



## OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

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# TIP OF THE WEEK

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SAFETY BELT & CHILD SEAT LAWS**

The following general information regarding safety belt and child restraint laws comes from the Oregon Department of Transportation Safety Division. The specific statutory requirements are found in the Oregon Revised Statutes, Volume 17, under **ORS 811.210 - 811.225**. (Note: You will have to scroll down to the specific referenced statute number to locate the actual full text).

### **ADULT BELT LAW**

Oregon law requires that all motor vehicle operators and passengers be properly secured with a safety belt or safety harness, unless all safety-belt equipped seating positions are occupied by other persons. Vehicle owners are required to maintain belt systems in working order. This applies to passenger cars; pickup trucks, motorhomes, and fee-based people transport carrying fifteen or fewer persons. Limited exemptions are allowed under ORS 811.215.

### **CHILD RESTRAINT LAW**

Child passengers must be restrained in child safety seats until they weigh forty pounds or reach the upper weight limit for the car seat in use. Infants must ride rear-facing until they reach both one year of age AND twenty pounds.

### **BOOSTER SEAT LAW**

Children over forty pounds or who have reached the upper weight limit for their forward-facing car seat must use boosters to 4'9" tall or age eight and the adult belt fits correctly.

### **REAR SEATING FOR CHILDREN**

There is no Oregon law specifically prohibiting children from riding in the front seat of passenger vehicles. However, a rear-facing infant seat cannot be placed in a front seating position that is equipped with an airbag because this would violate Oregon's requirement for "proper use" of a child safety seat. There is a national "best practice recommendation" calling for rear seating through age twelve.

## **NATIONAL "BEST PRACTICE" RECOMMENDATIONS**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) experts from the U.S. Department of Transportation have published guidelines which would keep children in each type of child seat longer than Oregon law prescribes, in addition to back seating through age twelve. Click this link to download the latest [National Best Practices Recommendations](#).

### **BELT OR BOOSTER?**

Belt fit can vary greatly from one vehicle to another and one child to another. If your child meets Oregon's legal requirements for moving from a booster seat to safety belt but you still have doubts about whether your child fits in the belt in your particular vehicle, then the following simple test can help. Place your child in the vehicle without a booster seat and then ask these questions. Until you can answer YES to all of the questions, your child should stay in a booster seat.

1. Can the child sit all the way back against the vehicle seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the seat?
3. Does the shoulder belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay comfortably seated like this for the whole trip?

### **MOTOR HOMES**

Motor homes are considered passenger vehicles under Oregon law and as such, adult belt and child seat requirements apply also to motor homes --- but only to forward-facing vehicle seating positions (those meeting federal safety standards for seat belt anchorages). Therefore, occupants should utilize all forward-facing belted positions before using side or rear-facing positions.

### **COMMERCIAL VEHICLES**

Oregon's safety belt law requires occupants of privately-owned commercial vehicles transporting 15 or fewer persons to use safety restraints including occupants of shuttles, taxis, limousines and vans. Among these types of vehicles, taxi cab drivers are the only occupants exempted from this rule.

We encourage everyone to always be properly buckled into their seatbelt and to correctly keep children in the appropriate safety seat. It CAN and DOES save lives.

For more information and tips, visit our web site at [www.lincolncountysheriff.net](http://www.lincolncountysheriff.net) and Like us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office – Oregon.