



NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications

Phone: 410-545-0303 / Toll-Free: 1-800-323-6742

MD Relay: 1-800-735-2258 Fax: 410-209-5012

www.marylandroads.com

Contacts:

Valerie Burnette Edgar, SHA, 410-545-0303

Jim Brown, MIEMSS, 410-706-3994

Kim Hoppe, Johns Hopkins Children's Center, 410-516-4934

EFFECTIVE TODAY: NEW BOOSTER SEAT LAW PROTECTS MORE CHILDREN IN MARYLAND

Lt. Governor, Legislators, Health and Safety Officials Join Together And Promote New Law That Boosts Child Safety

(June 30, 2008) – Today at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center, the forefront of pediatric medicine, research, and education, Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown joined legislators, health and safety officials and parents to give a boost to child health and safety by promoting Maryland's new booster seat law effective TODAY. Including bill sponsors Senator Jennie Forehand, Delegate Bill Bronrott, Dr. Allen Walker, Director of Pediatric Emergency Medicine at Johns Hopkins Children's Center and Associate Pediatric Medical Director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, Maryland State Highway Administrator Neil J. Pedersen, Baltimore City of Transportation Director Al Foxx, Baltimore City Fire Department Chief Kevin Cartwright, Director of the Office of Communications and other health and safety advocates, the assemblage stressed to parents that seat belts save lives, but that seat belts only work when worn correctly. The new law extends the time a child is required to be in a booster seat from age six to age eight (or until they weight at least 65 pounds or reach the height of 4'9" tall).

"Governor O'Malley and I share a deep concern about keeping our children safe," said Lt. Governor Brown. "This strengthened law will protect tens of thousands more lives of children who are most at risk on our roadways."

Today Maryland becomes the 18th state to have a model child booster seat law due to recently passed legislation that was sponsored by Delegate Bill Bronrott and Senator Jennie Forehand and signed into law by Governor O'Malley last month. The primary goal of Maryland's new and improved child booster seat law is to increase car safety in Maryland for a high risk population -- children ages six and seven who previously were not required to ride in a booster seat. Children between the ages of four and eight are typically too big for a child safety seat and too small for a regular seat belt.

"As an emergency department physician, there is nothing more frustrating than seeing a child with injuries that could have been easily prevented," said Dr. Walker. "We truly believe this new law will save lives and prevent injuries for Maryland's children."

(more)

Booster seats provide a platform that lifts the child up off the vehicle seat in order to improve the fit of the adult seat belt. An improper fit of a seat belt can cause the lap belt to ride up over the stomach and the shoulder belt to cut across the neck, potentially exposing the child to serious abdominal and/or neck injury. When children are properly restrained in a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt (as appropriate for age and size), their chance of death or injury in a crash is greatly reduced. In addition to protecting more child passengers from the leading threat to their lives, this new law will make Maryland eligible for additional federal highway safety funds over the next two years.

"The Baltimore City Fire Department has been committed for years to helping keep children safe from injury by partnering with the Baltimore City Safe Kids coalition in many injury prevention efforts; including making child safety seat inspections available. Our goal is to ensure that all of the children of Baltimore City are properly secured in car seats and seat belts while traveling," said City of Baltimore Fire Chief James Clack.

Motor vehicle crashes are the #1 cause of death and injury of children age 3 and older in the United States. In 2006, 444 children ages 4 through 7 died and nearly 50,000 children were injured in motor vehicle crashes nationwide. Nearly one-half of these child passengers killed in crashes were not properly restrained. Child booster seats can substantially reduce the risk of death and injury to children, but only an average of 1 in 5 children ages 4 to 8 use them nationwide. Children in this age group are at increased risk of injury or death due to either inappropriate restraint in adult seat belts or lack of any restraint at all.

"Starting today, Maryland comes into line with all the other states in the Mid-Atlantic region that have already enacted this lifesaving law to protect child passengers who have outgrown their car safety seats but are too small for a standard seat belt," said Delegate Bill Bronrott (D-District 16), House sponsor of the booster seat bill. "Highway crashes are the number one cause of death and disabling injury of kids, so nothing is more important than making sure that every child is correctly buckled up every ride."

Senator Jennie Forehand who sponsored the legislation in the State Senate said, "This is another step in the right direction for keeping our youngest and most vulnerable children safe. The additional federal funding that Maryland is now eligible for can be used to educate parents and provide child safety seats and boosters to families who cannot afford them."

Today's promotion of the new safety seat law is part of the Choose Safety for Life campaign's 100 days of safety, which promotes traffic safety through the acronym **B-SAFE** – Buckle up, Slow down – speeding kills, Always drive sober, Focus and Everyone share the road – Everyone gets home. By following all five key steps in the B-SAFE acronym, more than 600 lives could be saved each year in Maryland. Log onto www.choosesafetyforlife.com for more information.

###

FitzMall.com features:

CarFind
Search new
and usedAutoMalls
Find products
and services**Fitzgerald** AUTO-MALLS
FitzMall.com SINCE 1966**FitzWay**

All vehicles have discounted, delivered, no haggle prices. Shop now!

Gazette.Net

Maryland Community Newspapers Online

Now
88°Wed
92°/73°Thu
88°/67°5-day
Traffi

Montgomery | Prince George's | Frederick | Carroll | Sports | Politics | Business | Entertainment | Speak Out |

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

New law puts 7-year-olds in child safety seats

Parents, inspectors prepare to buckle up children

by Nathan Carrick | Staff Writer

[E-mail this article](#) | [Print this article](#)

Two-year-old Reynolds Kakeu Wessikoaba does not like riding in a safety seat. On Tuesday morning, in a parking lot behind the 7-Eleven on Georgia Avenue in Aspen Hill she stiffened her body and screamed while a certified technician installed the car seat in her mother's minivan.

More News

Barbecue startup on a roll

Bring out the bards

For Bioqual, monkey business is big business

Firefighter back at work two months after blaze

Galtersburg Marine receives Purple Heart

With another baby on the way soon, Anne Marie Wessikoaba of Silver Spring made an appointment to have two safety seats installed in her van.

"She's only 2, so it is difficult," Wessikoaba said. "This [installation instruction] is helpful. To me, this is a safer way of doing it."

Monday when the Maryland Child Passenger Safety Law goes into effect, children up to age 8 will have to be secured in a federally approved safety seat unless the child is at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall or weighs more than 65 pounds.

Nothing could make Emilie Crown happier. She's the Child Safety Seat program manager for Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services.

"I worked very hard on this new law," she said about her time spent testifying and lobbying in Annapolis. "It brings Maryland up to what is considered the best practice standard for the country."



Naomi Brookner The Gazette
Monty Crown of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services adjusts the car seat of Annabelle Yontef, 2, of Dame grandparents Joe and Noreen Cryan of Laurel watch

THIS WEEKEN

Find out where to go
and what to see.

Search Gazette.Net's
NEW ONLINE COMMUNITY CALENDAR
right this second. GO

FEATURED JOBS

THIS WEEKEND

Find out where to
be and what
to see.

Search right
this second ▶

Gazette.Net

The new law represents a change from Maryland's previous standards, which required children up to age 6 or less than 40 pounds to use a safety seat. This previous law was enacted in 2003.

Children who had been using adult seat belts will now have to return to a booster or safety seat. The new law also extends seatbelt regulations to all vehicles on the road in Maryland compared with the previous version that only applied to Maryland-registered vehicles.

Anne Levis, of Gaithersburg, said she wishes the law had included 8-year-olds all along. "It should even include kids older than 8," she said. Her daughter Grace will turn 6 in December.

"If an older kid has to start using a safety seat again, too bad," Levis said. "Maybe he for a few days, but if it saves his life, too bad."

Parents may face an unexpected challenge associated with the law change. They will have to get their 6- and 7-year-olds who had graduated from safety seats to start using them again.

Sherry Reba of Gaithersburg has a 6-year-old son. "I think it's a good idea," she said. "The seat belt would be cutting into them anyway."

On the third Thursday of every month parents can bring their child safety seats to be inspected and properly installed for free at Fitzgerald Auto Mall in North Bethesda. Crown volunteers usually with about 50 other volunteers from Fire and Rescue Services, Fitzgerald employees and citizen volunteers.

"It's really about helping people and keeping kids safe," she said.

Normally 120 to 150 vehicles are inspected at each event.

On Thursday, a little more than a week before the new law takes effect, parents in minivans, sedans and sport vehicles crowded onto the lot to have certified technicians teach them about proper child restraints.

The number of parents getting their seats checked that day was about average, despite the coming change in the law, Crown said.

"Booster seats are cheap, they're simple, there's really nothing to it. But it makes a huge difference," she said.

John M. Lehman, Fitzgerald's director of safety, was there for the first safety event 10 years ago.

"On that day 170 people showed up and 170 of them had installed their child's seat wrong," he said. "We have documented cases where police officers will tell us after an accident that a child was saved because they came to the event."

We invite you to join our team! Our extraordinary child
CLINICAL ASSISTANT Orthodontic
practice located in Silver Spring and Mitchellville is seeking

Generator Tech Min
4 years exp. Great Benefits & Pay Call 301.917.2276
detailed More

RECEPTIONISTS Evening &
Weekend Part-time receptionists needed for our Gaithersburg retail store. Call 301.917.2276
detailed More

See All Featured Ads

event.”

The fine for not properly buckling a child is \$48, according to the Maryland State Highway Administration.

“Some of the most common problems are the safety seat isn’t tightly installed, the harness straps aren’t tight or an improper seat is being used,” Crown said. “We see a misuse rate of 75 percent, and it’s not because parents don’t love their kids.”

Finding the right seat for a child and installing it properly can be complex, she said. A child’s height and weight be taken into consideration when choosing the type of restraint system, be it booster seat or car safety seat. Also knowing where in the car is the safest place — the middle of the back seat — and which direction it should face is key, Crown said.

“When I worked in the emergency services division, there was something called seatbelt syndrome,” she added. “Children would come in badly bruised across their bellies because they put the shoulder restraint behind the back to make it more comfortable. That’s just not safe.”

She added that people in this area are fortunate to have such an active public outreach program.

“There are more technicians in this county than there are in some states,” she said.

Keeping children safe

For more information about the nearest inspection locations, Maryland’s child passenger safety laws and loan programs, contact Maryland Kids in Safety Seats (KISS) at 1-800-370-SEAT, or visit www.mdkiss.org.

Information on child safety seat inspections is available by calling the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue’s child passenger safety hotline at 240-777-2222. To schedule a safety seat inspection, call 240-777-2223.

Child safety seat inspections are conducted 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the third Thursday of every month at Fitzgibbon Mall, 5501 Nicholson Lane in North Bethesda. No appointment is necessary.

Child safety seat inspections are conducted by appointment only 8 a.m. to noon Tuesdays and Thursdays and 1 p.m. the first Saturday of every month at 14111 Georgia Ave. in Aspen Hill.

Copyright © 2008 Post-Newsweek Media, Inc./Gazette.Net
Contact Us | About Us | Privacy Policy | FAQ | E-Letters | Place Classified ad |
The Gazette | 9030 Comprint Court | Gaithersburg, MD 20877 | main number: 301-670-2565, classifieds: 301-670-2566



DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
MEDIA SERVICES DIVISION
2350 RESEARCH BOULEVARD ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
20850-3294 240-773-5030

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE
June 6, 2008**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Media Services Division, 240-773-5030**

New Child Safety Seat Law Takes Effect

The Montgomery County Police Department wants citizens to be aware of a new child passenger safety seat law that takes effect June 30, 2008. The new law will require children up to age eight to use a federally-approved child safety seat or booster seat when riding in a motor vehicle, unless the child is 4'9" tall or taller or weighs more than 65 pounds. The current law requires children to use safety seats until they reach six years of age and weigh 40 pounds.

The new law means that some children who have been secured with adult seat belts under the current laws will have to return to using a safety seat or booster seat. The appropriate seat for most six- to eight-year-olds is a booster seat which is designed to raise the child up so that adult seat belts will fit properly. Proper fit for a seat belt means the lap- shoulder belt fits low on the child's hips and across the mid-chest. If the belt fits across the child's neck or stomach, the child could be injured in the event of a crash. Booster seats do not use a harness system and are not permanently fastened into the vehicle.

This new law will apply to all vehicles on the road in Maryland, even if registered in another state. All other aspects of the law remain the same. Every child from eight to sixteen years old who is not secured in a car seat must be secured by the vehicle's seat belt. A citation in the amount of \$50 may be issued for failing to properly restrain a child.

Citizens should keep the following general recommendations in mind:

1. The child safety restraint must be appropriate for the child and used according to both vehicle and child restraint manufacturer's instructions.
2. Car seats should not be installed in the front seat if the car is equipped with airbags.
3. Children under sixteen years of age may not ride in the unenclosed cargo bed of a pickup truck.
4. Always use both the lap and shoulder belt with a booster seat.

5. If your vehicle seats are low, and/or do not have a head rest, you will need a high back booster seat.
6. Never use car seats purchased at yard sales, secondhand stores or flea markets. They may not protect your child properly because of a recall, stress damage from use, or weakness from being in a crash.

To ensure that children are riding correctly, caregivers should have their child safety seats inspected by a certified technician. For more information about the nearest inspection locations, Maryland's child passenger safety laws, and loaner programs contact Maryland Kids in Safety Seats (KISS) at 1-800-370-SEAT, or visit their website:

Maryland's Child Passenger Safety Law Has Changed

(Effective June 30, 2008)

- **Every child** under 8 years old must ride in a booster seat or other appropriate child safety seat.*

Unless the child is 4 feet, 9 inches or taller, or weighs more than 65 pounds.

- **Every child** from 8 to 16 years old who is not secured in a car seat must be secured in the vehicle's seat belt.



Protect your children as they ride!

The back seat is the safest. Children under 13 years old should ride in the back seat.



Questions?

Call Maryland Kids In Safety Seats
(KISS)

at 1-800-370-SEAT or
(410) 767-6016.

Or visit us online at www.mdkiss.org

* "Child safety seat" includes infant seats, convertible seats, forward-facing seats, booster seats, or other federally approved safety devices.

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Maryland KISS Program

Martin O'Malley, Governor

Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor

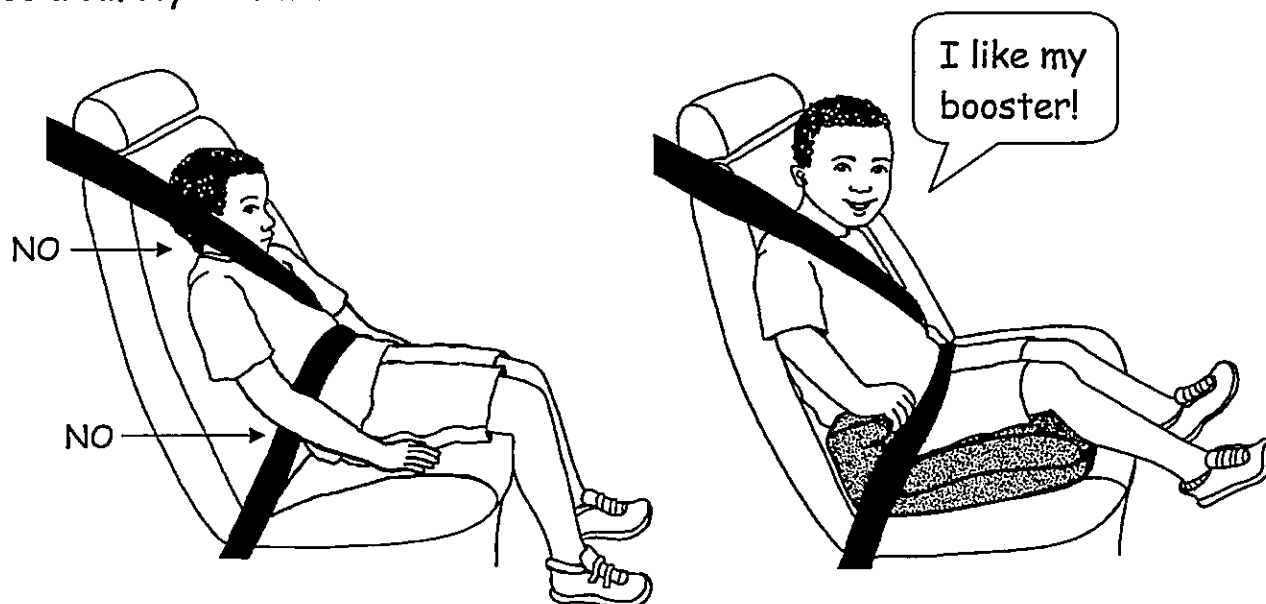
John M. Colmers, Secretary, DHMH



Boosters Are For Big Kids

Most kids need to ride in a booster seat from about age 4 until at least age 8-10.

If your child isn't using a booster, try the simple test below the next time you ride together in the car. You'll probably find that your child is not yet ready to use a safety belt without a booster.



The 5-Step Test

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your child needs a booster seat to make both the shoulder belt and the lap belt fit right for the best crash protection. Your child will be more comfortable, too!

The back seat is the safest part of the car for all passengers. Recent research shows that children should ride in the back seat until they reach age 15.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. P.O. Box 553, Altadena, CA 91003 www.carseat.org
310/222-6860, 800/745-SAFE (English) 310/222-6862, 800/747-SANO (Spanish)