

Tennessee's Child Restraint Law

Public Law 299, Changes effective July 1, 2005

Bold text indicates Tennessee Law. Smaller text is recommendations of 'best practice' by national safety advocates: American Academy of Pediatrics, NHTSA, and National Safe Kids Campaign.



Section 1. TCA, Section 55-9-602, (a)(1) **Any person transporting any child, under one (1) year of age, or any child, weighing twenty (20) pounds or less, ... is responsible for using a child restraint in a rear-facing position, meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards in the rear seat if available....**

National safety advocates recommend that infants continue rear facing as long as possible for the best protection in a crash. Some larger 'convertible' type car seats may allow children to ride rear-facing up to 35 pounds.



(2) **any person transporting any child, one (1) through three (3) years of age weighing greater than 20 pounds is responsible for the protection of a child and properly using a child passenger restraint system in a forward-facing position... in the rear seat if available or according to the child safety restraint system or vehicle manufacturer's instructions.**

The same advocates recommend restraining your child in a "5-point" Harness system until they are 40 pounds. Use upper tether straps where applicable. (Refer to the car seat and vehicle owner's manual for more information).



(3) **... any person transporting any child, four (4) through eight (8) years of age and measuring less than **four (4) feet nine (9) inches** in height, ... is responsible for the protection of the child and properly using a belt-positioning booster seat system, meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards in the rear seat if available..**

The Safety advocates cited recommend keeping children in booster seats until they are about 57" tall. The child's height is the best predictor of proper seat belt fit.



(4) **any person transporting any child, nine (9) through twelve (12) years of age, measuring **four (4) feet nine (9) inches** or more in height ... properly using a seat belt system meeting federal motor safety standards... recommended.. such child be placed in the rear seat if available. Notwithstanding, any person transporting a child, thirteen (13) through fifteen (15) years of age... is responsible ... properly using a passenger restraint system meeting federal highway standards...**

It is now a requirement that everyone in a car be properly buckled up with appropriate car seats, booster seats or vehicle seat belts. Proper fit is achieved when (1) the child can sit all the way back against the seat back with their knees naturally bent at the edge of the seat, (2) the shoulder belt comfortably crossing the shoulder between the neck and the arm; and (3) the lap belt sitting low on their hips, touching their thighs. This usually happens when the child's height is between 57-60" tall, regardless of age or weight.

For more information, contact 1-800-99Belts or visit <http://www.tntrafficsafety.org>