

## Make Safe Choices When Buckling Up Children

Children who are correctly buckled in a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt benefit from the single most effective way to protect vehicle occupants and reduce fatalities in a crash. Securing children in age and size appropriate car seats is the best way to keep children safe. It is also important to increase booster seat/seat belt use among children age 8 through 13 and to spread the message that they are safer in the back seat of a vehicle. By educating children and families on the importance of occupant protection, buckling up will become a habit for life.

### Rear-Facing



Secure infants and toddlers in a rear-facing car seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

Pennsylvania law requires children younger than two years of age to always ride in a rear-facing car seat. Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat with an active passenger-side front air bag.

Traveling rear-facing is safer than forward-facing.

### Forward-Facing



When children outgrow the rear-facing car seat, secure them in a forward-facing car seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

Forward-Facing car seats reduce the risk of injury for children up to 71% compared to children using a seat belt only.

### Belt-Positioning Booster



Once children outgrow the forward-facing car seat, secure them in a belt-positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt until the seat belt fits properly, typically when a child is approximately 4 feet 9 inches tall and between 8 and 12 years of age.

Booster seats lower the risk of injury for children age 4 to 8 years by 45% compared to children using the seat belt alone.

### Seat Belt



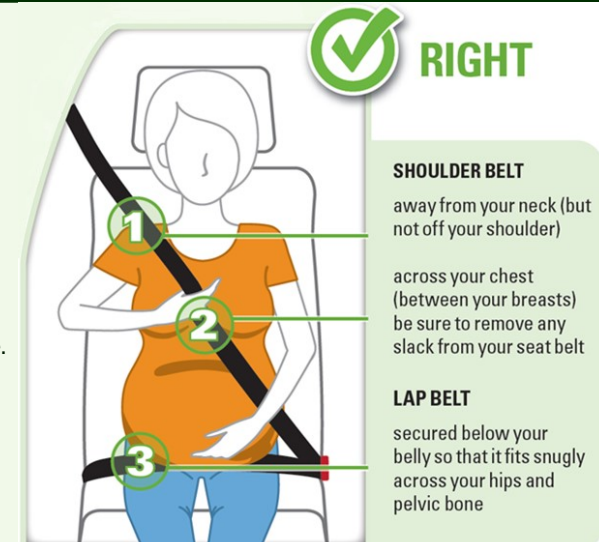
When children outgrow the belt-positioning booster seat, secure them in a properly fitted lap and shoulder belt. A lap and shoulder belt fits properly when the lap belt lays low and snug across the hips/upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the center of the chest and shoulder.

The lap and shoulder seat belt reduces the risk of injury by 45% - 60% in passenger cars and light trucks.

## Seat Belt Safety Tips During Pregnancy

1. Wear your seat belt. Buckling up is the single most effective action to take to protect you and your unborn child in a crash. Never drive or ride in a car without buckling up.
2. Place the shoulder belt across your chest and away from your neck.
  - ◆ Do not place the shoulder belt under your arm or behind our back.
3. Secure the lap belt **BELOW** your belly, snugly across your hips and pelvic bone.
  - ◆ **NEVER** place the lap belt over or on top of the belly.
4. Adjust the vehicle seat. Keep as much distance as possible between the belly and the steering wheel.
  - ◆ When driving, if you need additional room, consider adjusting the steering wheel or having someone else drive, if possible.
  - ◆ As a passenger, move your seat back as far as possible.
5. Keep Airbags Activated. Seat belts and air bags work together to provide the best protection for you and your unborn child.

**If you are involved in a crash, seek medical attention, even if you think you are not injured, regardless if you were the driver or passenger.**



# Achieving Correct Car Seat Use

## SELECTION

Select a car seat, belt-positioning booster seat, or seat belt that is appropriate for the child's age, weight, height, and developmental level.

Check the car seat to determine if it is:

- ◆ Expired,
- ◆ Recalled, or
- ◆ Missing labels.

Examine the car seat to assure it is in good working condition and has not been involved in a crash.

**Why:** Car seats and booster seats protect passengers who are too small to get the full safety benefit from an adult seat belt. Car Seats and belt-positioning booster seats:

- ◆ Are designed to keep children in position within the vehicle.
- ◆ Prevent contact with interior surfaces of the vehicle and other occupants.
- ◆ Provide "ride-down" by extending the time it takes for the child to slow down and reduces the crash forces exerted on the child's body.



### Rear Facing:

- ◆ Infant
- ◆ Convertible

### Forward Facing:

- ◆ Convertible
- ◆ Combination
- ◆ 3-in-1, 4-in-1, 5-in-1



### Belt-Positioning Booster Seat:

- ◆ High-Back
- ◆ Backless

### Vehicle Seat Belt

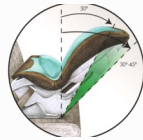
- ◆ Lap and Shoulder Seat Belt



## DIRECTION

Place the car seat on the vehicle seat facing the correct direction based on the child's age, weight, height, and developmental level.

- ◆ Rear-Facing
- ◆ Forward-Facing



**Why:** Moving children to the next car seat stage before they are ready puts them at greater risk for injury in a crash. Children younger than 2 years are better protected by riding rear-facing to the height and weight limits of their convertible car seat.

- ◆ NHTSA suggests that children ride rear-facing to the upper limits of their car seat. Convertible car seats with higher rear-facing weight and height limits allow children to ride rear-facing beyond 2 years of age.

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises that children:

- ◆ Ride in a rear-facing car seat for as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.
- ◆ Once children have outgrown the rear-facing car seat, secure them in a forward-facing car seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by their car seat manufacturer.

**Children are also being moved to a belt-positioning booster seat or a seat belt early, putting them at greater risk.**

## LOCATION

Place the car seat or belt-positioning booster seat in an appropriate location in the vehicle.

- ◆ **Forward-facing vehicle seat, and**
- ◆ **Seat belt or LATCH is available to tightly secure the car seat.**

**Why:** The safest place for children younger than 13 years of age to ride is the back seat, away from frontal air bags.

- ◆ The back seat eliminates the risk of being injured by the passenger-side front air bag, which is designed to provide additional protection for adults who are properly secured with the seat belt.
- ◆ Read the vehicle owner's manual to locate the air bags in the vehicle.
- ◆ **NEVER place a rear-facing car seat in front of an active passenger-side front air bag.**
- ◆ Consider the occupant protection needs of all passengers when installing a car seat. Select a seating position in a back seat that will provide an optimal installation for the car seat.
- ◆ Consider family needs. If parking on a busy street, place the child's car seat on the curb side for optimal protection when accessing the vehicle.
- ◆ **NEVER leave children alone in the car, not even for a minute.**

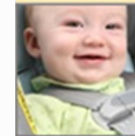
## HARNESS ADJUSTMENT AND FIT

Secure the child correctly in the car seat, booster seat, or seat belt, following the car seat manufacturer's instructions.

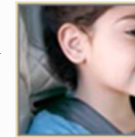
**Why:** Correct harness adjustment and fit or a properly positioned lap and shoulder belt, in a belt-positioning booster seat or vehicle seat, ensures the child is able to take advantage of the crash protection that the harness or seat belt provides.

- ◆ The harness holds the child snugly in the car seat. The correctly secured child will not slide up or out of position in a crash.

**Rear-Facing:** The harness is placed **AT or BELOW** the child's shoulders.

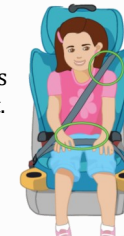


**Forward-Facing:** The harness is placed **AT or ABOVE** the child's shoulders.



**Belt-Positioning Booster Seat and Seat Belt:** Correct seat belt fit is very important.

- ◆ Shoulder belt is snug across the center of the child's shoulder and chest.
- ◆ Lap belt is low and snug across the child's hips/upper thighs.



## INSTALLATION

Install the car seat or booster seat in the vehicle correctly.

**Why:** A car seat that is installed correctly provides optimal protection in a crash, and improves the child's safety.

- ◆ Car seats can be installed with either the seat belt or the lower anchors.



- ◆ Forward-facing car seats should always utilize the tether, following the car seat and vehicle manufacturer's instructions.



Tightly install the car seat using either the seat belt or lower anchor connectors.

- ◆ Thread and tighten the seat belt or lower anchor connectors through the correct belt path.
- ◆ Buckle and lock the seat belt or attach the connectors to the lower anchors in the vehicle. Tighten to ensure the car seat does not move more than one-inch when checked at the belt path.
- ◆ While the seat belt and lower anchor systems are different, they are equally safe. Follow the car seat instructions and vehicle manual guidance to secure the car seat. Use the seat belt or lower anchors – but NOT both (unless approved by the car seat and vehicle manufacturer).

# Car Seat Safety—One Step at a Time

Car seats, belt-positioning booster seats and seat belts provide protection for infants and children. As children grow, choose the age-and-size appropriate car seat and use it correctly every time the child is traveling in a vehicle. Children should remain in their current car seat or belt-positioning booster seat until the maximum weight or height listed by the car seat manufacturer on a label or in the instructions. Follow best practice guidelines for selecting and using the correct car seat, belt-positioning booster seat, or seat belt for your child.

## Rear-Facing



Secure children in a rear-facing car seat until the maximum weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

Pennsylvania law requires children younger than 2 years of age to always ride in a rear-facing car seat.

Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat with an active passenger-side front air bag.

All children younger than age 13 should ride in a back seat.



### Here's What to Do:

- ◆ Use a rear-facing car seat:
  - ◆ Up to the rear-facing weight or height limit, even if the child is beyond the age of 2.
  - ◆ Secured in the back seat for as long as possible.
- ◆ If your child outgrows their rear-facing car seat before age 2, use a car seat with a higher weight and/or height limit to keep the child rear-facing longer.
- ◆ Leg crowding is expected and does not cause harm as long as the child is within the weight and height limits for the car seat.

**Traveling rear-facing is safer than forward-facing.**

## Forward-Facing



When children outgrow the rear-facing car seat, secure them in a forward-facing car seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

All children younger than age 13 should ride in a back seat.



### Here's What to Do:

- ◆ Use a forward-facing car seat with a harness up to the maximum weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.
- ◆ Secure the car seat with the seat belt or LATCH system in the back seat.
  - ◆ Check the car seat and vehicle manufacturer's instructions to determine the maximum weight limit permitted for lower anchor installation.
- ◆ Use the tether, whenever possible, when securing a forward-facing car seat with the seat belt or lower anchors.



## Belt-Positioning Booster Seat



Once children outgrow their forward-facing car seat, secure them in a belt-positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt until the seat belt fits correctly, typically when a child is approximately 4 feet 9 inches and between 8 and 12 years of age. All children younger than age 13 should ride in a back seat.



### Here's What to Do:

- ◆ Use a belt-positioning booster seat in the back seat until the seat belt fits.
- ◆ Belt-positioning booster seats raise and position a child so the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt fits correctly over the strong parts of a child's body.
- ◆ The lap belt must be snug across the hips, touching the upper thighs - not over the abdomen.
- ◆ The shoulder belt must be snug across the chest, making contact with the child's shoulder.



## Seat Belt



When children outgrow their belt-positioning booster seat, secure them in a properly fitted lap and shoulder seat belt.

A lap and shoulder belt fits properly when the lap belt lays low and snug across the hips/upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the center of the chest and shoulder.

All children younger than age 13 should ride in a back seat.



### Here's What to do:

- ◆ Use a correctly fitted lap and shoulder seat belt in the back seat for children when they outgrow the booster seat.
- ◆ Use the seat belt when the child is:
  - ◆ Tall enough to sit with their back against the vehicle seat back without slouching.
  - ◆ Able to keep their knees naturally bent over the front edge of the vehicle seat.
  - ◆ Able to keep their feet flat on the floor.
- ◆ The lap belt must be snug over the hips/upper thighs, not the stomach.
- ◆ The shoulder belt must be snug across the center of the shoulder and the chest.

# Car Seat Maintenance & Recall and Safety Notifications

Car seats are designed and tested to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213 governs the performance and some design criteria for child restraint systems for children who weigh up to 80 pounds. The standard includes requirements for crashworthiness, labeling and instructions, flammability, and buckle release pressure. Although child restraint systems undergo thorough testing and evaluation, it is possible that a child restraint could be recalled.

## Register All Car Seats to Receive Recall and Safety Notifications

A recall is issued when a car seat manufacturer or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) determines a car seat creates a safety risk or fails to meet minimum safety standards. Decisions to conduct a recall and remedy a safety defect are made voluntarily by car seat manufacturers prior to any involvement by NHTSA.



Car seats can be registered:

- ◆ Online at the car seat manufacturer's website.
  - ◆ Complete the form providing the model number and manufacture date found on the car seat label.
- ◆ By Mail with the registration card that came with the car seat.
  - ◆ The car seat model number and manufacture date is on the registration card.
  - ◆ No postage is required to mail the card.
- ◆ Online at: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats>.
  - ◆ Go to Registration and select the manufacturer of the car seat.
  - ◆ Complete the form and submit.

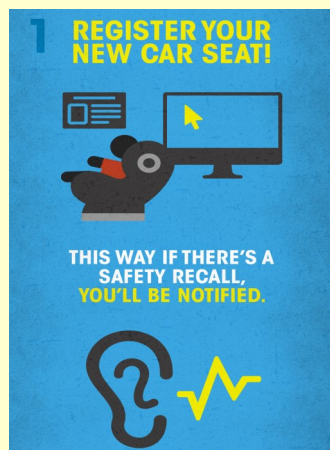
By registering your car seat, in the event of a recall, the manufacturer can contact you and guide you through the repair process.

## Car Seat Labels and Instruction Manual

Keep a record of the following car seat information.

Manufacturer	
Model Name	
Model #	
Manufacture Date	
Expiration Date	

- ◆ Discontinue using a car seat that has been involved in a crash or reached the expiration date.
- ◆ Keep the car seat instructions with the car seat. Refer to instructions to:
  - ◆ Learn how to use, adjust, and secure the harness and install the car seat in the vehicle.
- ◆ Always read and follow the car seat instructions.
- ◆ Register the car seat to receive recall and safety notifications.
- ◆ Discontinue using the car seat when:
  - ◆ The child has outgrown the car seat by weight or height.
  - ◆ The car seat has been involved in a crash.
  - ◆ The car seat has reached the manufacturer's expiration date.



## Cleaning Car Seats

Read the car seat manufacturer's instructions. Each manufacturer has specific instructions on how to clean their car seat. Follow the cleaning instructions provided by the manufacturer.



**Wash as Directed:** Use mild soap and the water temperature as directed for the car seat pad or parts. Do NOT use bleach or strong cleaners.

- ◆ **Car Seat Harness:** Many harnesses cannot be immersed in water. Manufacturers recommend wiping the harness with mild soap and water and allowing the harness to air dry.
- ◆ **Car Seat Shell:** Clean with mild soap and water and dry with a soft cloth. Take care not to damage the labels.
- ◆ **Never** use an iron or heat on the car seat pads or harnesses. The heat can damage the fibers.

**Evaluate the Buckle:** Check the crotch buckle and clean as needed, following car seat manufacturer's instructions, to ensure proper latching. Make sure the buckle is functioning properly and is free of debris.



## Car Seat Expiration Dates

Car seat expiration dates are determined by the manufacturer and indicate the life span of the car seat.

Manufactured in / Fabriqué en (year-month-day)/anné-mois-jour 2020-10-23  
Name / Nom LITEMAX 35 FACTORY SELECT  
Model / Modèle 3051198  
Made in / Fabriqué au China  
Expires on / Expire le 2026-10-23  
Serial Number 3051198GBPX001479

**Expiration dates** are a way for car seat manufacturers to provide guidance on the expected "useful" life of their car seat.

- ◆ The expiration date of a car seat is determined by the manufacturer. Check the car seat labels and instructions to determine the car seat expiration date.
- ◆ Discontinue use of the car seat once the expiration date is reached.
- ◆ The date of manufacture can be found on the label that provides the model number. The sticker may be found on the back, side, or bottom of the car seat.
- ◆ The expiration date may be provided as a month and year or in number of years from the date of manufacture.

**Replacement Parts:** An inventory of replacement parts may not be available for car seats beyond the expiration date.

**Car Seat Involved in a Crash:** Always follow the car seat manufacturer's guidance about replacing a car seat involved in a crash. Some car seat manufacturers:

- Recommend a car seat be replaced after a crash of any severity, even a minor crash.
- Follow the NHTSA recommendations that car seats be replaced following a moderate or severe crash.