



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Review Of Child Safety Car Restraints Pilot Program

Date:	October 29, 2008
To:	Community Development and Recreation
From:	Fire Chief, Toronto Fire Services
Wards:	All Wards
Reference Number:	p:\2008\CluserB\FIR\cd0817

SUMMARY

Currently, the Toronto Fire Services' pilot program to install child safety car restraints is conducted on a monthly basis in the East, South, North, and West commands. Because of the need to schedule participants' appointments to allow appropriate time for installation, participants not showing up to scheduled times, and the low volume of seat installations, it is suggested that based on the pilot project the monthly program is not efficient. It is proposed that Fire Services participate in the Toronto Child Safety Seat Coalition events three to four times per year to potentially assist in increasing the number of installations. The coalition is comprised of Toronto Police, Toronto Public Health and the Ministry of Transportation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Chief of Toronto Fire Services recommends that:

1. Toronto Fire Services discontinue the current format of the Child Safety Car Restraints pilot program and that, alternatively, Toronto Fire Services' Prevention Inspectors participate in the Toronto Child Safety Seat Coalition events held periodically with the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Public Health and the Ministry of Transportation.
2. The dates of the Toronto Child Safety Seat Coalition clinics be circulated to manufacturers and distributors of safety car seats.

3. Toronto Fire Services maintain a hotline that can be called by the public to be informed of upcoming clinics and respond to inquiries concerning car seat installations.

Financial Impact

This report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in Fire Services' Operating Budget.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on May 23, 24 and 25, 2007, City Council authorized Fire Services to offer a program that assists citizens in the proper installation of Child Safety Car Restraints on a monthly basis in the East, South, North and West commands. The Community Development and Recreation Committee at its May 7, 2007 meeting, requested the Fire Chief to report back in the Fall of 2008 with a review of the pilot program.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-3271.pdf>

COMMENTS

The following locations for the pilot program were chosen to assist with the safe administration of the program. The locations are in the North Command Fire Station 121, 10 William Carson Cr. (South of Yonge & 401), in the South Command at Fire Station 321, 231 McRae Dr. (East of Laird Dr.), in the East Command at the Scarborough Fire Museum, 351 Birchmount Rd. (North of Danforth Rd.) and in the West Command at Station 423, 358 Keele St. (South of Dundas).

In 2007, Toronto Fire Services attended three Toronto Child Safety Seat Coalition clinics and participated with Police, Ministry of Transportation and Coalition staff for a total of 480 car seat checks. Additional training was required to allow Fire Prevention staff to participate in the Fire Services pilot program and because of the limited dates for external training the pilot program implementation was delayed.

Review of Program:

As part of the training from January to September 2008 with the car seat coalition, Fire Services participated with the Coalition team for a total of 126 car seat checks.

In 2008 as part of the 3 Toronto Child Safety Seat Coalition clinics, Toronto Fire Services participated as part of the team for a total of 380 car seat checks. Over a 6-month period the monthly Fire Services' pilot program performed 41 car seat checks with approximately 24 cancellations.

Review Of Child Safety Car Restraints Pilot Program

The Fire Services pilot car seat clinics are held the 1st week of every month in the East Command, the 2nd week of every month in the West Command, the 3rd week of every month in the North command and the 4th week of every month in the South Command. This provides 12 clinics per year in each command.

The clinics operate from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and appointments are made through a central phone number. The program has 2 Fire Prevention inspectors in each command with the appointment time to complete a total of 4 car seat inspections per clinic. Each command has the potential for 48 car seat installations that allows the capacity to complete 192 installations per year. Because appointments must be scheduled to allow the required time for potential difficult installations the number of inspections are limited.

The efficiency of the car seat installation program is an issue if Toronto Fire Services continues with the current model. If, for instance, the program was cost recoverable for staff time for current car seat installation volume, it would cost approximately \$108.00 to install one car seat.

The following constraints also impact the value of continuing the program in its current form:

- The need for ongoing training and certification of appropriate staff.
- Last minute cancellations that can occur by participants scheduled for an installation.
- The fact that Fire Services' staff cannot alter the motor vehicle, including installation of anchor bolts, in any way. The training from St. John Ambulance does not authorize the insertion of such anchor bolts. If this were required, the participant would be instructed to have the bolt installed by an authorized car dealership.

The Inspection of a child safety car seat includes the correct placement of the seat in the motor vehicle, the correct angle of the seat within the vehicle, the correct use and path of the restraint belts, the correct location of the vehicle seats and advice on how to ensure the child is not injured due to loose objects left within the car.

Option for Installation of Car Seat Program:

It is proposed that Toronto Fire Services participate in the Toronto Child Safety Seat Coalition comprising of Police, Fire and Coalition members. This is far more cost effective because:

- Appointments do not need to be scheduled and there are 6 to 10 car seat staging areas that can respond to the larger number of participants.
- There is no down time of staff waiting for appointment times of individuals who do not show up for the appointment.

- Coordination of having experienced staff available in installing difficult car seat installations will reduce time of installation per seat.

The dates of the Toronto Child Safety Seat Coalition clinics will be circulated to manufacturers and distributors of safety car seats. Toronto Fire Services will remain a contact point for the public with a hotline that can be called by the public to be informed of upcoming clinics and respond to inquiries concerning car seat installations.

Fire Prevention staff are used as the car seat inspectors and installers. This allows staff to be present for the duration of the car seat clinic. If operational Fire Fighters were used at a clinic they would not be available for the prescribed installation hours when responding to emergencies.

CONTACT

Jim Stoops, Executive Officer
Toronto Fire Services
Phone: 338-9550, Fax: 338-9060
E-mail: jstoops@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE



William A. Stewart
Fire Chief