



# News Release

## IMPORTANT CHANGES TO CAR SAFETY SEAT LAW EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1

*Age that children must remain in a booster seat has increased to age 8.*

Beginning January 1, 2012, children under age 8 must be properly buckled into a car seat or booster seat in the back seat. In addition, children age eight or older who are not tall enough for the seat belt to fit properly must ride in a booster or car seat. The previous law required that children remain in a booster seat until the age of six or until they weighed sixty pounds.

“This is an important new law that will impact more than 1.1 million children in California. Keeping them in booster seats increases their chance of surviving a crash by 45 percent,” said your spokesperson.

The fine for violating this law is significant. For each child under 16 who is not properly secured, parents (if in the car) or the driver can be fined a minimum of \$475 and get a point on their driving record.

As opposed to the steep fine for violating the law, complying with the law should be inexpensive. “Most children impacted by the law can remain in the booster seat they already have, and if it is necessary to buy a new one, low back boosters can be purchased at major retailers for 15 to 20 dollars each,” said the same or another spokesperson.

A booster simply “boosts” the child up in order to make the adult-sized belt safely fit a child-sized body. If the belt crosses the child's stomach instead of the hip bones, the child risks damage to internal organs and/or a spinal cord injury if involved in a collision.

A child fits an adult seat belt when:

- ◇ He can sit against the vehicle seat back with his knees bent without slouching, and can comfortably stay in this position throughout the trip.
- ◇ The lap belt is low on the hips touching the upper thighs.
- ◇ The shoulder belt crosses the shoulder and chest without touching the face or the neck.

Never let your child put the shoulder belt behind his arm or back. In a crash, the child could sustain major injuries including head and spinal cord injuries. If the child is placing the shoulder belt behind him, this is a sign that he may still need a booster.

For more information about car seats, the new law or help in determining if your child still needs a booster seat, call your local health department or go to [cdph.ca.gov/vosp](http://cdph.ca.gov/vosp)