

Use of seat belts and booster seats

From September 2006, with few exceptions, children travelling in cars will be required to use an appropriate child restraint. **This includes children being transported in leaders' vehicles to/from BB events.** In vehicles where seat belts are fitted, children aged 3 years to 135 cm in height (approx 4ft 5ins) **MUST** use the appropriate child restraint.

Three exceptions allow these children to travel in the rear of a car and use an adult belt:

- in a taxi, if the right child restraint is not available;
- for an occasional journey over a short distance, if the right child restraint is not available,
- where two occupied child seats in the rear prevent the fitment of a third child seat.

[Note - children under 12 years in front seats must use the appropriate restraint - that is the law already.]

"Child restraints" is the collective term in the seat belt wearing legislation for:

- baby seats - rear-facing and for children up to 13 kg (approx age birth to 9-12 months);
- child seats - forward facing and for children 9 kg to 18 kg (approx 9 months to 4 years);
- booster seats - for children 15 kg to 25 kg (approx 4 to 6 years);
- booster cushions - for children 6 years and up.

£30 fixed penalty notice for non-compliance. The maximum fine is £500.

Passengers in minibuses, buses and coaches that have seatbelts fitted will also be required to wear those seatbelts, and operators will be required to notify passengers that seat belts must be used.

The use of booster seats is not a mandatory requirement in minibuses. Seat belt wearing is already compulsory in mini-buses. The driver is responsible for seat belt wearing by children under 14 years

The new regulations will mean that seated passengers aged 3 years and above will have to use seat belts where they are fitted in the larger buses and coaches. In vehicles over 16 seats, the driver is exempt from this responsibility because he cannot be expected to monitor seat belt wearing and drive safely at the same time.

The driver or operator will be required to take reasonable steps to remind passengers of the need to wear seat belts including reminding them of this requirement at the beginning of the journey. Alternatively a sign that takes the form of a pictorial symbol (shown at the end of this article) depicting a white figure on a blue background should be displayed at each passenger seat.

(Colours: a white figure on a blue background)



Further information at: <http://www.childcarseats.org.uk/> or contact BBUK HQ on 01442 231 681 / enquiries@boys-brigade.org.uk