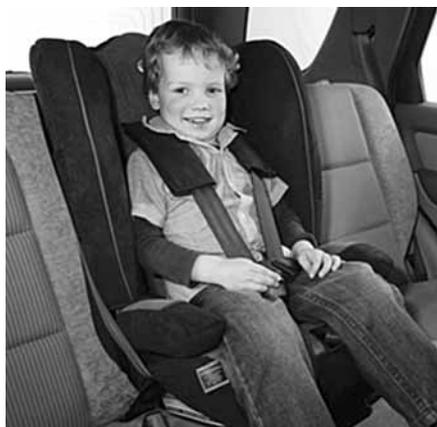


# A SAFETY MESSAGE FROM VICROADS



Forward facing



Restraint – booster



Capsule



Rear facing

## YOUR GUIDE TO BUYING CHILD RESTRAINTS

Every year many children are injured or killed in car crashes. Some of these injuries could be prevented or reduced if all children occupy the right restraint for their age and size and if the restraint is used correctly. **Not all child restraints are created equal.**

The Child Restraint Evaluation Program (CREP) is run by government agencies and motorist organisations who share a common interest in improving safety for children travelling in vehicles. CREP rates child restraints according to how well they protect your child in a crash and how easy they are to use. CREP allocates safety ratings to three types of restraints

- Rearward facing restraints
- Forward-facing restraints
- Booster seats

The underlying philosophy of CREP is to provide consumers with information to help choose and use child restraints and to apply commercial and public consumer pressure on restraint manufacturers to only market child restraints that perform well beyond the requirements of the Australian Standard. Results are provided to the public through brochures and on the CREP website. <http://www.crep.com.au/>

## USING RESTRAINTS – GETTING IT RIGHT EVERY TRIP

### Children as passengers

About a thousand children under the age of 16 years are seriously injured as vehicle occupants on Australian roads each year.

Car crashes are the most common cause of injury and death for Australian children aged 1–14 years and account for 37 per cent of all injury-related deaths. In the 12 month period to July 2010, 27 children under four years of age were killed in traffic incidents. For the same period in the previous year, 34 were killed.

### Incorrect restraint use

Recent research shows that up to three-quarters of parents and carers misuse child restraints, and/or use the incorrect type of restraint for their child. Research further shows that:

- children under seven years sitting in only an adult seatbelt (compared to a child restraint or booster seat) are at least four times more likely to sustain a head injury in a crash.
- seating children aged four to seven years old in an appropriate booster seat reduces their risk of injury in a crash by 60 per cent, compared to if they were sitting in an adult seatbelt without a booster seat.
- approximately 70 per cent of child restraints are not installed in the vehicle correctly.

Injuries to all children in a crash are significantly reduced by checking that the restraint is:

- the right size for the child
- being used correctly – this means the child is securely placed in the restraint and the restraint is correctly fitted to the vehicle.

### What are the common errors?

- Children being in the wrong restraint for their size
- Very loose or twisted harnesses
- The harness being off the shoulder
- The seatbelt buckle not being done up
- The tether strap not being used correctly
- Loose and incorrectly fitted seatbelts
- For children in seatbelts, the shoulder belt being placed under the arm

### Child restraint road rules

To improve the safety for all children in motor vehicles, the Australian National Road Rules introduced significant changes to child restraint road rules. All jurisdictions – except the Northern Territory – have now implemented these changes.

It is estimated that these changes could save over three lives and 151 serious injuries to children each year in Australia.

## BICYCLE HELMETS

All cyclists in Victoria and their passengers are required by law to wear bike helmets when riding in public places such as roads, bike paths, bike lanes, shared and separated footpaths, recreational parks and car parks.

This is because research shows bike helmets greatly reduce the risk of head injuries, which are the major cause of death and injury to cyclists.

When buying a bike helmet be sure that:

- it is an approved helmet with a sticker showing the Australian Standard AS 2063, AS/NZS 2063;
- it fits firmly and comfortably on your head and cannot be tilted in any direction; and
- the straps can be adjusted so there is no slack when they are fastened.

An accident can happen anywhere, and it only takes impact with the ground or concrete to sustain a head injury. Make sure children are always protected.

The rules also require the bicycle to have at least one working brake and a bell, horn, or similar working device in working order.

### How to correctly fit a helmet

Parents and carers should always check the helmets of children in their care.

Place your hands on top of the helmet and try to move it. It should not be possible to tilt the helmet:

- *forwards* to cover the eyes
- *backwards* to uncover the forehead
- *sideways* to uncover the side of the head.

When the helmet is fastened it should be squarely positioned on the head.

The rim of the helmet should sit on the forehead just above the eyebrows.

***An accident can happen anywhere, and it only takes impact with the ground or concrete to sustain a head injury. Make sure children are always protected.***

The straps should be adjusted so that there is no slack when the buckle is securely fastened under the chin. Ensure straps are not twisted and that the side straps form a V shape with the point just under the ear lobe.

### Do you have to wear a helmet when using a scooter?

The road rules require any person riding a scooter in a public place to wear a bicycle helmet. The rules also require the scooter to have at least one working brake and a bell, horn, or similar working device in working order.

### What about tricycles?

Tricycles (with pedal and chain) are considered bicycles under the road rules.

### What about wheeled toys?

Toy tricycles (without pedal and chain) and 'balance bikes' are considered wheeled toys under the road rules. Therefore, riders are not legally required to wear a helmet. However, VicRoads encourages children riding any typed of wheeled device to wear a bicycle helmet.

### Good role modelling in early childhood services

Ensure children in early childhood services wear a helmet when using a wheeled device.

Not only will it protect them from injury, it will instil positive road safety behaviours from a young age, which will hopefully stay with them for the rest of their lives.

The child restraint road rules require all children under the age of 16 years to travel in a suitable restraint that is properly adjusted and fastened. The type of restraint will depend on the child's size:

- children under 6 months of age must be restrained in a rearward facing approved child restraint
- children 6 months to under four years of age must be restrained in a rearward facing or forward facing approved child restraint
- children 4 years to under 7 years of age must be restrained in either a rearward facing approved child restraint or approved booster seat
- children 7 years to under 16 years must be restrained in either an approved booster seat or an adult seatbelt.

To comply with the child restraint road rules a child must travel in an Australian

Standards<sup>1</sup> child restraint. The Australian standard for child restraints is one of the most stringent child restraint standards in the world, so child restraints manufactured to this standard offer good protection in a crash.

The latest version of the Australian standard for child restraints was released in 2010 and some restraints that meet this standard are now available. The new features include:

- booster seats that are suitable for children from approximately 4 years to approximately 6 to 8 years (available now)
- an approximate age and shoulder height marking to guide selection of restraint (no longer weight based)
- colour coded seatbelt paths to make installing easier
- the introduction of a new type of booster seat for children from approximately 4

years to approximately 8 to 10 years (available in the future).

### Where to find more information

VicRoads product tables include an up-to-date listing of the Australian Standards child restraints.  
<http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/Home/SafetyAndRules/SaferVehicles/ChildRestraints/ProductTables.htm>

The Child Restraint Evaluation Program provides independent information on the levels of occupant protection from injury in a crash provided by child restraints and the ease of which they can be used correctly. Visit [www.CREP.com.au](http://www.CREP.com.au)

For information about the child restraint road rules contact VicRoads on 13 11 71.

<sup>1</sup> Restraints that are certified to the Australian/New Zealand Standard 1754: Child restraint systems for use in motor vehicles