

Belt-Positioning Booster Seats: What Every Parent Needs to Know

Pennsylvania Law

All drivers transporting children 4 years of age or older but under 8 years of age are responsible to securely restrain those children in a seat belt system and an appropriately fitting child booster seat. (Primary Law)

Children who have outgrown their forward-facing harness car seat should use a belt-positioning booster seat (booster seat) until they can use a seat belt correctly.

A booster seat is always used with a vehicle lap and shoulder belt. The booster seat raises and positions a child so the seat belt crosses the body correctly.

- Shoulder belt is snug across the center of the child's shoulder and chest.
- Lap belt is low and snug across the child's hips/upper thighs.

Most children need to ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until age 10 - 12.



Booster seat use lowers the risk for serious injury by 45% for children age 4 to 8 years old when compared to seat belt use alone.

Is my child ready to move from the car seat with a harness to a belt-positioning booster seat?

Ask the questions below before making the transition to a belt-positioning booster seat.

- Is the child at least 4 years old and reached the maximum weight or height limit of their forward-facing car seat with a harness?
- Is the child mature enough to sit properly in the booster seat for the entire trip?
 - No slouching;
 - No leaning over; and
 - No playing with the seat belt.



Types of Booster Seats

High-Back Booster Seat: Recommended when the vehicle seat and/or head restraint is not high enough to provide support for the child's head, neck, and back.

- Some high-back booster seats require full support from the vehicle seat.

Backless Booster Seat: Used in a vehicle seating position that is high enough or has a head restraint to support the child's head, neck, and back.

- Most backless booster seats have a shoulder belt positioner to adjust the shoulder belt height on the child, if needed.

Both types of booster seats protect the child in a crash. The booster seat guides the lap and shoulder belt correctly across the child's body. Always read and follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions, including the listed weight and height ranges.



Correct Belt-Positioning Booster Seat Use and Installation

Booster Seat Placement and Installation

- **Always read and follow the car seat instructions for information to secure the booster seat.**
- Place the booster seat on a forward-facing vehicle seat.
 - Some booster seats are held in place by the child's weight and the vehicle lap and shoulder belt.
 - Some booster seats have lower anchor connectors to position and keep the booster seat in place.
 - Lower anchor weight limits do not apply because the seat belt secures the child in a crash.
- Seated child's back is against the booster seat back or vehicle seat.
- Adjust the vehicle head restraint and the back of the booster seat to support the child's head.
 - The top of the child's ears are below the back of the vehicle seat or the top of the head restraint on a high back booster seat.
 - The shoulder belt guides on a high-back booster seat should be level with the top of the child's shoulders.



Seat Belt Adjustment and Fit

- Always use a lap and shoulder belt with a booster seat.
- Route the vehicle lap and shoulder belt through the booster seat belt path.
 - The lap belt is positioned under the arm rest on the booster seat.
 - The lap belt is snug across the child's hips and touching the upper thighs.
 - The shoulder belt is positioned across the center of the child's chest, making contact with the child's shoulder.
 - Use the shoulder belt guide/positioner to keep the shoulder belt properly placed on the shoulder.

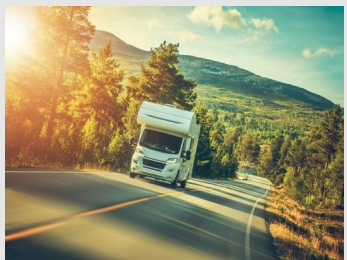


Secure all children younger than 13 years in the back seat of vehicles for best protection.

If a booster seat is used in the front seat, move the front seat back as far as possible maintaining contact between the child's body and the seat belt.

Summer Safety Tips When Traveling in RVs With Children

Safely Traveling: Children and RVs



Vacations in recreational vehicles (RVs) present a unique set of safety challenges for adults traveling with children. Children still need to be correctly secured in a car seat, booster seat or seat belt to keep them safe in your home on wheels. When installing a car seat in the rear cabin or living area of an RV, be aware that the seat belts may not meet the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and car seats and booster seats must be secured on a forward-facing vehicle seat. Never install a car seat on a side-facing or rear-facing vehicle seat. The Manufacturers Alliance for Child Passenger Safety (MACPS) provides the following guidance for “Car Seats and Recreational Vehicles.

“Car seats are designed for the FMVSS 213 bench and motor vehicle seats meeting the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard definitions of ‘passenger car’ and ‘multipurpose passenger vehicle’. A ‘recreational vehicle’ or ‘RV’ is neither. Standard No. 208 – Occupant Crash Protection Standard, in the section that is specific to recreational vehicles, states that rear designated seats in motor homes are excluded from the rear lap/shoulder belt requirements. While RVs may meet some Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, they are only required to comply with seat belt standards for the front passengers, but not for any rear occupants that may be traveling in Class A, Class C, or Class B RVs. Though these rear occupant seat belts are usually bolted to the floor, the biggest concern is that the wooden seat structure, on which the passenger is sitting will fail and cause injury in a crash. NHTSA does not currently crash test RVs with adults or child occupants. For these reasons, it is not recommended to rely on car seats to protect children while travelling in recreational vehicles.

Our recommendation is to choose a non-motorized tow-able RV, so that children can be restrained properly in the passenger vehicle that is towing the RV. If using a coach, have an adult drive a second car in which the children can ride so they can be restrained properly. Contact your child’s car seat manufacturer and your RV manufacturer directly for more information. (August 2016)”

Safety Tips for RV Travel

- Secure all passengers in the appropriate seat belt, car seat, or booster seat on every trip.
- Choose an RV that has seat belts that meet FMVSS 208.
 - Install car seats and booster seats on a forward-facing vehicle seat using either a seat belt or LATCH.
 - Check the RV cab for seating positions that are appropriate for installing car seats and booster seats.
 - Never secure a car seat or booster seat on a side-facing or rear-facing vehicle seat for travel.
- Consider a non-motorized RV, such as a fifth wheel, trailer, tent trailer, or truck camper so the child can be secured in the passenger vehicle that tows the RV.
 - Make sure the driver is experienced and familiar with towing a trailer.



Fifth Wheel



Trailer



Tent Trailer



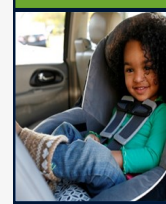
Truck Camper

- Drive children in a passenger car that follows the RV.
 - If you were planning to tow a car, consider driving the car with your children secured in their car seats instead of traveling with children in the RV.

Car Seat Basics

Whether traveling in a Recreational Vehicle or the family car, follow **car seat best practice recommendations when selecting and using** the correct car seat, booster seat, or seat belt for children.

Rear-Facing



Rear-Facing: Secure children in a **rear-facing car seat until the maximum weight or height allowed** by the manufacturer of the car seat. **Pennsylvania law requires children younger than 2 years** of age to always ride in a rear-facing car seat.

Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat with an active passenger-side front air bag.

Forward-Facing



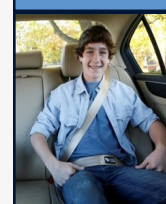
Forward-Facing: When children outgrow the rear-facing car seat, secure them in a **forward-facing car seat with a harness for as long as possible**, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

Booster



Belt-Positioning Booster Seat: Once children outgrow their forward-facing car seat, secure them in a **belt-positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt** until the seat belt fits properly, typically when a child is approximately **4 feet 9 inches and between 8 and 12 years** of age.

Seat Belt



Seat Belt: When children outgrow their belt-positioning booster seat, secure them in a **properly fitted lap and shoulder belt**. A lap and shoulder belt fits properly when the lap belt lays low and snug across the hips/upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the center of the chest and shoulder.

