Colorado's Child Passenger Safety Law

Colorado Has an Important Child Passenger Safety Law…

"It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that child passengers are properly buckled up in the appropriate restraints on every trip."

"The child restraint must have a label that states it meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) 213. (FMVSS set forth in Section 49 C.F.R. 571.213, as amended)."

How do I keep my infant safe?

The law requires infants to ride in a rear-facing child safety seat until they are at least one year old and weigh at least 20 lbs.

Safety Advocates recommend that infants continue riding in a rear-facing position as long as possible for the best protection in a crash. Many larger convertible type child safety seats will allow children to ride rear facing up to 30 or 35 lbs. Refer to your child safety seat and vehicle owner's manual for more information.

How do I protect my one to four-year old child?

The law requires that children ages one to four years who weigh 20 lbs. up to 40 lbs. be restrained in a forward-facing child safety seat.

Safety Advocates recommend restraining your child in a harness restraint that meets all of your child's needs until they are at least 40 lbs. The use of top tether straps is strongly recommended*.

My child is over four, but less than six years old . . . what seat is best?

The law requires that children who weigh over 40 lbs. or who are at least four years old but less than six years old be properly restrained in a child booster seat or with a child safety belt positioning device, unless they are 55" tall.

Safety Advocates recommend keeping children in booster seats until they are about 57" tall.

When my child is six, is it time for seatbelts?

The law requires that a child who is at least six years old or is at least 55" tall, must be properly restrained with the motor vehicle's safety belt.

It is recommended that proper seat belt fit is achieved when the child meets the 5-Step Test:

(1) The child can sit all the way back against the auto seat.
(2) The child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat.
(3) The belt crosses the shoulder between the neck and arm.
(4) The lap belt is as low as possible touching the thighs.
(5) The child can stay seated like this for the whole trip.

Child Restraint Law Enforcement

Booster Seats

The booster seat portion of the law is secondary enforcement, meaning a driver must be stopped for another driving offense before being ticketed for a violation of the booster seat provision.

Infant Seats, Child Safety Seats and Seat Belts

The infant seat, child safety seat and seat belt provisions of the law are primary enforcement, meaning the driver can be stopped and ticketed if an officer sees an unrestrained or improperly restrained child in the vehicle.

Fine

The minimum fine is $58.80 for violations of Colorado's CPS law. The driver can be fined for each unrestrained child in the vehicle.

Other Provisions of Colorado's Child Restraint Law

The law applies to children being transported in a privately-owned noncommercial vehicle and in noncommercial vehicles operated by childcare centers.

Children must be buckled up in the front and back seats on every trip. All children under age 16 must be buckled up with appropriate car seats, booster seats or vehicle seat belts in the front and back seats.

Children are exempt from the law when:

They are being transported in a medical emergency.

They are being transported in a motor vehicle built to commercial standards, such as a school bus.

A child is at least four years of age and is less than 55 inches tall and if the child is being transported in a vehicle equipped with ONLY a two-point-lap-belt system available for the child, the child shall be properly restrained with a lap belt.

NOTE: To ensure children are properly restrained as required by law, follow the recommendations below:

To determine proper installation, refer to both the owner's manual of the child restraint system and the owner's manual of the vehicle.

All child restraint systems must be installed according to manufacturer's instructions.

For local assistance, contact:

CPS Team Colorado Member Dan Young At Rocky Mountain Fire