

Child Passenger Safety

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among children in the United States. In 2005, 1451 children ages 14 years and younger died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes, and approximately 203,000 were injured. This is an average of 4 deaths and 556 injuries each day. Of the children ages 0 to 14 who were killed in motor vehicle crashes during 2005, nearly half were unrestrained. Many of these deaths can be prevented.

(Centers for Disease Control, Child Passenger Safety Facts)

One of the most important things that you can do to keep your children safe from death and injury from motor vehicle crashes is to insist that all children 12 years old and younger ride in the back seat and be sure that they are properly restrained every time they ride in a motor vehicle. Every state in the United States has child restraint laws. These laws vary from state to state.



A GUIDE TO THE IOWA CHILD RESTRAINT LAW Iowa Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau Department of Public Safety

Iowa Code 321.446, Data Code 198a - as of July 2006

Key Points:

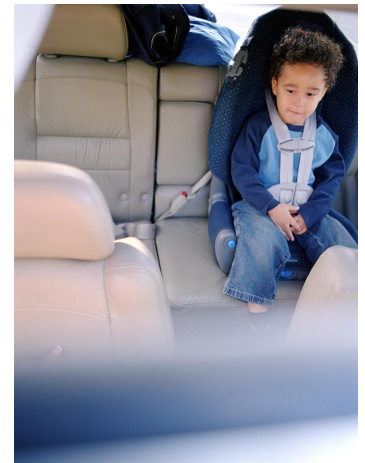
- A child under 1 year old and weighing less than 20 lbs. must be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system.
- A child age 1 up to 6 years old must be secured in a child restraint system (a safety seat or booster seat--NOT a seat belt).
- A child from the age of 6 up to the age of 11 must be secured in a child restraint system or by a safety belt.

Exceptions:

- Children certified by a physician as having a medical, physical or mental disability making restraint use inadvisable
- Children on bus, including a school bus
- Children riding on motorcycles
- Children riding in vehicles manufactured before 1966
- Children being transported in authorized emergency vehicles
- Children transported by peace officers on official duty
- Children riding in motor homes except if riding in the front passenger seat (where they must be restrained)

COMMON CHILD SAFETY SEAT MISUSES:

- Seat installed too loose
- Improper seating position (in front of an air bag)
- Not buckling child into restraint
- Not securely anchoring the child restraint to the vehicle
- Improper seat for child's age and size
- Infant riding forward facing
- Harness retainer clip not at armpit level
- Loose harness straps



A "child restraint system" is a specially designed seating system, including a belt positioning seat or a booster seat that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards.

To graduate to an adult belt -- a child must be able to sit with their back/buttocks against the seat and with their knees bent at the edge of the seat. The belt system must be snug across the center of the child's chest and across their lap at the hips.

COMMON SAFETY BELT MISUSES FOR CHILDREN:

- Lap belt up on abdomen
- Lap belt loose; shoulder belt loose
- Shoulder belt behind back
- Shoulder belt under their arm

Summary

Parents need to be safety advocates for their children. When choosing a child safety seat, make sure that it is age and size appropriate and fits in your car. For a car seat to be safe, it must be installed properly. Read the manuals for your car and safety seat, contact a trained technician in your community for hands on assistance, send in your car registration card so that the manufacturer can contact you about any recalls, and replace any car seat that was used during a motor vehicle crash. To find out about car safety seat recalls call: *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Auto Safety Hotline, (888) 327-4236.*