

Buckle-Up Safely: A Guide for Family Safety

Register Car Seats to Receive Recall and Safety Notifications

A recall is issued when a car seat manufacturer or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) determines a car seat creates a safety risk or fails to meet minimum safety standards.



Car seats can be registered:

- ◆ Online at the car seat manufacturer's website:
 - ◆ Complete the form,
 - ◆ Providing the car seat model number and manufacture date.
- ◆ By Mail with the car seat registration card:
 - ◆ Complete the card,
 - ◆ The model number and manufacture date are on the card.
 - ◆ No postage is required to mail the card.
- ◆ Online at: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats>.
 - ◆ Go to Registration,
 - ◆ Select the manufacturer of the car seat.
 - ◆ Complete the form and submit.

By registering the car seat, the manufacturer can contact you in the event of a recall, and guide you through the repair process.

Cleaning Car Seats

Read the car seat manufacturer's instructions. Each manufacturer has specific instructions on how to clean their car seat. Follow the cleaning instructions provided by the manufacturer.



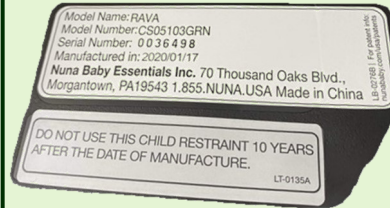
Wash as Directed: Use mild soap and the water temperature as directed for the car seat pad or parts. Do NOT use bleach or strong cleaners.

- ◆ **Car Seat Harness:** Many harnesses cannot be immersed in water. Manufacturers recommend wiping the harness with mild soap and water and allowing the harness to air dry.
- ◆ **Car Seat Shell:** Clean with mild soap and water and dry with a soft cloth. Take care not to damage the labels.
- ◆ **Never** use an iron or heat on the car seat pads or harnesses. The heat can damage the fibers.

Evaluate the Buckle: Check the crotch buckle and clean as needed, following car seat manufacturer's instructions, to ensure proper latching. Make sure the buckle is functioning properly and is free of debris.

Car Seat Expiration Dates

Expiration dates are determined by the car seat manufacturer and indicate the life span of the car seat.



Expiration dates are a way for car seat manufacturers to provide guidance on the expected "useful" life of their car seat.

- ◆ Check the car seat labels and instructions to determine the car seat expiration date.
- ◆ Discontinue use of the car seat once the expiration date is reached.
- ◆ The date of manufacture can be found on the label that provides the model number. The sticker may be found on the back, side, or bottom of the car seat.
- ◆ The expiration date may be provided as a month and year or in number of years from the date of manufacture.

Car Seat Involved in a Crash: Always follow the car seat manufacturer's guidance about replacing a car seat involved in a crash. Some car seat manufacturers:

- Recommend a car seat be replaced after a crash of any severity, even a minor crash.
- Follow the NHTSA recommendations that car seats be replaced following a moderate or severe crash.

Air Bags And Back Seat Safety

Air bags and seat belts work together to protect adults and older children who are correctly seated and buckled.

Children under 13 years of age should ride in the back seat away from the frontal air bag whenever possible.

Why?

The frontal air bag may cause injury to a child who is not large enough to take the force of its impact.



Best Practice recommendations:

- ◆ Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat in a vehicle with a front passenger-side air bag.
- ◆ If a forward-facing child must sit in the front seat with a front passenger-side air bag:
 - ◆ Check the car seat instructions for warnings about placing a car seat or belt-positioning booster seat in front of an air bag.
 - ◆ If permitted, make sure the child is properly secured in an appropriate car seat or booster seat, and
 - ◆ Move the vehicle seat as far back from the air bag as possible.

Seat Belt Safety Starts with Good Role Models

Learning the importance of wearing a seat belt starts with a good role model. Research shows that children whose parents buckle up are much more likely to buckle up themselves.

As a parent, you are your child's strongest influence when it comes to buckling up every time you get in the car. Safety is the responsibility of the driver and all passengers.



Consistency is Key: Remind children to buckle up on every trip, every time. Always buckle up before moving the car, no matter how short or routine the drive, and make sure all children are buckled up correctly.

Never Give Up Until They Buckle Up: Make sure children are buckled up with their lap and shoulder belt used correctly. The risk of injury among child passengers is significantly higher when their seat belts are loose and/or improperly positioned. Motivate children to buckle up properly and consistently using age-appropriate messages and rewards to reinforce the importance of seat belt safety.

Keeping Children Safe In and Around Cars

Today's vehicles are equipped with many safety features designed to protect children and families. Even with new safety features, six common dangers have been identified for children who are playing near vehicles. Even the most careful parents can overlook these dangers. Always supervise children when they are in and around vehicles. Review the following tips to learn how to limit a child's risk. Talk to children and teach them how to avoid these dangerous situations.

Heatstroke: Children die each year from heatstroke after entering a vehicle unnoticed or being left alone in a vehicle. Heatstroke can occur at any time of the year. Even in cooler temperatures, the vehicle can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly. The inside temperature of a vehicle can rise almost 20° Fahrenheit within the first 10 minutes.

Always:

Check the back seats of the vehicle before you lock it and walk away. Lock the vehicle and keep the keys out of reach. Take action if you see a child alone in a car:

◆ **If the child is not responsive or in distress, immediately:**

- ◆ Call 911.
- ◆ Get the child out of the car.
- ◆ Spray the child with cool water (not an ice bath).

◆ **If the child is responsive:**

- ◆ Stay with the child until help arrives.
- ◆ Have someone else search for the driver or ask the facility to page them.



Trunk Entrapment: Children are naturally curious and love to explore their surroundings. Unsupervised children may climb into the vehicle trunk and become trapped. Children being entrapped in vehicle trunks can suffer heatstroke, asphyxiation and death. To avoid entrapment, heed the following safety and prevention tips.

Always:

- ◆ Check the trunk immediately if a child is missing.
- ◆ Lock the car doors and trunk. Place keys and remote entry devices out of a child's reach.
- ◆ Keep the rear fold-down seats upright and locked to keep children from climbing into the trunk from inside the car.

Teach children that vehicle trunks are for cargo, not for playing.



Seat Belt Entanglement: A seated child is within reach of a seat belt and may become entangled if the seat belt is pulled all the way out and becomes wrapped around the head, neck, or waist. Seat belt entanglement can happen in the blink of an eye. Never leave your children alone in or around a vehicle for any reason.

If a child has an unused seat belt within reach:

- ◆ Buckle the unused seat belt,
- ◆ Pull it all the way out then feed the excess webbing back into the retractor.

Teach children that seat belts are not toys.



Power Windows: Children can hurt themselves with power windows. Children can be injured if a window closes on their finger, wrist, hand, or neck. Newer vehicles have child safety settings, "pull to close" switches, or power windows that reverse when it detects an object is in the path of the closing window or sunroof.

Never:

- ◆ Leave children alone in the vehicle
- ◆ Leave the keys in the ignition or in the "on" or "accessory" position when you exit the vehicle.

Always:

- ◆ Properly secure children in an appropriate car seat.
- ◆ Activate the power window lock switch so children cannot play with the windows.

Teach children to not play with window switches or climb on vehicle door armrests.



Back Over: A back over incident typically occurs when a car coming out of a driveway or parking space backs over a child. Many cars are equipped with rearview video cameras or warning sounds, but do not rely on these devices to detect what is behind the vehicle. Children are unpredictable.

Always:

- ◆ Walk around the vehicle to check for children before backing up. Actively check mirrors while backing up slowly
- ◆ Roll down a window to hear what is happening outside of the car.

Teach children to:

- ◆ Play away from cars and to keep toys and bikes out of the driveway.
- ◆ Move away from a vehicle when a driver gets into a car or the car is started.
- ◆ Stand to the side of the driveway or sidewalk to be easily seen as a vehicle is backing out of a driveway or parking space.



Vehicle Rollaway: Leaving a child unattended in a vehicle with the keys in the ignition is never safe. Unattended children can accidentally cause the vehicle to roll—or even drive—away, especially if the engine is running. Vehicles equipped with a keyless ignition or push-button start feature can rollaway when the vehicle has been turned off and not shifted into park.

- ◆ Always ensure the vehicle is securely in the "Park" position before shutting the vehicle off and exiting.
- ◆ Never leave keys in the car.

Keep vehicle locked when unattended and supervise children carefully when in and around vehicles.

