

Child Safety Seat Laws

By State



Florida

Children ages 4 until 18 must be restrained in a child restraint or safety belt. Children under age 4 are required to use a child restraint. Violation of the child restraint law is a standard offense.

Georgia

Children ages 8 until 18 and over 4 feet 9 inches tall are required to be in a safety belt in all seats. Children under age 8 and under 4 feet 9 inches tall are required to be in a child restraint installed and being used in accordance with the manufacturer's directions, if available, in the rear seat. Violation of the child restraint law is a standard offense. It is unlawful for anyone under the age of 18 to ride as a passenger in the uncovered bed of a pickup truck on any interstate highway in the state.

Illinois

Children ages 8 until 16 are required to be in either a child restraint system or a safety belt. Children under age 8 are required to be properly secured in a child restraint system. Children over 40 pounds may be transported in the back seat of a vehicle with only a lap belt if the back seat is not equipped with a lap and shoulder belt. Violation of the child restraint law is a standard offense.

Indiana

Children ages 8 until 16 are required to be in either a safety belt or a child restraint. Children under age 8 must be properly restrained in a child restraint system. Children over 40 pounds may be transported in the back seat of a vehicle with only a lap belt if the back seat is not equipped with a lap and shoulder belt. Violations of the child restraint laws are standard offenses. Riding in the cargo area of a pickup truck is not permitted for children under age 16. Vehicles participating in a funeral procession are exempt from complying with child restraint laws.

Iowa

Children ages 6 until 18 must be restrained in either a safety belt or child restraint system. Children under age 6 must be restrained in a child restraint. Infants under age 1 and under 20 pounds must be restrained in a rear-facing safety seat. Violation of the child restraint law is a standard offense.

Michigan

Children under age 16 must wear a safety belt or be in an approved restraint system regardless of where they sit in the vehicle. Children under age 8 and less than 4 feet 9 inches tall shall be properly secured in a booster seat or child restraint system. Children under age 4 must be properly secured in a child restraint system in the rear seat, if possible. Violation of the child restraint law is a standard offense.

Minnesota

Children under age 8 and under 4 feet 9 inches tall are required to be in a child restraint. Violations of the child restraint laws are standard offenses.



Nebraska

Children ages 6 until 18 are required to ride secured in an occupant protection system in all seating positions. Children under age 6 are required to be in a child restraint system. Violation of the child restraint law is a primary offense. Riding in the cargo area of a pickup truck is not permitted for children under age 18.

North Dakota

Children ages 7 until 18 must be in an approved child restraint system or in a safety belt. Children under age 7, less than 4 feet 9 inches tall and under 80 pounds must be properly secured in a child restraint system. Violation of the child restraint law is a standard offense.

Puerto Rico

Any person who drives or rides as a passenger in a motor vehicle, which should be equipped with safety belts, shall be bound to fasten said belt around his or her body while the vehicle is being driven along the public thoroughfares. Children under the age of 4 traveling on public highways must be in a protective car seat

(handicapped or incapacitated children are exempt) or must be using a safety belt properly; person operating vehicle is responsible for compliance with provision and subject to penalty for failure to comply. Children under age 12 must be in the rear seat of a vehicle, if possible.

Tennessee

Children ages 9 until 16 must be properly restrained in a safety belt. Children under age 9 are required to be seated in the rear seat of the vehicle, if available, and children ages 9 until 13 are encouraged to be seated in the rear seat of the vehicle, if available. Children ages 4 until 8 and less than 4 feet 9 inches tall must be properly restrained in a booster seat. Children ages 1 until 4 weighing more than 20 pounds must be properly restrained in a child seat. Children less than 1 year old or less than 20 pounds must be properly restrained in a rear-facing child seat. Violations of the child restraint laws are standard offenses. Riding in the cargo area of a pickup truck is prohibited for children under age 12.

Wisconsin

Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until the age of 1 and at least 20 pounds. Then they must ride in a forward-facing child seat until age 4 or weighing more than 40 pounds. They must then ride in a booster seat until they turn age 8, weigh more than 80 pounds, or are taller than 4 feet 9 inches tall. Violation of the child restraint law is a standard offense.

U.S. Virgin Islands

Operators and passengers seated in the front must be restrained by a safety belt. Children under 5 years of age must use a car seat that complies with federal motor vehicle safety standards; children between the ages of 3 and 5 may meet this requirement by riding with a safety belt in the rear of the vehicle.



Protect Your Child

Laws do not always dictate best practices. Be sure to check out the AAA Child Safety Seat Guidelines.

For more information on child passenger safety or laws for a state not mentioned in this brochure, contact your local AAA office or visit DrivingLaws.AAA.com.

Child Safety Seat Guidelines & Laws



continued on next panel →

▶▶▶▶ AAA Child Safety Seat Guidelines

Can we really be too careful when it comes to our children? Not when the issue at hand is car safety. Tragically, vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children in our country. Attention to detail and a few precautionary steps are all it takes to safeguard our junior passengers.



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Stage 1 Rear-Facing

Children should ride in the back seat from birth until two years of age, or until they reach the upper weight limit of their rear-facing convertible seat, which should be around 35 pounds. (This is a change from previous recommendations to keep children rear-facing until one year old and 20 pounds.)



Stage 2 Forward-Facing

Children can ride forward-facing in the back seat once they have reached the upper weight or height limit of their rear-facing convertible seat (around 35 pounds), which will typically be around two years old. It is safest to keep your child in a forward-facing seat with a harness until they reach the maximum weight limit (40-65 pounds) or height restriction of their seat.



Stage 3 Belt-Positioning Booster Seat

Once a child outgrows the upper weight or height limit of their forward-facing harness, which will usually be between 40-65 pounds, they are not yet ready to ride in a safety belt that is designed for adults. Children should use belt-positioning booster seats once they outgrow their 5-point harness until they are at least 4'9" tall and are between 8 and 12 years of age.



Stage 4 Lap/Shoulder Belt

Children can ride in safety belts once the belt fits properly. All children under age 13 should ride in the back seat!



Is your child ready for a safety belt?

- ✓ Lap belt should cross at the hips.
- ✓ Shoulder belt should cross at the center of the shoulder and chest.
- ✓ Legs should bend comfortably at seat edge with back flat on the seat.

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For more information on proper child seat installation, call 1-866-SEAT-CHECK or visit www.seatcheck.org or AAA.com.

✓ Safety Belt Rules

- ✓ Always require safety belt use by all passengers.
- ✓ Fit the lap belt low and tight across the lap/upper thigh area—NOT the abdomen.
- ✓ Fit the shoulder belt to cross the chest and shoulder.