

CHILD CAR SAFETY SEATS

FACT: MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AND SERIOUS INJURY FOR CHILDREN OVER 1 YEAR OLD.

FACT: EVERY DAY AN UNRESTRAINED CHILD UNDER AGE FIVE IS KILLED IN A TRAFFIC CRASH IN THIS COUNTRY.

FACT: THE SAFEST PLACE FOR A CHILD IN A CAR IS IN A REAR SEAT, PROPERLY BUCKLED INTO A CHILD SAFETY SEAT OR A BOOSTER SEAT.

TEXAS LAW STATES

A person commits an offense if the person operates a passenger vehicle, transports a child who is younger than five years and less than 36 inches in height, and does not keep the child secured during the operation of the vehicle in a child passenger safety seat system according to the instructions of the manufacturer of the safety seat system.

“Child Safety Seat System” includes car seats and booster seat, including high-back and backless boosters.

A person commits an offense if the person operates a passenger vehicle that is equipped with safety belts; and allows a child who is younger than 17 years of age and who is not required to be secured in a child passenger safety seat system, to ride in the vehicle without requiring the child to be secured by a safety belt.

TEXAS LAW SUMMARIZED

All children under 17 years old must be secured in a safety belt or child safety seat, whether they are sitting in the front seat or back seat.

Children under 5 years old *and* less than 36 inches tall must ride in a child safety seat. Children more than 36 inches tall and at least 5 years old but younger than 17 years old must be secured by a safety belt.

The Best Safety-Seat Parents/Guardians can use is:

- 1) One that fits their car
- 2) Easy to use
- 3) Appropriate for their child’s height and weight

What Type of Child Car Safety Seat Should I Use?

If your child is:

- ◆ **Under a Year old and less than 20 pounds**, use a rear-facing infant car seat. A rear-facing infant car seat should never be placed in the front seat of a car with an airbag. The infant child seat should sit at a 45-degree angle or the angle specified on the seat. This helps keep the baby's head from drooping forward and cutting off the airway.
- ◆ **Under a Year old and less than 30 pounds**, use a rear-facing convertible car seat. A rear-facing convertible car seat should never be placed in the front seat of a car with an airbag. The convertible child seat should sit at a 45-degree angle or the angle specified on the seat. This helps keep the baby's head from drooping forward and cutting off the airway.
- ◆ **At least one year old and 20 to 40 pounds**, use a convertible car seat. You may turn the seat to face forward.
- ◆ **At least one year old and 30 to 40 pounds**, use a booster seat with a harness.
- ◆ **Over 40 pounds and less than 4'9"**, your child should use a booster seat but remove the harness straps. The booster seat must be used with a lap/shoulder seat belt until the child is about 4'9".
- ◆ **Over 4'9" tall**, your child must use a lap/shoulder seat belt.

Children younger than 13 years old should never ride in the front seat of vehicles with active passenger airbags.

Did you know?

- ◆ Four out of five car seats are installed and/or used wrong.
- ◆ Could your child's be one of them?
- ◆ What can you do to make sure you install the car seat correctly?

Free Car Safety Seat Checks

- ◆ Make an appointment today for a free car safety seat check, sponsored by *Texas Children's Childhood Injury Prevention Center* and the *Greater Houston Coalition for SAFE KIDS*.
- ◆ Visit www.texaschildrenshospital.org/carecenters/InjuryPrevention/Childsafety.aspx for a list of the locations in the greater Houston area offering free car safety seat checks, or;
- ◆ Call Mari Hodges, Texas Children's Hospital, at 832-828-1314

To learn more valuable information regarding Child Car Seat Safety, please refer to the Texas Children's Center for Childhood Injury Prevention webpage at www.texaschildrenshospital.org/Parents/TipsArticles/SubcategoryDisplay.aspx?sid=42