



February 3, 2010

Clarification on Child Safety Seat Requirements with respect to School Bus
Transportation

The following information is provided with the intent of clarifying the legislated requirements pertaining to child safety seat requirements in school transportation. This is not a recommendation or position statement regarding the use of child restraints and/or mobility aids.

Additional information and recommendations about the use of child safety restraint systems can be obtained by reviewing materials from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

- 1) The use of child seats or booster seats in a school bus requires that an FMVSS approved passenger restraint system be installed in the seating position being used for that seat. Since most school buses over 10,000 lbs GVW are delivered without passenger restraints, it is not possible to use child seats without some accommodation. Options available to bus owners would include replacing a 'non-seat belt seat' with a 'seat belt ready seat', use of a replacement seat that incorporates child restraints, or use of a vest-style restraint that uses a cam-wrap encircling the seat back. Of these options, the vest-style restraint is the only system that does not require a 'seat-belt ready seat'.

The attachment of post production belts or restraints to seats that have not been designed for belts is not compliant with FMVSS regulations or school bus construction standards. It will also cause your bus to fail the MVI safety inspection.

- 2) The only vehicles for which child restraint rules apply are those required by the United States department of transportation to be equipped with seat belts at the time of manufacture. In Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 201 this is defined as cars, multipurpose passenger vehicles, trucks and buses with a GVWR of 4,536 kilograms (10,000 pounds) or less.

Full size school buses that exceed 10,000 pounds GVW are not required to have seat belts, and consequently are not required to have child safety restraints for passengers on board.

- 3) Child Safety Restraints are mandated in Ohio Revised Code 4511.81 for school vehicles that are required to have safety belts. Following is a summary of the regulations (The full text of the law and code follow this paper):



Department
of Education

Ted Strickland, Governor
Deborah S. Delisle, Superintendent of Public Instruction

- A) If a child is less than four years of age or weighs less than forty pounds, you must have the child properly secured in an approved child restraint system that meets FMVSS
- B) If a child is less than eight years of age and less than four feet nine inches in height, you must have the child properly secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions on a booster seat that meets FMVSS.
- C) If a child is at least eight years of age but not older than fifteen years of age, you must have the child properly secured either in a child restraint system that meets FMVSS or in an occupant restraining device (seat belt).

For additional information contact the Office of Pupil Transportation at the Ohio Department of Education

Ohio Revised Code 4511.81 Child restraint system - child highway safety fund.

(A) When any child who is in either or both of the following categories is being transported in a motor vehicle, other than a taxicab or public safety vehicle as defined in section 4511.01 of the Revised Code, that is required by the United States department of transportation to be equipped with seat belts at the time of manufacture or assembly, the operator of the motor vehicle shall have the child properly secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards:

- (1) A child who is less than four years of age;
- (2) A child who weighs less than forty pounds.

(B) When any child who is in either or both of the following categories is being transported in a motor vehicle, other than a taxicab, that is owned, leased, or otherwise under the control of a nursery school or day-care center, the operator of the motor vehicle shall have the child properly secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards:

- (1) A child who is less than four years of age;
- (2) A child who weighs less than forty pounds.

(C) When any child who is less than eight years of age and less than four feet nine inches in height, who is not required by division (A) or (B) of this section to be secured in a child restraint system, is being transported in a motor vehicle, other than a taxicab or public safety vehicle as defined in section 4511.01 of the Revised Code or a vehicle that is regulated under section 5104.011 of the Revised Code, that is required by the United States department of transportation to be equipped with seat belts at the time of manufacture or assembly, the operator of the motor vehicle shall have the child properly secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions on a booster seat that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards.

(D) When any child who is at least eight years of age but not older than fifteen years of age, and who is not otherwise required by division (A), (B), or (C) of this section to be secured in a child restraint system or booster seat, is being transported in a motor vehicle, other than a taxicab or public safety vehicle as defined in section 4511.01 of the Revised Code, that is required by the United States department of transportation to be equipped with seat belts at the time of manufacture or assembly, the operator of the motor vehicle shall have the child properly restrained either in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards or in an occupant restraining device as defined in section 4513.263 of the Revised Code.

(E) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, no law enforcement officer shall cause an operator of a motor vehicle being operated on any street or highway to stop the motor vehicle for the sole purpose of determining whether a violation of division (C) or (D) of this section has been or is being committed or for the sole purpose of issuing a ticket, citation, or summons for a violation of division (C) or (D) of this section or causing the arrest of or commencing a prosecution of a person for a violation of division (C) or (D) of this section, and absent another violation of law, a law enforcement officer's view of the interior or visual inspection of a motor vehicle being operated on any street or highway may not be used for the purpose of determining whether a violation of division (C) or (D) of this section has been or is being committed.

(F) The director of public safety shall adopt such rules as are necessary to carry out this section.

(G) The failure of an operator of a motor vehicle to secure a child in a child restraint system, a booster seat, or an occupant restraining device as required by this section is not negligence imputable to the child, is not admissible as evidence in any civil action involving the rights of the child against any other person allegedly liable for injuries to the child, is not to be used as a basis for a criminal prosecution of the operator of the motor vehicle other than a prosecution for a violation of this section, and is not admissible as evidence in any criminal action involving the operator of the motor vehicle other than a prosecution for a violation of this section.

(H) This section does not apply when an emergency exists that threatens the life of any person operating or occupying a motor vehicle that is being used to transport a child who otherwise would be required to be restrained under this section. This section does not apply to a person operating a motor vehicle who has an affidavit signed by a physician licensed to practice in this state under Chapter 4731. of the Revised Code or a chiropractor licensed to practice in this state under Chapter 4734. of the Revised Code that states that the child who otherwise would be required to be restrained under this section has a physical impairment that makes use of a child restraint system, booster seat, or an occupant restraining device impossible or impractical, provided that the person operating the vehicle has safely and appropriately restrained the child in accordance with any recommendations of the physician or chiropractor as noted on the affidavit.

(I) There is hereby created in the state treasury the child highway safety fund, consisting of fines imposed pursuant to division (K)(1) of this section for violations of divisions (A), (B), (C), and (D) of this section. The money in the fund shall be used by the department of health only to defray the cost of designating hospitals as pediatric trauma centers under section 3727.081 of the Revised Code and to establish and administer a child highway safety program. The purpose of the program shall be to educate the public about child restraint systems and booster seats and the importance of their proper use. The program also shall include a process for providing child restraint systems and booster seats to persons who meet the eligibility criteria established by the department, and a toll-free telephone number the public may utilize to obtain information about child restraint systems and booster seats, and their proper use.

(J) The director of health, in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, shall adopt any rules necessary to carry out this section, including rules establishing the criteria a person must meet in order to receive a child restraint system or booster seat under the department's child highway safety program; provided that rules relating to the verification of pediatric trauma centers shall not be adopted under this section.

(K) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any person to carry with the person the birth certificate of a child to prove the age of the child, but the production of a valid birth certificate for a child showing that the child was not of an age to which this section applies is a defense against any ticket, citation, or summons issued for violating this section.

(L)(1) Whoever violates division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of this section shall be punished as follows, provided that the failure of an operator of a motor vehicle to secure more than one child in a child restraint system, booster seat, or occupant restraining device as required by this section that occurred at the same time, on the same day, and at the same location is deemed to be a single violation of this section:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in division (L)(1)(b) of this section, the offender is guilty of a minor misdemeanor and shall be fined not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than seventy-five dollars.

(b) If the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of this section or of a municipal ordinance that is substantially similar to any of those divisions, the offender is guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree.

(2) All fines imposed pursuant to division (L)(1) of this section shall be forwarded to the treasurer of state for deposit in the child highway safety fund created by division (I) of this section.

Effective Date: 01-01-2004; 04-06-2007; 2008 HB30 09-12-2008; 2008 HB320 10-07-2009 This version is effective 10-07-2009

Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 4501-37 Child Restraint Systems

4501-37-05 Installation and use of restraints.

Persons using child restraint systems as set forth in paragraphs (A) and (B) of this rule shall adhere to the manufacturer's instructions regarding the proper installation and securing of the restraint system. No child restraint system shall be used in a motor vehicle for a purpose, or in a manner, for which it is not intended.

(A) When any child who is in either or both of the following categories is being transported in a motor vehicle, other than a taxicab or public safety vehicle as defined in section [4511.01](#) of the Revised Code, that is required by the United States department of transportation in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 571.208 cited as 49 C.F.R. 571.208 (January 2, 2008) to be equipped with seat belts at the time of manufacture or assembly, the operator of the motor vehicle shall have the child properly secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle standards as set forth in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 571.213 cited as 49 C.F.R. 571.213 (August 5, 2008):

- (1) A child who is less than four years of age;
- (2) A child who weighs less than forty pounds.

(B) When any child who is in either or both of the following categories is being transported in a motor vehicle, other than a taxicab, that is owned, leased, or otherwise under the control of a nursery school or day-care center, the operator of the motor vehicle shall have the child properly secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards as set forth in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 571.213, cited as 49 C.F.R. 571.213 (August 5, 2008):

- (1) A child who is less than four years of age;
- (2) A child who weighs less than forty pounds.

Effective: 12/14/2008

4501-37-06 Transportation of child at least four but not older than fifteen years of age.

When any child who is at least four years of age but not older than fifteen years of age is being transported in a motor vehicle, other than a taxicab or public safety vehicle as defined in section [4511.01](#) of the Revised Code, that is required by the United States department of transportation in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, section 571.208, cited as 49 C.F.R. 571.208 (January 2, 2008) to be equipped with seat belts at the time of manufacture or assembly, the operator of the motor vehicle shall have the child properly restrained either in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards as set forth in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, section 571.213, cited as 49 C.F.R. 571.213 (August 5, 2008) or in an occupant restraining device as defined in section [4513.263](#) of the Revised Code.

Effective: 12/14/2008