

Sergeant Bob's Safe Driving Tips

Retired Police Sergeant Bob Paterson works with The McLennan Group Insurance Inc. to develop practical safety tips for CARP members.

"Don't gamble with your safety. The stakes are too high."



Child Car Seat Safety For Parents and Grandparents

A few practical tips can help a good driver transport children in the safest manner possible.

There's no debating the benefits of having children correctly secured in an approved car seat or booster seat. Mature drivers may remember leaving the hospital after their newborn was carefully bundled up and gently placed in their arms, without restraints of any kind for mother or baby. How times have changed! Over the past two decades, parents have become increasingly aware of child car seat requirements and are anxious to provide every possible advantage for their children.

And what about active grandparents who routinely take their grandchildren on car trips or special adventures? Naturally, grandparents want nothing but the best for their young passengers, especially when safety is involved.

- ❑ **Tip #1:** Never transport children without the correct car or booster seat and fastening system. Remember, the law requires the use of car seats and booster seats. Many collisions occur very close to home, so this applies to short trips and quick errands.
- ❑ **Tip #2:** Removing the child car seat from one vehicle and trying to quickly install it in another vehicle can take an experienced child seat installer, while referencing both the vehicle and child seat manual, about 30 minutes to complete. Leave yourself ample time to complete this transition.
- ❑ **Tip #3:** Grandparents and parents could consider swapping vehicles and therefore leaving the previously installed child seats in place. If this is your preference make a "test run" before your first outing with the children as this will help drivers be comfortable with vehicle controls like wipers, lights, mirrors, seats, etc.
- ❑ **Tip #4:** Grandparents could also purchase an extra child car seat, have it professionally installed and leave it in their own vehicle. This is a wise decision but the "permanently" installed child seat may become a problem when adult passengers are expected to be in the same vehicle. Remember, one tip common to all regions and

manufacturers is that the best place for a child car seat is the centre rear location.

In 2002, Transport Canada implemented new regulations that require all new vehicles and child restraint systems to be equipped with the Universal Anchorage System (UAS). The UAS is an industry standard of compatible hardware, straps and latching mechanisms. UAS may also be referred to as LATCH or ISOFIX. Also note that all children's car and booster seats sold in Canada have an expiry or useful life date on them. Although not required by regulation it does provide owners and buyers of child seats with important information that should be researched and considered.

- ❑ **Tip #5:** When shopping for a new booster or child car seat, look for the round sticker with a maple leaf symbol and the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards endorsement. Use caution when purchasing used child seats. Check the serial number to ensure that model has never been recalled, and examine them carefully for:
 - an expiration date or that they are not over 10 years old if no expiry date
 - a matching owner's manual
 - evidence of past damage
 - missing parts or added "aftermarket parts"
 - confirmed child weight and height limitations

Child Car Seat Safety Continued...

Three Basic Seat Categories*

REAR FACING seat – birth to 9 kg (20 lb.)

FORWARD FACING seat – 9 kg to 18 kg (20 to 40lb.)

BOOSTER seat – 18 kg to 36 kg (40 to 80 lb.);
8 years of age; 145 cm (4' 9") tall



Installation

Your best option is to check Child Car Seat websites and contact agencies that hold periodic clinics where an experienced installer will help you through every step. Check regional health units, police services, and non-government organizations like Red Cross or Saint Johns Ambulance Service. One example of a website where further information can be found is the Ontario Ministry of Transportation: <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/carseat/choose.shtml>

Summary

Laws and rules concerning child car seat use are provincial, technical standards for seats and accessories are federal, but concern for children's safety is global. Parents, grandparents and caregivers must research local regulations, and then carefully follow the instructions pertaining to the specific vehicle, the car seat and the developmental stage of the child.

**Ages and weight standards shown are for Ontario. Please be advised that standards may vary slightly by province.*



www.carpinsurance.ca