

Safety First - Don't drive without an approved Child Seat

I think our parents still marvel at all that we have to offer our children; between technology and zillions of brand names, we have choices to give our kids that they'd never dreamed of giving us. I always shake my head when I hear the stories of how babies used to be transported in the back seat in their little bassinets or "Moses" baskets, just resting on the vehicle seat without any restraints. Or how the babies could easily be comforted by the mother while driving because, after all, they weren't belted in anywhere. It's not that our parents, grandparents, and prior generations were opposed to safety; it simply didn't exist in the form it does now. The first baby car seat to be invented was nothing more than a sack attached to the back seat with some strings. This is hardly comparable to the hundreds of options that parents of today can choose from.

Not only has what is being offered changed, but what is expected and demanded by law has also changed. Vehicle safety is an area of continuous restructuring as the government and various affiliations work to improve road safety. The sad truth is that most accidents can be prevented and this is especially saddening when you realize that most deaths of small children due to vehicular accidents are a result of being improperly restrained.

In Europe, each Country may have its own child safety laws when it comes to car seat requirements just as different states have different traffic laws. It is essential that you are aware of these restrictions and requirements if you are traveling outside of your home town. Similarly, in Canada there are laws for restraining young children. Manufacturers advertise and warn parents of such restrictions, such as placing children under twelve in the front seat of a vehicle with airbags, but it is up to us to abide by and pay attention to these restrictions. If you are uncertain of the vehicle laws in your area, especially those that pertain to child car seats, you can contact the traffic office, local MLA or other government agency. The importance of knowing how to install your baby's car seat and which car seat is right for your child can not be overstated. As the Funny Doctor, "knowing is half the battle". the other half is 'doing'!

A new Kid is on the way and you either have a car seat or you don't. You may have an older car seat passed down by a friend or family member or you may have purchased a new one the moment you found out you were expecting. Are they both safe? Well, logically you are thinking that the baby that occupied the hand-me-down seat was kept safe and is thriving today so why wouldn't it do the same justice to your bundle of joy? Simply because everyday standards are changing and what was considered safe a few years ago is not necessarily safe today.

We Are trying to equip you with the knowledge of how to choose, purchase, install and use the appropriate safety seat.

It can be said that older seats are not the safest choice particularly if you do not know their history. Many people borrow seats, buy used ones or, as mentioned, get them handed down. What you may not know is that if the seat has any damage, cracks, faults or has been in an accident it is not keeping your baby safe. In these circumstances it is not a seat that you should trust your newborn child in. Now, this is not to say that one can never borrow a car seat. It's not an article to tell you that you must go now and purchase the most expensive one out there. You can borrow car seats but they should be within the current safety standard regulations. You should not borrow a car seat that is more than five years old and in fact, you should not use the same seat you used for your last child if it is more than five years old. This is a common mistake among parents and most of the time nothing happens. However, you don't want to place bets on it most of the time. Ensure your child's safety by being certain about the car seat's history and quality.

Oh so many choices You don't just have to choose from different brand names and manufacturers or different features and options. Oh no! You also must choose from a variety of options in regards to "stages". There are baby carriers, rear facing seats, front facing seats and boosters as well as combination and convertible seats. Keep in mind, that most of these stages are for just that; the appropriate developmental stage that your child is at. I

The Regulatory Agencies recommend that children are in these seats or at the very least, in rear facing car seats until they are one year of age AND ## pounds. Your child must have reached both milestones, according to law, to use a front facing seat. In fact, the school of thought is that as long as you can keep your child comfortable rear facing you should do so even if you surpass this requirement. This waiting time allows for the strengthening of their bones and muscles, particularly in the neck. Using a forward facing seat too soon puts your child at serious risk of injury or even death should a vehicle collision occur.

How do you use a baby car seat? PROPERLY!! How do you do this? Baby car seats are tested and tested again to ensure maximum safety for your child. This safety is only assured if you, the purchaser, use this seat properly right from installation to latching up your child each time. You must be certain that the car seat fits well in your vehicle. This includes making sure that neither the seat nor baby's head is not on too much of a slant.

When installed and used properly the baby car seat will work to the best of its ability to keep your baby comfortable, secure and, above all else, safe. Baby car seats work with the vehicle seat belts and the seats to restrain the child in place.

A regular seat belt is not capable of keeping a small baby or child restrained upon impact. Their bodies are much too little. The car seat is equipped to hold them securely within the harness, while the vehicle seat belt tightly restrains the car seat as a whole. Your baby car seat will come with a number of features and options, all of which you should be aware of and be certain that you want. Some of your choices will include the type of harness, be it six point, five point, or three point. These work by restraining the child in that many places.

For example, a three point harness restrains the child at both shoulders and once between the legs. Your car seat may or may not come with a detachable base (this is for infant carriers), a head rest, adjustable handles (again, infant seats), drink holders, and many more options. A car seat works best if it meets your particular needs so know beforehand what your needs are so you can find exactly what you are looking for.

You can receive advice on installation from the manufacturer and can in fact even have your installation checked for safety. Online, you can find a number of locations to drive to with your car seat and they will tell you if your car seat is securely, safely and properly installed. Be sure as well that once a child is in a rear or front facer that you adjust the head rest to accommodate their growth spurts. As well, be certain that restraints are secure and you can get now more than a finger between the restraint and baby. If it has too much room baby may not be secure.

Summary Having a Child is a big step in your life. You will want to feel prepared and know that you are doing all you can to keep baby safe. If nothing else, remember these few things: car seats come with instructions- read them! Don't borrow or buy a seat you don't know the history of but if you do borrow or buy a second hand seat check for any defects, double check your installation and be prepared to make adjustments to the harness as baby grows, contact a professional (websites can give contact numbers and people) if you have any uncertainties. Your local health department can also help you make sure that baby is resting safely and comfortably in the seat.

By following the simple rules of car seat installation and use, just as you would follow the "rules of the road", you are doing your best to keep your most precious cargo safe. A child passenger safety technician is within a phone call if you need more questions answered. Look on line at consumer or government websites for more information. Stay safe.

About the Author

For more details on the topic of Baby Car Seats. You're only a click away - <http://www.bchighway.com/myvehicle/child-car-seat.html>.

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