



## Washington State Has Two Occupant Protection Laws: The Seat Belt Law and The Child Restraint Law



The Seat Belt Law requires:

- **ALL** vehicle occupants to be properly restrained in **ALL** seating positions.
- The driver is responsible for seeing that all children under the age of 16 are properly secured.
- Passengers 16 years of age and older are responsible for themselves and may receive their own ticket if they are not properly restrained.

Buckling one seat belt around two people or placing the seat belt under the arm or behind the back is dangerous, can cause death or serious injury in a crash, and is a violation of the law.

**The law requires everyone to wear the seat belt correctly. The driver can be given a ticket if the seat belt does not properly fit the child (for example: the shoulder belt crosses the face or neck; the shoulder belt is under the arm; the shoulder belt is behind the back; or the lap belt is up on the stomach).**



Washington's Child Restraint Law requires:

- Children under 13 years old be transported in the back seat where it is practical to do so.
- Children up to their 8<sup>th</sup> birthday, **unless** they are 4'9" tall (57 inches), be transported in a child restraint system. (For example a child car seat, booster seat, vest, or other restraint that is federally approved for use in the car.)
- The restraint system must be used according to the car seat **AND** vehicle manufacturer's instructions.
- Vehicles equipped with lap-only seat belts are exempt from the requirement to use a booster seat.
- Children 8-years of age or at least 4'9" who wear a seat belt **MUST** use it correctly. (**NOT** under the arm or behind the back.)

**Try this 5-Step Test to learn when the adult seat belt properly fits your child.**

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the vehicle seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the vehicle seat without slouching?
3. Does the lap belt stay on the top part of the child's thighs?
4. Is the shoulder belt centered on the chest and shoulder?
5. Can the child stay seated this way for the whole trip?

**If you say no to ANY of these questions, or if your child puts the shoulder part of the seat belt under their arm or behind their back, your child still needs a booster seat.**