealership, they do the inspections in a service bay area. We can do that here at the fire station," Garr said.

When parents buy a child carrier seat, they assume the apparatus is safe. And most of them are, but manufacturers do the safety tests themselves.

Some seats are on the market before the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration conducts crash tests, which in some cases can result in product recalls.

When buying a new child seat, experts recommend reading the instructions. They also urge people to send in the accompanying registration card so owners can be notified if there is a recall. In some cases, the whole seat doesn't need to be replaced. It may just need a new buckle or strap

that can be sent by mail.

Elsesser shows how on one seat the buckle easily comes undone. "Who knows what would've happened if this had ever been involved in a crash," she said.

Beyond that are a multitude of parents unknowingly using unsafe seats to transport their children because the equipment has been passed down from friends or relatives, bought at a rummage sale, or - as Elsesser found out - even picked out of the garbage.

First of all, experts don't recommend buying seats second-hand.

"If you bought a seat from a garage sale, pitch it," said Nancy Delany, Metro Detroit Safe Kids Coalition coordinator.

If parents are unsure, they can phone 1 (800) 424-9393 to find out if the seat has been recalled.

As Elsesser has found in a short time, one owner is enough to render a seat "rotty." Some of the grimy seats she's confiscated are encrusted with syrup and cereal remnants.

"You look at some of them and say to yourself, 'How could you put your child into this?'" she said.

## Bust from page A1

is a crack cocaine user.

Because of his involvement in a custody dispute, the man was patted down for weapons.

Police found no weapons, but the man volunteered he had marijuana in his crotch. Officers subsequently retrieved a plastic bag with a quarter ounce of the drug.

When asked how much cash he had on him, the man said \$30,000. Police counted \$3,024 in a fancy pack and asked him about the discrepancy.

The man told them there was \$13,000 and marijuana in the suitcase in his car. A sum of \$13,600 was found in a duffel bag as well as another

**■ The man told them there was \$13,000 and marijuana in the suitcase in his car. A sum of \$13,600 was found in a duffel bag as well as another ounce of marijuana.**

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The money, mostly \$100 bills, was wrapped in plastic and then bound with duct tape. Officers also found a small scale.

South Oakland Narcotics Investigative Consortium later found 71 grams of marijuana during a search of his Detroit home.

Police contacted the child's mother, who picked up her

son at the station. The boy was unharmed.

The boy's mother said the man has no job and makes money selling large quantities of marijuana.

"He definitely was headed in the right direction: The sally port is where prisoners are unloaded and picked up," Nebus said. "Maybe he had a premonition."

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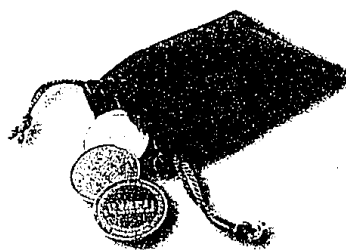
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