

OHIO'S NEW BOOSTER SEAT LAW

A six-month grace period is over; penalties kicked in on Wednesday, April 07, 2010 if you do not follow Ohio's new booster seat law. Since last fall, officers had been giving warnings. Now, anyone caught breaking the law could be fined \$75. State law now requires most children from ages 4 to 8 to ride in a booster seat, unless they are taller than 4'9".

Medina Township Police Department is urging all parents to get their safety seats inspected. Certified car seat technicians will make sure your car seat is installed correctly, and they'll install it for you! You can call Medina Township Police Department to make an appointment or contact the Medina Co. Health Department at 330-662-0517 for information.

Why isn't the seat belt enough? Seat belts were designed for adults and can leave a child at risk of serious injury in a motor vehicle crash.

- **Booster seats raise a child up so the shoulder belt fits correctly**, by lying over the middle of the shoulder and the center of the chest – the strongest parts of a child's body. The booster seat also positions the lap belt across the child's upper hips or thighs, not over the stomach. Without a booster, the lap belt can ride up onto the stomach and cause hip, stomach and spinal cord injuries in a crash.
- **Using a booster seat with a seat belt instead of using a seat belt alone for a child this age reduces the risk of injury in a crash by 59 percent.** Researchers with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimate that more than half the children killed in motor vehicles in motor vehicle crashes each year would be alive today if seat belt use and child safety seat use were at 100 percent.

Why is the law important? Most Ohio children are not using booster seats.

- **Motor vehicle traffic remains the leading cause of death for Ohio children aged 4 to 7 years.** From 1999 to 2006, at least 34 Ohio children aged 4 to 7 years died as occupants in motor vehicles (*Source: Office of Vital Statistics*).
- **In 2007, Ohio's booster seat use rate for children aged 4 to 8 years was only 18 percent, one of the lowest in the country.** (*Source: Partners for Child Passenger Safety*). Research studies have found that child restraint laws are very effective at increasing appropriate child restraint usage (*Source: CDC Community Guide*).

What's the best booster to buy?

The Injury Prevention Program does not endorse any particular child safety or booster seat. It's important to properly use one that meets current federal motor vehicle safety standards and fits well in your vehicle. The following resources may be of help in selecting a booster seat:

- **American Academy of Pediatrics Family Car Seat Guide (Boosters)** Web site has a buyers guide with information on available seats:
<http://www.aap.org/family/Carseatguide.htm#BoosterSeats>

- **2008 NHTSA Ease of Use Ratings for Booster Seats:**
http://www.nhtsa.gov/portal/nhtsa_eou/info.jsp?type=booster

When should my child move from a booster seat to a seat belt?

A booster seat is designed to place a child higher on the vehicle seat so that the lap/shoulder belt fits correctly. Seat belt fit varies from car to car and from person to person. It is safest for your child to remain in a booster seat until the adult seat belt system fits his/her properly as follows:

- Your child is tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with his/her knees bent at the edge of the seat without slouching.
- The shoulder belt lies in middle of his/her chest and shoulder, not his/her neck or throat.
- The lap belt is low and snug across the upper thighs, not the belly.
- Your child can stay in this position comfortably throughout the entire trip.
- Additional information on proper fitting can be found at: <http://www.carseat.org/>

For more info:
Call 1-866-CAR-SEAT, 1-866-227-7328
[Ohio Help Me Grow Campaign](#)
[Ohio Department of Public Safety Seat Belt Laws](#)