

# WHAT THE NEW REGULATIONS SAY AND MEAN

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DfT

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Department for  
Transport


## CHILD SEAT AND SEAT BELT REGULATIONS

*WHEN WILL THEY CHANGE?*

*WHAT'S NOW?*

*WHAT'S NEW?*

Andrew Burr (Road User Safety Division)  
31 March 2006



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### The new Regulations - timetable

|                                       |                        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Directive                           | 8 April 2003           |
| • Consultation – buses and coaches    | Sept to Dec 2004       |
| • Consultation – child seats          | June to September 2005 |
| • Decision letter – buses and coaches | 19 July 2005           |
| • Decision letter – child seats       | 27 February 2006       |
| • Regulations laid                    | May 2006               |
| • Regulations made                    | June 2006              |
| • Regulations in force                | September 2006         |



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### The new Regulations

- This presentation summarises the proposed new rules for -
  - Child seats in cars and vans
  - Seat belts in buses and coaches



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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- summary of decision letter**

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**Regulations will –**

- require the appropriate child restraint to be used  
- with very few exceptions
- prohibit -
  - rear-facing baby seats in front seats against frontal air bags;
  - older-specification child restraints from May 2008; and
  - the carrying of more passengers than there are seat belts from May 2009



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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- the appropriate child restraint**

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- the appropriate restraint is decided by a child's weight - and they are designed and tested accordingly
- the rules on moving up to an adult belt are based on height and age
- the exemption for children under 1 year in a baby cot will be removed



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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- summary of present requirements**

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| Age of child           | Front seat  | Rear seat  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Under 3 yrs            | appropriate child restraint must be used                                      | appropriate child restraint must be used if available                                      |
| Up to 150 cms          | appropriate child restraint must be used if available – otherwise, adult belt | appropriate child restraint must be used if available – otherwise, adult belt if available |
| Over 150 cms or age 12 | seat belt must be worn if fitted  | seat belt must be worn if available  |



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### Child seats in cars and vans - present use of restraints

- a recent survey showed –
  - 219 children aged 1-4 years in front seats:-
    - 26% using adult belts;
    - 57% using a baby/child seat
    - 16% using booster seat/cushion
    - 1% unrestrained
  - 1588 children aged 1-4 years in rear seats:-
    - 12% using adult belts;
    - 75% using a baby/child seat
    - 10% using booster seat cushion
    - 3% unrestrained (16 in laps!)
  - 539 children aged 5-9 years in front seats:-
    - 92% using adult belts;
    - 0% using a child seat
    - 5% using booster seat/cushion
    - 4% unrestrained (5 in laps!)
  - 1029 children aged 5-9 years in rear seats:-
    - 77% using adult belts;
    - 4% using a child seat
    - 9% using booster
    - 9% unrestrained

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### Child seats in cars and vans **THE CHANGES** - summary of ~~present~~ **proposed** requirements

| Age of child                        | Front seat   | Rear seat  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Under 3 yrs                         | appropriate child restraint must be used   | appropriate child restraint must be used <del>if available</del>   |
| Up to <del>150 cms</del><br>135 cms | appropriate child restraint must be used <del>if available – otherwise, adult belt</del> | appropriate child restraint must be used <del>if available – otherwise, adult belt if available</del> <b>if seat belt fitted</b> |
| Over 150 cms or age 12              | seat belt must be worn if fitted   | seat belt must be worn <del>if available</del> <b>if fitted</b>  |

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### Child seats in cars and vans - summary of proposed requirements

| Age of child          | Front seat                               | Rear seat  |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Under 3 yrs           | appropriate child restraint must be used | appropriate child restraint must be used (except taxis)  |
| Up to 135 cms         | appropriate child restraint must be used | appropriate child restraint must be used wherever seat belts are fitted (three exceptions allow travel in the rear in an adult belt) |
| Over 135cms or age 12 | seat belt must be worn if fitted         | seat belt must be worn if available  |

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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- proposed exemptions**

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**• taxis  
(include minicabs  
and private hire cars)**



- taxis cannot be expected to have a range of child seats available: so -
- if the appropriate child restraint is not available –
  - a child under 3 may travel unrestrained in the rear of a taxi (using an adult belt may be less safe)
  - a child aged 3 or more may travel in the rear of a taxi but must use an adult seat belt



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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- proposed exemptions**

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**• a short and occasional journey**



- if the appropriate child restraint is not available for a short and occasional journey, a child aged 3 or more may travel in a rear seat using an adult seat belt
- the exemption does not apply to under 3s
- consultation proposed this exemption for unplanned travel: treat it as for emergencies
  - it is not for the school run or the scout trip!



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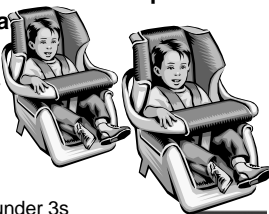
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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- proposed exemptions**

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**• where two occupied child seats in the rear prevent the fitment of a third child seat**



- three seats don't always fit – and even if they do the buckles may be too hard to reach
- a third child aged 3 or more must use the adult belt
- the exemption does not apply to under 3s
- the third child might be safer in a restraint in the front seat - but watch air bags!



12

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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- proposed exemptions**

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- **carriage of children in an emergency vehicle**
  - the Directive allows an exception for any child being carried in a vehicle being used for police, security or emergency services if no child restraint is available.



- this adds ambulances to the present exemptions



13

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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- proposed exemptions**

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- **old vehicles without seat belts fitted**
  - children over 3 years may travel in the rear seat of a car in which no seat belts are fitted
  - this exemption does not apply to unc
  - children under 135cms and 12 years must have an appropriate restraint in the front seat of any vehicle
    - from May 2009 every passenger must have and use a belt or child restraint in any vehicle in which seat belts are fitted

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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- proposed prohibitions**

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- **rear-facing child restraints in front seats against active frontal air bags**
  - air bags are a serious danger to a child in a rear-facing baby seat
  - car handbooks may warn against older children sitting in the front facing an active frontal air bag
  - in some cars, the driver can de-activate the air bag; and new technology may allow vehicles to sense the size of the front-seat occupant and deploy accordingly.






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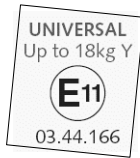
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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- proposed prohibitions**

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**• older-specification child restraints from May 2008**

- modern restraints conform to the current UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE 44.03) standard.
- all new restraints and most in use comply and provide better protection than older standards
- the change should come into force from May 2008 by a separate amendment to the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986.



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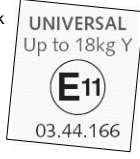
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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- UN ECE 44.03 standard**

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**• the restraint must be clearly and indelibly marked with:**

- the manufacturer's name, initials or trade mark
- the year of production
- the international approval mark - a circle surrounding the letter "E" and an approval number
- the weight range for which the child restraint has been designed
- an address to which the customer can write to obtain further information on fitting the child restraint in specific cars.



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**Child seats in cars and vans  
- proposed prohibitions**

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**• carrying more passengers than there are seat belts**

- all children up to 135cms will have to have a restraint as soon as the Regulations come into force
- from May 2009, all other children and adults must have and use seat belts or child restraints if belts are fitted in the vehicle



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## Seat belt Regulations for buses and coaches

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### Present rules



- vehicles up to 2450kg unladen (about 1 are subject to the same rules as cars
- drivers and front seat passengers must use seat belts if fitted
  - children can only be in front seats in an appropriate restraint
- seat belts and child restraints must be used in rear seats if available in these vehicles
- there are currently no rules for using seat belts or child restraints in larger buses and coaches



19

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## Seat belt Regulations for buses and coaches

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### Proposed changes



- all bus and coach passengers aged 3 years and above must use a seat belt if fitted
- a child passenger under 12 and 135 cms must use the appropriate child restraint if available and capable of being fitted
- requirement will not apply in buses and coaches used for urban transport services, or in which standing is allowed



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## Seat belt Regulations for buses and coaches

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### Proposed changes



- driver only responsible for children's se
- the operator must notify everybody boarding the bus or coach of the requirement to wear an adult seat belt or child restraint
- the notification may be by –
  - the driver
  - the conductor, courier or official designated as group leader
  - audio visual means (eg video)
  - signs or symbol prominently displayed at every seating position



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**THANK YOU**

**ANY QUESTIONS**

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