



Short Safety Subject

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www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Car Seat Safety

Nearly 700 children under the age of five were killed in motor vehicle accidents in 1994. Nearly half of those children were totally unrestrained, even though it's against the law.

We hear about recalls of child safety seats in the news all the time. Some recalls reflect serious problems with the product that could put the child at greater risk in an accident. But child safety experts say the biggest problem with car seats is the way parents use them, or don't use them.

Approximately 60 percent of parents use child safety seats, but about 95 percent of parents use them incorrectly.



What can be so difficult about using a car seat, you ask. You've got new parents. Many are sleep-deprived, they're going through a lot of learning experience of just being a parent, and you've got this foreign type of product.

Also, there are different types of seats for different ages, seats that don't fit in certain cars, and seats with complicated parts.

Here are some key things to remember:

- Infants get the best protection in a rear-facing seat.
- If you have a passenger-side airbag, put your infant in the back seat - in the center. The risk is that if the airbag is released, it comes out at a speed well over 100 miles per hour and the impact can cause serious injury to the infant.
- To keep an eye on your baby in the back, you can clip a monitoring mirror on the back window so you can see your baby through YOUR rearview mirror.
- Children between 20 and 40 pounds can sit in a forward facing seat. But again, keep them in the back seat.
- If you drive a pick-up that doesn't have a rear seat, de-activate the passenger air bag if you can.
- For many parents, the trickiest part is securing the seat tightly. The biggest problem parents have is the whole locking system.. Make sure you are securing the car seat in correctly because that's holding the child in.

A few other reminders:

- Read all instructions carefully because many parents don't.
- Don't use a car seat that's older than ten years or if it was in an accident. In fact, destroy it.
- Keep your child in a safety seat until they are 40 pounds AND 4 years old.
- Register your safety seat so the manufacturer can contact you if there's a recall.

The reason for all these precautions? The number one cause of child deaths is auto accidents. If used correctly, child safety seats can eliminate 70 percent of fatalities. In the year 1994 alone, more than 300 children under the age of five were saved because they were in car seats.

Recall Information:

There have been nearly 200 recalls on child safety seats manufactured since 1988. Many of the recalls were for minor problems, but you should be aware of them.

To get information about car seat recalls or to report problems with yours, call 1-800-424-9393 for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration hotline. The hotline is open from 5 am to 7 pm pacific time.

If you're having trouble installing your car seat:

- Call The Manufacturer.