

CHILD CAR SEATS SAVE LIVES!



Safety standards and the road traffic law

There's a lot of misunderstanding about the "law" on child car seats. It isn't the UK Road Traffic Law that has actually changed, but it is affected because the European Safety Standard has been revised.

The majority of car seats including booster cushions, are currently certified under the ECE R44/04 Child Car Seat Regulations. Part of this means you can use a booster cushion from 15kg. Sadly though, this has meant that some children, who are still as young as 4 years old, are legally using just a booster cushion in the car. Clearly with no head, side or upper body protection, it isn't the safest option for such a young body. And when there is a safer option of a high-backed booster seat which does have these safety features it would make sense to encourage parents to use these.

So to solve this problem, the regulation has been updated and now this means that any new booster cushions must not be designed for children under 22kg and over 125cm. Although knowing what we do know, we certainly wouldn't advise you do this even now.

What if we have a booster cushion already?

If you already own a booster cushion which states it conforms to ECE R44/04 Group 2 – 15kg minimum weight, then it will still be legal for you to use with a child who is just 15kg.

EVEN ON THE SHORTEST JOURNEYS, ALWAYS MAKE SURE THAT EVERY CHILD IN YOUR CAR HAS THE APPROPRIATE SEAT FOR THEIR WEIGHT, HEIGHT AND AGE. Legal exemptions don't prevent children from being seriously injured or killed.

Information is provided by www.childseatsafety.co.uk

Results from thirty Child car seat checking events held around the UK in 2016 and 2017, in which 3000 seats were inspected by a specialist organisation called Child Seat Safety, revealed that **33%** of children were sitting in a chair that wasn't suitable for them, while another **36%** of seats were incorrectly fitted and, most worryingly, **3%** of children who legally needed to be in a child seat were completely unrestrained.

WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED?

If your child is under 18kgs they need to still be using a full harness or safety shield, this is because their bones aren't fully developed and an adult seat belt won't hold them securely in their seat just yet.

If they are over 18kgs but under 135cm tall, they should always use a high backed booster seat for all journeys. These seats are designed to provide protection to their head, neck, spine and hips. So it's like providing them with armour.

You may need to remove your vehicle's head restraint to accommodate the high-backed booster seat correctly – never use it to hold the seat down, it's designed to keep the child continuously protected and move with the child in a collision.

I think my child is too big for their booster seat. What shall I do?

The UK road traffic law says that a child must use an appropriate child seat until they are 135cm in height or 12-years of age: whichever they reach first.

So in theory you no longer need a high-backed/booster seat after this, however it's far safer to keep them on it until they are 150cm. This is because vehicle seatbelts are designed for adults from 150cm tall.

So when you remove the seat from a child who is only 135cm and wonder why the diagonal belt is cutting into their neck, you'll now know why!