



Child Car Seat Safety - Frequently Asked Questions

Can a child seat purchased in the United States be used in Canada:

Only child seats with the National Safety Mark label (Maple Leaf Label) are approved for use in Canada. Child seats purchased outside of Canada (i.e. United States) will not have this label and therefore are not legal for use in Canada.



For more information visit: [Cross Border Shopping](#).

Should a child car seat be replaced after a crash?

Transport Canada says to always replace a child seat that was in a crash. Even if your child wasn't in the child seat when the crash happened, the child seat could be damaged. For more information visit: [Replacing child seat after a crash](#).

Most manufacturers say to replace the child seat if it has been in a crash, whether it was occupied or not.

How do I dispose/recycle my child seat?

Call the engineering department of your municipality/city and ask if they have a recycling program for child seats. If they don't, you can put the seats out with your regular waste pick-up.

It is recommended that you do the following when disposing of a child seat:

- Remove padding and cut it in two
- Remove harnessing and take all the pieces off
- Cut harness so that it can't be used again
- Put the child seat plastic shell out separately from the padding and parts.

Recycling information in BC:

- Pacific Mobile Depots - 250-893-8383 - www.pmdrecycling.com
- The Recycling Council of BC- 604-732-9253 or 1-800-667-4321 - www.rcbc.ca
- The bi-annual trade show "Bellies to Babies"
www.belliestobabiescelebration.com

Gibsons

Gibsons Recycling, (604) 740-1425 - 1018 Venture Way, Gibsons, BC V0N 1V7
Cost is \$5 per seat. Drop off hours are 8 am to 5 pm every day.

New Westminister

Queensborough Landing Return-it (604) 540-4467 - Unit A, 409 Boyne Street, New Westminister, BC V3M 5K2

Cost is \$10 per seat. Depot open Monday to Saturday from 9am – 6pm and Sundays from 10am – 4pm.

North Vancouver

Waste Control Services Inc. North Van - 604-986-9777 – Cost: \$5 recycle fee per seat.

Vancouver

PMD Recycling Services - (250) 893-3851 - See [website](#) for mobile locations on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 9 am to noon. Cost is \$9 if you fully dismantle it (fabric, metal, foam, and plastic separated). Cost is \$15 if they dismantle it for you.



Victoria

PMD Recycling Services - (250) 893-3851 - 6215 Marilyn Rd. Sooke, BC 9Z X6
Depot is open Tuesday to Thursday from 9am to 4pm, Friday 9 am to 1 pm, and 2nd and 4th Saturdays 9 am to 4 pm. See [website](#) for additional mobile locations with monthly collection around Victoria. Cost is \$9 if you fully dismantle it (fabric, metal, foam, and plastic separated). Cost is \$15 if they dismantle it for you.

For more information, call the BCAA Child Passenger Safety info line at: **1-877-247-5551**

When can children ride in the front seat of the vehicle?

Transport Canada recommends that children 12 years old and younger remain in the back seat of the vehicle. The back seat is the safest seating position if it is fitted with lap/shoulder seat belts. If you must transport a child in the front seat of the vehicle:

- move the vehicle seat as far back from the dash as possible
- deactivate the airbag if possible
- make sure the seat belt is over the child's shoulders and across their chest for the whole ride; never behind the back or under the arm
- make sure the lap belt is low across the child's hip area and not across their stomach

For more information visit: [Children in the Front Seat](#)

Can I put my child in the front seat of a vehicle that has no back seat?

The front seat of the vehicle can sometimes be used to transport a child if there is no back seat. If there is only a front seat in the vehicle and there are no airbags, you can transport children in this position.

If there are airbags in the front seating position of the vehicle there are some exceptions that will not allow you to transport a child in the front seat.

Forward-facing child car seat:

The child car seat instructions say you can't install a forward-facing child seat in a front vehicle seating position with an active airbag. If the airbag can't be turned off manually with a key, switch or be deactivated by an approved technician, the child seat can't be installed in this seating position.

If the child seat can't be tethered it cannot be installed in this seating position.

Rear-facing child car seat:

A rear-facing child seat **cannot** be installed in the front seat of the vehicle with an active airbag. If the airbag can't be turned off manually with a key, switch or be deactivated by an approved technician in this seating position the child seat can't be installed in this seating position.

Booster Seat:

A booster seat cannot be used in the front seat of the vehicle if the manufacturer's instructions for the booster seat states it cannot be used in this seating position.

If you are able to put a booster seat in this position according to manufacturer's instructions do the following:

- move the vehicle seat as far back from the dash as possible
- deactivate the airbag if possible
- make sure the seat belt is over the child's shoulders and across the chest for the whole ride; never behind the back or under the arm

Where is the safest location to install a child seat in the vehicle?

Statistically, the center rear seating position is the safest. It's farthest from any point of impact in a collision.



What position should the infant seat handle be in when in the vehicle?

Until the last few years the positioning of the handle was always back, behind the infant seat. Since 2012 that has changed. You will need to refer to the labels on the infant seat or the manufacturer's instructions to see what position the handle should be in when the seat is in the vehicle.

Why should children be kept rear facing?

A rear-facing child car seat provides the best protection for a child. When rear-facing, the child seat moves toward the point of impact and the back of the child seat absorbs the force of the crash rather than the front of the child's body. It's recommended that you keep your child rear-facing until they have reached the upper rear-facing weight limit for the child seat. Check the child seat instructions for the rear-facing weight limit range.

When installing a child seat, is the Universal Anchor System (UAS) safer than the seat belt?

The short answer is no. Both the UAS and seat belt are safe methods of use, as long as the car seat can be installed correctly. However, many vehicles do not allow the use of the UAS in the center unless there are designated UAS anchors in that position. As long as the child seat can be installed correctly, the seat belt can be used in any rear seating position in the vehicle.

Also, most vehicles and car seats have an upper weight limit of 40 or 48 pounds when using the UAS system. Once these weight limits have been achieved, the child seat must be installed with the seat belt.

Can I install a child car seat using both the seatbelt and UAS?

This varies from vehicle to vehicle and child seat to child seat. You will need to refer to the vehicle owner's manual and child car seat instructions.

Since 2002, all Canadian passenger vehicles are required to have lower universal anchorage systems (UAS) installed in some rear seating positions. Why? Because they make it easier to install infant and/or child car seats.

It is important that you install and use child car seats properly for them to perform well in a collision. Transport Canada recommends you read both the child car seat and vehicle owner's manuals to learn how to correctly install **your child's car seat in your vehicle**.

If you cannot find complete instructions in these manuals, and your child weighs 18kg (40lbs) or more, we recommend you install the child car seat using **both** the UAS (if equipped) and vehicle seat belt, **together with** the top tether anchor when your child seat is installed forward-facing.

When can children go forward facing?

In BC, the law states that a child must be **at least 1 year and 10kg (22lbs)** before they can go forward-facing. It also states that you must follow the manufacturer's instructions for the child car seat. At this time there are no child seats that can go forward-facing before one year of age and 10kg (22lb).

It is recommended that you keep your child rear-facing until they have reached the upper rear-facing weight limit for the child seat.

When can children move to a booster seat?

All children must be **at least 18kg (40lbs)** pounds before they can move to a booster seat. However, it is recommended that you don't move your child into a booster seat before they have reached four years of age. After age four each situation should be assessed individually.



When can children move to the seat belt?

In BC, a child can move to the seat belt system once he/she is at least 9 years old or has reached the height of 145 cm (4'9") tall. The height is the most important factor. If a child is 9 years of age but less than 145 cm (4'9") tall it is recommended they remain in the booster seat. Your child is tall enough to use the shoulder/lap belt without a booster seat when the:

- child's back is against the vehicle seat back
- child's knees bend naturally at the front of the vehicle seat
- child's feet are flat on the vehicle floor
- shoulder belt fits comfortably over the child's shoulder and across the chest
- lap belt fits low over the hips

Can I wash the car seat cover?

You should always refer to the manufacturer's instructions before washing the car seat cover and/or harnesses. Some manufacturers may allow for the cover and harnesses to be machine washed, others only specify hand washing. They should also be air dried and not put into the dryer.

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