

Safety on the Shore — ShoreSafe Newsletter #24 April 2010



Road Safety—Vulnerable Road Users

These are mainly pedestrians but could also include moped users, children on scooters and tricycles, cyclists, joggers and even animals like mother duck with her ducklings in tow.

The vulnerability was brought home to me while driving on my way to work. I passed by a lady on the footpath with a walking stick facing the road and then realized her predicament. She was trying to cross to the dairy opposite but there were no pedestrian crossings as far up or down the road as one could see. I then realized that I should have stopped and waved her across as it was a busy time in the morning and that meant a constant flow of traffic. Her only safe way across was to have assistance or vehicles stopped and while I'm at fault for not stopping, I made a mental note to do so next time I see a similar situation. Crossing quickly is just not possible for many older adults and many with special needs. One minute of my time spared is not critical to me but could prevent injury to others.

Child Restraints—Keeping Children Safe in Cars

The information detailed in this newsletter is intended to be shared so do please pass it on and be part of promoting sound safety messages

Your responsibilities as the driver (under the law)

As the driver, you must make sure that any child **under five years** of age is properly restrained by an approved child restraint that is appropriate for the age and size of the child. They must not travel in the car if you can't put them in an approved child restraint. The vehicle's safety belt on its own is not an approved child restraint.

All approved child restraints will display **standard markings** to show they have been approved. Details are on pages 2 and 3 along with free product offer information.

What to do if you don't have seats or safety belts in the back of your van or car?

If you don't have seats or safety belts fitted in the back of your van or car, you aren't allowed to carry children under the age of five in the back. If you need to get seats or safety belts fitted, ask an NZTA agent.

What if my car has airbags?

- It's important that you never put a child, in a rear-facing child restraint, in the front seat of a car that has a passenger airbag. The child could be seriously injured or killed if the airbag is activated.

All child restraints, including forward-facing restraints, are best installed in the rear passenger seat (not in the front).

[Share the messages, reduce the injuries](#)

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Upcoming Events

- 6-7 May ALAC conference at Manukau City
- 7 May Kids Trauma Conference—Starship Auckland
- 11 May Safekids Workshop Kelston Community Centre. Motor Vehicle Child Safety and Burns Prevention
- 18 May WaterSafe Auckland Drowning Prevention Forum, Mechanics Bay, Auckland (SLS Nthn Region)
- 21 May Family Violence Seminar, Henderson

Keeping Children Safe In Cars

Download the [Booster Rooster discount coupons](#) (PDF 88KB) for free product offers and vouchers for money off car safety items for children.

Car crashes are one of the biggest dangers to your child. Using a correctly fitted and sized child restraint (also called child car seat) will reduce your child's risk of injury or death in the event of a crash. Children should always be in the appropriate approved child restraint right for their weight and size. Research has shown that, when correctly installed and used, child restraints can reduce risk of death by 70 per cent for infants and 47-54 per cent for toddlers. Booster seats have been shown to be effective in reducing risk of death and hospitalization by up to 59 per cent.

Never place a rear facing baby seat in the front if there is an airbag. If activated the airbag could seriously injure or kill the baby.

What child restraint should you use?

It is generally accepted that children under the height of 148 cm should be seated in an appropriate child restraint. The specific type of child restraint you need to use depends on the age and size of the child. Suggested guidelines are given below but you should refer to the manufacturer's instructions to find a child restraint that best fits your child.

Infant restraint: birth to 9 kg (approx. 6 months), or birth to 13.5 kg (approx. 1 year)

Convertible (baby to child) restraint: birth to 18 kg (approx. 4 years)

Front-facing child restraint: 9–18 kg (about 1 year to approx. 4 years)

Booster seat - until the child is 148cm tall (check weight and height recommendations are correct for your child)

Child safety harness - until the child is 148cm tall (check weight and height recommendations are correct for your child)

To keep babies safe, safety practitioners recommend keeping them in a rear-facing car seat for at least one year and possibly longer, depending on their size. You may need to change car seats as your baby grows, moving to a bigger seat that will allow you to continue to have baby rear-facing.

Baby has outgrown their rear-facing car seat when:

The top of their head reaches the top of their car seat

Their weight is over the recommended maximum weight for a rear-facing seat

Don't stop using booster seats too soon



To stay safe in cars, children up to 148cm still need to be in booster seats. Parents want to keep their children as safe as possible but many are unaware of the importance of continuing to use booster seats as their children get older.

Without a booster seat an adult seat belt sits too high across the neck and stomach of a child, which can increase the risk of injuries in a road crash. A booster seat lifts the child up and ensures the adult belt fits correctly. This reduces the risk of head, spine and abdominal injury by around 59 %.

Retailers get onboard booster seat campaign

Participating car seat retailers on the North Shore, including Repco, Baby Factory and The Warehouse, are supporting the booster seat campaign by offering various incentives to encourage people to buy booster seats including money off and free product offers. Download the [discount coupons](#) (PDF 88KB). All offers finish on the 30 April 2010.

Correct fitting

One of the most common mistakes parents and caregivers make is to fit their child restraints incorrectly. Research has shown that as many as four out of five child seats are incorrectly fitted in one way or another. This can greatly reduce the safety benefits of their usage. To ensure your child restraint is fitted correctly:

Always read the manual and follow instructions

Keep the manual in the car so you can refer to it when necessary

If buying or using a second hand car seat, make sure it comes with the manual

Always ask about the crash history of a child restraint

Contact a [Safe2Go fitting technician](#) in your area to have your child restraint checked for correct fitting.

The law

Children aged under five must be secured in an approved child restraint when travelling in cars or vans

Children aged between five and seven must use a child restraint if available. If not available, they must use a safety belt. If a safety belt is not available they must travel in the back seat*

Children aged between eight and 14 must use safety belts if available. If not available, they must travel in the back seat*

People aged over 14 must wear safety belts where they are available

* To keep children safe in cars, research strongly recommends that they stay in boosters seats until they are 148cm in height.

FAQs

What should I look out for if buying a second-hand child car seat?

[Advice from Plunket on purchasing second hand car seats](#)

How do I know if a car seat has met the required safety standard?

A child restraint must meet an approved standard. This means that the design and the construction of the child restraint is laboratory tested under crash conditions. If a child restraint meets a standard you will find that it displays a specific safety marking - see the marking on this [NZTA page](#).

For further information regarding approved standards for child restraints, please go to the [NZTA website](#) or contact NZTA on 0800 699 000.

How do I know if my child restraint is fitted correctly?

[Find a Safe2Go technician in your area](#)

What are the most common mistakes people make in relation to child restraints?

<http://www.childrestraints.co.nz/top10.php>

Does my five year old still need a child car seat?

It is recommended that children continue to use a booster until they reach 148cm tall. This is because a child under this height will not correctly fit the adult seat belt and will be at greater risk of internal injuries in a crash if using only an adult seat belt without a booster.

If children up to 148cm in height need car seats to stay safe, why isn't it the law?

It is not currently the law but there is a pressing body of research that may lead to a change in the law at some time in the future. In some parts of the world the law relating to use of child car seats has been extended to relate to height after children have reached a certain weight.

Do I need to use child car seats on short journeys?

Yes. Every time a child that should be in car seat travels without one, they are put at risk. It is not possible to predict when a crash could occur so always place children in car seats, even if running late.

What can happen to a child in the event of a crash who is under 148cm in height and placed in an adult seatbelt without a booster?

I know that babies in rear facing seats must never be placed in the front with an airbag but is it okay to place children in forward facing seats in the front with an airbag?

Never allow a child to lean forward toward the dashboard

NEVER put a rear-facing infant in the front passenger seat of a vehicle with an airbag fitted on the front passenger side.

Research has shown that, based on average heights:

All four and five year olds require a child car seat or booster

90 per cent of six, seven and eight year olds require booster seats

50 per cent of nine and 10 year olds

10 per cent of 10 and 11 year olds still require booster seats.

(Dr L Cameron and Dr E Segedin, Safe restraint of the school age child)

'Safer Journeys 2020 – NZ Road Safety Strategy', launched on 3 March by Transport Minister Stephen Joyce reinforces this view. The Strategy states that New Zealand has one of the highest child road fatality rates in the OECD and this is in part due to the lack or incorrect use of appropriate restraints.

Air bags have been designed to help protect adults in a front-end collision, but not children. So it is very important that all children aged 12 and under be properly restrained in the back seat. If it is absolutely necessary for a child to ride in the front seat of a car with an air bag active passenger-side air bag

Move the front seat as far back away from the dashboard as possible

What about side airbags? Are they also dangerous for children in rear child car seats?

Side airbags should not cause injury, provided the child sits within the confines of the shell of the child restraint on the passenger-side:

Secure the child in a restraint system that is correct for the size of the child – a front-facing car seat, a booster seat, or a lap/shoulder belt

When a child under 148cm, (a child who is unable to pass the 5 step test**) is placed into an adult belt there are a number of risks that the child is exposed to. Such risks include injuries to the neck, spine and internal organs, as well as injuries caused when the child slides out of the lap portion of the seat belt in an accident.

The effect of this is known as "sub-marining".

**The "Five Step Test" is helpful to check if your child needs a booster seat.

Does your child sit all the way back against the car seat?

Do your child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the seat?

Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?

Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?

Can your child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

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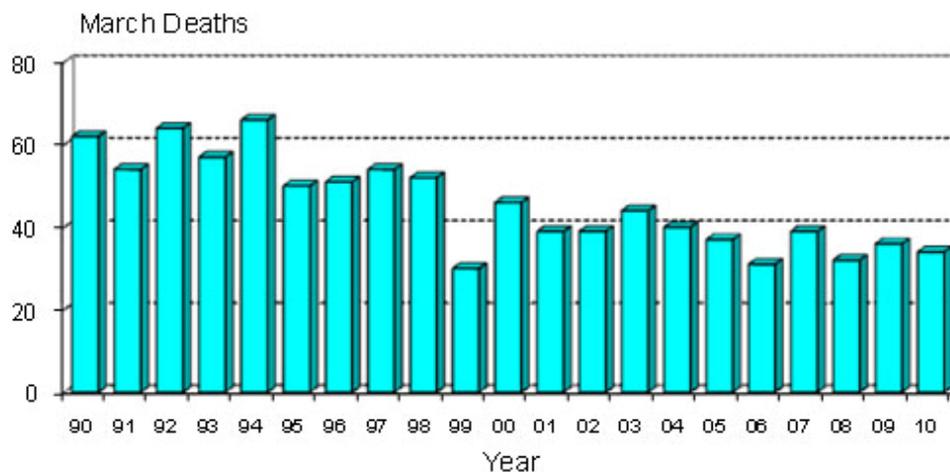
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Travelling safely to and from school on foot

Statistics indicate that the journey home from school is the one that results in most casualty collisions to primary-aged children. Many parents and children assume that by the age of 11, children have mastered the skills they need to be safe in the traffic environment. The perceptual and motor skills needed require attention, judgment, timing and control. Like learning to play tennis or the piano, road crossing needs supervised practice in successively more difficult situations before it is mastered. Parents need to observe how their children go about choosing the safest place to cross, how thoroughly they scan for traffic, how directly they cross and whether they behave as carefully when they have friends with them. It is not sufficient to a child to 'know' what to do, or be able to explain what to do when asked: parents need to observe deliberately and determine for themselves how ready their child is for independent travel. Children aged 10 and 11 are still likely to be confused when traffic conditions change suddenly. Above all, parents need to lead by example, following road rules and choosing the safest road crossing option.



New Road Safety Statistics



- To the end of March this year 102 people have died on New Zealand roads. This is three fewer than at the same time last year.
- In the 12 months to the end of March 2010, 382 people were killed on our roads. This is 20 more than the number of deaths in the 12 months to the end of March 2009.
- During March, 17 of the deaths were car or van drivers, six were car or van passengers, four were motorcyclists, three were pedestrians, three were truck drivers and one was a cyclist.
- Twenty-four of the 34 killed were in open road crashes. Fifteen were in single vehicle crashes in which a driver lost control of the vehicle or ran off the road and six were in head-on crashes.
- Of the 26 vehicle occupants killed, seven were not restrained at the time of the crash.

Reference: Ministry of Transport For more detail please visit www.nzta.govt.nz

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