

Child Restraints

Proposed Changes to Road Rules



Existing Road Rules

Children under one year old

- Children under 1 year old must be restrained in a restraint that is:
 - Approved by VicRoads (carries an Australian Standard Sticker AS1754)
 - Suitable for the child's size and mass
 - Properly fitted to the vehicle
 - Adjusted to fit the child's body correctly.

Existing Road Rules

Children over 1 and under 16

- Children over 1 and under 16 should be restrained in either an approved, properly fitted and adjusted child restraint that is suitable for the child's size and mass, or a seat belt that is properly adjusted and fastened.

Existing Road Rules

Location of children

- There are currently no requirements for where children must be carried in a motor vehicle.

Existing Road Rules

Anecdotal evidence

1. Children progressing to the next seat before they have grown out of their existing seat.
2. Children being “phased” out of their boosters when they arrive at primary school. (The “I’m a big kid” issue)

Existing Road Rules Anecdotal evidence

3. Children sitting in the front seat
4. Children being rewarded by sitting out of their restraints, or in the front seat.

Proposed Changes

- Earlier this year, it was agreed to change the National Road Rules with regard to the carriage of children in motor vehicles.
- Each state is responsible for including these changes into their individual road law.

Proposed Changes Weight versus Age

- Currently, children are restrained according to their weight and not age.
- It is intended that the new road rules will be based upon age and not weight, to simplify the issue for parents, community and Victoria Police.
- Some opportunities for progression based on weight or height will still apply in certain circumstances.

Proposed Changes - under 6 months

- In brief the changes will:
 - Require passengers less than 6 months old to use a properly fastened and adjusted rearward facing approved child restraint.

Proposed Changes - under 6 months



Proposed Changes

- between 6 months and 4 years of age
- Require passengers between six months old but less than four years old, to use a suitable, properly fastened and adjusted rearward facing approved child restraint or forward facing approved child restraint with an inbuilt harness.

Proposed Changes

- between 6 months and 4 years of age



Proposed Changes

- between 4 years & under 7 years of age
 - Require passengers four years old or older but less than seven years old, to use a suitable, properly fastened and adjusted forward facing approved child restraint that has an inbuilt harness or a properly positioned booster seat and seat belt that is properly fastened and adjusted.

Proposed Changes

- between 4 years & under 7 years of age

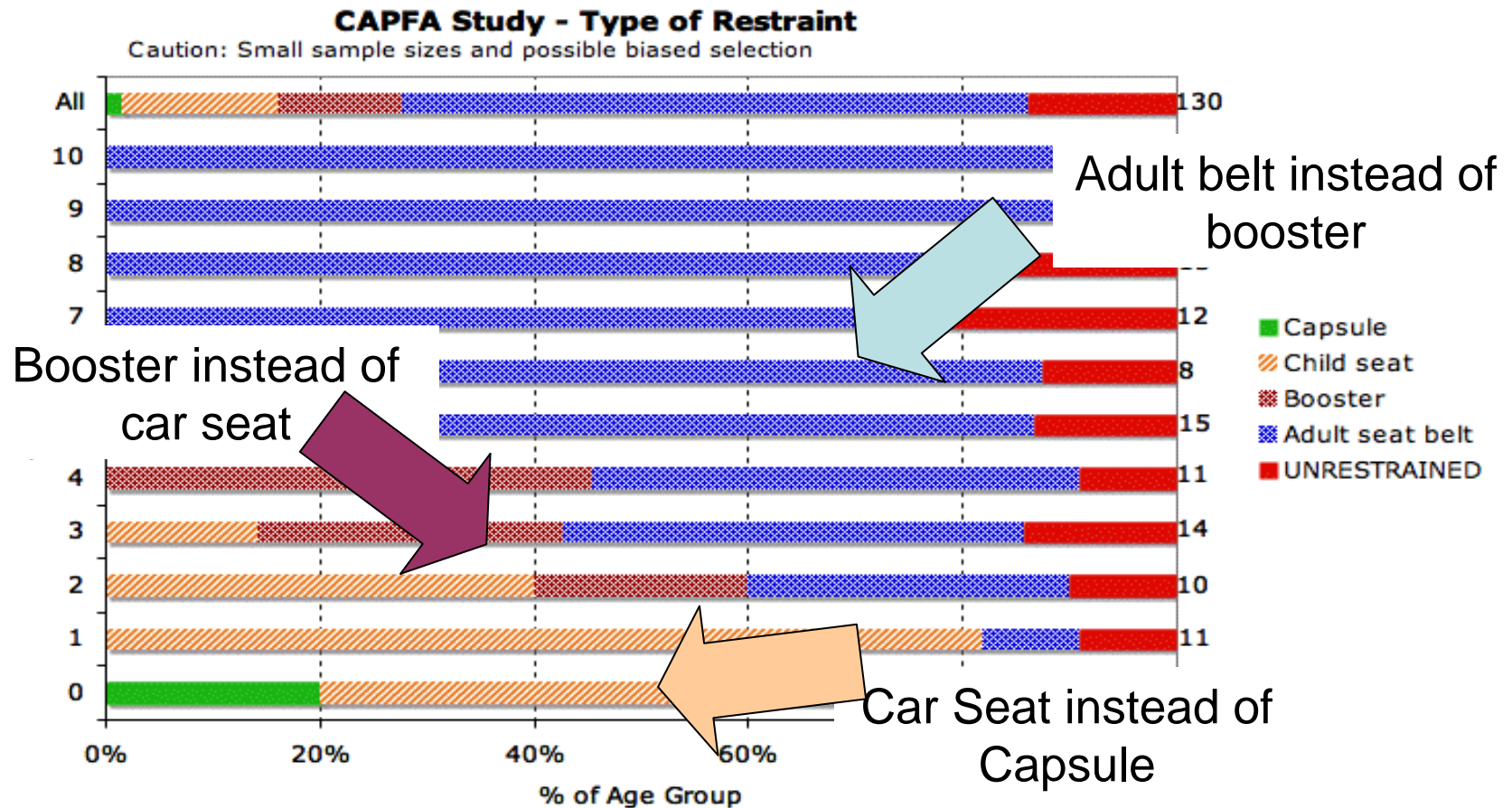


Proposed Changes

- Where Children can sit

- Not allow children under four years of age to sit in the front seat of a vehicle which has two or more rows of seats.
- Not allow passengers aged over four and under seven years old to be restrained in the front row of a vehicle, unless all other seats in the row(s) behind are also occupied by children under seven years of age.

Why are the changes proposed?



Why are the changes proposed?

- Recent research suggested that children are being prematurely promoted into seats that are too big for their weight and size at too early an age.
- This progression increases the risk of injury.

Why are the changes proposed?

- Many experts from enforcement, injury prevention, road safety experts and the community have called for updated laws which identify improved minimum standards.

When are the proposed changes likely to happen?

- The proposed changes are expected during the 2009/10 financial year
- A more detailed timeframe will be available as soon as possible.

What impacts are the changes likely to have?

- It is expected that the legislation will impact upon:
 - Taxi Drivers – with a requirement that every child must be counted as a passenger.
 - The feasibility of restraining children in taxis.

What impacts are the changes likely to have?

- Large families needing to restrain multiple children
- Carers who have differing children each day, will be required to have appropriate seats for all the children that they transport

What is VicRoads undertaking?

- Communications Plan
- Training for key stakeholders
- Advice for parents
- Updating brochures, pamphlets and website information

Communication Plan

- Objectives:
 - To announce and raise awareness of new rules.
 - Provide information to help motorists comply with new rules
- Communication Activities:
 - Advertising (Press, Radio and online)
 - Public Relations
 - Stakeholder Communications
 - Ethnic Community Communications

Child Restraint information

- Starting Out Safely is a series of resources to assist parents and carers to role model appropriate road safety behavior.
- It targets the professional services of Maternal and Child Health Nurses, Family Day Carers, Preschool and Child Care Centre staff.
- There are also the complementary resources such as Choosing and Using Restraints.

Parents information

- Parents and Carers receive information:
 - That is age appropriate
 - From professional support agencies
 - To assist the development process of their child
 - That complements the preschool and child care centre resource.

Other sources of parent information

- There are numerous other sources of parent information. These include:
 - RACV restraint fitting stations
 - Websites
 - Commercial stores selling child restraints
 - Local government
 - Department of Human Services
 - Victoria Police
 - Hospitals

Stakeholder Support

- In rolling out the proposed legislation, VicRoads will be seeking the assistance of various stakeholders including:
 - RACV
 - Local Government
 - RoadSafe
 - Restraint Fitters (RACV and independent)
 - KidSafe
 - Department of Human Services
 - Hospitals (including the RCH Safety Centre)
 - Maternal and Child Health Centres

For more information:

- Please visit the NTC website: www.ntc.gov.au and search for child restraints
- Please contact Heather Bishop on email: heather.bishop@roads.vic.gov.au to be added to the stakeholder email distribution list.