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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS CAR SEAT TECHNICIANS AVAILABLE

Child Passenger Seat technicians inspect seats, answer caregiver questions

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Three recent recruits to the Muscatine Fire Department are now certified car seat technicians after completing course work last week at Station 1 including working a drive through car seat inspection at the station on May 20.

Ben Danielson, Elaine Sheber, and Joe Colon were among those who volunteered to become Child Passenger Seat (CPS) technicians.

“Our goal is to have at least one car seat technician on each shift,” Fire Captain Joe Timmsen said. “But a lot of times that just is not feasible.”

Timmsen has been involved with the CPS Technician classes for the past 10 years and knows that having technicians on staff and able to educate the public on CPS safety is important.

“This is a great program that we can offer and support for our residents that we protect to make sure they are installed correctly because we know car seats are effective when correctly installed,” Jerry Ewers, Muscatine Fire Chief, said.

Because of the need for technicians, Muscatine brought in a car seat technician program and had volunteers to take the course including the three new recruits (Ben Danielson, Elaine Sheber, and Joe Colon). The four-day course is a 32-hour class that concludes with a car seat inspection program.

“One of the reasons it is so hard to get people to volunteer is because of the time commitment needed to become a technician,” Timmsen said. “That is a lot of time to spend training to become a technician along with everything else the staff is doing.”

The Muscatine Fire Department offers car seat inspections by appointment.

“We can work with caregivers who just come in without an appointment if there is a technician available,” Timmsen said. “That is why making an appointment is the best approach. But caregivers must remember that our first duty is to respond to emergency calls and they may have to wait until we return.”

Timmsen recommends emailing mfdsafe@muscatineiowa.gov to set up an appointment.

“Our technicians can show you how to install the car or booster seat, check to see if the seat was installed properly, and check for recalls on the car or booster seat,” Timmsen said.

Oftentimes people assume they have the car seat installed correctly but statistics have shown that 80 percent of the time there is some errors.

“We want to answer any questions caregivers might have, but also want to make sure that the right people are providing the answers,” Timmsen said.

The National Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Training Program is a partnership between the National Highway Traffic Safety Administrations (NHTSA), the National Child Passenger Safety Board (NCPBS), and Safe Kids Worldwide.

To be certified as a CPS Technician, candidates will be provided the opportunity to apply basic technical skills and knowledge to the correct installation and use of car seats, booster seats,



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and seat belts, learn how to educate caregivers in the proper selection, installation, and use of car seats and booster seats, and to be a resource in the community.