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Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

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Dear Enquirer,

Replacing Child Car Restraints that have been Involved in an Accident

It is RoSPA's advice that a child car seat that was in a car that has been involved in an accident should be replaced, even if there is no visible damage.

The only reliable way to test whether a child seat is still capable of providing the performance and protection for which it is designed would be to conduct laboratory tests, which would themselves destroy the seat. It is possible that the child seat has been weakened to such an extent that it will not provide the same level of protection in another accident.

We also suggest that following an accident the vehicle's seat belts and seat belt attachments, especially ones that were in use at the time of the accident, are carefully checked to ensure that they have not been damaged.

RoSPA believes that insurance companies should regard these issues as legitimate accident costs and fund any necessary repairs or replacements, just as they would fund repairs to the vehicle's bodywork, for example. We know of two insurance companies, Sainsbury's Bank and Norwich Union, who will replace a child car seat (with a new one of equivalent quality) that was in a vehicle that was damaged in a collision, as part of their normal motor insurance claims procedure. We hope that all insurance companies will follow suit.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Clinton', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kevin Clinton
Road Safety Adviser

