



Texas Occupant Safety Laws

Applicable to all passenger vehicles: a passenger car, light truck, sport utility vehicle, passenger van designed to transport 15 or fewer passengers, including the driver, truck, or truck tractor. Drivers are responsible for checking all passengers are properly restrained and following laws.

CHILD PASSENGERS

A child who is younger than age 8, (unless the child is taller than four feet, nine inches) must ride in a child safety seat according to the manufacturer's instructions.

SAFETY BELTS

All occupants must be restrained in a safety belt regardless of position in the vehicle, if position is equipped with a safety belt.

Children younger than age 17 who are not required to be in a child safety seat must use a vehicle safety belt when riding in a vehicle.

RIDING IN OPEN BEDS

Children younger than age 18 should never ride in the bed of the truck or trailer.

MOTORCYCLES OR MOPEDS

A motorcycle or moped operator may not carry a passenger unless the motorcycle or moped is designed to carry a passenger. Passengers must ride in a regular passenger seat and must be at least age 5. Passengers can also ride in another seat firmly attached behind or to the side of the operator.

See Texas Transportation code, Chapter 545. Operation of Movement of Vehicles. statutes.capitol.texas.gov/?tab=1&code=TN&chapter=TN.545&artSec=545.412

For exemptions and defenses to prosecution please refer to the specific transportation or penal code.



Save a Life™

Texas Department of Transportation



Transportation Code

Types of Child Passenger Safety Seats

Read car seat labels for specific weight and height limitations.

Always use the seat according to seat manufacturer's instructions and until the child reaches the height or weight limitations of the seat before transitioning to the next seat.



REAR-FACING ONLY SAFETY SEAT

Seat can only be installed with the infant facing back of vehicle. Seat is inserted into a base that has been installed in the vehicle and usually has a carrying handle.



CONVERTIBLE SAFETY SEAT

Seat can be used rear- or forward-facing. Seat will have labeled instructions for use in both directions. Use until child reaches maximum weight or height limits for the direction chosen.



FORWARD-FACING SAFETY SEAT

This seat is only installed in the vehicle facing forward. It has a harness system that can be removed once outgrown to then use as a belt-positioning booster seat.



BELT-POSITIONING BOOSTER SEAT

Booster seats are for children who outgrow safety seats with a harness. For proper fit, children may need to use a booster seat until ages 9-12. Child must be at least age 4 to ride in a booster.

Quick Checklist for Visible Errors

- Child riding unrestrained or sharing a seat belt
- Rear-facing seat in front of air bag
- Infant-only seat facing front of vehicle
- Harness is loose or not over the shoulders
- Seat not installed in the vehicle using the seatbelt or lower anchors and tether
- Shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back of child in a booster

Texas Department of State Health Services

Safe Riders

Child Passenger Safety Education and Training Program



Parent Resources