



WINTER SAFETY & CAR SEATS

Keeping Kids Warm without Compromising their Safety in Car Seats

Securing infants using rear-facing infant carriers:

- Store the infant carrier portion of the child safety seat inside the house to keep it warm. Keeping the child safety seat at room temperature will reduce the loss of the child's body heat when placed in the vehicle.
- Secure the child properly in the infant carrier while inside the house to avoid the child being outside in the cold for too long.
- Cover the baby with a warm blanket after the harness is secured properly on the child. The blanket is placed over the harnessed child so it will not interfere with achieving a properly tightened harness and the performance of the child safety seat.
- Do not use non-regulated products such as blankets that attach to the child safety seat through the harness system. Remember, if the item did not come with the child safety seat, it has not been crash tested and may interfere with the protection provided during a crash.

Securing toddlers and pre-school children in car seats:

- Avoid using heavy snowsuits or extra bulky coats. The extra padding in coats and snowsuits will make it difficult to properly tighten the child safety seat's harness. In a crash, the padding will compress, allowing slack in the harness.
- Get in the vehicle and close the door before securing the child with the harness of the child safety seat. By closing the door, the child is out of the direct wind and/or cold. This will enable you to spend enough time correctly securing the child without being exposed to the elements.
- Many bulky winter coats and snow wear for older children should also be removed to allow for proper harness adjustment. Secure the harness on the child and then place the coat over the child for warmth.

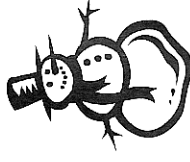


The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- All children should ride in a **rear facing child safety seat until they are 2 years of age** or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat. Infants, who weigh 20 pounds before 2 years of age, should remain rear-facing in a convertible seat or an infant seat approved for a higher rear-facing weight as long as the top of the head is below the top of the seat back, (1 inch). Children younger than 1 should always ride rear-facing. All children 2 years of age or older, or those younger than 2 years who have outgrown the maximum weight or height for their rear-facing car seat should use 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 who have outgrown their forward facing car seat should use a belt positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt until approximately 4'9" in height and between 8 and 12 years of age.
- A rear-facing car seat should never be placed in the front seat in front of an active passenger side air bag.
- All children younger than 13 years of age should be securely buckled in the back seat of the vehicle.

General Winter Travel Safety Tips

- **Always carry extra blankets** in the vehicle for all passengers, along with non-perishable food supplies and other necessities in case of a roadside emergency in inclement weather.
- Allow time to warm up the vehicle and brush off any snow or ice before entering and securing passengers.
- Keep projectiles like snowbrushes, ice scrapers, and kitty litter in the trunk.
- Allow extra time for travel. Driving in wintry conditions will require you to slow down and be extra cautious.
- Explain to young children that **driving on snowy roads requires concentration and they will need to sit quietly during the trip.**
- Purchase a winter coat that is warm but not too bulky. Coats that are not bulky allow for a better fit of the child safety seat harness without compromising the child's warmth. Coats that are not bulky will also allow for a better fit of the lap and shoulder belt.



Overview of New Transportation Safety Laws in Pennsylvania

Anti-Texting Law Facts for Pennsylvania

What the law does:

- ◆ The law prohibits, as a primary offense, any driver from using an Interactive Wireless Communication Device (IWCD) to send, read or write a text-based communication while the vehicle is in motion
- ◆ Defines an IWCD as a wireless phone, personal digital assistant, smart phone, portable or mobile computer or similar devices that can be used for texting, instant messaging, emailing or browsing the Internet.
- ◆ Defines a text-based communication as a text message, instant message, email or other written communication composed or received on an IWCD.
- ◆ Institutes a fine of \$50 for convictions.
- ◆ Makes clear that this law supersedes and preempts any local ordinances restricting the use of interactive wireless communication devices by drivers.
- ◆ The penalty is a summary offense. The law does not authorize seizure of an IWCD.
- ◆ The law goes into effect March 8, 2012.

The texting ban does NOT include the use of GPS devices, a system or device that is physically or electronically integrated into the vehicle, or a communications device that is affixed to a mass transit vehicle, bus or school bus.

New Primary Booster Law (Act 81, 2011)

All drivers transporting children 4 years of age or older but under 8 years of age are responsible to securely restrain those children in a seat belt system and an appropriately fitting child booster seat (Primary Law)

- ◆ Violators may be stopped as a primary offense for non-compliance of the Child Protection Law for children age 4 to age 8. Violators will be fined \$75.00, plus Court Costs (adjusted annually); \$30.00 MCARE; \$10.00 EMS Fund and \$10.00 Administrative Costs.
- ◆ The fine shall be dismissed if the person prior to or at his hearing displays evidence of acquisition of a child passenger restraint system/booster. Evidence shall include a receipt to the appropriate court officer, which evidences purchase, rental, transferal from another child seat owner (by notarized letter) or bailment from a bona fide child seat loaner program.



Act 81 of 2011 : Changes Affecting Graduated Driver Licensing and Passenger Restraint Laws

The new rules in Act 81 of 2011 take effect on December 24, 2011. The changes to the law were initiated to help junior drivers receive more comprehensive training, ease young driver distractions through limiting the number of passengers they may carry and improve general highway safety through improvements to passenger restraint laws.

Changes to Junior Driver Training

Act 81 increases supervised, behind-the-wheel skill building for learner's permit holders under 18 years of age from 50 hours to 65 hours. Ten of the added hours will consist of night time driving, while the other five additional hours must be driven in poor weather conditions.

Learner's permit holders who have taken their on the road driving skills test before the law's effective date of December 24, 2011 only need to complete the present requirement of 50 hours of supervised training. However, learner's permit holders who have not passed the on the road driving skills test before December 24, 2011 will have to meet the new requirement of 65 total hours of supervised skill building training – including the ten night time hours and five poor weather hours of driving – before they are authorized to take the driving skills portion of their driver's test to receive their junior license.



Changes to Junior Driver Passenger Restrictions

Act 81 places increased restrictions on the number and age of passengers which a junior driver license holder may transport. Current law limits drivers under the age of 18 to transporting no more passengers than the number of seat belts in the vehicle.

As of December 24, 2011, for the first six months after receiving their junior driver's license, a driver is not permitted to have more than one passenger under age 18 who is not an immediate family member (brother, sister, stepbrother, stepmother, stepfather, stepson or stepdaughter) living in the same household as the junior driver in their vehicle unless they are accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. If they have not been convicted of a driving violation or been partially or fully responsible for a reportable crash after six months, they may have up to three passengers under age 18 who are not immediate family members without a parent or legal guardian present. If they have any convictions or are partially or fully responsible for a reportable crash while a junior driver, they are once again restricted to one passenger.

Changes to Seat Belt Requirements

Drivers and occupants in a vehicle who are under the age of 18 must wear a properly adjusted and fastened seat belt, and children under the age of eight must be securely fastened in a child restraint system. Failure to comply with the new law's seat belt provisions is a primary offense, meaning that a driver can be pulled over and cited solely for that violation.