

Child Car Restraints

Effectiveness of Child Car Restraints

A correctly fitted and used child car restraint, appropriate for the child's age and size, can significantly reduce the risk of serious injury or death in road crashes. The majority of children correctly restrained in a crash suffer only minor or trivial injuries.

Why Children are at Risk

Children incorrectly or inappropriately restrained for their age and size are at greater risk of serious injury in a motor vehicle collision.

- Incorrectly fitted restraints are unlikely to perform as intended in a car crash, increasing the risk of injury to the occupant
- Children using a restraint type intended for an older or larger child too early are also at increased risk of injury

A number of surveys have found that:

- up to 40% of children use restraints inappropriate for their size and age
- many children are moved to a booster seat or adult seatbelt before they are an appropriate size

Child restraint checking services have found that up to 80% of restraints checked have one or more fitting faults.

The main problems identified include:

- Seatbelt undone, twisted or incorrect configuration
- Incorrectly fitted harness, either too loose to restrain a child or not adjusted to the child's shoulder height
- Top tether not attached correctly or not centrally located behind child restraint
- Anchorage assembly faults

Incorrect installation can lead to increased risk of injury and increased severity of injury.

Australian Standards: AS/NZS 1754



Australian Standard
AS/NZS 1754
Lic
Standards Australia

All child restraints sold in Australia must meet the strict requirements of the AS/NZS: 1754 covering the materials, design, construction, performance, testing and labelling of child restraints.

Restraints bought in other countries will not meet the Australian Standard - it is illegal to use them in Australia. The symbol to the left certifies that the restraint has been tested to and complies with the Australian Standard.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can my child sit in the front passenger seat?

Research clearly demonstrates that front seat passengers are at significantly greater risk of severe injury and/or death in the event of a crash.

Legally children under 7 years of age are not permitted to occupy the front passenger seat of any vehicle with two or more rows of seats. Children aged 4 – 7 years can only occupy the front passenger seat of any vehicle with two or more rows of seats if all the rear seating positions are occupied by other children less than 7 years of age.

Kidsafe recommends that children under the age of 10-12 do not sit in the front seat, even if they may legally do so.

Safer Seating Position for Children

Kidsafe and other road safety experts recommend the rear centre seating position as the preferred position for children as it provides some additional protection in side impact.

The rear centre seating position may not be able to be used when there is:

- More than one child in car
- No centre anchorage point for child car restraint
- 50/50 split in rear seat back
- Lap only seatbelt in centre
- Vehicle seat contouring issues
- Driver seat conflicts with rearward child restraints

The rear left passenger is the next most suitable option as this is usually the off-road/footpath side of the car.

Seatbelts

- Vehicle occupants must occupy a seat position with a seatbelt.
- Drivers can only carry as many passengers as there are seating position for in the vehicle
- Vehicle occupants cannot share a seat belt.
- Infants and children cannot be carried on another passengers lap when travelling in a motor vehicle.

What about Airbags?

Airbags are designed to protect occupants by reducing impact with the vehicle interior. They deploy at high speed to an adult's chest height.

Kidsafe recommends that:

- Children under 12 years of age do not sit in the front seat, especially where there is an airbag.
- Refer to your vehicle owner's manual for further information on the airbags in your vehicle.



Cargo space or open load

No one is permitted to ride in the cargo space of vehicles. Loose objects become dangerous missiles in a crash, striking with up to 20 times their own force.

- Keep the back shelf under rear window free of loose articles, even tissue boxes.
- Install a cargo barrier/curtain in station wagons, hatchbacks, 4-Wheel drives and panel vans.

