

## KEEPING KIDS SAFE IN THE BACK SEAT

November 4, 2009

Premier Nathan Rees today announced new safety regulations to target the high rate of injuries from children traveling in cars.

Mr Rees said the rules to be in place next year will see children up to the age of seven required to travel in approved seats or wear restraints.

“We needed to act on the high numbers of children being injured and even killed when traveling in cars,” Mr Rees said.

“In NSW there have been around 10 deaths of children under seven and around 480 injuries from cars annually.

“National statistics are horrific with up to 80 children killed and almost 4,000 injured each year.

“Currently it is only compulsory for children up to the age of one to travel in approved baby capsules or seats which contain their own restraints.

“Research shows that younger children using adult seat belts greatly increase their risk of injury.

“For around \$100 for a booster seat, families can reduce the risks and even save lives.

“The changes will come into effect on 1 March 2010 to allow parents time to learn the new rules and purchase restraints such as booster seats,” Mr Rees said.

The new regulations are part of national safety reforms and include:

- Children younger than six months secured in rearward facing restraints
- Children between six months and four years secured in either a rear or forward facing restraint
- Children between four and seven years secured in forward facing child restraint or booster seat.
- Children younger than four years cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows
- Children between four and less than seven years cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows, unless all other back seats are occupied by children younger than seven years in a child restraint or booster seat

Transport Minister David Campbell said that to give parents time to prepare for the change there will be an amnesty on enforcement of the new regulations for the first four months.

“Too many children are being hurt on our roads and these regulations will ensure that all children are protected every time they travel in a car,” Mr Campbell said.

“Before the regulations come into effect there will be an extensive education campaign so every parent will know what type of restraint they will need for their child.”

Mr Campbell said there is information available for parents with the recently released 2009 Safer Child Restraints Guide from the RTA.

“This brochure provides guidelines for parents to follow when buying a restraint and information about the level of safety and ease of use,” Mr Campbell said.

“It also includes a list of approved restraints as well as information on the ease of use of infant, young child restraints and booster seats.”

The RTA offers expert fitting services and has more than 190 authorised restraint fitting stations across NSW.

The guide is available from motor registries, RTA Customer Service Enquiry on 13 22 13 or [www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au)