



Keeping Kids Warm & Safe Through Winter



The Danger of Winter Coats in Car Seats

In cooler weather, parents bundle children in bulky coats to keep them warm. Using these thick coats may keep children warm, but they reduce the safety of their car seat. The car seat harness keeps the child in the car seat and spreads the crash forces over a large area of the body. The harness provides the best protection when correctly placed on the child and tightened snugly. A bulky coat can compress in a crash and create slack in the harness.



To determine if the child's coat is too bulky and not safe to use under the harness while traveling in the car:

1. Put the coat on the child and correctly place the car seat harness on the child's body. Secure the harness and adjust snugly to fit the child. A snug harness does not allow the webbing to be folded between your thumb and forefinger when pinched at the shoulder.
2. Without loosening the harness, unbuckle and remove the child from the car seat.
3. Remove the coat and place the child back in the car seat. Correctly place the harness on the child's body and 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.



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.
- Warm up the car in a well-ventilated area prior to taking the child outside.

What you **SHOULD NOT** Do

- **Do Not** use puffy coats, buntings and snowsuits or use padding under the harness.
- **Do Not** 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.
- **Do Not** use car seat covers that cover the entire car seat for warmth and decoration in the car, unless it came with the car seat or is provided by the car seat manufacturer.

Note: A common misuse 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.



Following Manufacturer's Instructions

Install the child's car seat correctly to reduce the risk of injury in a crash. It is important to follow the car seat and vehicle instructions carefully to achieve a correct installation. Useful tips to obtain a correct installation include:

- **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.

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.



Winter Safety Tips for the Whole Family



School Bus Safety Tips For Winter



During winter months, school transportation safety is a must. Plan ahead for times of inclement weather to ensure your child's safety in either walking to school or riding the bus. The safety of children on the school bus depends not only on the bus driver, but others on the road as well. Drivers of other vehicles should always be mindful of student unloading and loading zones, but should take extra precaution at or near schools and bus stops during winter months.

The following are some winter safety tips for children, parents, and drivers in preparation for winter climates:

- Dress for winter! Students who walk to or wait at school bus stops should dress appropriately for cold, icy weather. Proper outerwear includes warm coats, gloves, hats and waterproof footwear.
- Be seen! Wear bright clothing during the daytime and reflective items on clothing, shoes, and backpacks in low light or when it is dark.
- Safety First! Passengers should wait for the bus to stop completely before approaching the bus to get on, as well as before standing up to get off. Always use caution when stepping on or off the bus and wait for the driver's signal to cross in front of the bus.
- Stay alert! Always "Stop, Look and Listen" before crossing the street. Hoodies, headphones and portable electronic devices can distract students from paying attention to traffic.
- Remember the Danger Zone. This is the area extending 10 feet in all directions from the school bus. Loading and unloading is the most dangerous time when riding the bus. Staying out of the Danger Zone will help ensure that the driver is able to see you.
- Delays can happen. In the early evening as temperatures drop, roads may become icy and delay students' arrival times.
- Plan ahead. Students should never run after the bus. Plan ahead and allow sufficient time to get to the bus stop. Make arrangements. Consider child care options in the event that school is closed for the full day. Likewise, consider arrangements if school dismisses early, such as: talk with your child's daycare provider regarding their severe weather policy, talk with a neighbor about checking in on your child, make plans to have an adult in the home after dismissal, ensure your child has a key to get in the house.
- Communicate with your school. If you plan to pick your child up from school, make sure the school is notified in advance.

Note: If you have difficulty installing or using a car seat, locate a car seat check-up event/fitting station to have a car seat technician teach you how to properly use and install the car seat.

A list can be found at www.pakidstravelsafe.org or call 1-800-CAR-BELT for information on this service.

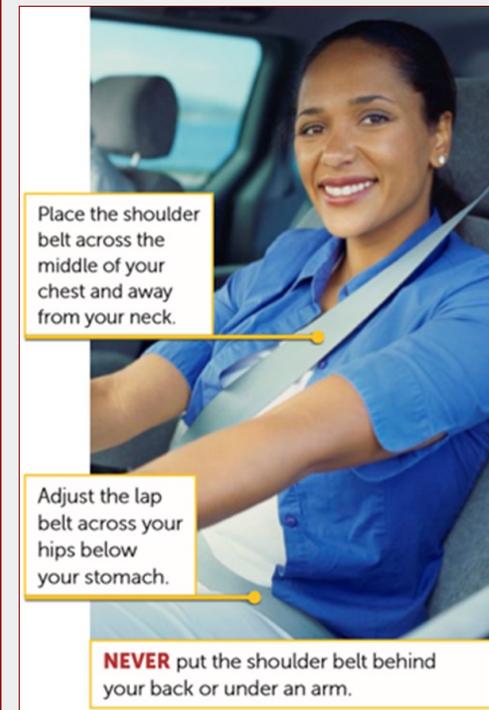
Seat belts save more than 13,000 lives every year. One of them could be yours...

Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash. During a crash, being buckled up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas being completely thrown out of a vehicle is almost always deadly. Seat belts are the best defense against impaired, aggressive, and distracted drivers.

Modeling Seat Belt Safety—As a parent, you are your child's strongest influence when it comes to modeling safe driving practices, including buckling up every time you get in the car. Teach your family that safety is the responsibility of the driver and all passengers.

Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them. In fact, if you don't wear your seat belt, you could be thrown into a rapidly opening frontal air bag; a movement of such force could injure or even kill you. Visit www.nhtsa.gov/airbags for more on air bag safety.

Guidelines to buckle up safely



Place the shoulder belt across the middle of your chest and away from your neck.

Adjust the lap belt across your hips below your stomach.

NEVER put the shoulder belt behind your back or under an arm.

Secure the lap belt and shoulder belt across the pelvis and rib cage, which can withstand crash forces better than other parts of your body.

Fit matters: Before you buy a new car, check to see that the seat belts are a good fit for you. Ask your dealer about seat belt adjusters, which can help you get the best fit. If you need a roomier belt, contact your vehicle manufacturer to obtain seat belt extenders.