

Car Seats Made Simple

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What Does Minnesota Law Say?

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It's important to know Minnesota's child passenger law, but safety experts say you should do more than the law requires in order to keep your child safe. (See links to laws of neighboring states below.)

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Minnesota's Child Passenger Restraint Law

[Minnesota Statute 169.685](#)

- Children under age four must be secured in a safety seat that meets federal safety standards.
- Safety seats must be installed and used according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Child must be secured (buckled) in the safety seat.
- Seat must be secured to the vehicle.
- Infants (under 20 pounds and one year of age) must be in a rear-facing safety seat.
- Law applies to all motor vehicles originally built with factory-installed seat belts.
- Law applies to all seating positions.
- Driver is responsible.
- Petty misdemeanor fine for violation is \$50 (may be waived if violator shows proof of obtaining a safety seat within 14 days).
- Applies to both residents and non-residents of Minnesota.
- Suspected non-use is a valid basis to stop a motor vehicle.

Exceptions to the law

- Children riding in emergency medical vehicles, when medical needs make use of a restraint unreasonable.
- Children riding in a motor vehicle for hire, including a taxi, airport limousine or bus, but excluding a rented, leased or borrowed motor vehicle.
- Children riding with a peace officer on official duty, when a restraint is not available (a seat belt must be substituted).
- Children certified by a licensed physician as having a medical, physical or mental disability that makes restraint use inadvisable.

NOTE: The law is a minimum safety standard and does not reflect best practices for properly securing children within vehicles.

Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety

Best Practices

- Every one in the vehicle should buckle up on every trip.
- Children under 80 pounds should sit in a child car seat (or booster seat) that is right for their age and size.
- Children are typically large enough for the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt when they are 4' 9" tall and 80 pounds.
- Never place the shoulder belt behind a child's back; serious injury could result if there is a crash.
- Children under the age of 13 should sit in the rear of a vehicle.
- Put any loose objects in the trunk or secure them. In a crash, loose items can strike with great force and cause serious injury.

Laws of neighboring states

[Illinois](#) (State of Illinois)

[Iowa](#) (Iowa Department of Transportation)

[Michigan](#) (Michigan State Police)

[Nebraska](#) (Department of Education)

[North Dakota](#) (North Dakota Department of Transportation)

[South Dakota](#) (South Dakota Department of Public Safety)

[Wisconsin](#) (Wisconsin Department of Transportation)

Protect children from the greatest risk they face: traffic crashes. You can do it!

Content provided by the Minnesota Safety Council, AAA Clubs of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety.