

ARCADIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Seatbelt & Child Safety Seat Laws

California seatbelt laws apply to all passenger vehicles, RVs and trucks; buses are exempt. ***All occupants*** in a vehicle ***must*** be properly restrained. A person is considered “*properly restrained by a safety belt,*” when the lower (lap) portion of the belt crosses the hips or upper thighs of the occupant and the upper (shoulder) portion of the belt, if present, crosses the chest in front of the occupant—CVC 27315(d)(2). It is important to note that wearing the shoulder portion of the seat belt under the armpit is not a proper use of the safety belt and is a violation of the law.

California law requires that a ***child under 8 years old*** must be properly secured by an appropriate child passenger restraint system meeting applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards (***CVC 27360***).

California law also requires that a child who is ***8 years of age, but less than 16 years of age,*** must be properly secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint system or a safety belt (***CVC 27360.5***).

It should be noted that the child’s parent/guardian is responsible to make sure the child is properly restrained, if they are in the vehicle. As such, the parent or guardian will receive the citation if a violation exists. If a parent/guardian is not in the vehicle with the child, the ***driver*** is ultimately responsible for making sure each child in the vehicle is properly secured in a safety belt/or an appropriate child passenger restraint system and will be issued the citation for any violations that exist.

There are four (4) types of Child Passenger Restraint Systems/Child Safety Seats:

Rear Facing Infant Seat

Use the Rear Facing only infant seat until the baby reaches maximum weight (22-35 lbs), or until the head is close to the top edge of the seat. This seat ***must*** be installed facing rearward!



Convertible Child Safety Seat

Rear Facing Child Safety Seat is ***required until age one (1)*** and recommended until age two (2), or until the baby reaches between (30-45 lbs). ***Forward Facing*** Safety Seat is used between 40-85 lbs.



Forward Facing Only

The Forward Facing Only Seat fits children from 30 lbs up to 40-90 lbs. The Child ***must*** be at least one (1) year old. A harness-only restraint system may be used with this safety seat. The seatbelt is used to secure the safety seat and is not used across the body of the child.



Safety Booster Seat

The Safety Booster Seat is used for children who outgrow safety seats with a harness. Most children need a booster from about age 4 until at least 10-12 years for proper belt-fit. The seatbelt is used to secure the child while sitting in the booster seat, with or without backing.



Additional Safety Concerns

- Children may not share a seatbelt with another occupant
- Children under 8 may not ride in the front seat of a vehicle
- An infant’s child safety seat should not face forward—it should face rearwards
- A child or rear facing baby should not sit in front of an air bag
- Seatbelts or harnesses should be securely fastened over the shoulders on the child/infant, and not loose
- The harness chest clip should be secured over the chest of the child/infant, not the tummy
- The shoulder belt may not be under the arm or behind the back of the restrained person
- If the shoulder belt is close to the child’s face, a booster is needed

Please ensure the safety of all persons in your vehicle and check to make sure each occupant is properly secured in an age appropriate safety belt/seat. Remember, safety begins with you!