

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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CALIFORNIA TO REQUIRE BOOSTER SEATS UNTIL AGE 8

TORRANCE, CA (October 6, 2011) – Governor Brown has signed SB 929, introduced by Senator Noreen Evans. As of January 1, 2012, children will be required to ride in a safety seat or booster, in the back seat, up to age 8. California will finally join 30 other states that require booster use up to age 8.

Stephanie Tombrello, Executive Director of SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A., points out that children are 45% less likely to be injured in a crash if they are riding in boosters instead of just a vehicle belt and that California law already requires all vehicle occupants, regardless of age, to be properly buckled up. "SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. recommends that parents use the 5-Step Test [see side bar] to find out if a child needs a booster. Be sure to check how the belt fits in every car the child rides in. We tested 3500 children up to age 13 and found that half of ten-year-olds and one quarter of twelve-year-olds need a booster seat for their safety belts to fit properly." SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. also recommends that children ride in the back seat, which is 40% safer than the front, until they are old enough to learn to drive.

The fine for failing to properly secure a child under 16 in a safety seat, booster, or safety belt is more than \$450. The parent, if present, gets the ticket; otherwise, the driver is cited. A portion of the fine money goes to the local health department to provide community education and safety seats to low-income families.

Parents who have questions about safely buckling up the whole family are invited to contact the Safe Ride Helpline (800-745-SAFE) or go to www.carseat.org. Families are also invited to attend a safety seat checkup sponsored by SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. and Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A. at Pretend City, Irvine, California, on Tuesday, October 25. Child Passenger

Safety Technicians will offer free inspections of safety seats and booster seats at the checkup.

Families should call the Safe Ride Helpline (800) 745-SAFE or (800) 745-SANO (for Spanish) to receive a call back for an appointment.

This program is made possible with funding from a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Sidebar

Try the 5-Step Test!

Most kids need to ride in a booster seat from about age 4 until age 10-12.

If your child isn't using a booster, try the simple test below the next time you ride together in the car. You may find that your child is not yet ready to use a safety belt without a booster.

The 5-Step Test

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your child needs a booster seat to make both the shoulder belt and the lap belt fit right for the best crash protection. Your child will be more comfortable, too!