



**FROM 18 SEPTEMBER 2006  
YOU MUST USE THE CORRECT  
CAR SEAT FOR YOUR CHILD.**

**Use the right car seat for your child**





## What is the new law?

Children under 3 years MUST use the child restraint appropriate for their weight in any vehicle (including vans and other goods vehicles). There is only one exception:-

- a child under three may travel unrestrained in the rear of a taxi if the right child restraint is not available.

Rear-facing baby seats MUST NOT be used in a seat protected by a frontal air-bag unless the air-bag has been deactivated manually or automatically.

In vehicles where seat belts are fitted, children 3 years to 135 cms in height (approx 4ft 5ins) MUST use the appropriate child restraint.

- Three exceptions allow these children to travel in the rear and use an adult belt :-
  - in a taxi, if the right child restraint is not available;
  - for a short distance in an unexpected necessity, if the right child restraint is not available;
  - where two occupied child seats in the rear prevent the fitment of a third child seat.



## When will this new law apply?

**From 18 September 2006.**

Further regulations will come into force:

- from May 2008, all child restraints must comply with the **UN ECE 44.03** standard (or subsequent versions). Child seats to the 44.03 standard have been on sale for many years.

### Seat belt/child restraint wearing requirements from 18 September 06

	Front Seat	Rear Seat	Who is Responsible?
<b>Driver</b>	Seat belt must be worn if fitted		Driver
<b>Child under 3 years of age</b>	Correct child restraint must be used	Correct child restraint must be used. If one is not available in a taxi, may travel unrestrained	Driver
<b>Child from 3rd birthday up to 135 cms in height (or 12th birthday whichever they reach first)</b>	Correct child restraint must be used	Correct child restraint must be used where seat belts fitted. Must use adult belt in a rear seat if correct child restraint not available - - in a taxi; - for a short distance in an unexpected necessity; - if two occupied child restraints prevent fitting a third.	Driver
<b>Child 12 or 13, or over 135 cms in height</b>	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Driver
<b>Adult passengers</b>	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Passenger

## What are "child restraints"?

"Child restraints" is the collective term for:

	Seat Facing	Weight and Age	Typical Examples
Baby seats	rear-facing	for children up to 13 kgs (approx age birth to 9-12 months)	
Child seats	forward facing	for children 9 kgs to 18 kgs (approx 9 months to 4 years)	
Booster seats		for children 15 kgs and up (from approx 4 years)	
Booster cushions		for children from 22 kgs (from approx 6 years)	

## What are the penalties for not using a child restraint?

A £30 fixed penalty notice. If a case goes to court, **the maximum fine is £500.**

### So I can't carry children in just a seat belt until they are over 135cm?

No - the new law requires this for children's safety.

There are a few exemptions but parents and carers will need to think ahead about how they, or someone else, will be carrying their child.

### Why aren't adult seat belts OK for older children?

- Adult seat belts are best for people with an adult bone structure. Children need to use child seats and boosters to be safe - they put them in the right position to use the seat belt properly.
- The lap belt of an adult seat belt needs to go as low as possible over the stomach. A child needs to be boosted up so the adult belt fits properly. If not, the adult belt sits too high over the stomach and in a crash there is a risk of damage to internal organs as well as sliding under the belt.



Booster Seat

### What about travelling in taxis?

Taxis cannot be expected to have the right child seat or booster unless parents have brought one with them. If child seats or boosters are not available in a taxi: under 3s must travel unrestrained in the rear only; those 3 years and above must use an adult belt in the rear seat only.

**A child up to 135 cms in a front seat of any vehicle must use the correct child seat or booster.**

### What if someone has to give a child a lift at short notice and does not have the right child seat?

- If there is an “unexpected necessity” there is an exemption for a child of 3 years or more to wear an adult belt on a short journey in a car or light goods vehicle when no appropriate child seat is available. The exemption is not intended to cover regular school runs or other journeys.

**Children under 3 years must always have a child seat. The only exception is travel in the rear of taxis and a child seat is not available.**

### We have 4 children but only a medium size car. Do they all need to use child seats and boosters?

If they are under 135 cms then they will all need to use the right seat or booster for their size.

### What if I can't fit 3 child seats in the back of my car?

If a car has 3 seat belts in the rear, and 2 occupied child seats or boosters prevent the fitting of a third, a third child 3 years or over may then use an adult belt. If there is room, it would be safer for the third child to travel in the front seat and use the correct child seat or booster.

### Do the new rules apply in vans and larger commercial vehicles?

The new rules apply in cars, vans and goods vehicles.

### Why can't I use a rear-facing baby seat in a seat protected by an active frontal air-bag?

Air-bags are powerful safety devices. A rear-facing baby seat would be hit by a frontal air-bag if it deployed - and could be thrown up and towards the rear of the vehicle. This means that the baby seat and child could be completely unrestrained during a crash.



A child in a rear-facing baby seat could be badly hurt by a frontal air-bag if it deployed

### Can I use a forward facing child seat or booster in a seat fitted with an active air-bag?

See what the car handbook says about children in seats with frontal air-bags. We strongly recommend that advice should be followed because air-bags are powerful safety devices that must be treated with respect. Children, and adults for that matter, should not sit close to an active frontal air-bag. We suggest that the car seat should be as far back as possible from an air-bag.

### I'll need to get a child seat/booster seat or cushion now. How do I choose the right one and how much will that cost?

- There is a range of products and prices. All the major shops selling child seats have information on their websites, including prices.
- Child seat types depend upon the weight of the child and if you need help, most retailers of child restraints will have trained staff that can help in choosing the right one.
- Most seats will fit most cars but the advice is to try before you buy.

### How do I know if my child car seat is correctly fitted?

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully when fitting your car seat and keep them in your car. Make sure that the child seats are tightly held in place. Make sure others know how to fit them properly if they are taking your children out with them.
- Some retailers offer a service demonstrating how to fit a child seat. Check your car seat is still fitted correctly every trip.
- Speak with your local Road Safety Officer (at your county council) or look out in your local press for any fitting checks in your area.

### When I buy a new child car seat, how will I know if it will fit my car properly?

Try before you buy. Some retailers offer a service demonstrating how to fit a child seat which will also check whether it fits. Manufacturers' web-sites may have advice.

Baby Seat



### Can second-hand child seats and boosters be used?

Parents/carers should beware of second-hand child seats. They need to check whether they are to the up-to-date UN ECE 44.03 or later standard. Do they have the correct fitting instructions, and have they been in a crash already?

### My child is under 135 cms in height but already weighs more than 36 kgs? Should he use the adult belt?

No. The legislation is clear that height is the measure to decide whether to move up to the adult belt. Using a booster cushion and the adult belt even if a child is over 36 kgs is far better than using the adult belt alone.

### **Never carry a baby or child in your lap**

Never carry a baby or child in your lap and do not allow any of your passengers to do so. Babies and children must travel in a child restraint. An unrestrained child will be in serious danger if the vehicle stops suddenly or is in a crash.

### **Never use a seat belt for more than one person (adult or child)**

Never use a seat belt for more than one person. Do not travel with a baby or child in your lap sharing the belt. You and the child are likely to be badly hurt if the car stops suddenly or is in a crash.

An active frontal airbag is an added danger if you are sitting with a baby or child on your lap in the front passenger seat.



For more information about child car seats and other THINK!  
road safety campaigns visit [www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

**Directgov**

For wider motoring advice, such as how to renew your car tax online,  
visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk). Directgov - public services all in one place.

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