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# News Release

## New NHTSA Regulation Recognizes Flexible Seating

**Westfield, IN – October 17, 2008** – The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released its final ruling Wednesday on school bus seating protection, as regulated by FMVSS 222. The new ruling allows for flexible seating, pioneered in 2007 by SafeGuard.

SafeGuard Sales Director James Johnson commented on the importance of this allowance in the final rule. “NHTSA recognizes flexible capacity technology found on the SafeGuard FlexSeat™,” Johnson said. “With this update to FMVSS 222, the industry now has design parameters and testing standards for belted seating, along with an ongoing requirement for true compartmentalization, provided exclusively by SafeGuard through SmartFrame.”

The final rule specifies that one lap-shoulder belt may be installed for every 330 mm (13 inches) of seat bench width, provided that these school bus seats equipped with three lap-shoulder belts also be able to be configured to transport two students.

Johnson applauded NHTSA for its thorough analysis and measured approach to final rulemaking. “NHTSA’s final rule certainly will improve the crashworthiness of school buses and make school travel safer for all of our children,” Johnson said. “The mandate of lap-shoulder belts for buses under 10,000 lbs GVWR, along with higher back seats for all school buses, are certainly changes that will net positive results for student transportation safety.”

According to Johnson, flexible seating is changing the dialogue in the school transportation industry as well as in school districts around the country. “Essentially, FlexSeat eliminates the capacity concerns related to the previous generation of school bus seats equipped with lap and shoulder belts,” Johnson said. “Due in part to this new technology, we are beginning to see an increasing number of individual school districts in states like Virginia, Texas, Indiana and Illinois voluntarily installing lap-shoulder belts on all school buses in their fleets, not just small buses.”

While the regulation stops short of requiring seat belts for larger buses, Johnson emphasizes that the industry should value the opportunity to plan and budget for lap-shoulder belts on their own timetables. “With this final rule in place, SafeGuard can explore ways to expand the distribution of this technology in the industry,” added Johnson.

For more information on the SafeGuard School Bus Seating line, visit [safeguardseat.com](http://safeguardseat.com), or call 877-447-2305.

### About SafeGuard

SafeGuard, a division of IMMI, has been the leader in child passenger protection for more than 25 years and is the largest child seating safety products manufacturer in the world. Bus seats made by SafeGuard undergo the most rigorous testing in the school transportation industry. Engineers at SafeGuard utilize the company’s modern crash test facility to verify the performance of bus seating products, as well as support product development of its OEM customers in the school bus industry. Over the past decade, SafeGuard has conducted ten full barrier crash tests on school buses to gain a full understanding of student occupant protection. To support the development of the company’s bus seat products, SafeGuard has conducted more than 200 sled tests and 20 school bus rollover tests, as well as performed tests on thousands of components to assure performance and durability.

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