

# Seat belts and child restraints



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0845 300 1818

The Government brought in new regulations on the 18 September 2006, regarding the use of child seats.

These new regulations will have an impact on some Scouting activities and the following information may assist Leaders.

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**Note:** A table detailing the new regulations can be found on the next page. This information **must be read in conjunction** with all of the information available from the Department for Transport (DfT) either on its website or on its leaflet mentioned below.

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The link below is for the DfT's 'Think! Road Safety' website and provides an excellent set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the new regulations including why they have changed, an explanation of terms, exemptions and a useful table outlining the new requirements.

We strongly recommend that you read through all information to help you prepare for the changes when transporting youth Members.

<http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/campaigns/childcarseats/childcarseats.htm>

A leaflet containing the same information can also be obtained from the DfT (Product Code T/INF/251), dated 2006, on 0870 122 6236 or [dft@twoten.press.net](mailto:dft@twoten.press.net)

In addition to this information, the DfT has kindly clarified the following, which will be of specific interest to our Members:

## Use of Minibuses:

Child seats and boosters seats/cushions are not legally required in the back of minibuses or coaches, although they can be used if wished. However, all passengers aged 3 years and over must wear seat belts.

Children up to aged 3 years travelling in line with, or forward of the driver, must use the appropriate restraints as per the information in the aforementioned link.

Children over 3 years travelling in line with, or forward of the driver, must use the appropriate child restraint if available. If not, an adult seat belt must be worn.

The DfT's leaflet mentions the requirement in the Directive that children over 3 must use a belt in a bus or coach (other than a minibus). This has not yet been made a UK legal requirement but it will be in due course. It is good practice for children to use belts on buses and coaches where available.

More information on Minibuses can be found in section 6 of the DfT document at the following link. Please note however, that the height threshold is now 135 cms and not 150 cms.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_roads/documents/page/dft\\_roads\\_506857.hcsp](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/page/dft_roads_506857.hcsp)

## Transporting young people to camps, trips, etc. where the transport is in a Leader's or another parents' private car/van/goods vehicle as opposed to a minibus or coach:

As per the requirements the appropriate child restraints will need to be used. One way of

ensuring that the appropriate booster seats or cushions are used is for the young person's own booster seat or cushion to be labelled clearly and be part of their kit list for the trip/camp. Remember booster seats and cushions are designed to be movable from vehicle to vehicle.

**'Emergency' situations:**

The new regulations state that 'If there is an 'unexpected necessity' there is an exemption for a child of 3 years or more to wear an adult belt on a short journey when no appropriate child seat is available. The exemption is not intended to cover regular school runs or other journeys that are planned in advance.'

This guidance would be relevant, for example, if a Leader needed to take some young people home from a meeting or trip where the parents hadn't been able to pick them up as initially planned.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Scout Information Centre on 0845 300 1818 or [info.centre@scout.org.uk](mailto:info.centre@scout.org.uk)

Additional help can be obtained from the Department for Transport on 020 7944 2043 / 46 / 47.

The following information is taken from the FAQs at <http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/campaigns/childcarseats/childcarseats.htm#01>

### What are the new regulations?

From 18 September 2006 in cars, vans and goods vehicles			
	Front seat	Rear seat	Who is responsible?
Driver	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available.		Driver
Child up to 3 years*	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used*.	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used*. If one is not available in a taxi, may travel unrestrained.	Driver
Child from 3rd birthday up to 135cms in height (approx 4'5") (or 12th birthday whichever they reach first)**	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used***.	<p><b>Where</b> seat belts fitted, correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used. Must use adult belt if the correct child restraint is not available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in a taxi;</li> <li>- for a short distance for reason of unexpected necessity;</li> <li>- two occupied child restraints prevent fitment of a third.</li> </ul> <p>A child 3 and over may travel unrestrained in the rear seat of a vehicle if seat belts are not available.</p>	Driver
Child over 1.35 metres (approx 4ft 5ins in height) or 12 or 13 years	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available.	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available.	Driver
Adult passengers (i.e 14 years and over)	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available.	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available.	Passenger

**In addition, the revised regulations also say that rear-facing baby seats MUST NOT be used in a seat protected by a frontal air-bag unless the air-bag has been deactivated manually or automatically.**

- \* Children under 3 years **MUST** use the child restraint appropriate for their weight in all cars, vans and other goods vehicles, with the single exception for the rear of taxis. They cannot travel otherwise. This means for example that they may not travel in cars, vans or goods vehicles, which do not have seat belts installed.
- \*\* Examples. A 7 year old who is 140 cms tall is over the height for a child restraint and may use an adult seat belt. A 12 year old who is 130 cms tall is over the age threshold and therefore may use an adult belt.
- \*\*\* If no seat belts are fitted in the front, then children under 135 cms in height (who are also under 12 years of age) cannot travel in the front.

In **buses and coaches** seated passengers aged 14 years and above will have to use seat belts where they are fitted. Regulations requiring children from 3 to 13 years to use seat belts (or child restraints if they are available) in these vehicles will be brought forward by Government in due course. The regulations will not include an obligation for anyone to provide child restraints in these vehicles.

In Minibuses seat belt wearing is already compulsory. All passengers aged 3 and over must wear seat belts (see 'Use of Minibuses').