



Q. Can a child ride in the front seat?

A: Safety advocates recommend that children under the age of 13 should ride properly restrained in the back seat, which is generally the safest place in the vehicle. While some states require this by law, Utah law does not specify where in the vehicle a child is required to ride.

The law does require that children younger than age 8 ride in an appropriate car seat or booster seat that is used according to the owner's manual, however it is recommended that a child stay in a booster seat until 4'9" or until the seat belt fits the child correctly.

Remember, all rear-facing seats are prohibited from being used in the front seat of the vehicle if there is a passenger air bag. The only way the rear-facing safety seat can be legally and properly installed in the front seat of a vehicle is to manually turn the air bag to the "off" position. Some manufacturers prohibit using their products in certain seating positions of different vehicles.

If a child younger than age 13 must ride in the front seat, be sure the vehicle seat is pushed as far back as possible and that the child is properly restrained in a car seat, booster seat, or lap-and-shoulder belt.

For more information, go to ClickIt.Utah.gov.

Q. What is Utah's seat belt law?

A: All passengers must wear seat belts and children up to age 8 must be properly restrained in a car or booster seat.

Remember, seat belts save lives. If you or anyone in your vehicle aren't properly restrained, you can be issued a \$45 citation.

For specifics on the law and exceptions, click [HERE](#) to view the Utah Criminal and Traffic Code, Motor Vehicle Safety Belt Usage Act (Part 18, 41-6a-1803).



Q. Why doesn't our school bus have seat belts?

A: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has determined that the best way to protect children on buses is through a concept called, "compartmentalization." Occupant crash protection is provided by a protective envelope consisting of strong, closely-spaced seats that have energy-absorbing seat backs.

According to NHTSA, riding the bus is the safest way to get to school. School buses are approximately seven times safer than passenger cars or light trucks. Of the national average of 815 fatalities related to school transportation per year, only 2% are associated with official school transportation, compared to 22% due to walking/bicycling to or from school, and 75% from riding in a passenger car to and from school.

Q. Is it okay to put the shoulder belt behind me?

A: Just because your child is wearing a seat belt, it doesn't mean that they're "properly restrained."

- The seat belt must be worn properly and be properly fitted for the child's height and weight. When the shoulder belt rubs across a child's neck, it's because the child is too small for a seat belt and should be boosted up so the seat belt fits properly.
- Some kids find it uncomfortable when the shoulder belt rubs on their neck, so they put it behind their back. However, when they do this, there isn't anything to restrain a child's upper body if they get into a crash.
- The seat belt should rest low across the child's hips—not high across their abdomen. If the seat belt is high across a child's abdomen, the forces of the crash are transmitted to the spine. This makes the spine the pivot point instead of the hips.

For more information, go to Click.It.utah.gov