

## CAR RESTRAINTS

Road trauma accounts for 40% of childhood deaths. In a 5 year period 719 crashes occurred in the Sydney Region in which 816 children under 5 were killed or injured. Many of these injuries/deaths could have been prevented. The major cause of child deaths and injuries is the child not wearing a proper restraint or seat belt. A quarter of those children who were casualties of car accidents were **not** using a restraint.

In many cases, a proper child restraint was present in the car, but not used, despite proof that children not using restraints are several times more likely to be killed or suffer injuries.

**By law, every child must use a suitable restraint when travelling in a car**

## Australian Standard AS 1754



All child restraints sold in Australia must meet the strict requirements of the AS:1754 covering the materials, design, construction, performance, testing and labelling of child restraints.

Restraints bought in other countries will not meet the Australian Standard - it is illegal to use them in Australia.

The Australian Standard symbol certifies that the restraint fully meets these requirements

## Which Restraint to Use?

All child restraints are tested to mass limits, therefore weight and height are the most important factors when determining which restraint to use.

### Infants

- Birth to approx 6 months
- Baby weighs less than 9kg and is less than 700 mm in length

#### Use either:

- A Rearward Facing Capsule – SAFE-N-SOUND Baby Safety Capsule.
- or**
- A Convertible Restraint – facing rearward.



Rearward Facing Capsule



Convertible Restraint



Forward Facing Car Seat

### Toddler-Young Child

- Approximately 6 months to 4 years.
- Weighing 8kg – 18 kg.
- Shoulder level less than 2.5 cm above the top harness adjustment level.
- Eye level must be lower than the back of the restraint.

#### Use either:

- A Convertible Restraint - facing forward
- or**
- A Forward Facing Car Seat

Before changing to a Forward Facing Seat or turning around a Convertible, it is recommended the child has a "Gross Motor Assessment" to check neck and back muscle development. See you Doctor or go to your Community Health Centre.

## Older Children

- Approximately 3-7 years
- Weight 14kg-26 kg

### Use A Booster Seat

- Choose a high back booster seat, with wide side wings and a sash locator.
- Select a booster with an anti- submarine clip.
- Use a child harness with the booster seat for children weighing up to 26 kg. Ensure the lap belt is tightened first then adjust the harness.
- Do not use a booster seat or cushion seat with lap belt only.



Booster Seat

## Child Harness

A Child Harness can also be used on its own for children 26 to 32kgs or up to 10 years of age.

## 10 Years Onwards

The upper weight limit for a Child Harness is 32kg, around 10 years of age. After this, a child should use the adult lap/sash seat belt.

# Fitting a Child Restraint

- Make sure you have your infant restraint fitted **before** the due date of your child's birth.
- An anchorage bolt kit comes with each new restraint, but is generally missing from second-hand restraints. Kits can be purchased separately. There are two styles:
  - Old Style Keyhole
  - New Style Clip
- You will need to use the style of bolt that suits the fittings on your restraint.

## Anchorage Points in Cars

- Sedans** – on the parcel shelf.
- Hatchbacks** – inside the tail gate or on the floor behind the seat.
- Station Wagons** – in the roof or on the floor behind the seat.
- 4WDs** – in the roof or on the floor behind the seat or in the back of the seat.

# No Anchorage Bar Fitted to Car

- If your vehicle does not have anchorage points fitted, consult an Authorised Fitting Station. Contact the RTA for a list of Authorised Fitting Stations.
- **Do not** consider doing it yourself. Check with an Authorised Fitting Station for free advice.

## Vehicles Not Fitted with an Anchorage Bar

- ☑ Sedans – pre -1976
- ☑ Station Wagons & Hatchbacks – pre-1977
- ☑ Passenger Vans/People Movers – pre 1986
- ☑ 4WDs – pre-1990
- ☑ Dual Cab Utes – pre 2000

**WARNING** Fitting a bolt to the floor of a vehicle where an anchorage point is not fitted and running the restraint strapping over the back seat to the floor, could collapse the seating in a crash and cause serious injury to the back seat occupants

## Second-Hand Restraints

It is illegal to sell any restraint that does not comply with AS 1754

### What to look for:

- Australian Standard sticker AS 1754.
- An instruction booklet.
- Complete set of fittings.
- Check the history of the restraint. Ask the previous owner if the restraint has been in a car crash.
- Check the date stamped in the plastic mould on the back of the restraint. Do not use if the restraint is older than ten years.
- Look for stress mark on the plastic mould. These appear like white lines (the same

lines you get if you twist a plastic milk bottle). Do not use if there are a lot of stress lines, splits, cracks or broken areas.

- Check harnessing and tethering for small frays or tears. A tear or fray as small as 5 mm is a weak point in the harnessing.
- Check tethering for mould. Little black spots indicate mould is rotting the webbing at these points.

### Restraints More Than 10 Years Old:

- It is not recommended that a child restraint be used after 10 years of age because.
- Restraints older than 10 years cannot be guaranteed to perform as they were originally intended.
- The Australian Standards have been improved since 1991 and updated in 1995 and 2000. Older restraints will not meet new improved design features.

## Safe in the Centre

- Research clearly demonstrates that persons travelling in the front passenger seat of a motor vehicle are at significantly greater risk of severe injury and/or death in the event of a crash.
- Children may legally ride in the front of a motor vehicle if they are correctly restrained.
- Kidsafe does not recommend children under the age of 12 sit in the front seat.
- It is recommended that children travel in the rear centre position as the preferred option. This position offers protection from side impact.

- If the Child Restraint or Harness cannot be placed in the centre, the rear left passenger side is the next best option.

## Seatbelts

- A person must occupy a seat position with a belt where one is provided.
- Do not allow children to share a seat belt.
- Never nurse a child on your lap whilst travelling in a motor vehicle.

## Airbags

Airbags are designed to cushion adults in an accident; they deploy at 320km per hour to an adult's chest height.

In the USA, passenger side airbags have been implicated in the deaths of 21 children, including 6 infants in rearward facing child restraints.

Kidsafe recommends children under 12 years of age do not sit in the front seat with an airbag, and that child restraints be placed on the back seat only.

## Cargo Space

- No one is permitted to ride in the cargo space of utilities, Station Wagons, 4WDs or Hatchbacks.
- Loose objects become dangerous missiles in a crash, striking with up to 20 times their own force.
- Keep the cargo space or parcel shelf free of loose articles, even tissue boxes.
- Install a cargo barrier in station wagons, hatchbacks, 4-Wheel drives and panel vans.

## After an Accident

- If a restraint has been involved in a severe crash where the main body structure of the car is damaged. The child restraint should be destroyed even if there is no obvious damage.
- Inform your car insurer of the type and number of child restraints used in your vehicle to ensure compensation.

**A correctly fitted child restraint, appropriate for the child's age and weight, can reduce the risk of serious injury or death in road crashes by up to 70%.**



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