

Fact Sheet

Child Restraints and Seat Belts

New Laws

Following an agreement in Europe, legislation came into force on 18/09/2006 with regards to restraining children in vehicles. Whilst the responsibility for ensuring children under the age of 14 years are restrained correctly rests with the driver of the lease / rental vehicle.

The key changes are:

- All children under 3 years old must use an appropriate child restraint when travelling in any car or goods vehicles.
- Children aged 3 or more years old and up to 135cms (4ft 5) in height must use an appropriate child restraint when travelling in cars or goods vehicles fitted with seatbelts. The exemption for these regulations include for unexpected necessity over a short distance, if the right child restraint is not available and where two occupied child seats in the rear prevent the fitment of a third child seat.
- Rear facing baby seats must not be used in a seat with an active frontal air bag.



From May 2009, where seatbelts are provided, the number of people carried in the rear of vehicles may not exceed the number of seats available fitted with seat belts or child restraints.

The penalties for offending driver's remains at a £30 fixed penalty notice or a maximum fine of £500 if a case goes to court.

Definitions

"Child Restraints" is the collective term in the seat belt wearing legislation for:

- Baby Seats – rear facing and for children up to 13kg (approx age birth to 9-12 months);
- Child Seats – forward facing and for children 9kg to 18kg (approx 9 months to 4 years);
- Booster seats – for children 15kg to 25kg (approx 4 to 6 years);
- Booster cushions – for children 6 years and up.

Minibuses and Child Restraints

We are aware that customers temporarily remove seats from minibuses, for example to create extra luggage space. Department for Transport has commented to the BVRLA that where a temporary adaption is made, which reduces the number of seats in the minibus to less than eight, there is no need to use car seats or booster seats in the minibus.

Where a more permanent adaption has been made and the vehicles has been reclassified with DVLA as having less than eight seats then there will be a requirement to use child car seats or booster seats.

Further Information

Department for Transport – FAQ's

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dftrdsafety/documents/pdf/dft_rdsafety_pdf_611257.pdf

ROSPA – Choosing the right child car seat

http://www.rosipa.com/roadsfaety/info/car_seats_choosing_using.pdf