

CAR SEAT SAFETY

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Critical Points

1. In California, health care facilities are required to provide families of newborns, infants, and children with the following information:
 - a. A summary of current California state law (Vehicle Code Section 27360) requiring child passenger restraint systems to be used when transporting children in motor vehicles.
 - b. A listing of child passenger safety programs located in the patient's county of residence.
 - c. Information describing the risks of death or serious injury associated with failure to use a child passenger restraint system.
2. Upon discharge, the parents/legal guardian signature on the discharge form indicates receipt of car seat safety information.

Procedure

EDUCATION

1. When discharging an infant or child under age 8 years or height less than 4 feet 9 inches, provide parent or legal guardian with the following written informational handouts:
 - a. Your Child's Health: Car Seat Safety
 - b. If parents/legal guardians request additional information regarding car seat safety, give them the option to view the Car Seat Safety video on the One View. (*Note:* Only available in English.)
 - i. To access the video on the One View:
 1. Turn One View on.
 2. Tap Education icon then "Car Seat Safety".
 - c. For car seat video in Spanish and English, use a bedside computer.
 - i. Access the California Highway Patrol (CHP) website: [Child Safety Seat Videos \(ca.gov\)](http://www.chp.ca.gov)
 - ii. Click "Child Safety Seat Videos" located on the right side of the screen in a box.



Click on the Child Safety Seat Videos

- d. Choose program; videos include:
 - i. Rear-Facing Car Seat (Infants & Toddlers).
 - ii. Forward Facing (Toddlers & Preschoolers)
 - iii. Booster Seat (School Aged Children)

CAR SEAT SAFETY *(continued)*

- Health care providers may assist parents/legal guardians to place and secure infant into car seat as needed. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for use of the car seat. Car seat safety technician evaluation of the car seat should be encouraged to family to optimize safety for the child.
- For questions regarding individual car seat usage, weight/height requirements, installations, and operations, refer parent or legal guardian to the manufacturer's recommendations.

DOCUMENTATION

- Document car seat safety materials provided to family in the medical record.
- Use interpreters when needed. Document interpreter use in the medical record.

References

Reference
American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Injury and Poison Prevention.
California Department of Motor Vehicles website
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) website
California Highway Patrol (CHP) website
HealthyChildren.org (Safety & Prevention: On The Go)

Procedure History

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CAR SEAT SAFETY *(continued)*

Appendix A: Car Seat Recommendations



REAR-FACING CAR SEATS

Newborns and Toddlers

CALIFORNIA LAW EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2017: Children under two years of age shall ride rear-facing. Exceptions: the child is over 40 pounds or over 40 inches in height.

- Rear-Facing Only Seats (Infant Only)—Should only be used in a rear-facing position.
- Convertible Car Seat—A convertible car seat can be used in both rear-facing and change to a forward-facing position as the child grows.
- Rear-facing car seats should be placed in the back seat of a vehicle.
- NEVER place a rear-facing car seat in front of an active airbag.
- Placing newborns and toddlers in seats that are rear-facing is 5 times safer than forward-facing seats. Children are safer staying rear-facing, until they reach the upper height and weight limits of their particular car seat.
- Harness straps should be at or below the child's shoulders.

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FORWARD-FACING CAR SEATS (WITH A HARNESS)

Young Children

Three car seat options are available—convertible, combination, and safety harness:

- Convertible Car Seat—Most can be used rear-facing past two years of age, and can be turned around to a forward-facing position to accommodate a growing child. (Refer to manufacturer guidelines for exact weight and height limits).
- Combination Car Seat—Can be used as a forward-facing car seat and adapted to a booster seat as the child grows. Harness straps should be at or above the child's shoulders.
- Safety harnesses are an acceptable alternative to a booster seat. Check the labels to confirm it meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.



BELT-POSITIONING BOOSTER CAR SEAT

Older Children

According to California law, children are required to be properly secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint (booster seat) until their eighth birthday or they reach 4'9" in height.

Booster seats are designed to raise the child up to allow proper fit of the adult lap and shoulder belt.

ADULT SEAT BELT

Children are permitted to use a seat belt when they have passed their eighth birthday; however, the seat belt should be checked for proper fit. The child should be able to sit all the way back in the vehicle seat, with knees bending comfortably over the edge of the seat, the shoulder portion of the belt laying across the collar bone and chest, and the lap belt low on the hips across the tops of the thighs. The child must be able to stay seated properly for the entire trip.

CALIFORNIA LAW EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2017: Children under two years of age shall ride rear-facing. Exceptions: the child is over 40 pounds or over 40 inches in height.