



# Booster Seat Law in Connecticut: Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the updated child passenger safety law in Connecticut?

Effective October 1, 2005, children in Connecticut need to be in a federally approved child restraint system (either a car seat or booster seat) until they reach a minimum of 7 years old **and** 60 pounds. When children are in a booster seat, they must use a lap and shoulder belt. Additionally, children must remain rear-facing in their car seat until they are a minimum of one year old **and** 20 pounds.

## What is a booster seat?

A booster seat is a seat that “boosts” the child up so that the seat belt fits properly. This seat gives children a taller sitting height, which allows the shoulder belt to ride across the collarbone and the lap belt to ride across the hip bones. Booster seats should only be used with a seat belt that has a lap and shoulder component, not with a seat belt which is only a lap belt.

## Do booster seats fit in all vehicles?

Booster seats fit in most vehicles, but should not be used in a seating position that has only a lap belt. Low back booster seats are appropriate for automobile seats that have a head restraint, while high back boosters are appropriate for automobile seats with or without a head restraint.

## How available are booster seats?

Booster seats are widely available at stores such as discount retailers and specialty baby stores, as well as being available via the Internet. Additionally, booster seats are affordable, with low back boosters starting at about \$20 and high back boosters starting at \$30. Furthermore, many forward-facing car seats can be used as a booster seat, so no additional seats need be purchased.



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### **Does the law apply to out of state vehicles driving in Connecticut?**

Yes. The law does not exempt vehicles traveling through the state. Additionally, Connecticut residents should check on the other states' laws when traveling to those states. Please visit [www.iihs.org/laws/state\\_laws/restrain2.html](http://www.iihs.org/laws/state_laws/restrain2.html) for information on child passenger safety laws in other states.

### **Are children riding on school buses required to be in child safety seats or booster seats?**

No. School buses are exempt from Connecticut's child restraint law. School buses are among the safest form of transportation available to children today. Additionally, most school buses do not have seat belts.

### **Why aren't there seat belts on school buses?**

School buses are built with a safety feature called compartmentalization. The high seat backs and the smaller spaces between the seats create a "compartment" which helps reduce injury during a crash. Additionally, school buses are rarely involved in crashes—they travel at lower speeds, are highly visible (bright yellow), travel familiar routes and have flashing lights.

### **What happens if I don't comply with this law?**

You will receive a ticket and have to pay a fine. Additionally, you will be required to attend a two-hour car seat safety course run by the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles.

For more information about the new booster seat law, please visit [www.ctsafekids.org](http://www.ctsafekids.org)



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