

CPS NEWS

Crash-Tested and Time-Limited: Why Car Seats Have Expiration Dates

As a Child Passenger Safety Technician, have you:

- Been asked why car seats have expiration dates?
- Had a caregiver come to your car seat check because they put the car seat in the washing machine and dryer and could not put it back together?
- Wondered how manufacturers decide how each of the car seat components on this life-saving device will hold up in a crash?



Car seats are carefully engineered and crash-tested as a complete system. Every component plays an important role in crash protection. Car seat manufacturers must follow strict crash test standards and for that reason they have specific cleaning instructions. The cleaning instructions in the manual should always be followed.



When car seats are developed, they must go through different series of crash tests. One of the facilities in Indiana – IMMI’s Center for Advanced Product Evaluation (CAPE) performs crash testing, rollover testing, applied mechanics, and environmental testing. The car seat companies who use this facility can assess the performance of their occupant protection products. To find out more about the CAPE facility and testing across the transportation industry: <https://www.capetesting.com/>

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Some of the main tests include:

Compliance Testing Quality & Performance		
Cycle Testing Latch / unlatch tens of thousands of cycles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No federal standards • Customer requirements • IMMI beyond customer requirements 	Performance Testing Insertion and release force consistency Environmental Testing Extreme hot and cold	Corrosion Testing Salt spray exposure Tensile Testing System strength testing of webbing




EXTREME EXPOSURE Chemical Exposure Test		
 Chemical Spray	 Environmental Chamber 212° F to -40° F	 Strength Test Tested to breaking point

Type of Testing	Purpose
Crash Testing	The complete car seat is tested in simulated front-impact and side-impact crashes to ensure it protects the child and keeps crash forces within safe limits.
Harness Strength Testing	Harness straps, buckles, and adjusters are tested to ensure they can withstand crash forces without breaking or slipping.
Webbing Durability Testing	Harness webbing is evaluated for stretching, fraying, and long-term strength over time.
Buckle Release Testing	Buckles must remain securely latched during a crash while still allowing an adult to unbuckle the child.
Plastic Shell Testing	The seat shell is tested for strength, flexibility, and resistance to cracking under extreme crash forces.
Temperature Testing	Seats are exposed to extreme heat and cold to verify that materials do not warp, crack, or weaken in different climates.
Flammability Testing	Fabrics, padding, and plastic components must meet federal flammability standards to help reduce fire risk.
LATCH & Connector Testing	Lower anchor connectors and tether straps are tested for strength and performance during crash conditions.
Repeated Use / Wear Testing	Buckles, adjusters, and moving parts are cycled thousands of times to simulate years of everyday use.
Label & Instruction Durability Testing	Labels and instruction manuals are tested to ensure they remain readable and attached throughout the seat’s lifespan.
Chemical & Material Safety Testing	Components are evaluated for harmful substances and must meet material safety requirements.

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EXTREME EXPOSURE

Chemical Exposure Test

 Chemical Spray	 Environmental Chamber 212° F to -40° F	 Strength Test Tested to breaking point
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Why the tests matter: These tests help ensure that car seats remain safe, reliable, and effective throughout their intended lifespan, which is one reason manufacturers establish expiration dates.

During a recent conference Katia Dubas from IMMI presented some of the testing performed at IMMI and showed a buckle that was exposed to harsh cleaning. The extreme testing showed the dangers of harsh chemicals on car seat components.

The results of product testing help establish how long a car seat can be safely used.



The results of product testing help establish how long a car seat can be safely used.

Expiration dates are a way for car seat manufacturers to provide guidance on the expected “useful” life of their car seat and components. Materials such as plastic and webbing can degrade over time from heat, UV exposure, and wear and tear, even if the seat looks okay to use. Years of use (and even storage) can affect how well the seat would protect a child in a crash.

- Plastic weakens over time
- Harness straps and parts straps wear
- Safety standards change over time
- Missing pieces or instruction manual
- Manufacturers test for a specific lifespan

It is ALWAYS important to teach caregivers to check the expiration date of the car seat. Replace it when it expires even if it “looks fine.” It’s one of the easiest ways to make sure a child is riding in a car seat that will perform as intended in a crash.





From Graco FAQs: Why do car seats expire? <https://www.gracobaby.com/carseatexpirationpage.html>

Car seats can be used safely only for a defined period of time, typically 7 to 10 years. Think about it: Your car seat goes through a lot during its useful life. Your child sits in the seat hundreds of times, plus the temperatures inside our cars vary greatly with the seasons (from cold to hot and back again). Graco defines “useful life” as 10 years for belt-positioning boosters and for steel-reinforced belt path car seats and 7 years for plastic-reinforced belt path car seats. Due to frequent changes in vehicles, regulations, safety technology and general wear and tear, Graco recommends not to use a car seat past its expiration date.



Cleaning Instructions: UPPA Baby Rove Manual

Cleaning and Maintenance



CLEANING FABRICS — Fabrics include: seat and headrest covers, harness covers, comfort inlay and crotch buckle cover.

 Machine wash in warm water on gentle cycle with mild detergent. DO NOT bleach.	 Secure all hook and loop fasteners before laundering.	 Tumble Dry Low.	 DO NOT iron or dry clean.
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CLEANING HARNESS WEBBING

 Spot clean using warm water with mild detergent. DO NOT bleach.	 Air dry completely before re-use or storage.
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CLEANING PLASTIC

 Spot clean using warm water with mild detergent.	 Towel dry completely before re-use or storage.
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Cleaning Lower Anchor Connectors — Anchors should fasten with a “click.” If not, rinse under warm running water. **DO NOT** use detergents or lubricants.

Cleaning Instructions: Peg Perego Primo Viaggio 4-35 manual

Cleaning and Maintenance

This unit needs minimal maintenance.

Keep all moving parts clean.

Clean the plastic parts often with a damp cloth. Do not use solvents or harsh products.

Brush the fabric parts to remove dust.

Protect the product against snow, water, and rain. Constant exposure to sunlight can change the colors in the material. Sun can also make the seat very hot. Be sure it is cool before putting your baby in the seat.

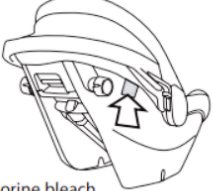
Warning! Excessive exposure to the sun for long periods of time can make the plastic brittle.

Store product in a dry area.

Warning! Do not use or purchase this restraint 7 (seven) years after the production date labelled on the seat or shell.

MAINTENANCE OF THE PADDING
Brush the fabric parts to remove dust.

To wash this upholstery, follow the instructions written on the product label (see below).



Do not use chlorine bleach.
Do not iron.
Do not dry clean.
Do not remove stains with solvents.
Do not tumble dry.

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Federal Aviation Administration

CHILD SAFETY

Keep Your Little One Safe When You Fly



Kids' Corner

<https://www.faa.gov/travelers/kids-corner>

FAA Updates Guidance for Children Younger Than 2-Years of Age

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) updated guidance recommending that children under the age of two be secured in an approved child restraint or device for the entire trip. The [website](#) page location has also changed. The Kids' Corner page offers tips and videos for parents on the selection of approved child restraints (rear-facing, forward-facing, and CARES), installation on the airplane seat, and additional resources for parents.

FAA's Tips For Families Traveling With Children

FAA's tips for families traveling with children.

- **The safest place for your child under the age of two on a U.S. airplane is in an approved child restraint system (CRS) or device, not in your lap.**
- **Purchase a ticket** for a child under the age of 2 to reserve a seat for the child and use an approved car seat or device.
 - When booking an airline ticket, see if there is a place to note you will be traveling with an approved car seat or device.
- **Use a rear-facing or forward-facing car seat that is appropriate for the child based on their height and weight.**
 - Check the CRS to make sure it is approved for use on aircraft.
 - Consult the CRS instructions for guidance on installing the car seat on the aircraft seat.
- **Installing the car seat:**
 - Raise the armrest on the aircraft seat, if possible.
 - Place the CRS on the aircraft seat facing the appropriate direction for the child.
 - Thread the flat end of the seat belt (latchplate) through the belt path. Buckle and tighten the seat belt.
 - Lower the armrest on the aircraft seat, if possible.

This child restraint system conforms to all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. **This Restraint is Certified for Use in Motor Vehicles and Aircraft.**

Note: If the approved CRS, for which a ticket has been purchased, does not fit in a particular seat on the aircraft, the airline is responsible for accommodating the CRS in another seat in the same class of service. The airline may have policies that dictate the specific safe seat locations for specific aircraft.

- **Use the AmSafe Child Aviation Restraint System (CARES) vest for forward-facing children who are able to sit upright in their own aircraft seat.** CARES:
 - Is the only FAA-approved vest-type device.
 - Accommodates children who are between 22 and 44 pounds and up to 40 inches tall.
- **Installing the CARES vest:**
 - Seat the child in the aircraft seat and lower the tray table behind the child's seat.
 - Slide the Red Loop of the CARES restraint over the seat back, and adjust the height so it is just above the child's shoulders, and tighten it.
 - Close the tray table covering the Red Loop.
 - Place the Black Shoulder Straps over the child's shoulders and slide the seat belt through the loops at the bottom of the Black Shoulder Straps. Buckle the seat belt and pull it snugly across the child's lap.
 - Connect the chest clip and adjust the length of the shoulder straps to provide a snug fit.



FAA APPROVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH 14 CFR 21.9(d) APPROVED FOR AIRCRAFT USE ONLY

FAA APPROVED Child Restraint System (CRS) IN ACCORDANCE WITH 14 CFR 21.305 (b) AMD 21.150 (6-9-1980) ELOS to TSO-C100b APPROVED FOR AIRCRAFT USE ONLY



Note: [CARES Instructional Safety Card](#)

- If a child rides on an adult's lap, booster seats, harness-type or lap-held devices are not allowed during take-off, landing, or taxiing-ground movement.



Airlines' Customer Service Plans for Family Travel



The following Airlines guarantee adjacent seats for a child 13 or under and an accompanying adult at no additional cost for all fare types **subject to limited conditions.***

- Alaska Airlines
- American Airlines
- Frontier Airlines
- Hawaiian Airlines
- JetBlue Airways

The following Airlines do not guarantee adjacent seats for a child 13 or under and an accompanying adult at no additional cost for all fare types **subject to limited conditions.***

- Allegiant Air
- Delta Air Lines
- Southwest Airlines
- United Airlines



*Limited Conditions:

- **When using an airline that assigns seats**, the airline can condition its guarantee on each of the following:
 - **Child and accompanying adult are on the same reservation;**
 - Adjacent seats are available at the time of booking in the selected class of service;
 - Aircraft is not substituted for a smaller aircraft;
 - Adult either chooses seats for the entire reservation or skips seats for the entire reservation, and does not make changes to seat assignments once assigned to them; and
 - It is possible, based on the seating layout, to seat the number of young children traveling next to the accompanying adult(s).

If the conditions are satisfied, airlines that assign seats and guarantee fee-free family seating will provide an adjacent seat assignments to the adult traveling with a child age 13 or under no later than the day before the flight.

- **When using an airline with an open seating policy**, the airline can condition its guarantee on the following:
 - **Child and accompanying adult are on the same reservation;**
 - Accompanying adult notifies gate agent of the need for adjacent seats prior to the start of boarding; and
 - It is possible, based on the seating layout, to seat the number of young children traveling next to the accompanying adult(s).

Child Passenger Safety Trainings

Certification Courses

The CPS Certification course provides the training necessary to become a certified CPS technician. This four-day course establishes CPS certification for a two-year cycle. The fee is \$95. To register, go to cert.safekids.org.

Berks County*

Course ID: PA2026011994
Date: July 27 - 30, 2026
Time: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
AAA Reading Berks
Lower Level Conference Classroom
920 Van Reed Road
Wyomissing, PA 19610
Contact: Cheryl Gouker
Phone: 610-374-4531 ext. 7117
Email: cgouker@aaardgberks.com
*Controlled class: Contact lead instructor before registering for class.

Cumberland County

Course ID: PA20260122116
Date: September 15 - 18, 2026
Time: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Hampden Township Fire Department
1200 Good Hope Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
Contact: Shannon Depatto
Phone: 717-982-7402
Email:
afickesmountz@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

York County*

Course ID: PA20260204153
Date: October 6 - 9, 2026
Time: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Southeastern Adams Volunteer
Emergency Services (SAVES)
5865 Hanover Road
Hanover, PA 17331
Contact: Missy Sweitzer
Phone: 717-840-2330
Email:
mmsweitzer@yorkcountypa.gov
*Controlled class: Contact lead instructor before registering for class.

Indiana County*

Course ID: PA20260312318
Date: October 14 - 16, 2026
Time: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Citizen's Ambulance Service
2712 W. Pike Road
Indiana, PA 15701
Contact: Kristen Urso
Phone: 412-885-0266
Email: kurso@paaap.org
*Controlled class: Contact lead instructor before registering for class.

Cumberland County

Course ID: PA20260122117
Date: October 20 - 23, 2026
Time: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Hampden Township Fire Department
1200 Good Hope Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
Contact: Angela Mountz
Phone: 717-982-7402
Email:
afickesmountz@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

Clearfield County*

Course ID: PA20260320351
Date: November 3 - 5, 2026
Time: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Morris Township Volunteer Fire
Company
72 Glendale Avenue
Morrisdale, PA 16858
Contact: Kelly Whitaker
Email: kwhitaker@paaap.org
*Controlled class: Contact lead instructor before registering for class.

Washington County*

Course ID: PA20260313320
Date: December 7 - 10, 2026
Time: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Peters Fire Department
245 E. McMurray Road
McMurray, PA 15317
Contact: Kristen Urso
Phone: 412-885-0266
Email: kurso@paaap.org
*Controlled class: Contact lead instructor before registering for class.

Renewal Courses

The CPS Renewal course is for CPS technicians with an expired certification. The one-day course allows recertification for a two-year cycle. The fee is \$95. To register, go to cert.safekids.org.

Berks County*

Course ID: PA2026011993
Date: July 17, 2026
Time: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
AAA Reading Berks
Lower Level Conference Classroom
920 Van Reed Road
Wyomissing, PA 19610
Contact: Cheryl Gouker
Phone: 610-374-4531 ext. 7117
Email: cgouker@aaardgberks.com
*Controlled class: Contact lead instructor before registering for class.

Washington County*

Course ID: PA20260313321
Date: December 10, 2026
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Peters Fire Department
245 E. McMurray Road
McMurray, PA 15317
Contact: Kristen Urso
Phone: 412-885-0266
Email: kurso@paaap.org
*Controlled class: Contact lead instructor before registering for class.

PA TIPP
CPS
Technical
Update
Course ID:
8234

PA TIPP Child Passenger Safety Technical Update Classes

Class is approved for 6 CEUs toward CPS Recertification. Contact your TIPP regional coordinator if you are interested in hosting or attending a CPS Technical Update.

PA TIPP instructors are approved as Emergency Medical Services Continuing Education Providers. EMTs can receive 6 EMS continuing education credits for attending the class.

Please RSVP if you plan to attend one of the following courses.

Allegheny County

Date: July 8, 2026
Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Moon Township Police Department
990 Beaver Grade Road
Moon Township, PA 15108
Contact: Kristen Urso
Phone: 412-885-0266
Email: kurso@paaap.org
Register to attend:
<https://forms.office.com/g/Jhpe9Bj6Ts>

Bucks County

Date: September 10, 2026
Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Bucks County Public Safety Training
Center
1760 S. Easton Road
Doylestown, PA 18901
Contact: Teresa Rychlak
Phone: 484-446-3019
Email: trychlak@paaap.org
Register to attend:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/cps-update-classes-103649>

Lancaster County

Date: September 22, 2026
Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Women and Babies Hospital
690 Good Drive
Lancaster, PA 17601
Contact: Teresa Rychlak
Phone: 484-446-3019
Email: trychlak@paaap.org
Register to attend:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/cps-update-classes-103649>

Allegheny County

Date: October 1, 2026
Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Ohio Township Fire Department
1520 Roosevelt Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
Contact: Kristen Urso
Phone: 412-885-0266
Email: kurso@paaap.org
Register to attend:
<https://forms.office.com/g/Jhpe9Bj6Ts>

Allegheny County

Date: November 20, 2026
Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Pleasant Hills Police Department
410 E. Bruceton
Pittsburgh, PA 15236
Contact: Kristen Urso
Phone: 412-885-0266
Email: kurso@paaap.org
Register to attend:
<https://forms.office.com/g/Jhpe9Bj6Ts>

Washington County

Date: December 11, 2026
Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Peters Township Fire Department
245 E. McMurray Road
McMurray, PA 15317
Contact: Kristen Urso
Phone: 412-885-0266
Email: kurso@paaap.org
Register to attend:
<https://forms.office.com/g/Jhpe9Bj6Ts>



Follow us!

www.facebook.com/pakidstravelsafe.org

PA TIPP
661 Moore Road
Suite 200
King of Prussia, PA 19406
www.pakidstravelsafe.org



Looking for Vehicular Heatstroke Resources? A number of agencies have developed resources for educating families and caregivers. A variety of resources are available including:

- Downloadable outreach materials that can be printed and used for visual education
- Links to videos
- Fact sheets and safety tips



A PARKED VEHICLE CAN BECOME DEADLY IN MINUTES

OUTSIDE TEMPERATURE: 80°F

INSIDE VEHICLE TEMPERATURE RISE:

0 MIN	10 MIN	20 MIN	30 MIN	60 MIN
80°F	99°F	109°F	114°F	123°F

HEATSTROKE CAN BEGIN AT 104°F. DEATH CAN OCCUR AT 107°F.

A child's body warms 3-5 times faster than an adult's.

NEVER LEAVE A CHILD ALONE IN A VEHICLE. NOT EVEN FOR A MINUTE.

HEATSTROKE

- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/heatstroke>
 - <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/child-safety#topic-heatstroke>
 - Traffic Safety Marketing: <https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/safety-topics/child-safety/vehicular-heatstroke-prevention>
- National Safety Council: Online Course / General Education: carseateducation.org
- American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Prevent-Child-Deaths-in-Hot-Cars.aspx>
 - <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Protecting-Children-from-Extreme-Heat-Information-for-Parents.aspx>
- CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/risk-factors/infants-and-children.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fextreme-heat%2Frisk-factors%2Fextreme-heat-and-children.html
 - https://www.cdc.gov/extreme-heat/media/pdf/15_257720_ready_wrigley_extreme_heat_508.pdf
- NoHeatstroke.org
- Prevent Child Injury: <https://www.preventchildinjury.org/toolkits/heatstroke-kids-in-hot-cars>