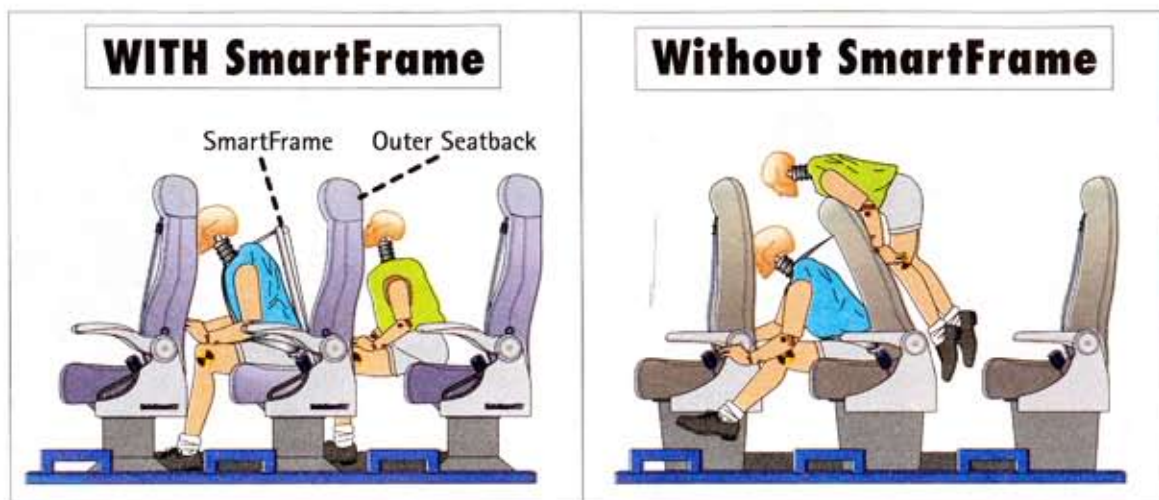


SafeGuard, American unveil revolutionary belted seat



During a frontal impact, the SafeGuard seat separates, above left, with the "smartframe" supporting belted passengers and the rest of the seat restraining unbelted

passengers. Traditional seat backs collapse forward in a frontal crash, right, leaving no protection for unbelted passengers.

ORLANDO — For the first time in a decade, a motorcoach seat has created a sensation at a UMA Motorcoach Expo.

What makes the seat unique is its patented construction that provides crash protection for both belted and unbelted passengers, and for both adults and small children.

The seat was developed by SafeGuard of Westfield, Ind., the leader in child passenger protection and the largest child seating safety products manufacturer in the world.

SafeGuard has formed a partnership with American Seating of Grand Rapids, Mich., to produce the innovative Premier seat for the motorcoach industry.

The Premier employs a dual-frame technology, which SafeGuard calls SmartFrame. The seat essentially separates into two pieces during a crash, providing protection to passengers who are using its three-point integral seatbelt, as well as those passengers who aren't buckled up.

The seat's inner structure, with its lap-shoulder belt, absorbs crash energy for belted passengers, while the outer seatback structure remains vertical to cushion anyone behind the seat who is not belted, providing full compartmentalization protection in frontal crashes.

SafeGuard and American Seating say the Premier is the only motorcoach seat combining lap-shoulder belts with full compartmentalization.

A slide mechanism on the shoulder belt allows small children, those weighing more than 40 pounds, to use the seat and have its full protection without special gear.

Perhaps the best testament to the seat's capabilities is the fact that Greyhound Lines has spec'd it for scores of Prevost X3-45 coach-

es it has ordered. At the time the 140-coach order was announced the name of the seat supplier was not revealed, only that the Prevosts being purchased by Greyhound would be seatbelt equipped. (See Oct. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Greyhound has a long history of not identifying its key suppliers, and neither SafeGuard nor American Seating executives would confirm Greyhound had specified the SafeGuard seats on its new X3-45s. But other industry executives did.

Unlike some manufacturers, SafeGuard maintains its own aggressive crash-testing program. To support the development of its bus seat products, SafeGuard has conducted more than 200 sled tests and 20 school bus rollover tests,

plus tested thousands of components to assure performance and durability.

With the introduction of the Premier seat, "American Seating and SafeGuard are working to address one of five federal highway safety priorities on the NTSB 'Most-Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements for 2008,'" said James Johnson, director of sales for SafeGuard, a division of IMMI, which specializes in designing and manufacturing restraint systems for off-highway vehicles, buses, boats and pets.

Johnson says the Premier is the only seat tested and capable of meeting Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards 208, 209, 210, 213, 222 and 225.



James Johnson, left, director of sales at SafeGuard, and Gary Thompson, marketing manager at American Seating, are interviewed about SafeGuard's innovative passenger seat. Clearly visible on the seats in front of Johnson and Thompson is the slide mechanism that adjusts the shoulder belt for small children.

Dave McLaughlin, vice president of transportation sales for American Seating, said the partnership between American Seating and SafeGuard, "enables us to combine our transportation seating experience with the safety expertise of SafeGuard, together offering an exciting, revolutionary safety solution to the U.S. motorcoach market."

Adds Johnson: "The partnership with American Seating allows us to change the discussion in the motorcoach industry about safety.

SafeGuard brings 30 years of experience in designing and developing integrated safety systems, while American Seating has set the industry benchmark for transportation seating for over 70 years."

While the Premier is currently available on Prevost coaches, other bus builders are looking at the seat for their coaches.

Also at Motorcoach Expo, American Seating unveiled a new, motorcoach slider-seat securement system, the Autoslide®.