



**BUCKLE
KIDS UP
*Correctly***

KEEP KIDS SAFE

*Information Provided
Compliments of
Your State
Senator*

Dear Friend:

According to Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS) motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of children ages 2 to 14. The use of belt-positioning booster seats lowers the risk of injury to children in crashes by 59 percent compared to the use of vehicle seat belts.

While 94 percent of America's toddlers are now regularly restrained, not enough kids ages 4-8 are properly and safely restrained. Only 10-20 percent of kids ages 4-8 who should be using booster seats and their safety belts to protect them are actually in them. This puts children at an unnecessary risk of being injured or killed in crashes because they are simply in the wrong restraint for their size.

These facts and figures prompted passage of a state law that will make cars safer for kids by tightening up the seatbelt and car seat requirements.

I encourage drivers to take time to understand this law, not only to avoid fines, but because following the law could save lives.

I also urge adults to use seatbelts properly, themselves. Statistics also show that young people are far more likely to use seatbelts if the adults in the vehicle buckle up.

Sincerely,
Your State Senator

PROTECTING CHILDREN

Previously, state law required all children under age four to be secured in an approved child passenger safety seat when riding in most vehicles.

- The law requires that age-appropriate safety or booster seats be used for children up to age 8, as opposed to age 4.
- Failure to properly secure children in safety seats could result in fines of up to \$100 plus costs.
- Children between ages 8 and 18 must be secured with a seatbelt whether they ride in the front or back seat. Prior law required seatbelts for those under 18 years of age only when riding in the front seat.
- Failure to ensure that young passengers use a seatbelt correctly could result in fines of \$10 plus costs.

Exemptions are allowed depending upon the size of the child, certain medical conditions, or when existing characteristics of the vehicle make it impractical or dangerous to place a child in a booster seat. Specifically:

- Children under age 8 who are 4'9" or taller or who weigh more than 80 pounds may be placed in an existing seat belt system without the use of a booster.
- Children between the ages of 4 and 8 may use a seatbelt alone IF a vehicle's original seatbelt system does not include shoulder belts for backseat passengers or where the available seating position has only a lap belt. Booster seats designed for use with only a lap belt may be used when done in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations.

And please note:

All drivers are responsible for making sure children are properly secured – not just parents.

Why Use Booster Seats?

Adult seatbelts don't fit young children properly. Children ages 8 and under who are secured with seatbelts can suffer abdominal, head and spine injuries in a crash. Booster seats raise children so lap and shoulder belts are positioned to best protect the child.

Finding Safe, Affordable Seats

If you cannot afford a safety or booster seat, many organizations provide them, including hospitals and the state Department of Transportation. For more information, contact PENNDOT's Traffic Injury Prevention Program at 1-800-CAR-BELT.

