

Ask the Chief.....

Does Ohio actually have laws requiring children to ride in the rear seats of vehicles? A few people have told me the law has changed and it is no longer a requirement.

Yes, Ohio law has specific child restraint requirements for passengers of vehicles. The full law is spelled out in the Ohio Revised Code section *4511.81 Child Restraint System*. In the United States everyday an average of 5 children are killed and nearly 600 are injured in car crashes. Over 50% of the children who are killed are not using child safety seats or seat belts. Using the proper child safety seat substantially reduces the risk of death and serious injury.

Here is a brief overview of the law:

- From newborn to at least age 1 (or weighing in excess of 20 pounds) the appropriate restraint is an infant only, rear facing seat. To be exact, the seat faces the back of the vehicle. Such seats are only designed for a young child in rear facing position and should not be used as a forward facing seat.
- From age 1 (or at least 20 pounds) to age 4 (or at least 40 pounds) the appropriate restraint is a forward facing car child seat. Such seats should be used only up to the specified limits set by the manufacturer.
- Age 5 (or at least 40 pounds) to age 8 (or under 4' 9") the appropriate restraint is a booster seat. Booster seats raise the child up so that the lap and shoulder belt fit correctly. The belt should never rest against the neck or face, but rather across the chest, while the lap belt fits tightly across the hips.
- Age 8 to age 15 the appropriate restraint is a booster seat or shoulder/lap seat belt.

In each of these categories the child should be *"properly secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards"* ORC 4511.81.

Check out Ohio Child Passenger Safety Laws at:
<http://www.nationwidechildrens.org/cirp-child-passenger-safety>

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