

Travelers Safety Advice

(NAPSA)—Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of children from ages 1 to 14 and approximately 50 percent of these deaths involve children under 5 that were unrestrained. The right child seat and the correct use of that seat is the most important mechanism we have to protect our children in the instance of a car crash. But even for those parents who do buckle up their children, car seat misuse is reported in 80-95% of cases.

To ensure your children travel safely and securely this holiday season, safety industry expert Steve Wallen, President and General Manager of IMMI's SafeGuard division, world leader in child passenger restraints, has provided the following advice about children's car seats. These tips will help parents and grandparents gear up for the holiday by first making sure their most precious cargo, their small child, is properly restrained and as safe as possible while driving.

First and Foremost

- Never place a child in a rear-facing car safety seat in the front seat of a vehicle that has an airbag.
- The safest place for all children to ride is in the back seat in a restrained child car seat that is weight and age appropriate.
- Set a good example, by always wearing your seat belt. According to a study by the Air Bag Safety Campaign on recent seat belt use studies from 10 states, restraint use for young children was above 80 percent when adults were also buckled.

Installation

When installing a car safety seat it is important to remember that:

- The seat should be installed as tightly as possible into your vehicle. Grab your car seat at the base, where the seatbelt goes.



Your child should be buckled snugly into the vehicle. Ideally, you want the harness as tight as your child can ride comfortably, and the car seat coupled as tightly as possible to the vehicle with the seatbelt or LATCH system.

The base should not move more than an inch (1") side-to-side or front-to-back. Some slight movement at the top of the seat is normal, though a tether will reduce this movement in forward-facing car seats.

- Your child should be buckled snugly into the vehicle. Ideally, you want the harness as tight as your child can ride comfortably, and the car seat coupled as tightly as possible to the vehicle with the seatbelt or LATCH system. The SafeGuard Child Seat is unique in that it has a patented 5 point retractable harness system that retracts like a standard seatbelt; simple tensioning knobs for a secure ride each time, and a one-touch adjustable headrest that is easy to use and ensures a proper fit.

- Ensure the plastic harness clip (if your seat comes with one) is at armpit level to hold shoulder straps in place.

- Any blankets you use should be tucked around your child after ensuring the harnesses are secured snugly.

- Always use the correct harness slots and ensure they are snug. Shoulder straps should be at or slightly below shoulder level in a rear-facing seat, and at or slightly above shoulder level for a forward-facing seat. For many seats, you will need to disassemble the harness to adjust this. Some seats, like the SafeGuard Child Seat, have a simple mechanism that allows you to adjust this while the child is in the seat. Ensure the harness straps lie flat and are not twisted in any way.

Selecting a Child Car Seat

If you are selecting a new child car seat for your trip, remember:

- Some models do have different features; select one that has the features that will allow you to use it correctly EVERY trip. Make sure to choose a car seat that has a good return policy in case it doesn't fit.

- Remember that each car safety seat is different so read and keep the instructions that came with your seat.

- The safest seat for your child is one that fits him/her well and fits in your car well. Make sure to choose the proper type of seat for your child. In general, the longer he or she can ride in a 5-point harness, the better.

- You should never purchase a used car seat. If it has been in a crash or modified in any way, it may not function and protect your child as well as a new child seat.

For more information on correct installation, how new designs such as SafeGuard tackle the most common areas of misuse and what to look for when selecting a child car seat, please visit www.safeguardseat.com.