

CHILD Passenger safety

IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE IN VEHICLES. That means putting them in the proper restraint for their age, size and weight. Parents are often confused about the difference between child restraint laws and the recommendations of national experts regarding child safety seats. The National Highway Safety Traffic Administration has resources to help parents and caregivers at www.safercar.gov/parents/CarSeats/Car-Seat-Safety.htm. Their Car Seat Finder found at www.safercar.gov/cpsApp/crs/index.htm is an easy-to-use tool that lets you find the right car seat to fit your child. **Follow your car seat manufacturer's instructions and your vehicle owner's manual on how to install and properly use the car seat.**



Car Seats and Booster Seats:

- Children ages 0-3, such restraint devices must be a separate carrier or a vehicle manufacturer's integrated child seat.
- Children ages 4-5, the restraint device should be a separate carrier, an integrated child seat or a child booster seat.
- The best child seat is one that fits your child, fits your car and that drivers will use correctly every time. Read the car seat's instruction manual and the portion of your vehicle's owner manual when you install a car seat.
- Visit a local Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) station to ask a car-seat certified trooper to help you install your seat.
- Remember to check for car and booster seat recalls

Many children may need booster seats beyond the age required by law, depending on the size of the child and where the seatbelt crosses the body. The following recommendations can help determine if your child, after age 5, is ready to wear a seatbelt without a booster seat:

- The child is at least 4'9" tall;
- The child can sit all the way back in the seat and bend knees at the edge of the seat;
- The shoulder belt lays across the chest, not the neck;
- The lap belt lays across the upper thighs, not the stomach

Children under the age of 13 should ride in the back seat of the vehicle whenever possible for additional safety.

The Florida Highway Patrol has members that are car seat certified who can help identify the best child seat to fit a child, can ensure the seat is properly fitted in a car and can check that the seat is being used correctly every time. FHP offers free car seat checks and installations for motorists who bring their current car seat to local FHP Troop stations. Parents are encouraged to contact their local troop station to make an appointment. More information about how to best protect child passengers can be found at www.flhsmv.gov/safety-center/vehicle-and-child-safety/child-safety/.

Seatbelts

- Buckle up. A seatbelt is your vehicle's most important safety feature, but it only works if you use it.
- Florida law requires the use of seat belts by drivers of motor vehicles and all children riding in a vehicle under the age of 18.
- Keep children in the back seat, at least through age 12, if possible. Front seat air bags, when deployed, can be dangerous to children.
- A new law effective January 2015 requires children 4 and 5 years of age to ride in a booster seat.

Never Leave a Child in a Hot Car

- Never leave a child unattended or unsupervised in a motor vehicle. It is extremely hot, especially in Florida during the summer and can result in the child's injury or death.
- Florida law states that children under six should never be left in a motor vehicle for longer than 15 minutes or for any period of time if the motor is running, the health of the child is in danger or if the child appears to be in distress. A violation of this law is a second degree misdemeanor and can result in a fine of up to \$500. If a child is injured, the violation becomes a third degree felony.