



Seatbelts

A seatbelt is one of the primary safety features of your vehicle and will substantially reduce the risk of serious injury or death in a crash if worn correctly. In a crash, a person who is not restrained will continue to travel forward at speed until something stops them. This could be the steering wheel, dashboard or windscreen.

The Road Safety Centre offers free road safety sessions to all road users, anywhere in the state.

Functions of a seatbelt

The main functions of a seatbelt are to:

- cause the occupant to decelerate at the same rate as the vehicle in a crash
- spread the force of the impact over the stronger parts of the body (pelvis and chest area)
- prevent the occupant colliding with the interior of the vehicle
- reduce the risk of being thrown from the vehicle
- slow the speed of the occupant so they impact safely with the airbag.

Wearing a seatbelt correctly

Always ensure seatbelts are firmly adjusted. A poorly adjusted seatbelt will allow the occupant to move forward in a crash and increase the risk of head contact with the vehicle's interior. In a crash, a properly adjusted seatbelt will hold the occupant firmly in their seat.

A seatbelt is worn correctly if:

- the sash part of the seatbelt sits flat on the shoulder without touching the face or neck
- the lap part of the seatbelt crosses low over the hips, not the abdomen
- the seatbelt is not twisted.

What the law says

Everyone travelling in a motor vehicle must be restrained. It is a driver's responsibility to ensure that all passengers in their motor vehicle are correctly wearing an approved seatbelt or child restraint.

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Child Restraints

Child restraint laws are based on age (rather than by height or weight) because research indicates this is easier for parents/guardians to follow. However, a child's height and weight are important to consider when making a choice about the right restraint or booster seat for your child. The law specifies that:

- If a child is too tall or heavy for the restraint specified for their age, they must use the restraint specified for the next age group.
- If a child is too small to advance into the restraint for their age, they should remain in the restraint specified for the previous age group until they have outgrown that restraint.

Child restraints must comply with the Australian/New Zealand Standard 1754 and must be marked accordingly.

Children up to 6 months

- must not travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats
- must use approved infant restraint that is:
 - rearward facing
 - properly fitted to the vehicle
 - adjusted to fit the child's body correctly.

Children aged from 6 months to 4 years

- must not travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats
- must use either an approved rearward facing infant restraint or an approved forward facing child safety seat with an inbuilt harness that is:
 - properly fitted to the vehicle
 - adjusted to fit the child's body correctly.

Children aged from 4 years to 7 years

- must not travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats, unless all the other back seats are occupied by children who are also under 7 years
- must use either a properly fastened and adjusted approved forward facing child safety seat with an inbuilt harness or use an approved booster seat and be restrained with a properly fastened and adjusted lap sash seatbelt or child safety harness.

Children aged 7 years to 16 years

- must use either a properly fastened and adjusted approved child restraint or a seatbelt that is properly adjusted and fastened.

The National Child Restraint Guidelines recommend children 12 years of age and under are safest in the rear seat.

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Exemptions

Bus - Bus drivers are exempt from ensuring passengers under 16 years of age are restrained. If a bus has seatbelts fitted, they must be worn. A bus is defined as a motor vehicle designed to carry over 12 adults including the driver.

Taxis - Taxi drivers are not required to provide child restraints or booster seats. It is recommended that you provide your own child restraint when traveling in a taxi or look for an alternative service that can provide one.

If no child restraint is available, a taxi driver must ensure:

- children under seven years are seated in the rear row in a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats;
- children under one year may sit on the lap of a passenger who is 16 years old or older in the rear row, but not between the passenger and the seatbelt;
- children between one year and up to seven years are seated in their own seat in the rear row with a seatbelt fastened to the best extent possible given the passenger's size; and
- children aged from seven years up to 16 years wear a seatbelt.

Ride Share Services / Limousines – Driver of ride sharing services / Limousines, do not have exemptions from child restraint laws and must comply with all of the requirements for children up to 16 years of age.

The SA Police Road Safety Centre is a leader in road safety education, playing a vital role in reducing road trauma through enhancing the awareness, knowledge and skills of all road users through lifelong learning. For more information on our range of programs visit www.police.sa.gov.au/road-safety or use the QR code below to take you straight to SAPOL's road safety page. To book a FREE road safety session email SAPOL.RoadSafetySection@police.sa.gov.au

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