

Strengthened Infant and Child Passenger Regulations

Changes to BC law – July 1, 2008

For children in BC, motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and injury resulting in hospitalization—an average of 1,387 children under age nine are injured every year and four are killed in motor vehicle crashes in BC. Research shows that a correctly used child safety seat reduces the risk of fatality by 71 per cent and the risk of serious injury by 67 per cent. The use of child restraints represent significant health care cost savings.

BC’s child passenger safety regulations, though progressive at the time, have not been updated since 1985. As new research and technology have been developed, the “best practices” for child passenger safety has also evolved since 1985.

Effective July 1, 2008, new regulations will require that child passengers are appropriately secured according to their age and development.

Previous Requirement

Infants secured in rear-facing infant seat until 9 kg (20 lbs).

Children 9 kg to 18 kg (20 – 40 lbs):

- secured in child seat if driver is parent/guardian
- secured in a lap belt or a child seat if the driver is not parent/guardian.

Children 18 kg (40 lbs) to age six secured in a lap belt.

Exemptions:

- Peace officers and drivers of emergency vehicles, taxis, rental vehicles, out-of province vehicles, and buses
- Drivers of vehicles not required by federal law to be equipped with seatbelts
- Drivers with certificates issued by the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles or a medical practitioner certifying that a child cannot be fit with a child restraint for medical or physical reasons.

Change (Effective July 1, 2008)

→ Infants secured in rear-facing infant seat away from an active frontal airbag until at least 12 months old and 9 kg (20 lbs).

→ All drivers must secure children at least one year old and 9 kg (20 lbs) to at least 18 kg (40 lbs) in a child seat.

→ Children at least 18 kg (40 lbs) to age nine or 145 cm tall (4'9"), whichever comes first secured:

- in a booster seat, in a seating position equipped with a shoulder harness or
- in a lap belt, if a seating position equipped with a shoulder harness is not available.

→ Exemptions removed:

- Drivers of rental vehicles
- Drivers of out-of-province vehicles
- Drivers of small buses (passenger vans equipped with seatbelts)
- Drivers with medical exemption certificates issued by the Superintendent (physicians will now be sole issuer of medical exemptions).

The law effective July 1, 2008

Infants (Birth to at least 12 months old)

Infants must travel in a rear-facing child seat away from an active frontal airbag until **at least 12 months and 9 kg (20 lbs)**.

It is safer for a child to remain rear-facing as long as possible, up to the car seat's maximum weight or height limit.

Children who reach the upper weight limit of the rear-facing child seat but are still under 12 months will need a convertible child seat with a higher weight limit.



Young children (at least one year to approx. 4½ years)

After reaching at least 12 months and 9 kg (20 lbs), a child must be restrained in child safety seat until **at least 18 kg (40 lbs)** and may travel in the forward-facing position.

It is safer for a child to remain in a child seat (five-point harness) for as long as possible, up to the car seat's maximum weight or height limit.



Older children (about 4½ to at least nine years)

Child passengers who weigh at least 18 kg (40 lbs) must be restrained in a booster seat until they are **at least nine years old or reach 145 cm (4'9") tall**.

Children who reach the upper weight limit of the booster seat but are still under nine years old and 145 cm (4'9") tall will need a new booster seat with a higher weight limit. If a booster seat is not manufactured to the weight limit required, an exemption may be requested from their medical practitioner.



This publication reflects the laws in British Columbia as of May 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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