

A GUIDE TO
CAR SEAT
SAFETY



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INTRODUCTION

As a responsible parent, you want the best for your infants and children which is why you diligently follow state laws and install car seats and booster seats. Though well meaning, problems still prevail:

- Car seat ease of use is practically non-existent.
- A high percentage of car seats are improperly installed because of confusing directions and no standardization of parts and features.
- Lastly, most car seat brands have models that are recalled later than sooner.

Lots of bad things have to happen to babies and children before a recall is issued and notification reaches the buying public. You have to wonder what process these car seat manufacturers go through and why have they not been put through more rigorous standards when producing and testing car seat safety. Another question is why are car seats so complicated? Car seat safety is not a one size fits all solution. Car seat features fluctuate based on the baby or child's weight and age. Also, motor vehicle manufacturers offer so many complicated options, it's no wonder parents cannot understand how to secure the seats.

In 2001, a universal connection system was introduced and it appropriately was named LATCH which means Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children. LATCH was supposed to connect to the car seat from the top tethers and lower anchors or attachments in the cargo bay. Not only did LATCH not solve any problems but at end of 2006, a study determined that LATCH only complicated car systems and that most children were not properly restrained.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING CAR SEATS

- Car seats now have an expiration date stamped into the plastic shell on the back of the seat. If a seat is used past an expiration date and you are in a crash and your child is injured, the manufacturer will not stand behind the product.
- Car seats may be used after a minor crash but some restrictions apply: Was the car able to be driven away from the crash? Was anyone injured in the crash? Was the impact of the crash on the same side of the car where the car seat was installed? Is there no visible damage to the car seat? If you answered yes, no, no, and no, then you can still use your car seat after a minor crash.
- If your state requires a booster seat, use it, whether you used one as a child or not.
- Only use or buy a used car seat if it is still within the 6-year expiration date; you know the history of the seat; and the car seat comes with the instruction booklet.
- Play it safe and get your child seat installation inspected. It's one thing to be too proud to not to ask for directions but quite another to risk your baby or child's safety. Check out the inspection locator resource.



ANCHOR OR TETHER?

Either the anchors or tethers should be used, or the seat belt, but not both. How a car seat is installed depends on the model vehicle a parent drives. Vehicles model year 2000 and newer have an anchor point to attach the tether to. Vehicles model year 2003 and newer were required to have lower anchors in the bite of the seat. Not every seating position will have a latch and cars older than vehicle model 2000 will have none.



HOW TO CONTACT US

Please contact us for a [free no-obligation consultation](#). The more information that you can provide, the more helpful it will be. You are under no obligation to continue. Any information you provide will be held in the strictest of confidence.

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FOUR TYPES OF CAR SEATS

There are four types of car seats but only three to choose from. Which is the right type of car seat for your baby?

Infant Car Seat

The infant car seat is suitable from birth until your baby weighs about 20 pounds. The infant car seat is designed to ride in your car in the rear facing position. Do not turn around the infant car seat to face forward. An infant car seat can last six to 12 months depending on how fast your baby grows. Once your baby outgrows the infant car seat you will need to buy another type of car seat designed for older babies and toddlers.

The infant car seat can also double as a carrier. You can carry your baby out of the car to the house, grocery store, or doctor's office. Many models of this infant car seat can either be strapped into the car directly or into a base that stays strapped into the car seat. Multiple bases can be purchased for multiple cars. Premature babies will most likely need another kind of car seat prior to an infant car seat.



Convertible Car Seat

Convertible car seats are used from birth until your child outgrows a car seat. With a convertible car seat, you get more value for your investment. Convertible car seats can be used in forward facing or rear facing positions, depending on the weight of your child. (Rear facing is used for infants up to 20 pounds and/or age one.

Unfortunately, convertible car seats are not portable and cannot be used as an infant carrier. They do not have bases and are not easily moved from one car to another. Some parents find these bigger seats more difficult to use for smaller infants.

Convertible Car Seat with Shield

The convertible car seat with shield is not often found anymore because of its lack of safety, particularly with smaller infants under 20 pounds. Car seats with shields or car seats that have been recalled should be discontinued immediately. To verify if a car seat has been recalled, check out <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls/>.

Booster Car Seat

Booster car seats are to be used only for toddlers in a forward facing position. The minimum weight requirement varies from 30 to 40 pounds, depending on the model. The good news is that the booster car seat can take your child safely to 80 pounds in a car seat. As infant car seat laws change and vary from state to state many states are going with higher weight requirements for children in car seats.

The booster car seat may have its own set of buckles or harness or it can use the seat belt already found in your car. Your child's height will dictate which is most comfortable. Your best bet to have your child try out the car seat out before buying it.

CAR SEAT INJURIES

Car seats can malfunction for a number of reasons from poor design, not tested properly, improperly installed, etc. The injuries sustained by car seats are:

- Head injury
- Neck injury
- Face injury
- Crushed by airbag, adult, or part of the vehicle
- Ejected from the vehicle or into another part of the vehicle
- Paralyzed
- Death

CAR SEAT RESOURCES

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - 2006 Car Seat Safety Ease of Use Ratings <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/CSSRating/Index.cfm>

Consumer Product Safety Commission
<http://search.cpsc.gov/query.html?col=pubweb&qt=car+seats&x=11&y=16>

Car Seat Recall
<http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls/>

Ask a Lawyer
<http://www.monheit.com>

CONTACT A LAWYER / FREE NO-OBLIGATION CONSULTATION

Please contact us for a [free no-obligation consultation](#). The more information that you can provide, the more helpful it will be. You are under no obligation to continue. Any information you provide will be held in the strictest of confidence.

If you have questions, please call us toll-free at 1-866-761-1385.
Thank you.



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