

Child Safety

PASSENGER SAFETY

Child safety



Many people have over the past year raised their concerns on child safety and they have requested information on the use of child seats. The development team has found that extensive research has been done in the United States on child seats and that it might be important to make this available to parents in South Africa.

The leading role players in the world on Child safety have been the US department of

Transportation as well as the National SAFE KIDS Campaign. We would like to give recognition to these organizations for their inspiring efforts and for the information provided.

Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 14 and under. Child safety seats and safety belts, when installed and used correctly, can prevent injuries and save lives. Unrestrained children are more likely to be injured, suffer severe injuries and die in motor vehicle crashes than children who are restrained.

Although sunscreen, first aid kits and cell phones are among the travel aids that parents bring to ensure safety on vacation, many parents underestimate the importance of correctly using child safety seats for every ride. Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading killer of kids, in part because nearly a third of children ride in the wrong restraints for their age and size and four out of five child safety seats are used incorrectly.

"Motor vehicle crashes are still taking children's lives at an alarming rate. We know that correctly restraining them dramatically cuts their risk of injury and death," said Dr. Martin Eichelberger, chief executive officer of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign in the USA. "No parent or caregiver wants a family vacation to end in a tragedy."

Child safety seats and safety belts, when selected, installed and used correctly, can prevent injuries and save lives. Families should practice the following safety tips on every ride:

- Buckle up every time, no matter how short the trip.
- Children 12 and under should be properly restrained in a back seat. A back seat is generally the safest place for a child to ride. While air bags can save lives, kids riding in the front seat can be seriously injured or killed when an air bag comes out in a crash. Even with advanced air bags or no air bags, the back seat is safer for children.
- Never put a rear-facing child in a front seat with an active frontal air bag.

- Choose the right child safety seat or safety belt for your child's size and age. Make sure you have the right seat for your child.
 - Infants should ride in rear-facing safety seats as long as possible, until they are at least 12 months old and weigh at least 20 pounds.
 - Children who are at least 1 year old, weigh 20 to 40 pounds and can no longer ride in rear-facing seats should ride in forward-facing child safety seats.
 - Children over 40 pounds should be correctly secured in belt-positioning boosters or other appropriate child restraints until the adult lap and shoulder belts fit correctly, usually around age 8.
 - Once the vehicle safety belts fit children, both lap and shoulder belts should be used correctly.
- Install and use your child safety seat or safety belt according to the manufacturer's instructions and your vehicle owner's manual.
- Ensure your child safety seat has not been recalled.

Visit the following web sites for more info:

<http://www.safekids.org>

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/>

Are you using it right? :

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/UsingItRight2002/index.htm>

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