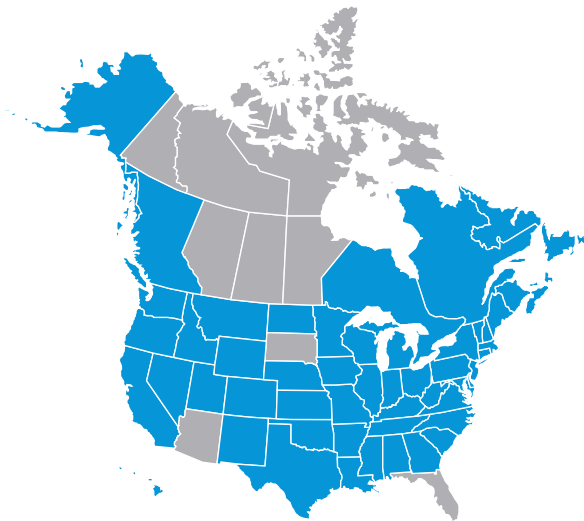




Guide to U.S. and Canada Child Safety Seat Laws



-  Child booster seat/restraint required*
-  No restraint provision required beyond the age of 3 or 4*



Why Use a Booster Seat?

Motor vehicle traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for children age 2 to 14. Many parents are surprised to learn that safety belts generally do NOT fit children until they are between 8 and 12 years of age. Vehicle seat belt systems are made to fit people who are at least 4'9" (145 cm.) tall. So, until that time, children who have outgrown a car seat with a harness are safest in a booster seat.¹

A booster seat lifts your child up so that the seat belt fits correctly across the bony areas of the body (hips and collarbone). Putting children in a seat belt before they are big enough puts him at risk for serious injuries or death in a crash. "Seat belt syndrome" is how doctors describe injuries to the spine and internal organs that can happen to children who are too small for the seat belt.

Remember — car seats and booster seats are designed to protect children and make them comfortable at the same time. There's nothing comfortable about a too-big safety belt cutting into children's stomachs or pressing against their faces. Plus, kids who ride on booster seats can easily see many things they would otherwise miss.

¹ Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (www.nhtsa.gov)

Who Should Use a Booster Seat?

Children should use a booster seat UNTIL they meet the following criteria:

- Weigh between 80 and 100 lbs.;
- Reach 4'9" (57 in.) in height; and
- Can pass the Safety Belt Fit Test

Safety Belt Fit Test

1. Have your child sit all the way back on the vehicle seat. Do your child's knees bend at the front edge of the seat? If they bend naturally, go to #2. If they don't, return to the booster seat.
2. Buckle the lap and shoulder belt. Be sure the lap belt rests on the upper legs or hips. If it does, go to #3. If it rests on the stomach, return to the booster seat.
3. Be sure the shoulder belt rests on the shoulder or collarbone. If it does, go to #4. If it's on the face or neck, return to the booster seat. Never put the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back.
4. Check whether your child maintains the correct seating position for as long as you are in the car. If your child slouches or shifts positions so the safety belt touches the face, neck or stomach, return your child to the booster seat.

Source: [Safe Kids Worldwide \(www.usa.safekids.org\)](http://www.usa.safekids.org)

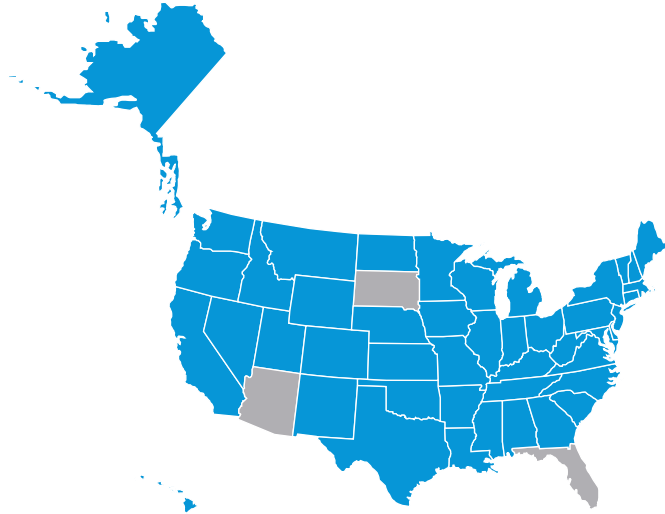
U.S. Laws by State

The following list provides the child safety seat laws for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia according to Safe Kids Worldwide. Please note that the laws generally require some older children to ride properly restrained in a booster seat, secured by the motor vehicle's safety belt system. Age coverage and other requirements vary by state.

Please remember that state law does not necessarily represent best practice. We recommend that you follow the laws of your state as the minimum requirements for restraining your child while traveling. Children should use a booster seat until they weigh between 80 and 100 lbs., are about 4'9" (57 in.) tall, and can pass the Safety Belt Fit Test. For most children, that will be between ages 8 and 12.

[For more detailed information on state child safety seat laws and laws regarding seat belt use for older children, visit the Safe Kids website at \[www.usa.safekids.org\]\(http://www.usa.safekids.org\). Scroll down to "Learn about Child Safety Laws and Regulations" on the right side of the page and then select your state from the drop-down menu.](#)

For informational purposes only. Please consult local authorities for further interpretation and current status.



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*As of September 2009

Alabama

Alabama law requires children through age 5 to ride in an appropriate child safety seat. • Children who are age 5 and 40 lbs. or more must use a booster seat. • Children who are age 5 and less than 40 lbs. must use a forward-facing child safety seat. • Children are required to use a rear-facing child safety seat until they are at least 1 year of age or weigh 20 lbs.

Alaska

Alaska law requires that children ages 7 and under who are less than 57 in. tall and weigh 20 or more lbs., but less than 65 lbs., be properly secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint system. The law will go into effect on September 15, 2009.

Arizona

Arizona law requires children under the age of 5 to use a child safety seat.

Arkansas

Arkansas law requires children ages 5 and under and weighing less than 60 lbs. to use an appropriate child safety seat.

California

California law requires children ages 5 and under and weighing less than 60 lbs. to use an appropriate child safety seat.

[For informational purposes only. Please consult local authorities for further interpretation and current status.](#)

Colorado

Colorado law requires children ages 4–5 and less than 55 in. in height to use a booster seat. • Children less than 1 year of age and weighing less than 20 lbs. are required to ride in an appropriate rear-facing child safety seat. • Children ages 1–3 and weighing more than 20 lbs. (but less than 40 lbs.) are required to ride in an appropriate forward-facing child safety seat.

Connecticut

Connecticut law requires children ages 6 and under or weighing less than 60 lbs. to ride in an appropriate child safety seat. • Children under age 1 or weighing less than 20 lbs. are required to use a rear-facing child safety seat.

Delaware

Delaware law requires children ages 7 and under and weighing less than 66 lbs. to ride in an appropriate child safety seat or booster seat.

District of Columbia

District of Columbia law requires children ages 7 and under to ride in an appropriate child safety seat or booster seat.

Florida

Florida law requires children under the age of 4 to use a child safety seat.

Georgia

Georgia law requires children ages 5 and under and 4'9" in height or shorter to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Hawaii

Hawaii law requires children ages 7 and under and 4'9" in height or shorter to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Idaho

Idaho law requires children ages 6 and under to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Illinois

Illinois law requires children ages 7 and under to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Indiana

Indiana law requires children ages 7 and under to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Iowa

Iowa law requires children ages 5 and under to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Kansas

Kansas law requires children ages 4–7, weighing less than 80 lbs. or less than 4'9" in height, to use an appropriate child restraint. • Children under the age of 4 are required to be restrained in the most appropriate child safety seat for their age.

Kentucky

Kentucky law requires children through age 6 who are between 40–50 in. tall to use a booster seat. • Children 40 in. in height or less must use an appropriate child safety seat.

Louisiana

Louisiana law requires children ages 5 and under or weighing 60 lbs. or less to ride in an appropriate child safety seat. • Children ages 4–5 or weighing 40–60 lbs. are required to use a booster seat. • Children ages 1–3 or weighing 20–39 lbs. are required to use a forward-facing child safety seat. • Children younger than age 1 or weighing less than 20 lbs. are required to use a rear-facing child safety seat.

Maine

Maine law requires children weighing less than 40 lbs. to use an appropriate child safety seat. • Children ages 7 and under and weighing at least 40 lbs. but under 80 lbs. are required to use an appropriate child safety seat.

Maryland

Maryland law requires children to be in a child safety seat through age 7, unless they weigh more than 65 lbs. or are 4'9" or taller.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts law requires children through age 7 and 57 in. in height or less to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Michigan

Michigan law requires children under the age of 8 and less than 4'9" in height to use a child safety seat.

Minnesota

Minnesota law requires children ages 7 and under and less than 4'9" to use an appropriate child safety seat.

Mississippi

Mississippi law requires children ages 4–6 and less than 4'9" in height or less than 65 lbs. in weight to use a booster seat. • Children ages 3 and under are required to use a child safety seat.

Missouri

Missouri law requires children ages 4–7 weighing at least 40 lbs. but under 80 lbs., and less than 4'9" to use an appropriate child safety seat. • Children less than 4 years of age (regardless of weight) and children weighing less than 40 lbs. (regardless of age) are required to use an appropriate child safety seat.

Montana

Montana law requires children ages 5 and under and weighing less than 60 lbs. to use an appropriate child safety seat.

Nebraska

Nebraska law requires children ages 5 and under to use an appropriate child safety seat.

Nevada

Nevada law requires children ages 5 and under and weighing 60 lbs. or less to use an appropriate child safety seat.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire law requires children ages 5 and under and less than 55 in. in height to use an appropriate child safety seat.

New Jersey

New Jersey law requires children ages 7 and under and weighing less than 80 lbs. to use an appropriate child safety seat or booster seat in the back seat.

New Mexico

New Mexico law requires children under the age of 7 (regardless of weight) or children who weigh less than 60 lbs. (regardless of age) to use a child safety seat. • Children under the age of 1 are required to use a rear-facing child safety seat in the rear seat.

New York

New York law requires children ages 7 and under to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

North Carolina

North Carolina law requires children ages 7 and under and less than 80 lbs. to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

North Dakota

North Dakota law requires children ages 6 and under who are under 57 in. in height and weigh less than 80 lbs. to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Ohio

Ohio law will require children ages 8 and under and less than 4'9" to use a booster seat. • Children under age 4 and less than 40 lbs. are required to use a child safety seat. This law will go into effect on October 1, 2009.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma law requires children ages 5 and under to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Oregon

Oregon law requires children through age 7 weighing more than 40 lbs. and measuring 4'9" or shorter to use a booster seat. • Children weighing 40 lbs. or less are required to use an appropriate child safety seat. • Children under age 1, regardless of weight, or children weighing 20 lbs. or less, must be properly secured in a rear-facing child safety seat.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania law requires children under the age of 8 to use a child safety seat.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island law requires children ages 6 and under, less than 54 in. in height, and weighing less than 80 lbs. to use an appropriate child safety seat in the back seat.

South Carolina

South Carolina law requires children ages 5 and under and weighing between 40–80 lbs. to use a booster seat in the back seat. • Children ages 0–1 or weighing less than 20 lbs. must use a rear-facing child safety seat in the back seat. • Children ages 1–5 and weighing between 20–39 lbs. must use a forward-facing child safety seat in the back seat.

South Dakota

South Dakota law requires children under the age of 5 and weighing less than 40 lbs. to use a child safety seat.

Tennessee

Tennessee law requires children ages 4–8 and measuring less than 4'9" in height to use a booster seat (in the rear seat, if available). • Children under age 1 or children weighing 20 lbs. or less are required to use a rear-facing child safety seat (in the rear seat, if available). • Children ages 1–3 and weighing more than 20 lbs. are required to use a forward-facing child safety seat (in the rear seat, if available).

Texas

Texas law requires children ages 8 and under to use an appropriate child safety seat. • Children who are taller than 4'9" are required to use a child safety seat.

[For informational purposes only. Please consult local authorities for further interpretation and current status.](#)

Utah

Utah law requires children through age 7 and less than 57 in. in height to use an appropriate child safety seat.

Vermont

Vermont law requires children ages 1–7 and weighing more than 20 lbs. to use an appropriate child safety seat. • Children under the age of 1 (regardless of weight) and children weighing less than 20 lbs. (regardless of age) are required to use a rear-facing child safety seat.

Virginia

Virginia law requires children ages 7 and under to use an appropriate child safety seat.

Washington

Washington law requires children ages 7 and under and less than 4'9" in height to use an appropriate child safety seat.

West Virginia

West Virginia law requires children ages 7 and under and less than 4'9" in height to ride in an appropriate child safety seat.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin law requires children ages 4–7, weighing between 40–80 lbs. and no more than 57 in. in height to ride in a booster seat. • Children ages 1–3 and weighing between 20–39 lbs. are required to use a forward-facing child safety seat in the back seat, if possible. • Children less than 1 year of age or weighing less than 20 lbs. are required to use a rear-facing child safety seat in the back seat if possible.

Wyoming

Wyoming law requires children ages 8 and under to use an appropriate child safety seat.

Source: Safe Kids Worldwide (www.usa.safekids.org)

For informational purposes only. Please consult local authorities for further interpretation and current status.

Canadian Laws by Province/Territory

The following list provides car seat and booster seat laws, according to Safe Kids Canada, for each of the 10 provinces and 3 territories. Please note that the laws generally require some older children to ride properly restrained in a booster seat, secured by the motor vehicle's safety belt system. Age coverage and other requirements vary by province/territory.

Please remember that local law does not necessarily represent best practice. We recommend that you follow the laws of your province as the minimum requirements for restraining your child while traveling. Children should use a booster seat until they weigh between 80 and 100 lbs., are about 4'9" (57 in.) tall, and can pass the Safety Belt Fit Test. For most children, that will be between ages 8 and 12.

For more detailed information on state booster seat laws and laws regarding seat belt use for older children, visit the Safe Kids website at www.safekidscanada.ca. You will find specific information pertaining to your province or territory under the public policy and advocacy tab, then choose "Solution: Mandatory Booster Seat Use."



■ Child booster seat/restraint required*
■ No restraint provision required beyond the age of 3 or 4*

*As of September 2009

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Alberta

Children must ride in a car seat until they are a minimum of 6 years old or over 40 lbs. (18 kg.). • No provision after children reach 40 lbs. (18 kg.).

British Columbia

Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are a minimum of 20 lbs. (9 kg.) and at least 1 year of age. • Children who are at least 1 year of age, at least 20 lbs. (9 kg.) but less than 40 lbs. (18 kg.) must ride in an appropriate car seat. • Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4'9" (145 cm.) tall, or a minimum of 9 years old.

Manitoba

Children must ride in a car seat until they are a minimum of 5 years old and a minimum of 50 lbs. (23 kg.). • No provision after children reach 40 lbs. (18 kg.).

New Brunswick

Children must ride in a car seat until they are a minimum of 5 years old or more than 40 lbs. (18 kg.). • Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4'9" (145 cm.) tall, or a minimum of 79 lbs. (36 kg.), or a minimum of 9 years old.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are a minimum of 20 lbs. (9 kg.). • Children who are at least 20 lbs. (9 kg.) but less than 40 lbs. (18 kg.) must ride in an appropriate car seat. • Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4'9" (145 cm.) tall, or more than 80 lbs. (36 kg.), or a minimum of 9 years old.

Northwest Territories

Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are a minimum of 20 lbs. (9 kg.). • Children who are at least 20 lbs. (9 kg.) but less than 40 lbs. (18 kg.) must ride in an appropriate car seat. • No provision after children reach 40 lbs. (18 kg.).

Nova Scotia

Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are a minimum of 22 lbs. (10 kg.) and at least 1 year of age. • Children who are at least 1 year of age, at least 22 lbs. (10 kg.) but less than 40 lbs. (18 kg.) must ride in an appropriate car seat. • Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4'9" (145 cm.) tall, or a minimum of 9 years old.

Nunavut

Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are a minimum of 20 lbs. (9 kg.). • Children who are at least 20 lbs. (9 kg.) but less than 40 lbs. (18 kg.) must ride in an appropriate car seat. • No provision after children reach 40 lbs. (18 kg.).

Ontario

Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are a minimum of 20 lbs. (9 kg.). • Children who are at least 20 lbs. (9 kg.) but less than 40 lbs. (18 kg.) must ride in an appropriate car seat. • Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4'9" (145 cm.) tall, or a minimum of 80 lbs. (36 kg.), or a minimum of 8 years old.

Prince Edward Island

Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are a minimum of 22 lbs. (10 kg.) or a minimum of 1 year of age. • Children who are at least 22 lbs. (10 kg.) but less than 40 lbs. (18 kg.) must ride in an appropriate car seat. • Children must ride in a booster seat if they are 40 lbs. (18 kg.) or more (maximum weight based on booster seat manufacturer's recommendations). They must ride in a booster seat until they are 4'9" (145 cm.) tall, or a minimum of 10 years old.

Quebec

Children must ride in a car seat or booster seat until they have a minimum seated height (measured from the seat to the top of the head) of 25 in. (63 cm.). The car seat or booster seat must fit the child's height and weight.

Saskatchewan

Children must ride in a car seat that is appropriate for their size until they are a minimum of 40 lbs. (18 kg.). • No provision after children reach 40 lbs. (18 kg.).

Yukon

Children under the age of 6 must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are a minimum of 20 lbs. (9 kg.). • Children under the age of 6 who are at least 20 lbs. (9 kg.) but less than 48 lbs. (22 kg.) must ride in an appropriate car seat. • New legislation currently under development. Until then, no provision after children reach the age of 6 or are over 48 lbs. (22 kg.).

Source: [Safe Kids Canada](#) (all height and weight measurement conversions are approximates and are provided for convenience purposes only)

[For informational purposes only. Please consult local authorities for further interpretation and current status.](#)

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