



WINTER SAFETY & CAR SEATS

Keeping Kids Warm without Compromising their Safety in Car Seats

Securing infants using rear-facing infant carriers:

- Store the infant carrier portion of the child safety seat inside the house to keep it warm. Keeping the child safety seat at room temperature will reduce the loss of the child's body heat when placed in the vehicle.
- Secure the child properly in the infant carrier while inside the house to avoid the child being outside in the cold for too long.
- Cover the baby with a warm blanket after the harness is secured properly on the child. The blanket is placed over the harnessed child so it will not interfere with achieving a properly tightened harness and the performance of the child safety seat.
- Do not use non-regulated products such as blankets that attach to the child safety seat through the harness system. Remember, if the item did not come with the child safety seat, it has not been

crash tested and may interfere with the protection provided during a crash.

Securing toddlers and pre-school children in car seats:

- Avoid using heavy snowsuits or extra bulky coats. The extra padding in coats and snowsuits will make it difficult to properly tighten the child safety seat's harness. In a crash, the padding will compress, allowing slack in the harness.
- Get in the vehicle and close the door before securing the child with the harness of the child safety seat. By closing the door, the child is out of the direct wind and/or cold. This will enable you to spend enough time correctly securing the child without being exposed to the elements.
- Many bulky winter coats and snow wear for older children should also be removed to allow for proper harness adjustment. Secure the harness on the child and then place the coat over the child for



The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- ◆ All children should ride in a **rear facing child safety seat until they are 2 years of age** or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat. Infants, who weigh 20 pounds before 2 years of age, should remain rear-facing in a convertible seat or an infant seat approved for a higher rear facing weight as long as the top of the head is below the top of the seat back, (1 inch). Children younger than 1 should always ride rear-facing.
- ◆ All children 2 years of age or older, or those younger than 2 years who have outgrown the maximum weight or height for their rear facing car seat should use a forward facing car seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.
- ◆ All children who have outgrown their forward facing car seat should use a belt positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt until approximately 4'9" in height and between 8 and 12 years of age.
- ◆ A rear facing car seat should never be placed in the front seat in front of an active passenger side air bag.
- ◆ All children younger than 13 years of age should be securely buckled in the back seat of the vehicle.

General Winter Travel Safety Tips

- ◆ **Always carry extra blankets** in the vehicle for all passengers, along with non-perishable food supplies and other necessities in case of a roadside emergency in inclement weather.
- ◆ Allow time to warm up the vehicle and brush off any snow or ice before entering and securing passengers.
- ◆ Keep projectiles like snowbrushes, ice scrapers, and kitty litter in the trunk.
- ◆ Allow extra time for travel. Driving in wintry conditions will require you to slow down and be extra cautious.
- ◆ Explain to young children that **driving on snowy roads requires concentration and they will need to sit quietly during the trip.**
- ◆ Purchase a winter coat that is warm but not too bulky. Coats that are not bulky allow for a better fit of the child safety seat harness without compromising the child's warmth. Coats that are not bulky will also allow for a better fit of the lap and shoulder belt.

