

Children & Air Bags

What's the Problem?

- Most new cars have air bags for front-seat passengers. When used with lap/shoulder belts, air bags work very well to protect older children and adults who ride facing the front of the car.
- **Air bags do not work with rear-facing child seats** (those used with infants).
- Airbags could seriously injure or even kill an **unbuckled child or adult** who is sitting too close to the air bag or who is thrown toward the dash during emergency braking.
- In a crash, the air bag inflates very quickly. It could hit anything close to the dashboard with enough force to cause severe injuries or even death. Because the back of a rear-facing child seat sits very close to the dashboard, the seat could be struck with enough force to cause serious, or even fatal injuries to a baby.
- Even older children (who have outgrown child seats) are at risk from a deploying air bag, if they are not **properly** restrained with a lap/shoulder belt.

What Should I Do?

- The **rear seat** is the safest place for children of any age to ride.
- An infant in a **rear-facing** child seat must ride in the back seat if your vehicle has a passenger side air bag (babies under 1 year and 20 pounds should always ride in a rear-facing seat).
- Make sure that everyone in the front seat is properly **buckled up** and seated as far back from the air bags as is reasonably possible.
- Make sure that all young children are properly secured in a child safety seat and older children by a lap/shoulder belt. Know how to properly install your child seat in the vehicle. Read both the owner's manual for the vehicle and the instructions for your child safety seat.

Where Can I Get More Information?

- Call NHTSA's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline at 1.800.424.9393.
- Written information and "tip sheets" are available by writing to:

Child Safety Seats
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration
400 7th Street S.W. NTS-13
Washington, DC 20590