

# Protect Your Kids with Safety Seats



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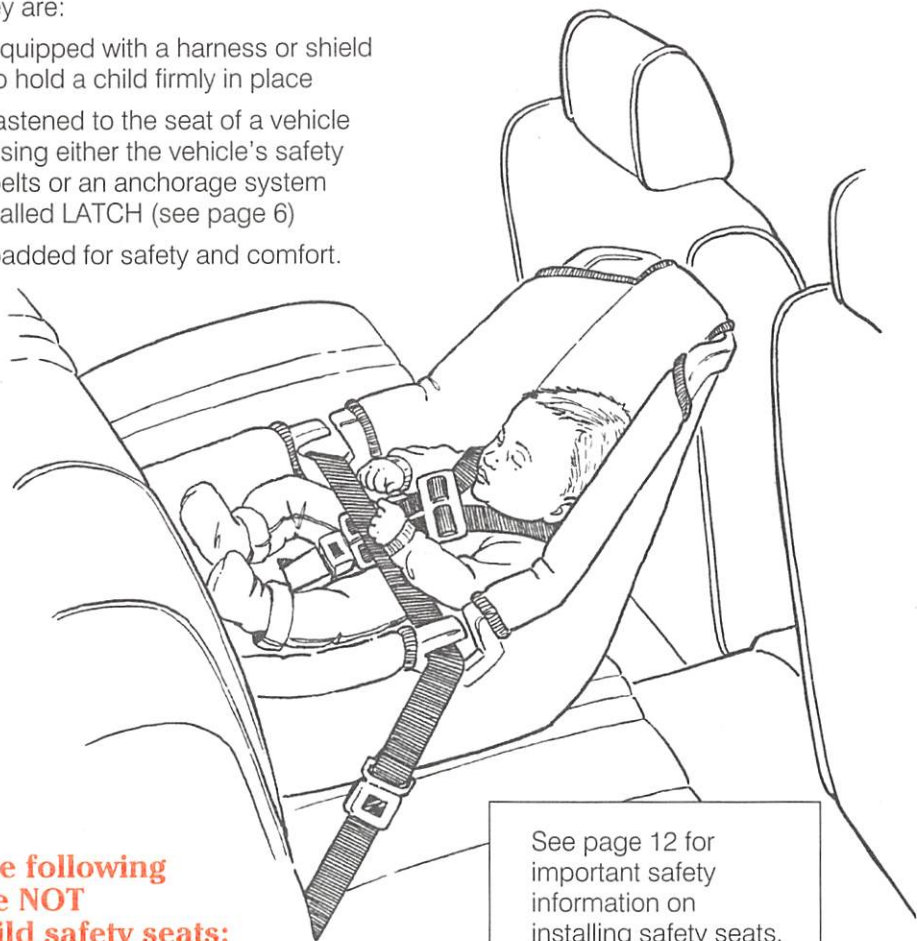
# What are child safety seats?

They're special restraints that protect babies and small children in any moving vehicle.

## Here's how safety seats work.

They are:

- equipped with a harness or shield to hold a child firmly in place
- fastened to the seat of a vehicle using either the vehicle's safety belts or an anchorage system called LATCH (see page 6)
- padded for safety and comfort.



## The following are NOT child safety seats:

- home feeder-seats
- seats that keep a child strapped in but are not belted or anchored to the vehicle.

See page 12 for important safety information on installing safety seats.

These are both inadequate for crash protection.

# Why should I know about child safety seats?

## Because they save lives!

- Without proper protection, children can easily be hurt -- even in minor crashes or sudden stops.
- Child safety seats make riding much safer for kids.

By using safety belts yourself and insisting that your children use safety seats, you help develop lifelong safety habits.

## Children depend on adults for protection.

As an adult, you're responsible for the safety of any children who ride in your vehicle.



### Important Notice

**Please read:** The publisher has taken care in the preparation of this booklet, but the information it contains does not necessarily describe particular situations you may encounter. You should ask a qualified expert or professional for advice about your particular situation.

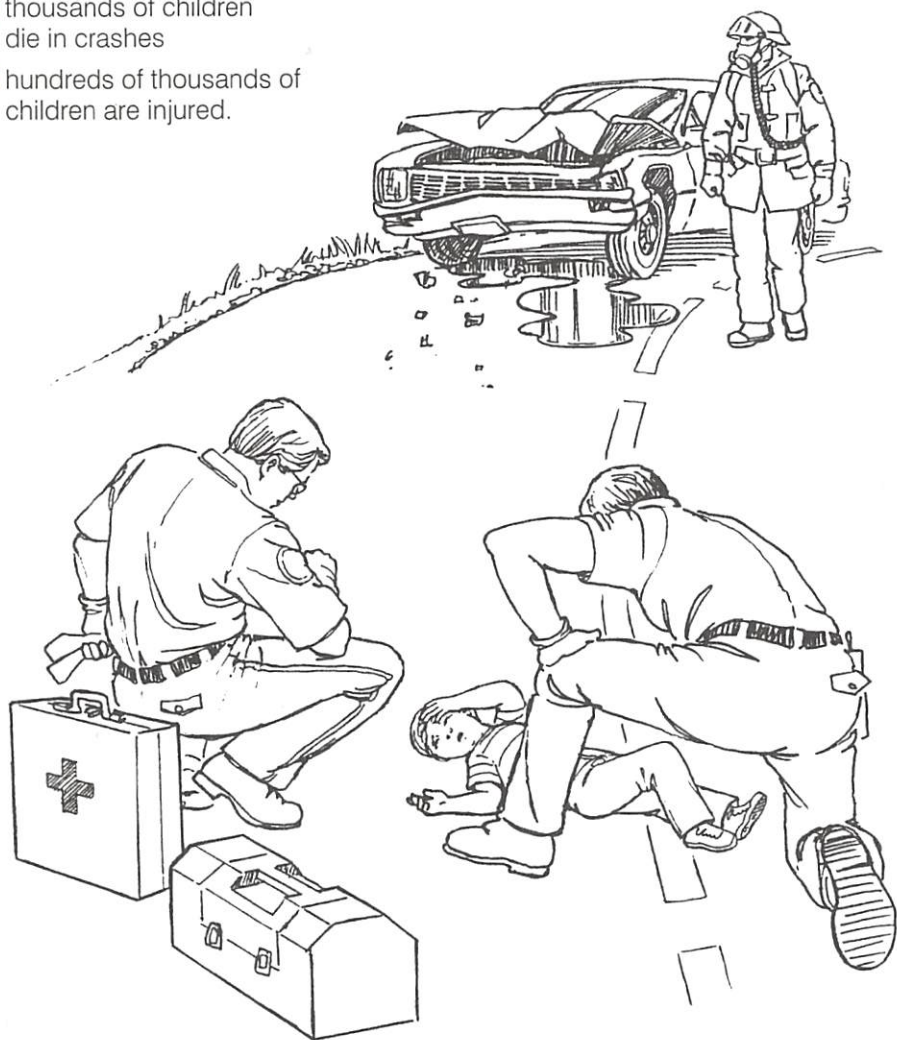
**Child safety seats are required by law throughout the U.S.**

# A vehicle can be a dangerous place for kids.

Car crashes are a leading killer of children.

## Every year:

- thousands of children die in crashes
- hundreds of thousands of children are injured.



**Remember:**  
Even if you're a safe driver, others may not be!



# Children are easily hurt.

## Children are more likely to be injured than adults.

That's because they have:

- softer neck bones
- stretchier ligaments in the neck
- larger and heavier heads in proportion to their bodies
- more fragile bodies.

## Child safety seats help prevent death and injury.

- Crashes can happen anywhere, any time. But most occur close to home, on short trips.
- Child safety seats are designed to meet young passengers' special needs for protection.



**That's why you need to use a proper child safety seat -- beginning with the first ride home from the hospital.**

# How safety seats protect a child

In a sudden stop or swerve, unrestrained passengers keep moving at the speed the vehicle is traveling -- until they hit something.

## Most injuries to children are the result of being:

- thrown into a windshield, dashboard, etc.
- crushed by an adult
- thrown from the vehicle.

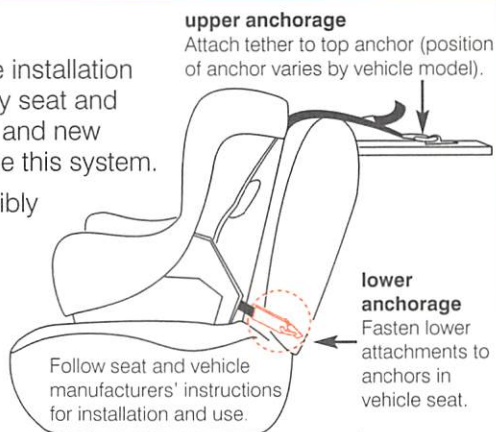
Even at low speeds, an unrestrained child will be thrown with great force. An adult cannot hold on to a child against such force.



## The LATCH\* system

The LATCH system allows secure installation using hardware both on the safety seat and in the vehicle. Most new vehicles and new safety seats (except boosters) use this system.

Older cars and safety seats possibly can have an upper anchorage added to them (see illustration). Contact the seat's and vehicle's manufacturers to see if this is possible.



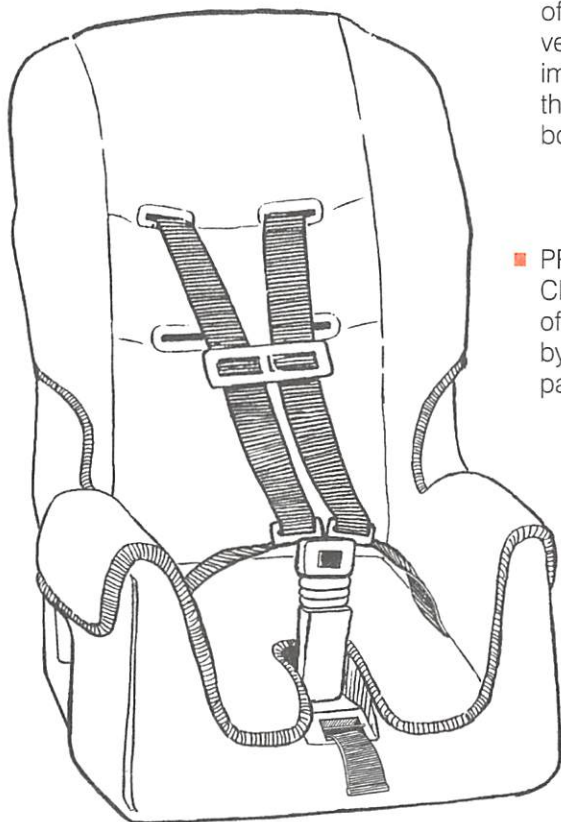
\*Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children

Adapted from NHTSA sources

**Follow the seat and vehicle manufacturers' instructions for installation and use.**

## **A child safety seat is designed to:**

- **HOLD**  
THE CHILD  
securely in  
the vehicle  
and in  
the seat
- **PROTECT**  
THE CHILD  
from hitting  
something  
inside the  
vehicle or  
from being  
thrown out  
of the vehicle
- **ABSORB**  
THE FORCE  
of a sudden  
stop or  
swerve



- **SPREAD**  
THE FORCE  
of the  
vehicle's  
impact over  
the whole  
body -- safely
- **PREVENT**  
CRUSHING  
of the child  
by other  
passengers.

**Proper use of an effective safety seat -- every time  
a child rides -- can make the difference between life  
and death!**

# There are 4 types of child safety seats.

## Infant safety seats

are suitable for children up to 1 year old and up to 20 lb.\*

- Babies must ride facing the rear -- in the back seat.
- Never install an infant safety seat facing forward.
- The safety harness that straps the baby to the carrier must be adjusted properly.
- The safety seat must be tightly anchored by the vehicle lap belt or by the LATCH system.

Switch to a rear-facing convertible seat if the infant outgrows the seat (by weight or height) before reaching age 1.



## Convertible infant/toddler seats

are suitable for children from birth up to 40 lb.\*

- Use the convertible seat facing the rear until your child is at least 1 year old and at least 20 lb. After that, the seat may face forward.
- If your child is less than 1 year old and over 20 lb., use a convertible seat that has a higher weight limit in the rear-facing position.



**All children 12 and under should ride in the back seat. But, ask your vehicle manufacturer if you need to have side air bags deactivated. Never use a safety seat in a seat that has a front air bag!**



## Toddler-only seats

are for children over 1 year old and over 20 lb. up to 40 lb.\*

- Children ride facing forward.
- Some car makers offer built-in toddler seats on certain models.
- Some toddler seats convert to booster seats.



## Booster seats

are for children who have outgrown toddler seats but who aren't big enough to safely use the vehicle safety belts. In general, children should use a booster seat until they are about 4'9" tall. Used correctly, the booster helps ensure the safety belts fit properly.

Experts recommend using a belt-positioning booster. This requires the use of lap and shoulder belts. (If your vehicle has no shoulder belts in the rear seat, have them installed.)



\*Weight and size limits of seats may vary by model. Always consult and follow the manufacturer's exact instructions concerning weight and size limitations.

**Keep your child in a booster seat for as long as possible (see page 14).**

# Choose the right safety seat.

Pick one that:

## Fits your vehicle

Make sure the seat fits in your vehicle before you buy, if possible. Use the instruction manual!

- The safety seat shouldn't extend over the seat edge.
- Make sure the harness and belts are long enough.

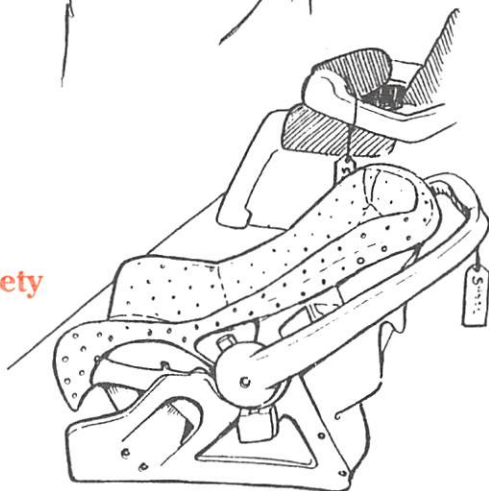
## Fits your child

The safety seat must fit your child's height and weight. It should keep a young child from getting out while you're driving. A seat that's too large or small may not protect your child.

## Meets federal standards

Look for a label that certifies the seat meets federal safety standards and that has the seat's date of manufacture and model number on it.

**Certified technicians are available to inspect your safety seat and install it correctly. Call 1-866-SEAT-CHECK or visit [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org) for more information.**



## Always use safety seats.

Use a safety seat for the first ride home from the hospital -- and for every ride!

## Don't let cost stand in your way.

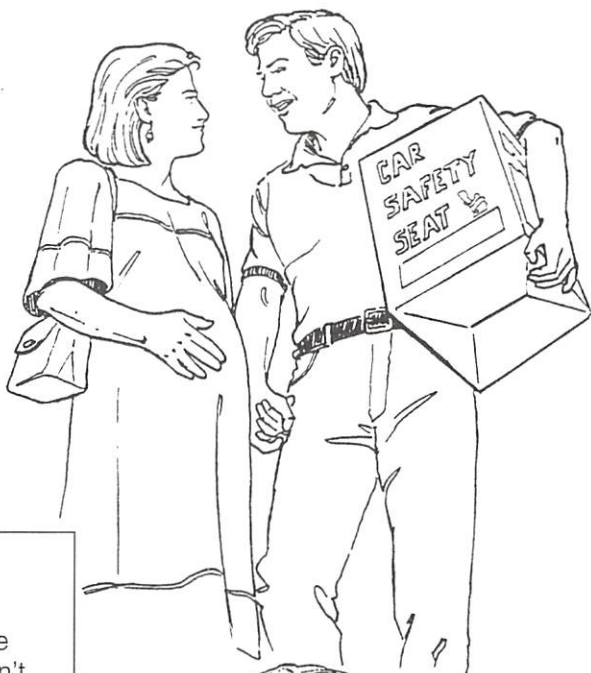
Contact your local hospital or health department about rental or loan programs.

## Invest in a new safety seat.

Used car seats may have suffered damage you can't see. This may make the seat unsafe. If you absolutely must use a used seat:

- Contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at 1-888-327-4236 or visit [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) to find out if the seat has been recalled. (Check about your new seat from time to time, too.)
- Contact the seat manufacturer and ask when your seat should be replaced.

Never use a seat that's been in a crash.



**Your child's safety is priceless!**

# Proper installation and use

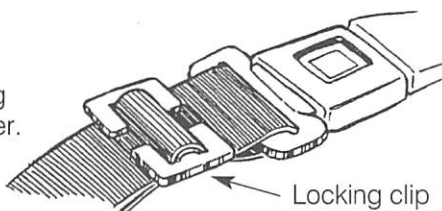
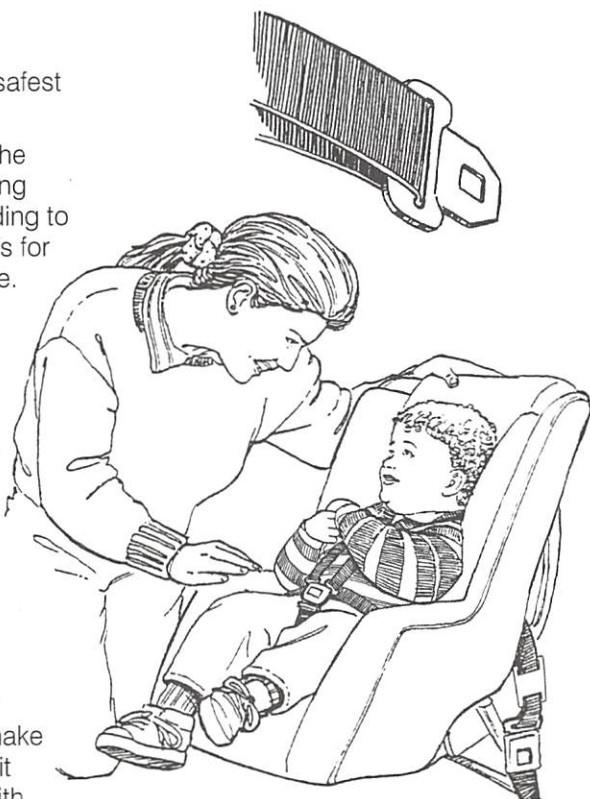
Safety seats are unsafe if improperly installed and used. Read and carefully follow the seat and vehicle manufacturers' instructions for:

## Installation

- Place the safety seat in the safest spot -- the back seat.\*
- Fasten the safety seat with the vehicle's safety belt -- or using the LATCH system -- according to the manufacturer instructions for both the seat and the vehicle. A special locking clip may be needed for one-piece lap/shoulder belts.
- Infant safety seats must face the rear to be effective.
- Never install a safety seat in a seat that has a front air bag.

## Use

- Read and follow the vehicle and safety seat manufacturers' instructions.
- For seats with harnesses, make sure the straps fit snugly. (Fit should be straight across with no slack, without pressing or pushing the child unnaturally.)
- Use the recommended tilt only.
- Buckle the harness before covering a child with blankets in cold weather.
- Don't use a safety seat that your child has outgrown.



\*If your vehicle has no back seat or you are absolutely unable to avoid transporting a child in the front seat, see a dealer or mechanic for information about a front air bag on/off switch. Also, if you have side air bags alongside seats occupied by children, ask the vehicle manufacturer if the side air bags should be deactivated. If you have questions, call the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236.



# Some questions and answers

## Is holding a child in my lap safe enough?

No, not even for short rides. In fact, this is the most dangerous way for a child to ride. In a crash or sudden stop, your child could be thrown from your arms and badly hurt by the impact. You could also be thrown on top of the child with crushing force if you're not wearing your belt.



## Should pregnant women wear safety belts?

Yes. Pregnant women should protect themselves and their babies by wearing lap belts (under the abdomen, low across the hips and upper thighs) and shoulder belts (diagonally between the breasts and to the side of the belly).



## Can child safety seats be used for air travel?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recommends their use. However, only certain models are acceptable. Contact the FAA and check your airline's policies before you travel.

# Keep older children safe, too!

Safety belts should safely fit children who have outgrown booster seats (check your seat's manual for size limits).

## Teach them how to fasten a lap belt properly:

- across the lap/upper thighs
- below the stomach
- adjusted snugly.\*

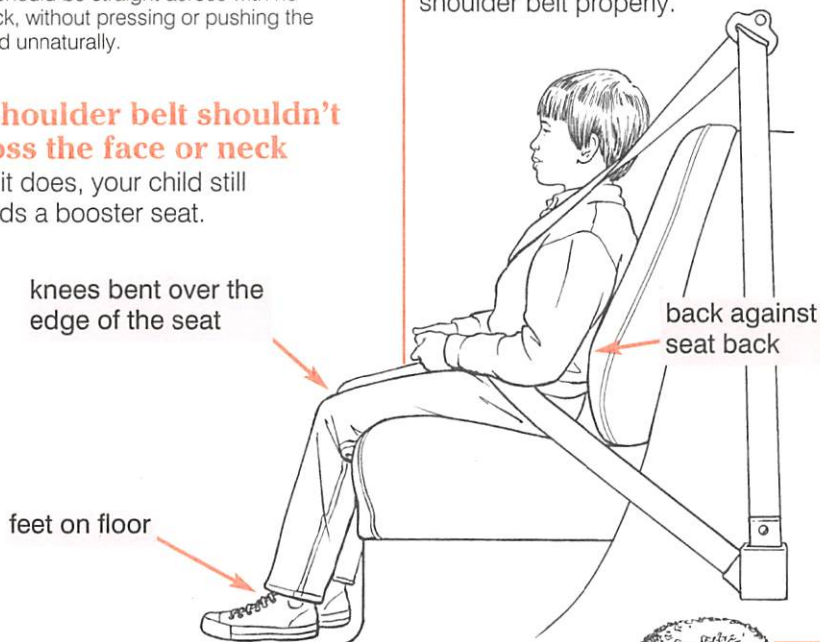
\*Fit should be straight across with no slack, without pressing or pushing the child unnaturally.

## A shoulder belt shouldn't cross the face or neck

-- if it does, your child still needs a booster seat.

## How to know your child is ready

To use the vehicle's safety belts, your child should be able to sit as shown. In general, a child must be about 4'9" tall to use just a lap and shoulder belt properly.



**Remember, the back seat is the safest place for children 12 and under to ride.\***

\*See footnote on page 12.



# A child safety seat could save your child's life!

Don't delay:

## Choose

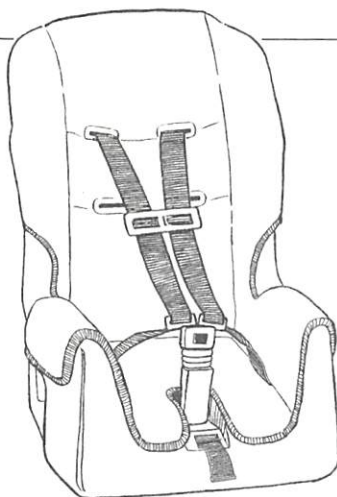
a child safety seat that fits your vehicle and suits your needs.

## Install

and use it properly.

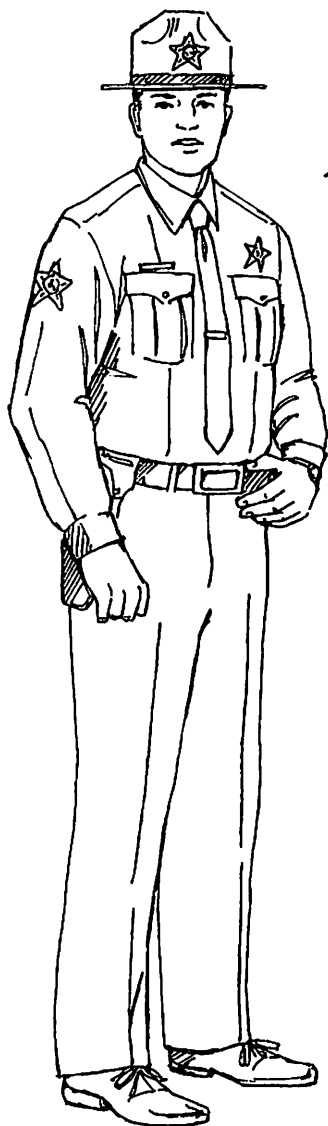
## Secure

your child carefully each time before setting out.



**Always wear your own safety belts, too.**

# SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHERIFF



Be a  
**Crime  
Stopper**  
Report suspicious  
activities to your  
local sheriff.



Help support the many  
educational programs of the  
Indiana Sheriffs' Association  
by becoming a member today.

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP.**

Contact the  
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(Limited quantities of this  
booklet may be obtained from  
your local sheriff or by contacting  
the Sheriffs' Association.)

