



# Keeping Kids Warm & Safe Through Winter

## Install Car Seats Following Manufacturer's Instructions

**Traffic crashes can happen at any time.** Install the child's car seat correctly to reduce the risk of injury in a crash. Every car seat and vehicle is different. It is important to follow the car seat and vehicle instructions carefully to achieve a correct installation. Useful tips to obtain a correct installation:

- **Read the car seat instruction manual and the portion of your vehicle's owner's manual covering car seat installation.**
- Place the car seat in a back seat of the vehicle and secure it tightly. It should not move side-to-side or front-to-back more than 1-inch when pulled at the belt path.
- Install the rear-facing car seat at the correct recline angle. Rear-facing car seats provide instructions to determine the correct installation angle and many have built in angle indicators to show when the car seat recline angle is correct.
- Install the forward-facing car seat with the lower anchors or the vehicle seat belt and secure the tether strap to the designated tether anchor and tighten. A tether increases safety by limiting forward movement of the car seat and limiting head movement in a crash.

## Secure Children Correctly In the Car Seat

- Properly position the harness on your child.
- **Rear-facing:** The harness straps should lie flat and be threaded through the slot that is **at or below** your child's shoulders.
- **Forward-facing:** The harness straps should lie flat and be threaded through the **reinforced slot** that is **at or above** your child's shoulders.
- Buckle the harness and secure the chest clip. Tighten the harness until it is snug on the child.
  - The harness is snug when the webbing cannot be pinched at the shoulder.
  - Make sure the chest clip is at armpit level.

**Note:** If you have difficulty installing or using the car seat, locate a car seat check-up event or fitting station to have a car seat technician teach you how to properly use and install your car seat. Car Seat fitting stations are listed at [www.pakidstravelsafe.org](http://www.pakidstravelsafe.org) or call 1-800-CAR-BELT for information on this service.

## Winter Coats and Harnessing

### What you **CAN** Do

- Purchase coats that come in layers or offer warmth with thinner fabrics and fillers.
- Place a blanket over the child in a car seat for additional warmth.
- Put your child's coat on backwards once in the car and buckled.
  - Secure the child in the car seat with the clothes that will be worn while indoors.
  - Buckle and tighten the harness snugly. A snug harness does not allow any slack. It lies in a relatively straight line without pressing on the child's body and pushing it into an unnatural position. The harness should be snug enough on the child that you cannot pinch any extra webbing.
  - Slip the child's arms through the sleeves to wear the coat backwards and over the snug harness.
  - In the event of a crash, the snug harness will keep the child secure in the car seat.
- Warm up the car in a well-ventilated area prior to taking the child outside.

### What you **SHOULD NOT** Do

- Purchase and use puffy coats, buntings and snowsuits or too much padding under the harness.
- Use head roll supports that do not come with the car seat (non-regulated). These items can actually interfere with the harness, add padding under the child and affect how the car seat protects in a crash.
- Use car seat covers that cover the entire car seat for warmth and decoration. Unless the car seat cover comes with the car seat, it should not be used in the car during travel.

Here are some steps you can use to determine if the child's coat is too bulky and not safe to use under the harness while traveling in the car:



- Put the coat on the child and secure the child in the car seat. Fasten and adjust the harness to snugly fit the child. A snug harness does not allow the webbing to be folded between your thumb and forefinger when pinched at the shoulder.
- Without loosening the harness, unbuckle and remove the child from the car seat.
- Remove the coat and place the child back in the car seat. Buckle the harness straps. If you can pinch the webbing between your thumb and forefinger, the coat is too bulky to be worn under the harness.

**Note:** A common misuser for car seats is a loose harness. Wearing a bulky winter coat under the harness is just one of the causes for a loose harness. Extra slack in the harness can be very dangerous; it can lead to too much forward movement or even ejection during a crash.



# Holiday Safety Tips for the Whole Family



## Stay Focused—Avoid Driver Distraction

With the holidays approaching, it is easy to be pulled in many directions. Try to set all of the holiday bustle aside when getting in your vehicle to avoid being a distracted driver. **In 2014, 3,179 people were killed, and 431,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.**

### What is distracted driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving, endangering driver, passenger, and bystander safety. Activities may include:

- ◆ Texting
- ◆ Using a cell phone or smartphone
- ◆ Eating and drinking
- ◆ Talking to passengers
- ◆ Grooming
- ◆ Reading, including maps
- ◆ Using a navigation system
- ◆ Watching a video
- ◆ Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player



Text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention making it the most distracting activity for the driver.

## How to Avoid Driver Distraction...

- **Fully focus on driving.**
  - Do not let anything divert your attention
  - Actively scan the road
  - Use your mirrors and watch out for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Put aside your electronic distractions.**
  - Don't use cell phones while driving – handheld or hands-free – except in absolute emergencies.
  - Never use text messaging, email functions, video games or the internet with a wireless device, including those built into the vehicle, while driving.
- **If another activity demands your attention:**
  - Pull off the road and stop your vehicle in a safe place to address the demand.
  - Avoid temptation, power down or stow devices before heading out.
  - Use caution when using voice-activated systems, even at seemingly safe moments. A lull in traffic or when the car is stopped at an intersection is still potentially dangerous because distractions can last longer than expected.
- **Secure children and pets before getting underway.** If they need your attention, pull off the road safely to care for them. Reaching into the backseat can cause you to lose control of the vehicle.
- **Snack smart.** Avoid messy foods that can be difficult to manage.
- **Make adjustments before you begin your trip.**
  - Address vehicle systems like your GPS, seats, mirrors, climate controls and sound systems before hitting the road.
  - Decide on your route and check traffic conditions ahead of time.
- **Finish dressing and personal grooming at home** – before you get on the road.

## General Winter Travel Safety Tips

- Make sure everyone in the vehicle is properly buckled up, EVERY RIDE.
- Always carry extra blankets in the vehicle for all passengers, along with non-perishable food supplies and other necessities in case of a roadside emergency in inclement weather.
- Allow time to warm up the vehicle and brush off any snow or ice before entering and securing passengers.
- Keep projectiles like snowbrushes, ice scrapers, and kitty litter in the trunk.
- Allow extra time for travel. Driving in wintry conditions will require you to slow down and be extra cautious.
- Explain to young children that **driving on snowy roads requires concentration and they will need to sit quietly during the trip.**

