



## PRESS RELEASE

---

- I. DATE OF PRESS RELEASE: October 7, 2011
- II. ANNOUNCEMENT: Changes to California's Child Safety Seat Laws
- III. FACTUAL INFORMATION:

The Livermore Police Department would like to inform our community about important new legislation in California regarding the protection of children in vehicles.

On Tuesday, October 4, 2011, Governor Brown signed into law Senate Bill 929 which will require that children riding in any vehicle must be restrained in the back seat in a child restraint until their 8<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Livermore Police Department was instrumental in getting this new law passed. Personnel with expertise in child safety restraint systems testified before the Senate and Congress at the State Capitol. This new law brings California up to similar standards that have been in place in at least 30 other states.

Studies have shown that children are far more likely to be restrained in age-appropriate restraints, such as car seats and booster seats, if State law requires booster seat use for their age group. Many people rely on state laws to guide them in determining how to best protect their children.

California's current child restraint law only protects children that are under the age of 6 or weigh less than 60 lbs. After January 1, 2012, those vulnerable 6 and 7 year olds will be required to stay in their car seats or booster seats until they reach the age of 8 years old.

For the complete law that will take effect January 1, 2012, follow the below link.

[http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/sen/sb\\_0901950/sb\\_929\\_bill\\_20111004\\_chaptered.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/sen/sb_0901950/sb_929_bill_20111004_chaptered.pdf)

After January 1, 2012, a violation of this section will be punishable by a fine of nearly \$500.00 and one point on your driver's record.

The number one killer of children in the United States is vehicle collisions. The Livermore Police Department wants to help parents best protect their children while they are traveling in vehicles. Deaths are just the tip of the iceberg. Young children are too small for seat belts that are made to fit adults, and are subject to severe injury or death if improperly restrained.

Restraining a child with only a seat belt is putting them at risk for serious injury. If the belt is across the child's waist instead of across the hips or thigh bones, they could suffer damage to internal organs and/or a spinal cord injury if involved in a collision.

Booster seats are 60 percent safer than seat belts alone. A booster seat is a child restraint

that raises a child up so that the vehicle's lap-shoulder belt is properly positioned across the strong bones of their body.

The Livermore Police Department would like to provide parents with this simple 5-step test to confirm if a child over 8 years old can safely ride in a seat belt alone, and not use a booster seat.

**5-Step Test:**

**Can your child....**

1. Sit with his/her back flat up against the vehicle seat
2. while his/her knees are bent naturally over the seat cushion edge
3. with the lap belt across his/her hip or thigh bones
4. and the shoulder belt across his/her shoulder (not crossing over his/her face or under his/her arm or, behind his/her back
5. and, his/her can stay seated in that position the whole trip ?

If your child cannot achieve all 5 steps above, they need to stay in their booster seat.

**Four Key Safety Points:**

1. Restrain your child on every trip, every time.
2. Keep your child in the back seat.
3. Use the best safety restraint for your child's size.
4. Use the child safety seats and belts correctly.

The Livermore Police Department has a free monthly car seat fitting station and is happy to check your child's car seat/booster or seat belt fit. To make an appointment call (925) 371-4858.

- IV. CONTACT PERSON: PIO Officer Traci Rebiejo  
PHONE NUMBER: (925) 580-9665