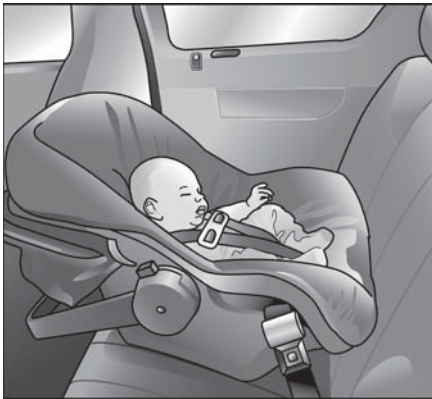


# Child Passenger Safety

## Safest location in a vehicle for a child

- This depends on the type of motor vehicle crash, but generally the safest location in the vehicle for all children 12 years and younger is the back seat. The centre position has the added benefit of providing some protection against intrusion into the vehicle during a crash.



- Infants and young children should ride in the back seat in the appropriate child seat for their size and age.

## Airbag safety

- As a general rule, restrain children 12 years of age and younger in the back seat, away from the airbag.
- The 12-year guideline is not just a height and weight issue. It also depends on the child's maturity to sit still and out of the airbag deployment zone. If your child squirms, places his/her feet up on the dash, persists on changing the radio or CDs, he/she belongs in the back seat.
- A rear-facing child seat should NEVER be placed in the front seat of a vehicle equipped with an active passenger airbag. Serious injury or death may result if an airbag inflates and strikes a rear-facing child seat.
- Keep toys, blankets and other objects from getting between your child and an airbag.

- If your vehicle has side airbags, check your child's position throughout the journey to ensure they remain in a safe position.

## Providing a safe "first ride home" from the hospital

- The most appropriate restraint is one designed for infants only and complies with CMVSS 213.1. Look for this designation on the label on the restraint. Child seats designed for larger children won't work as well for infants. They prevent snug harnessing.
- Select a child seat with two crotch adjustments to accommodate growth. A snug fit will hold the hips against the back of the restraint and prevent slouching.
- Select a restraint with at least two harness slots in the back of the restraint (three is better) allowing for a snug fit and adjustment as sitting height increases. Install the harness at the height of the infant's shoulders, or slightly below, to ensure a snug fit.
- Position the infant restraint rear facing in the back seat of the vehicle away from an airbag. Even if the vehicle is not equipped with airbags the back seat is generally the safest location.
- Check the manufacturer's instructions.
- Avoid carrying newborn infants in the larger rear-facing convertible seat. Snug harnessing is difficult and the infant's face can collide with T-shields and padded arm rests.

## Remaining in the rear-facing position

- Keep your infant rear facing until at least one year of age and 9 kg (20 lbs) to help prevent severe neck and spinal cord injuries.

### Restraining infants who are more than 9 kg (20 lbs), but are less than one year of age

- When the baby has outgrown the infant seat, but is not yet one year of age, move to the larger convertible seat and maintain the rear-facing position until one year of age. The Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards were revised in March 2000 to allow manufacturers to offer rear-facing convertible restraints for children up to 15 kg (33 lbs).
- During moderate to severe frontal crashes, the weak neck ligaments and soft neckbones in the vertebral column (found in infants younger than a year) will not protect the spinal cord, and severe injuries can occur. However, when riding rear facing, the head and neck are supported and move together with the body providing good protection during one of the most common types of serious crashes.

### How long do I keep my child in the forward-facing child seat?

- Children should stay in a forward-facing child seat (secured with a tether strap) until they are 4½ years of age and weigh at least 18 kg (40 lbs).

### Restraining toddlers who are too tall for the convertible child seat

- If the child is tall, but below booster seat age, consider a two-stage transitional seat. This restraint resembles a high-back booster but its special features are the two harness systems.
- Initially the child is restrained by a five-point harness, similar to that used in a child seat. When booster seat age is reached, the harness is removed and the seat becomes a high-back booster. The child is then restrained by the lap/shoulder belt system.
- Don't move the child to a booster seat too soon. Children younger than 4½ years of age are better protected by the five-point harness in convertible seats than by the lap and shoulder belt used with booster seats.

### Benefits of booster seats

- The booster seat serves as an intermediate step between the forward-facing child seat and the adult lap/shoulder belt system.
- The booster seat raises the child so the lap/shoulder belt fits properly over the child's body.
- Most adult seatbelt systems do not fit children who are younger than nine years of age or have a standing height of less than 145 cm (4' 9"). Poorly fitting lap belts that ride up over the soft stomach can cause serious internal injury to young children.
- The high back also protects the child's head and neck during a rear-end crash.

### The best booster



- The best booster is one that causes the seatbelt to fit properly and will fit your child until nine years of age.
- If your vehicle is equipped with lap/shoulder belt systems in the back seat, select a belt positioning high back booster. The belt positioner will correct the angle of the shoulder belt and increase comfort.
- There are boosters now available for children weighing up to 45 kg (100 lbs).
- If only a lap belt is available, a booster seat with a shield must be used. Contact the toll-free Child Seat Information line 1-877-247-5551 for assistance.

### Readiness for an adult seatbelt system

- Most children are ready for the adult seatbelt system at approximately nine years of age and 145 cm (4' 9") in height. Another indicator is when the child is able to sit back against the vehicle seat and hinge the lower legs over the seat without slouching forward at the hips.

### Making an adult seatbelt system safer

- Do not use it too soon — move children to an adult system only when they have outgrown the booster seat.
- NEVER restrain two children in one seatbelt. The forces of a frontal crash will throw them violently together as their bodies attempt to occupy the same space.
- Use a lap and shoulder belt system whenever available — these are safest.
- Position the lap belt low over the hips and the shoulder belt snug over the shoulder, collar bone and across the chest — never under the arm, behind the back, or with a reclined seat.
- Remove all slack from the lap and shoulder belt.
- Aftermarket seatbelt adjusters that change the path of the lap or shoulder belt should not be used.



### Holding a baby in your arms

- Even in a minor crash the baby can be fatally injured.
- Remember, it's the law in BC that infants, children and adults ride restrained in motor vehicles.
- An unrestrained 11 kg (25 lbs) child in a 50 km/h crash can be thrown forward with the force of a 544 kg (1200 lbs) baby elephant.
- In a similar crash, an infant who is sitting unrestrained on a parent's lap will be torn from the parent's arms by the immense forces that occur when the vehicle comes to a stop.
- Never leave a child unattended in a child seat, whether in or out of the vehicle.

### Child seat instructions are important

The child seat instructions include information on the make, model number, weight capacity and date of manufacture. This information is needed if a recall notice is issued. The instructions also show how to install the child seat in the vehicle and harness the child correctly.

#### For more information on ...

##### Child seats and clinics:

- Call the toll-free Child Seat Information line 1-877-247-5551
- Visit our website at [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com)

##### Child seats, public notices and recalls:

- Call Transport Canada 1-800-333-0371
- Visit [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca)

##### Buying and installing a child seat:

- See ICBC's *Buying and installing a child seat* brochure.

*Ages, weights and heights given are guidelines. Always check manufacturer's instructions.*

*This publication reflects the laws in British Columbia as of November 2007. You should be aware that laws might change from time to time, so for a current statement of the law, you should refer to the applicable legislation. In the case of any conflict between this publication and the legislation, you should always follow the legislation.*

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