

Child Restraints – New Law

The government as of September 2006 will be introducing new regulations that govern the use of child restraints and seatbelts in cars, vans and other goods vehicles.

Why has this been introduced?

The Department for Transport has estimated that the changes to these regulations could prevent over 2000 child deaths or injuries each year.

How does this affect you?

- Seatbelt wearing is already compulsory in mini buses. The driver is responsible for seatbelt wearing by children under 14 years old.
- The new regulations will mean that children aged 3 and above will have to use seatbelts where they are fitted in the larger buses and coaches.
- In vehicles over 16 seats, the driver is exempt from this responsibility because they cannot expect to monitor seatbelt wearing and drive safely at the same time.
- Parents and/or carers will have to abide by the new regulations as set out in the table below for planned excursions. For example: - Parent taking children to a school football match or a care worker taking children on an excursion.

Exemptions

There are 3 exemptions to the law. Correct child restraints must be used where seat belts are fitted. Children aged 3 –11yrs must use an adult belt if: -

1. In a taxi, the right child restraint is not available.
2. For an occasional journey (e.g. unforeseen emergency) over a short distance, if the right child restraint is not available.
3. Where 2 occupied child seats in the rear prevent the fitment of a third seat.

For further information please follow the instructions below for frequently asked questions published by the Department for Transport: -

1. Enter dft in to search engine
2. Click on department for Transport
3. On left hand side of screen click on road safety
4. Under road safety, find and click upon “child road safety”
5. Click on “New rules for use of child seats frequently asked questions”

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Seat Belt Wearing Requirements in Cars and Goods Vehicles

Current Rules				Future Rules commencing September 2006			
Category	Front Seat	Rear Seat	Who is Responsible	Category	Front Seat	Rear Seat	Who is Responsible
Driver	Seat belt must be worn if fitted.		Driver	Driver	Seat belt must be worn if fitted.		Driver
Child under 3 years of age	Correct child restraint must be used.	Correct child restraint must be used if available.		Child under 3 years of age	Correct child restraint must be used.	Correct child seat must be used. If one is not available in a taxi, child to travel unrestrained.	Driver
Child aged 3 to 11 and under 1.5m approx. 5ft in height	Correct child restraints must be used if available. If not an adult seatbelt must be worn.	Correct child restraints must be used if available. If not an adult seatbelt must be worn.	Driver	Child aged 3 to 11 and under 1.35m approx. 4ft 5in in height	Correct child restraint must be used.	Correct child restraints must be used where seat belts fitted. Must use adult belt if: In a taxi, 2 occupied child restraints prevent fitment of a third, on a short and occasional trip and the correct child restraint is not available.	Driver

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Child 12 or 13, or under 1.35 metres approx. 4ft 5in in height	Seat belt must be worn if fitted.	Seat belt must be worn if fitted.	Driver	Child 12 or 13, or over 1.35 metres approx. 4ft 5in in height	Seat belt must be worn if fitted.	Adult seat belt must be worn if fitted.	Driver
Adult Passengers	Seat belt must be worn if fitted.	Seat belt must be worn if fitted.	Passenger	Adult Passengers	Seat belt must be worn if fitted.	Seat belt must be worn if fitted.	Passenger

Children under 3 years old **MUST** use the child restraint (child seat or booster) appropriate for their weight in any vehicle (including vans and other goods vehicles).

In vehicles where seat belts are fitted, children 3 years and over 135cm in height **MUST** use the appropriate child restraint.

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