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# Carrying Children Safely in Taxis, Coaches, Buses and Minibuses



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**The law about providing seat belts and child seats in taxis, coaches, buses and minibuses is different from cars, as is the law about children having to use them in these vehicles. However, transport organisations who carry children in taxis, buses, coaches or minibuses still have a duty of care to ensure that they carry them safely.**

This means that they must make sure their drivers are fit and competent, their vehicles are safe and suitable, their passengers are carried safely, and their journeys are properly planned.

Children should be carried in an appropriate child seat from birth until either they are at least 135cm (4'5") tall or 12 years old, whichever comes first. They should then use a seat belt if one is fitted, although it would be better for them to continue to use a booster seat until they are 150cm (5') tall, as is the case in some European countries.

Child car seats are a very effective way of reducing risk for child car passengers. Children who use an appropriate child car seat are significantly less likely to be killed or injured than children who are unrestrained or only wearing a seat belt.

Seat belts on their own are less effective for children because they are designed for adults. Due to their smaller size, a child may slide under the lap strap of a seat belt because it is too high over their abdomen, or the diagonal strap might cut across their neck. Both of these could cause serious injury. This is why it is far better to carry children in approved child seats.



# Child Car Seats in Taxis, Private Hire Vehicles and Minicabs



**Taxi companies are not required by law to provide child car seats in taxis, private hire vehicles and minicabs, although child passengers must use them if they are provided, as described below.**

If child car seats are not available, but seat belts are fitted, children must wear the seat belts as described below.

If the taxi's seat belts cannot be used (for example, because the buckle is hidden) ask the driver to fix it. If it cannot be fixed, do not use the vehicle - ask for a replacement.

## Children under 3 years old in a taxi, private hire vehicle or minicab

Children under three years old can only travel in the front of a taxi, private hire vehicle or minicab if they are carried in an appropriate child car seat. This will be a rearward-facing baby seat that meets the R44 or R129 safety standards or a forward-facing child seat with an internal harness that meets R44 or R129.

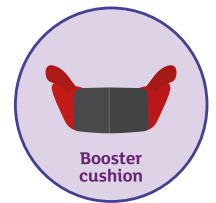


If an appropriate child seat is not provided they cannot travel in the front seat, but they can travel in the rear without a child seat or seat belt if they are not available and fitted. However, this is not a safe choice. It's better to book a different taxi with seat belts and with child seats provided.

It is illegal to carry a baby in a rearward-facing baby seat in the front of a vehicle if there is an active front passenger airbag. The airbag must be deactivated or the baby seat must be placed in the rear of the taxi, private hire vehicle or minicab.

## Children aged 3 years to their 12th birthday or until they are at least 135cm (approximately 4'5") tall

Children aged between 3 and 12 years old (or who are at least 135 cm tall) can travel in the rear of a taxi, private hire vehicle or minicab but they must use an appropriate child seat, if one is available. If one is not available or is not suitable, they must use a seat belt.



Although they may travel unrestrained in the rear if seat belts are not available, this is not a safe choice. It's better to book a different taxi with seat belts or child seats provided.

## Children aged 12 years and over (or younger children over 135cm tall)

Children aged 12 years and over (or younger children who are over 135 cm tall) must wear a seat belt if fitted in the taxi, private hire vehicle or minicab.

It is illegal and dangerous for two people to wear the same seat belt at the same time.

# Child Car Seats in Coaches and Buses



**Bus and coach companies are not required by law to provide child car seats in coaches and buses, but child passengers should use them if they are provided. Any passenger in a front passenger seat, or any exposed seat, must use an appropriate child seat.**

Seat belts must be fitted in buses and coaches except ones in which standing is permitted, or which are being used to provide a “local service”. If seat belts are fitted, they must be worn by passengers aged 14 years and over (unless standing is permitted or the vehicle is being used to provide a “local service”).

Passengers aged under 14 years are not legally required to wear them, but it is much safer if they do so. RoSPA advises passengers to follow the same rules as using them in cars.

If seat belts or child seats are not provided children can travel unrestrained, although this is not the best option. It’s better to try to book a bus or coach with seat belts fitted, and child seats provided.

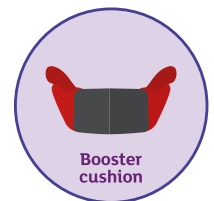
## Children under 3 years old

Children under 3 years old can travel on buses or coaches without wearing a seat belt, or using a child car seat. However, this is not the safest option. Check whether the bus or coach operator can provide and fit suitable child car seats or whether you can fit your own one for your child to use, although it may not be possible to do so.



## Children aged 3 years to their 12th Birthday or until they are 135cm tall (approximately 4’5”)

Children aged 3 to 12 years old should wear a seat belt, if they are provided. If appropriate child seats are provided and can be fitted, children aged 3 to 12 years should use them.



If they are not provided children can travel unrestrained. However, this is not the safest option. Try to book a bus or coach that has seat belts fitted and check whether the bus or coach operator can provide and fit child car seats or whether you can fit your own one for your child to use, although it may not be possible to do so.

## Children aged 14 years or over

All seated passengers aged 14 years or over must wear seat belts if they are fitted. The driver (or a conductor or similar person) must notify passengers when they board that they have to wear their seat belt and/or signs must be displayed at every seat. In some buses and coaches, it is possible to adjust the height of the diagonal strap of the seat belt to fit child passengers better.

# Child Car Seats in Minibuses



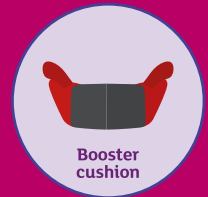
**Minibuses are motor vehicles constructed or adapted to carry more than eight, but not more than 16, passengers in addition to the driver, and (those manufactured since January 2013) have a maximum length of 8 metres.**

Minibus operators are not required by law to provide child car seats, but if they are provided and can be fitted properly, they must be used by children in the appropriate weight and size ranges, as shown below.

If seat belts or child seats are not provided in the front, children must travel in the rear of the minibus.

## Children under 3 years old

Children under 3 years old can travel in minibuses without wearing a seat belt, or using a child car seat if they are not provided. However, this is not the safest option. Check whether the minibus operator can provide a minibus with seat belts and child car seats. If they cannot provide child car seats, ask whether you can fit your own although it may not be possible to do so because your child seat will be designed for cars not minibuses whose seats are different shapes and sizes.



Children aged 3 or older must:

- Use a child car seat if there's one available
- Use an adult seat belt if child car seats are not fitted or are unsuitable

## Children aged 12 years and over (or younger children over 135cm tall)

If seat belts are provided, children aged 12 years or older (or younger children who are over 135 cm tall) must use them.



## Children aged 3 years to their 12th Birthday or until they are 135cm tall (approximately 4'5")

All children must travel in rear seats (any seats behind the driver) if a child car seat or an adult seat belt isn't fitted.



# Booking a Taxi, Bus, Coach or Minibus



**When booking a taxi, bus, coach or minibus check that it will have seat belts and ask whether the operator will provide suitable child car seats or whether you can fit your own one for your child to use during the journey. But be aware that it may not be possible to fit your child car seat properly in these vehicles because their vehicle seats are different shapes and sizes from car seats.**

If you use an organisation that regularly carries children, ask them to consider buying a number of seats that are compatible with their vehicles and the age and size ranges of the children they carry. If they can't do this, ask them to consider letting you fit your own child seat when your child travels in their taxi or minicab.

Some taxi firms provide child car seats and some black cabs have a fold-down integral booster seat in the rear for older children.



R44 seats use a child's weight

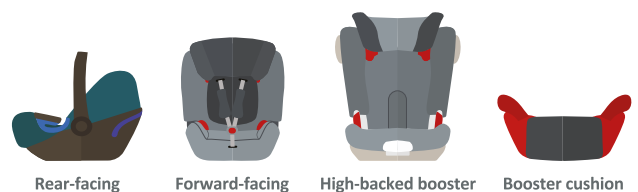


iSize seats use a child's height

In some buses, coaches or minibuses, it is possible to adjust the height of the diagonal strap of the seat belt to better fit child passengers.

If you borrow someone else's child car seat to use in one of these vehicles, get them to talk you through the manufacturer's fitting instructions and show you how to fit it first, so that you are sure you can fit it correctly. It is unlikely that the driver will be able to fit it for you.

Check that the child seat is suitable for your child's weight and height and that it can be fitted in the taxi, bus, coach or minibus. But again be aware that it may not be possible to do so. The most common types of child seats are:



Child car seats must:

- Meet either the R44 or R129 safety standard
- Display an "E" mark to show they meet R44 or R129
- Be suitable for the child's weight or height
- Be suitable for the vehicle
- Be in a safe condition
- Be correctly fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Avoid using a second-hand child car seat. It may have hidden damage and not meet current safety standards. The fitting instructions may be missing and it may have suffered more wear and tear than newer child car seats. It will not be legal to use unless it conforms to either the R44 or R129 safety standard.

For more details see [Types of Child Seats](#), [Choosing and Using Child Car Seats](#) and [Films](#) on [www.childcarseats.org.uk](http://www.childcarseats.org.uk) or [Child Car Seats: the Rules](#) on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

# Useful Links

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## Road Safety Organisations

[RoSPA Road Safety](#)

[Think Road Safety](#)

[The Highway Code](#)

[Department for Transport](#)

[Road Safety GB](#)

[Good Egg Car Safety](#)

[In-car Safety Centre](#)

[Road Safety Scotland](#)

[Road Safety Wales](#)

[Child Accident Prevention Trust \(CAPT\)](#)

[Confederation of Passenger Transport \(CPT\)](#)

[London Road Safety Council \(LRSC\)](#)

[Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety \(PACTS\)](#)

[Trading Standards Institute](#)

[Road Safety Knowledge Centre](#)

[Transport for London](#)

[Community Transport Association \(CTA\)](#)

[RAC Foundation](#)

## Child Car Seat Manufacturers and Retailers

[Britax Excelsior Ltd](#)

[Mamas & Papas Ltd](#)

[Maxi-Cosi](#)

[Graco](#)

[Recaro UK Ltd](#)

[Bebe Confort](#)

[Bettacare Ltd](#)

[Brevi](#)

[Chicco UK Ltd](#)

[Cosatto](#)

[Multimac](#)

[Renolux](#)

[Cozy N Safe](#)

[Axxkid](#)

[Halfords Ltd](#)

[John Lewis & Partners](#)



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