

Safety Tips

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

Under Indiana's Child Passenger Law

- Children are required to ride properly restrained in a child restraint, which can include a belt positioning booster seat, until they reach their 8th birthday. (This does not include shoulder belt positioners.)
- If at court proceedings, a driver who has received a violation under this code possesses or has acquired a child restraint system, the driver is not liable for any costs or monetary judgment if the person has no previous judgments of violation of this chapter against the person.
- Fees collected from violations will be entered into a fund to purchase child restraints for low income families throughout Indiana.

Exemptions:

If all lap/shoulder seat belts are being used by other children, then a child over 40 pounds may ride in a lap only seat belt without a child restraint. (Booster seats cannot be safely used with a lap only seat belt.)

This chapter (9-19-11-1) does not apply to a person who operates any of the following vehicles:

- A school bus.
- A taxicab.
- An ambulance.
- A public passenger bus.
- A motor vehicle having a seating capacity greater than nine (9) individuals that is owned or leased and operated by religious or not-for-profit youth organization.
- An antique motor vehicle.
- A motorcycle.
- A motor vehicle that is owned or leased by a governmental unit and is being used in the performance of official law enforcement duties.
- A motor vehicle that is being used in an emergency.

Children at least 8 years old until their 16th birthday are required to ride properly restrained in a child restraint system or seat belt in all seating positions in all vehicles.

Child Safety Seat Guidelines

Rear facing infant seat

- Until 1 year of age and 20 pounds



Mishawaka Police Department

200 N. Church St.
Mishawaka, IN 46544

Phone: 574-258-1678
Fax: 574-258-1690
www.MishawakaCity.com

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

Rear facing/forward facing convertible seat

- Until 1 year of age and 20 pounds rear
- 1 year of age or older and 20-40 pounds forward

Forward facing seat

- 1 year of age and 20-40 pounds

Booster seat

- Over 40 pounds and up to 8-12 years old

Correct fit of lap/shoulder belt only

- Approximately 4'05" tall and 80 pounds

Child Passenger Safety Statistics

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death to children 15 and younger in the United States. In fact, crashes kill more children in the United States than all diseases combined.
- More than 50% of all the children killed in crashes were completely unrestrained. (NHTSA)
- Child safety seats reduce injury by 71 percent for infants less than age one, and by 54 percent for toddlers between 1 and 4 years of age. (NHTSA)
- A recent study showed that when parents were buckled up, 90% of the children were buckled up as well. However, when the parent was unrestrained, 76% of the children were unrestrained as well. Parents who fail to buckle up are sending a deadly message to their children.
- Between 1975 and 1998, researchers estimate that child restraints (child safety seats and adults belts) saved the lives of almost 4,200 children. (NHTSA)
- During the past ten years, child restraints have saved the lives of 2,300 children under age 5. (NSBC)
- In 1998, child restraints saved the lives of 299 children under age 5. (NHTSA)
- The lives of an additional 173 children could have been saved during 1998 if all children under age 5 had been riding in child safety seats or wearing safety belts. A study by the National Safe Kids Campaign showed that 85 percent of all child safety seats are installed incorrectly. (NSKC)
- The National Safe Kids Campaign found that the majority of parents or caregivers made

Mishawaka Police Department

200 N. Church St.
Mishawaka, IN 46544

Phone: 574-258-1678
Fax: 574-258-1690
www.MishawakaCity.com

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

two or more mistakes in installing and using the child safety seats. (NSKC) In recent child safety clinics held in Indiana, safety seat technicians found that nearly 90 percent of the seats they checked were improperly installed.

- According to the National Safe Kids Campaign Study: About 63 percent of the time, the car seat was not secured tightly enough by the safety belt.
- Approximately 33 percent of children were in restraints with loose harness straps.
- About 20 percent of children were in child seats where the harness straps were not correctly routed.
- Approximately 11 percent of the time infants less than a year old or weighing less than 20 pounds were observed riding in forward-facing car seats instead of rear-facing ones. The neck muscles of children under one year old are not sufficiently developed to ride facing forward in a crash.
- In less than 1 percent of the cases, infants were placed in an unsafe manner by locating the rear-facing infant seats directly in front of a passenger side airbag. If the airbag deploys, the infant can be injured or killed. In a crash at 30 miles per hour, a 10-pound baby could be ripped from an adult's arms with a force of almost 300 pounds and hurled into the dash or windshield. Whenever a child safety seat is involved in a crash, it should be replaced. Hidden crash damage can severely weaken a car seat.
- Just as there are many makes and models of motor vehicles, there are many makes and models of child safety seats. The same seat may not fit into different vehicles the same. The safety seat's manual and the motor vehicle's manual are the two best sources of information on installation of specific seats.
- Always complete and return the registration card that comes with your new safety seat so the manufacturer can contact you in the case of a safety recall.

Myths about child passenger safety...

MYTH: My child is safest in my arms.

Children are never safe riding in the arms or lap of an adult. In a 30 mph crash, a child weighing 20 pounds will be ripped from the adult's arms with 600 pounds of force. The adult's body can also crush the child against the dashboard, or seat belt, with an even greater force.

MYTH: I will be able to grab my child in a crash.

This is highly improbable. Crashes happen suddenly, allowing you less than one-half of a second to react.

MYTH: I should put my infant in the front seat so I can keep an eye on her all the time.

Mishawaka Police Department

200 N. Church St.
Mishawaka, IN 46544

Phone: 574-258-1678
Fax: 574-258-1690
www.MishawakaCity.com

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

For many parents this is a concern, but the bottom line is that the back seat is the safest place for a child of any age to ride. If you travel alone, allow plenty of time to pull off the road to periodically check your child. Compare your child traveling to your child sleeping. You probably don't watch your healthy baby sleep throughout the night, so you don't need to watch your infant continuously when driving. A healthy baby properly secured in a safety seat should not need constant watching. If your baby has a health condition, then two adults should be in the car when the baby is traveling, one to watch the baby and one to drive.

MYTH: A car seat or safety belt will trap us if the car catches on fire or falls into water.

Less than 1/2 of 1% of all crashes involve fire or water submersion. Even in these situations, car seats and seat belts keep passengers unhurt and alert enough to escape.

MYTH: The law doesn't say that I have to put my child in a car seat.

False. Children under 4 years of age must be restrained in a child safety seat that meets federal safety standards. All children between 4 and up to 12 years of age must wear a safety belt no matter where they are seated in the vehicle, and all front seat passengers of passenger vehicles must be buckled up.

MYTH: All I care about is that my kids are buckled up. I don't need to wear my seat belt.

Besides the fact that it is the law in Indiana for all front seat passengers to buckle up, you are setting an example for your child. A recent study showed that when parents were buckled up, 90% of the children were buckled up as well. However, when the parent was unrestrained, 76% of the children were unrestrained as well. Parents who fail to buckle up are sending a deadly message to their children.

MYTH: All car seats are the same and it doesn't matter which one I get.

No car seat is superior to all others. When choosing a seat, be sure that it fits the child, fits your vehicle and is convenient to use on every ride.

MYTH: It's impossible to find a car seat that is compatible with my vehicle.

Since car seats are made by different manufacturers, all car seats may not be compatible with every vehicle. It is always best to try the safety seat in your vehicle before you buy it. Also, always read the instructions that come with the child seat and all sections in the vehicle manual that discuss safety seat installation. It is important not to take makeshift measures.

Mishawaka Police Department

200 N. Church St.
Mishawaka, IN 46544

Phone: 574-258-1678
Fax: 574-258-1690
www.MishawakaCity.com

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

MYTH: A lap belt will restrain my child in his booster seat.

Children between 4 and 8 years of age (approximately 40 to 80 pounds) are safest when secured in a booster seat with a shoulder/lap safety belt strap. Boosters are not designed to be used with a lap belt only. If your vehicle only has lap belts in the rear seat, your best option is to call the manufacturer about having shoulder belts installed. Another option may be to restrain this child in the front seat using a booster with the lap/shoulder belt, since there will be no passenger side air-bag.

MYTH: Car seats don't work!

Researchers estimate that between 1975 and 1998, the lives of nearly 4,200 children were saved by child restraints. In 1998 alone, nearly 300 children under age 5 were saved as a result of child restraint use. However, the lives of an additional 173 children could have been saved during 1998 if all children under age 5 had been riding in child safety seats or wearing safety belts. Child safety seats reduce injury by 71 percent for infants less than age one, and by 54 percent for toddlers between 1 and 4 years of age. (NHTSA)

Mishawaka Police Department

200 N. Church St.
Mishawaka, IN 46544

Phone: 574-258-1678
Fax: 574-258-1690
www.MishawakaCity.com