



Village of  
**Elmwood Park**

*Residents can call to schedule an appointment*

## **Elmwood Park Police offer free child safety seat training**

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ELMWOOD PARK – Parents with young children can have their child safety seats inspected and also receive hands-on training for how to properly install the safety seats, now that an Elmwood Park police officer has become a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST).

"The primary purpose of having Officer Michael Barrile certified to conduct these inspections is to educate parents and caregivers on the correct use of a child restraint," Elmwood Park Police Chief Frank Fagiano said. "We really want residents to take advantage of this opportunity to keep their kids safe in vehicles."

Every car seat is different and every vehicle is different. Studies have shown there is widespread misuse of car seats, booster seats and seat belts. "It's not as simple as you might think," Barrile said. "People just don't realize they're using them incorrectly."

Officer Barrile said his safety check includes inspecting the current safety seat installation and making recommendations, if any. He also educates caregivers about their particular car seat and about Illinois laws regarding age and weight.

"I always recommend best practices for each family's situation," Barrile explained. "They may have a perfectly good child safety seat, but have it installed incorrectly. I make sure the caregiver can properly install their own child seat before leaving." He said the typical safety inspection may take up to 45 minutes.

In studies conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to observe child safety seat compliance, nearly 80 percent of the child seats observed were misused in one or more ways. In some cases, the seat was not properly attached to the vehicle; in others, the child was not appropriately buckled into the seat.

Authorities point out that for a car seat to do its job, it must be the right seat for the child's age and size. In Illinois, children under age 1 and weighing less than 20 pounds should always be

placed in a rear-facing infant seat. When a child outgrows the rear-facing seat he or she may transition to a forward-facing seat with a harness system.

Barrile stays current on the NHTSA's safety seat recall list, which may be updated daily. He checks the list before each safety inspection. The recall list is available at [www.safecar.gov](http://www.safecar.gov).

Residents who want to take advantage of the free inspections and training are asked to schedule an appointment by calling 708-452-3924 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

[www.elmwoodpark.org](http://www.elmwoodpark.org)