



Tempe Fire Department Safety Tip

Tip #2

Where Should Your Child Ride?



The back seat is safer than the front. The center belt often works best for a safety seat. Older children should use booster seats with lap/shoulder belts for best protection until about age 7-8. Some booster seats go to 100 lbs.



Always read the car owner's guide for advice on installing safety seats.

Does your child ride in the back seat?

- Anyone who rides loose can hurt those who are buckled up by being thrown against them. People riding without belts or safety seats can be hurled out of the car and seriously hurt.
- The back seat usually is safer than the front, because head-on crashes are the most common kind (A).
- There must be one belt for each person. Buckling two people, even children, into one belt could injure both. Each child safety seat needs a safety belt to hold it in place.
- If no shoulder belt is available, it's most safety for anyone (except small babies who can't sit up) to use just a lap belt than to ride loose. Keep the lap belt low and snug across the thighs. Other options should be pursued, i.e., having shoulder belts installed or using harness/vest devices for children.
- Children who have outgrown safety seats are better protected by lap/shoulder belts than by lap belts alone. So if several children are riding in back, and there are shoulder belts there, let the older ones use the shoulder belts. Put the child riding in the car seat in the middle where there is only a lap belt (A).
- Infants must ride facing the rear of the car. In this position, the safety seat cushions the head and back.
- Infants must ride facing the rear of the car even if they are out of the driver's view in the back seat. Parents should feel just as comfortable in this situation as they do when they put their babies down for a nap and leave the room. If a baby has special health needs that require full-time monitoring, ask another adult to ride with the baby in the back seat and travel alone as little as possible.
- Always read the instructions that come with the safety seat. Also read the section on safety belts and child seat installation in your vehicle owner's manual (B).

Does your car have an air bag for the front passenger seat? An infant or child could be seriously injured or killed by an inflating air bag.

A passenger air bag can seriously harm a child riding in the front seat of the car.

Many new cars have air bags for the right front seat. Air bags work with lap/shoulder belts to protect teens and adults. To check if your vehicle has air bags, look for a warning label on the sun visor or the letters "STS"

or "SIR" embossed on the dashboard. The owner's manual will also tell you.



*Everyone in this family buckles up.
Mother sits in back beside her baby to
watch and play with him. this car has a
passenger air bag, so the baby ALWAYS
rides in back.*

*Parents who buckle up show their
children that it is important to ride
safely.*

An inflating passenger air bag can kill a baby in a rear-facing safety seat. An air bag also can be hazardous for children age 12 and under who ride facing forward. This is especially true if they are not properly buckled up in a safety seat, booster seat, or lap and shoulder belt.

In a crash, the air bag inflates very quickly. it would hit a rear-facing safety seat hard enough to kill the baby. **Infants must ride in the back seat facing rear (C).** Even in the back seat, do not turn your baby to face forward until he or she is about one year of age and weights at least 20 pounds. Look for a seat that meets the higher rear-facing weight limit for heavier babies not yet one year of age.

If there is no room in back and you have no alternative, a child over age one who is forward facing may have to ride in front. Make sure the child is correctly buckled up for his or her age and size and that the vehicle seat is moved as far back as possible. Fasten the harness snugly and make sure the child using a lap and shoulder belt does not lean toward the dashboard. Read your vehicle owner's guide about the air bags in your car.

WARNING: If the front right seat has an air bag, a baby in a rear-facing seat must ride in the back seat. All children age 12 and under should ride in back.

Remember: One Person - One Belt

- Never hold a child on your lap because you could crush him in a collision. Even if you are using a safety belt, the child would be torn from your arms in a crash.
- Never put a belt around yourself and a child on your lap.
- Two people with one belt around them could injure each other.
- The cargo area of a station wagon, van, or pickup is a very dangerous place for anyone to ride. Anyone riding in the bed of a pickup truck, even under a canopy, could be thrown out!