



Media Fact Sheet

Who are we?

The Center for Pet Safety is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit research and advocacy organization dedicated to companion animal and consumer safety.

- The Center for Pet Safety is an independent safety science entity leading a unique mission for companion animals and their owners.
- Our organization was developed after 8 years of pet product industry and consumer research.

What do we do?

Currently, CPS is focusing on Pet Travel Safety. Using scientific testing and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard specifications, we study pet products and establish criteria and test protocols to measure whether pet safety products provide the protection claimed by advocates and intended by the manufacturer.

- We conduct rigorous crash testing on commonly available pet safety products using realistic, specially designed, crash test dogs.
- Although CPS does not directly impact legislation, our organization advocates for meaningful standards leading to safer products that protect animals and improve travel safety for everyone in the vehicle.
- We do not use live animals in our testing.
- We are not affiliated with the pet product industry.
- We do not endorse products.

Why we do what we do?

- The current data from our pilot study tells us that the majority of pet safety restraints currently on the market do not provide acceptable levels of protection to the animal and/or the humans in a crash situation.
- If a pet travel product fails in an automobile accident, not only can the pet be injured or killed, but the human passengers are also be at risk for injury or death.
- In the US there are no performance standards or test protocols for many classes of pet product.
- Manufacturers are not required to test products before going to market for many classes of pet product – including pet travel products!
- There is no oversight agent for the pet product industry outside of the FDA and USDA for consumable products (including some toys) and pharmaceuticals.
- Some manufacturers claim to test their products, but with the absence of test standards, these claims cannot be substantiated.

Founded in 2011 by Lindsey A. Wolko, Founder, CEO & Chairman

Lindsey Wolko is available for interviews and presentations, including videos and photographs of tests, as well as compelling statistics on pet travel product safety.

A long-term pet safety advocate, Ms. Wolko led the pet safety mission at Canine Commuter from 2004 – 2011. During that time she also acted as a consultant for numerous pet product manufacturers on product design, quality, performance, consumer communications and marketing efforts. In 2011, in response to scientific product testing results, she closed Canine Commuter and launched the Center for Pet Safety. Ms. Wolko is an associate member of the Society of Automotive Engineers and holds a bachelor's degree from George Mason University. She currently leads the product research division of CPS.

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Media Images

These images can be found online in our [Media section](#).





Center for Pet Safety Licenses Proprietary Crash Test Dogs to Evaluate Pet Travel Products

*Nonprofit Seeks Partnerships to Address Urgent Need for Product Research to Ensure Safety
for All Vehicle Occupants*

WASHINGTON, DC (May 15, 2013) – [Center for Pet Safety™](#), the nonprofit dedicated to consumer and companion animal safety, today announced that it will allow pet product manufacturers the use of its proprietary, instrumented and weighted crash test and static [dog models](#) for product testing of pet travel products through a licensing agreement.

“The test dogs are expensive yet necessary for manufacturers to gather data and evaluate the real-world, worst case, performance of their products,” said Lindsey Wolko, founder, Center for Pet Safety. “We want to encourage pet product manufacturers to test their harnesses, crates and other travel equipment as part of their efforts to ensure that consumers and their pets are offered effective, measurable protection by these safety devices.”

In its [2011 pilot study](#) of popular dog harnesses, The Center for Pet Safety (CPS), discovered that many pet restraints and other pet travel products are not tested before going to market. The [study revealed](#) an alarming 100 percent failure rate of the tested harnesses and none of the products were deemed safe enough to protect the dog and the humans in the event of an accident. Preliminary crate testing was performed as well, raising additional safety concerns for vehicle occupants.

The Center for Pet Safety is currently partnering with [Subaru of America, Inc.](#) on a landmark pet car safety restraint study. Through [scientific product evaluations](#), they are collecting harness data to support a pet safety restraint standard scheduled for publication later this year. In addition, they plan to identify current, top-performing harness brands.

Wolko continued, “Our work is as much about human safety as it is about pets. If one of these pet safety devices fails in an accident, a human life may be in harm’s way. Our preliminary crate testing has uncovered a serious concern around passenger safety, which is the reason consumers are demanding we expand the harness testing with a crate study. We will offer constructive guidance to consumers to ensure they are as safe as possible until the standards for these products are in place.”

Pet product manufacturers interested in licensing the use of the CPS test model dogs should contact Info@CenterForPetSafety.org or call 800.324.3659 for details.

Corporations, foundations and other nonprofit organizations interested in strategic partnership opportunities with the Center for Pet Safety should reach out to Lindsey Wolko at LWolko@CenterForPetSafety.org or call 800.324.3659.

About the Center for Pet Safety™

The Center for Pet Safety (CPS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit research and advocacy organization dedicated to consumer and companion animal safety. Based in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area, the Center for Pet Safety's mission is to have an enduring, positive impact on the survivability, health, safety and well-being of companion animals and the consumer through scientific research and product testing. Welcome to the Science of Pet Safety™. For additional information, visit www.CenterForPetSafety.org.



Subaru and the Center for Pet Safety to Test Pet Car Safety Restraints

- Subaru to fund a quest for the top performing safety restraints so consumers can keep their best friend as safe as possible on the road

- Lawmakers in Subaru of America's home state of New Jersey are the first to consider the requirement of pet restraints when riding in vehicles

CHERRY HILL, N.J., March 5, 2013 -- Subaru of America, Inc. today announced a partnership with the Center for Pet Safety, a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit research and advocacy organization dedicated to companion animal and consumer safety, to fund testing of pet car safety restraints.

Currently, there are no performance standards or test protocols in the U.S. for pet travel products. Although many manufacturers claim to test their products, without test standards, these claims cannot be substantiated. Together, Subaru and the Center for Pet Safety will create standards for testing restraints, while announcing those that perform best.

"The Center for Pet Safety conducted a pilot study which showed that the majority of pet safety restraints currently on the market do not provide acceptable protection in a crash situation," said Michael McHale, Subaru's director of corporate communications. "As many of our owners have dogs, we feel it's our responsibility to help them keep their pets as safe as possible when they journey with us."

The Center for Pet Safety conducted rigorous crash testing on commonly available pet safety restraints using realistic, specially designed, crash test dogs, not live animals. A 55-pound crash dummy dog was used to see how the seat belts would hold up in a collision at 30 miles per hour, patterning the same motor vehicle safety standards used to test child seats. Of the four popular dog car harness brands, none held up in the tests. All of them demonstrated that they either could lead to plausibly serious or fatal injuries for not only the canine but driver, too.

"We are thrilled to have the support of Subaru as its love for pets is as deep as ours," said Lindsey Wolko, Center for Pet safety's founder and CEO. "We have received requests from all over the world from manufacturers who want guidance on developing a safer harness and, through this partnership, we can finally conduct additional testing to help develop a suitable standard, provide the needed knowledge-base to manufacturers, as well as determine the top performers."

The Center for Pet Safety is not affiliated with the pet product industry. The organization uses scientific testing and references Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards to study pet products and establish criteria and test protocols to measure whether pet safety products provide the protection claimed by advocates and intended by the manufacturer.

About Subaru of America, Inc.

Subaru of America, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. of Japan. Headquartered in Cherry Hill, N.J., the company markets and distributes Subaru vehicles, parts and accessories through a network of more than 600 dealers across the United States. All Subaru products are manufactured in zero-landfill production plants and Subaru of Indiana Automotive Inc. is the only U.S. automobile production plant to be designated a backyard wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. For additional information visit www.subaru.com.

About the Center for Pet Safety

The Center for Pet Safety (CPS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit research and advocacy organization dedicated to consumer and companion animal safety. Based in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area, the Center for Pet Safety's mission is to have an enduring, positive impact on the survivability, health, safety and well-being of companion animals and the consumer through scientific research and product testing. For additional information visit www.CenterforPetSafety.org



Center for Pet Safety Videos Show Graphic Failure of Pet Auto Restraints

Videos released by the Center for Pet Safety show failure of four popular pet auto restraints in crash testing. The first of the four videos shows a multi-point failure of the harness at the time of impact and the specially designed crash test dog is slammed at full speed into the back of the front bench seat. No protection would be provided to either the dog or to vehicle occupants in similar crash conditions.

Washington, DC (July 10, 2012) – The [Center for Pet Safety](#) has released the videos from their recently announced crashworthiness pilot study of canine automotive restraints. The harnesses were tested by third-party independent test laboratory, [MGA Research Corporation](#), to conditions of the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213 for child safety restraints.

During the crash simulations the specially developed crash dogs were subjected to standardized crash conditions while wearing popular pet travel harnesses that are widely promoted to protect pets during an automobile accident.

The purpose of releasing the videos is to illustrate the necessity for standards and test protocols for pet products – the focus of the Center’s mission. The four harnesses tested as part of the control group experienced multipoint failures, including complete separation from the connection point at the time of impact and one very gruesome result when the adjustment buckles slipped, allowing the harness to move upward and decapitate the test dog.

The first of the four videos shows a multi-point failure of the harness at the time of impact and the specially designed crash test dog is slammed at full speed into the back of the front bench seat. No protection would be provided to either the dog or to vehicle occupants in similar crash conditions.

"These are very disturbing videos. They indicate the type of failures we expect to see when most of the pet travel restraints are measured against standardized crash conditions," says Lindsey Wolko, founder and chairman of the Center for Pet Safety, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which is undertaking a study to define safe travel for companion animals and their owners in a moving vehicle. Currently, animal restraints are not held to specific safety standards and testing by the manufacturer is not a requirement.

Although not identified in the study, the control group of harnesses tested are considered quality brands within the pet product industry and are widely marketed as safety devices for companion animal travel. The harness size selection for the CPS pilot study was based on the American Kennel Club’s Most Popular Dog Breed List from 2010, where six of the top ten dog breeds were within the “large” harness category. A realistic crash test dog was specially designed, weighted and instrumented for data collection.

Wolko says she struggled with releasing the videos: "These are horrific images of our realistic test dog enduring standardized crash conditions while wearing a safety harness that was designed to protect it. The videos are disturbing and viewer discretion is advised."

Companies and individuals requesting to receive more information on the full CPS Pilot Study can contact a member of the CPS Public Relations Team at 703.904.4357 (800.324.3659) or [PR\(at\)CenterforPetSafety\(dot\)org](mailto:PR(at)CenterforPetSafety(dot)org).



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PET SAFETY™

Individuals wishing to help support the CPS Mission can make a secure donation on the [Center's website](#). Grants and Endowments provide the backbone of our continued Pet Safety Research. Contact the CPS Funding Director, Karen Stevens at 703.904.4357 (800.324.3659) or [Funding\(at\)CenterforPetSafety\(dot\)org](mailto:Funding@CenterforPetSafety.org).



Car Safety Restraints For Dogs Found Potentially Unsafe in Pilot Study from the Center for Pet Safety

A pilot study conducted by the Center for Pet Safety has shown that pet safety restraints used in cars may be unsafe, leaving the animals to become projectiles, possibly causing severe injury or death to the animal and potential injury to human family members if an accident occurs. The Center for Pet Safety is located in Haymarket, Virginia, just outside Washington, DC.

Washington, DC (June 18, 2012) – A pilot study conducted by the [Center for Pet Safety](#) has shown that pet safety restraints used in cars may be unsafe, leaving the animals to become projectiles, possibly causing severe injury or death to the animal and potential injury to human family members if an accident occurs. The Center for Pet Safety is located in Haymarket, Virginia, just outside Washington, DC.

The Center for Pet Safety is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which is undertaking a study to define safe travel for companion animals and their owners in a moving vehicle. Currently, animal restraints are not held to specific safety standards and testing by the manufacturer is not a requirement.

Through scientific testing, data collection, and analysis, the Center for Pet Safety plans to author studies of specific types of pet travel “safety” devices and from those studies to develop criteria and test protocols to support safe performance. The Center for Pet Safety is an independent organization, not associated with any pet product manufacturer. The Center is currently seeking grant funding to continue its independent research.

"With tens of millions of dogs traveling with their families every year, the use of pet travel safety restraints is at an all-time high," says Lindsey Wolko, founder and chairman of the Center for Pet Safety. "Safety advocates, travel associations and now law enforcement agencies are recommending or [mandating the use of pet safety restraints](#). But how does the consumer know that the pet harnesses and crates actually protect their pet in the case of an accident? There are currently no official standards to measure performance success, nor are manufacturers required to test their products for this category of pet product. So who says 'safe' is safe?"

While Wolko agrees that tethering or containing your pet may help reduce incidents of distracted driving, any other safety claims must be proven through the development of performance criteria and test methodologies. "Saying that these products prevent your pet from becoming a projectile in an accident is a potentially misleading statement. In our pilot study, the harnesses tested failed to keep the dog from becoming a projectile in a standardized crash simulation."

The pilot study conducted by the Center for Pet Safety in 2011 indicated a 100% failure rate of a set of four popular animal travel harnesses crash tested according to the conditions of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213 for child safety seats. FMVSS 213 was selected as it is commonly referenced by some pet product manufacturers and pet safety advocates as a general standard.

The harness size selection for the CPS pilot study was based on the American Kennel Club's Most Popular Dog Breed List from 2010, where six of the top ten dog breeds were within the “large” harness category. A realistic crash test dog was specially designed, weighted and instrumented for data collection.

In 2011 Lindsey Wolko, pet safety advocate and founder of The Center for Pet Safety, invested over \$10,000.00 in scientific testing of pet harnesses used in automobile travel. A “blind” control group of pet travel harnesses was selected for the pilot study. Wolko hired an independent test laboratory, [MGA Research Corporation](#) in Manassas, Virginia, to perform unbiased scientific product testing.

MGA Research Corporation performs safety compliance testing for FMVSS 213 child restraint systems for the U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



The goal of the testing was to determine if the products protected the companion animal from injury in a standardized crash simulation. A second round of quasi-static testing was completed to confirm the initial dynamic test results. A weighted and instrumented crash test dog was developed for the tests. No live animals were used for the tests.

Procedures for the testing of companion animal restraints:

A total of 12 restraints from major brands within the pet product industry were purchased from online vendor/manufacturer websites and delivered by independent carrier (UPS, USPS, etc) to the test laboratory. The restraints were received in new, unused condition with intact packaging. The restraints were handled only by laboratory personnel. Out of an initial sampling of 12 brands, four harnesses were selected as a "control group". Selection of the control group was based on perceived strength of the materials and design, associated marketing materials that indicated testing had been completed by the manufacturer and the reputation of the manufacturer in the pet travel product marketplace – similar to the way the consumer would select a product for purchase. Although not identified in the study, the control group harnesses are considered quality brands within the pet product industry and are widely marketed as safety devices for companion animal travel.

"We have re-sampled these products and performed follow-up testing to confirm our initial findings," says Wolko. "While we did not test all brands of harnesses in our initial pilot study, our sampling was broad enough for us to gain better insight regarding the expected performance of these products when tested to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213 conditions. Their safety is not guaranteed and the buyer should beware."

About the Center for Pet Safety:

The Center for Pet Safety was founded in 2011 and is a registered 501(c)3 research organization dedicated to companion animal and consumer safety. The idea for the Center for Pet Safety was developed from eight years of pet product industry and consumer research.

In 2004 Lindsey Wolko's dog, Maggie, was injured by a poorly designed safety harness designed for car travel. At that time, Wolko began to purchase pet travel products and try them with her dogs. This practice continued until she launched Canine Commuter in 2007.

Through Canine Commuter, Wolko independently sampled and tested pet products for quality and performance. She purchased the products, ran them through consumer trials, and evaluated them for wear and tear, instructions, marketing, packaging and overall product performance. Over time, Wolko developed official product reports and a formal Consumer Trial Methodology. Products were given a rating based on their overall performance. The products that passed were included on Canine Commuter's website. Products that failed were put on an unpublished "Watch" list – for follow-up with the manufacturer and future re-evaluation if product improvements were made.

In 2010, Canine Commuter was contacted repeatedly by new pet product manufacturers to lend their product expertise to evaluate proposed product lines and provide feedback. This testing was formalized with the incorporation of the Center of Pet Safety in July 2011 and its recognition by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Center for Pet Safety is currently seeking grant funding to continue its independent research. Donations may be made through The Center for Pet Safety's website <http://www.centerforpetsafety.org/donate-today/>.

For more information on the Center for Pet Safety, visit <http://www.centerforpetsafety.org>.