



# Public Affairs

## Department of Transportation

*Aloha!*

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### Booster Seat Law

#### Hawaii's New Booster Seat Law

Chapter 286-5, HRS, establishes the Hawaii Highway Safety Council. The Director of Transportation is designated to serve as its chairperson.

Beginning on January 1, 2007, Hawaii will be the 35th state to have a booster seat law. The new law will require children between the ages of four through seven to ride in a booster seat whenever traveling in a motor vehicle. The only exemptions are if the child is over 4'9" or if the vehicle has lap-only seat belts in the rear seat.

A Hawaii State tax credit of \$25 per year applies to the purchase of a booster or child safety seat.

The driver is held responsible for compliance with the law. Violators of Hawaii's Child Passenger Restraint Law are required to attend a 4-hour class and may be assessed a fine of between \$100-\$500 depending upon the number of offenses. However, the most compelling reason for using a booster seat is the safety of your child.

Basic guidelines on the proper use of booster seats:

- Use for children between the ages of four through seven, unless at least 4'9" tall.
- Use until the vehicle lap and shoulder belt fit correctly. (The lap belt should fit low and snug on their hips, and the shoulder belt should not cross over a child's face or neck.)
- Never put the shoulder belt behind a child's back or under their arm.
- A high back or low back booster with no shield may be used.

Never Hold Your Infant Or Child In Your Lap.

- A crash or sudden stop can result in a serious injury or even a fatality.

Who should use a booster seat?

Each year, more than 700 children, between the ages of four through seven, are involved in major car crashes in Hawaii. Statistics show that children unrestrained by seat belts are at least 50% more at risk for injury than children in a child safety seat or booster seat.

The proper use of child passenger restraints, such as a booster seat, is the most important factor in preventing death and injury in a car crash. Seat belts are designed for older children and adults, not for children under the age of eight, whose size and physical development make seat belts less effective, and in some cases, unsafe.

A child under 80 lbs. is generally too small for an adult seat belt. The lap belt rides up over the stomach and the shoulder belt cuts across the neck. In a crash this can cause critical or even fatal injuries.

When children outgrow child restraints with a harness, between 40 and 65 lbs. depending on seat weight limit, they should be restrained in a booster seat until they are big enough to fit in an adult seat belt (approximately 80 lbs. and 4'9" tall).

A child who cannot sit with his or her back against the vehicle seat back cushion with knees bent over the vehicle's seat edge without slouching, must use a booster seat — no matter what age, weight or height.

Using a booster seat can save your child's life.

For more information, contact the Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition at 537-9200 or refer to their web site at [www.KIPChawaii.org](http://www.KIPChawaii.org)

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