

New child passenger restraint laws are coming soon!

From March 1, 2010, all children up to the age of seven years must be correctly restrained in an approved child restraint, suitable for their size and age.

In vehicles with two or more rows of seats:

- All children under four must travel in the rear seat
- Children between four and seven can only travel in the front passenger seat if all rear seats are occupied by children under seven years in child restraints.

There will soon be an extensive education campaign for families to learn about the new rules and to give them time to buy or hire the type of restraint they need for their child.

For answers to further questions about child passenger restraints and the new laws keep checking the *Kids and Traffic* and RTA websites.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Why are there new child restraint laws?

A. New child restraint laws are needed to help keep young children safe as passengers. High numbers of children are injured and even killed when travelling in cars. In NSW, almost 500 children under seven years old are passenger casualties each year. Australia-wide, the numbers are over 4,000 each year.

A child who is properly secured in an approved child restraint is less likely to be injured or killed in a car crash than one who is not.
(NSW Roads and Traffic Authority).

Q. What should families know about approved child restraints suitable for children up to seven years of age?

- A.** For children who are:
- Younger than six months – rearward facing restraints
 - Between six months and four years – either rear or forward facing restraints
 - Between four and seven years – forward facing child restraints or booster seats.

Q. Why do the new child restraint laws refer to size and age?

A. Specifying child restraints by age is easier for families and carers to comply with and will result in fewer children being inappropriately restrained. However, children of the same age can vary considerably in size so children who are too physically big for the recommended restraint may be graduated to the next restraint level, providing they are still properly restrained. Standards Australia is changing the child restraint standards to ensure that nearly all children in the specified age groups will fit into the specified type of restraints.

Q. How will families know if their children's restraints are correctly fitted?

A. RTA Authorised Fitting Stations can check and fit child restraints. Families can call the RTA Call Centre, 13 22 13, to find the nearest one.

Q. So, what's wrong with seatbelts?

A. Seatbelts are designed to fit adult males. Young children put in adult seatbelts are at increased risk of serious injury or being killed than those restrained in approved child restraints suitable for their size and age.

MORE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Where children sit in a car is often a challenging issue for families. Do the new laws say anything about this?

A. Yes. Child passengers are always safer in rear seats, so in vehicles with two or more rows of seats children younger than four years must travel in the rear seat. Children between four and seven years can only travel in the front passenger seat if all rear seats are occupied by children under seven years in child restraints.



Q. Where can families find free information about child restraints?

A. Visit the RTA website www.rta.nsw.gov.au to download the most recent brochures and posters about child restraints.

Q. Will families have to rush out now to buy child restraints?

A. Most families are likely to already have their younger children in suitable, approved child restraints. However, if they don't, they will need to buy or hire suitable restraints before March 1, 2010. To help keep their children safe as passengers, the earlier families use restraints, the safer their children will be.

Some families will have allowed their school children aged up to seven years to be in seat belts already and may be surprised to learn that these children must now be in booster seats or in forward facing restraints. Their children might also be surprised! However, by emphasising the safety aspect of the new laws with families, most will be happy to comply.

Q. How will families learn about the changes to the child restraint laws?

A. An extensive education campaign in 2010 will allow families to learn about the new rules and to give them time to buy or hire the type of restraint they need for their child.

Visit our website www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au

KIDS and TRAFFIC

Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program

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