FROM 18 SEPTEMBER 2006
YOU MUST USE THE CORRECT
CAR SEAT FOR YOUR CHILD.

Use the right car seat for your child
What is the new law?

Children under 3 years MUST use the child restraint appropriate for their weight in any vehicle (including vans and other goods vehicles). There is only one exception:

- a child under three may travel unrestrained in the rear of a taxi if the right child restraint is not available.

Rear-facing baby seats MUST NOT be used in a seat protected by a frontal air-bag unless the air-bag has been deactivated manually or automatically.

In vehicles where seat belts are fitted, children 3 years to 135 cms in height (approx 4ft 5ins) MUST use the appropriate child restraint:

- Three exceptions allow these children to travel in the rear and use an adult belt:
  - in a taxi, if the right child restraint is not available;
  - for a short distance in an unexpected necessity, if the right child restraint is not available;
  - where two occupied child seats in the rear prevent the fitment of a third child seat.
When will this new law apply?

From 19 September 2006

Further regulations will come into force:

- from May 2008, all child restraints must comply with the UN ECE 44.03 standard (or subsequent versions). Child seats to the 44.03 standard have been on sale for many years.

Seat belt/child restraint wearing requirements from 18 September 06

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<th>Front Seat</th>
<th>Rear Seat</th>
<th>Who is Responsible</th>
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<td>Driver</td>
<td>Seat belt must be worn if fitted</td>
<td></td>
<td>Driver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child under 3 years of age</td>
<td>Correct child restraint must be used</td>
<td>Correct child restraint must be used. If one is not available in a taxi, may travel unrestrained</td>
<td>Driver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child from 3rd birthday up to 135 cms in height (or 12th birthday whichever they reach first)</td>
<td>Correct child restraint must be used</td>
<td>Correct child restraint must be used where seat belts fitted. Must use adult belt in a rear seat if correct child restraint not available - in a taxi; for a short distance in an unexpected necessity; if two occupied child restraints prevent fitting a third.</td>
<td>Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 12 or 13, or over 135 cms in height</td>
<td>Seat belt must be worn if fitted</td>
<td>Seat belt must be worn if fitted.</td>
<td>Driver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult passengers</td>
<td>Seat belt must be worn if fitted</td>
<td>Seat belt must be worn if fitted.</td>
<td>Passenger</td>
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What are “child restraints”? "Child restraints" is the collective term for:

<table>
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<th>Weight and Age</th>
<th>Typical Examples</th>
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<td>Baby seats</td>
<td>rear-facing, for children up to 13 kgs (approx age birth to 9-12 months)</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Example" /></td>
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<td>Child seats</td>
<td>forward facing, for children 9 kgs to 18 kgs (approx 9 months to 4 years)</td>
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<td>Booster seats</td>
<td>for children 15 kgs and up (from approx 4 years)</td>
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<td>for children from 22 kgs (from approx 6 years)</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Example" /></td>
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</table>

What are the penalties for not using a child restraint?

A £30 fixed penalty notice. If a case goes to court, the maximum fine is £500.
So I can't carry children in just a seat belt until they are over 135cm?

No – the new law requires this for children's safety.

There are a few exemptions but parents and carers will need to think ahead about how they, or someone else, will be carrying their child.

Why aren't adult seat belts OK for older children?

- Adult seat belts are best for people with an adult bone structure. Children need to use child seats and boosters to be safe – they put them in the right position to use the seat belt properly.

- The lap belt of an adult seat belt needs to go as low as possible over the stomach. A child needs to be boosted up so the adult belt fits properly. If not, the adult belt sits too high over the stomach and in a crash there is a risk of damage to internal organs as well as sliding under the belt.
What about travelling in taxis?

Taxis cannot be expected to have the right child seat or booster unless parents have brought one with them. If child seats or boosters are not available in a taxi: under 3s must travel unrestrained in the rear only; those 3 years and above must use an adult belt in the rear seat only.

A child up to 135 cm in a front seat of any vehicle must use the correct child seat or booster.

What if someone has to give a child a lift at short notice and does not have the right child seat?

• If there is an "unexpected necessity", there is an exemption for a child of 3 years or more to wear an adult belt on a short journey in a car or light goods vehicle when no appropriate child seat is available. The exemption is not intended to cover regular school runs or other journeys.

Children under 3 years must always have a child seat. The only exception is travel in the rear of taxis and a child seat is not available.

We have 4 children but only a medium size car. Do they all need to use child seats and boosters?

If they are under 135 cms then they will all need to use the right seat or booster for their size.
What if I can't fit 3 child seats in the back of my car?

If a car has 3 seat belts in the rear, and 2 occupied child seats or boosters prevent the fitting of a third, a third child 3 years or over may then use an adult belt. If there is room, it would be safer for the third child to travel in the front seat and use the correct child seat or booster.

Do the new rules apply in vans and larger commercial vehicles?

The new rules apply in cars, vans and goods vehicles.

Why can't I use a rear-facing baby seat in a seat protected by an active frontal air-bag?

Air-bags are powerful safety devices. A rear-facing baby seat would be hit by a frontal air-bag if it deployed - and could be thrown up and towards the rear of the vehicle. This means that the baby seat and child could be completely unrestrained during a crash.

A child in a rear-facing baby seat could be badly hurt by a frontal air-bag if it deployed.