

## **CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY**

New Jersey adopted the Child Passenger Safety Law which went into effect December 1, 2001.

All drivers and their passengers are required to wear seat belts when riding in a motor vehicle. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that all passengers under 18 are properly restrained. This means that each occupant must have their own seat belt and harness.

Many parents are often caught up with busy schedules transporting children to school, sporting events, etc. Quite often parents carpool with other parents. This can help in many ways but should not jeopardize the safety of our children along the way.

It was recently reported to police that a mother, obviously pressured for time, was carpooling several children to an event. It was just as obvious that the vehicle was overloaded with children and most were not in restraints. When confronted with this by another motorist concerned with child safety, the reply was less than kind or appreciative. Why wasn't this mother more safety conscious? Are you?

Taking the time to be safe you can prevent serious injuries and even death. Children follow the example of their parents. The lessons you teach your children today could save them from injury later on in life.

If you drive other children in your car, insist that each child "buckle up". If your child is traveling with someone else insist that they have your child "buckled up".

### **NJ Law requires:**

**Infants up to 20 pounds and one year of age** must be secured in the back seat of a motor vehicle in a federally-approved rear-facing infant or convertible car seat. (Many newer convertible seats are approved for rear-facing use up to 30-35 pounds.) If the motor vehicle doesn't have a back seat, the infant must be secured in the front seat of the vehicle in the same rear-facing manner. A rear-facing car seat, however, should NEVER be installed in the front seat of a motor vehicle equipped with an active airbag. Prior to installing a rear-facing car seat, the airbag must be switched to off (if the vehicle is equipped with an on/off switch) or permission to deactivate the airbag must be obtained from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Additionally, the front seat should be pushed back as far as possible.

**Children between 20 and 40 pounds (applies to most children between one and four years of age)** must be secured in the back seat of a motor vehicle in a federally-approved convertible car seat or a booster seat (with a five-point harness system). The child must be facing forward in an upright position. If there's no back seat in the motor vehicle, the child must be secured in the front seat of the vehicle in the same forward facing manner, with the vehicle's seat pushed back as far as possible.

**Children between 40 and 80 pounds (applies to most children between four and eight years of age)** must be secured in the back seat of a motor vehicle in a federally-

approved booster seat using the lap and shoulder belt. If there's no back seat in the motor vehicle, the child must be secured in the front seat in the same manner as the back, with the vehicle's seat pushed back as far as possible.

**All passengers under 18 years of age (but older than 8 years of age and weighing more than 80 pounds)** are required to wear a seat belt when riding anywhere in a motor vehicle. Children under 12 should ride in the back seat of a motor vehicle - the safest place - whenever possible.

**All drivers and their passengers are required to wear seat belts when riding in a motor vehicle.** It's the driver's responsibility to ensure that all passengers under 18 are properly restrained.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Taking the time to be safe may prevent you from paying fines and/or spare you the liability if someone is injured while driving in your car.

Residents with questions about the seat belt law or who wish to schedule a child safety seat inspection may contact the Traffic Safety Officer at 201-891-2121.