

MONTANA'S REVISED CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY LAW

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2025

MCA 61-9-419 DEFINITIONS
MCA 61-9-420 STANDARDS
MCA 61-9-421 EXEMPTIONS



UNDER AGE 2

Must ride rear-facing in a car seat that meets federal standards



AGES 2 - 4

Rear- or forward-facing car seat with internal harness



AGES 4 - 8

Forward-facing car seat or booster seat



AGE 9+

May use booster seat until outgrown height and weight limits and then move to a vehicle seat belt

- Parents and caregivers may choose to keep children in each stage longer for best practice protection and pre-crash positioning
- Fine of \$100, with a 7-day waiver if seat is acquired or installed correctly. Proof provided to court of jurisdiction
- Exemptions include motor home, bus, taxi, ambulance, emergency vehicle, or for a child who because of physical or medical condition or body size can not be placed in a restraint system



Find a Certified Car Seat Technician



- ✓ Child's head is at least 1" below top of car seat
- ✓ Harness straps are AT OR BELOW child's shoulders
- ✓ Chest clip is buckled and at armpit level
- ✓ Harness straps are snug: can't pinch a fold in webbing

- ✓ Harness straps are AT OR ABOVE child's shoulders
- ✓ Chest clip is buckled and at armpit level
- ✓ Harness straps are snug: can't pinch a fold in webbing
- ✓ Hook and tighten the car seat's top tether strap (upper right image)



tether strap attaches to designated anchor



- ✓ Shoulder belt lies diagonally across middle of chest and shoulder
- ✓ Lap belt lies on upper thighs, not the stomach and is snug
- ✓ Seat belts go under the booster's armrests
- ✓ Seat belt should be flat with no twists

- ✓ Shoulder belt lies across middle of the chest and shoulder, not on the neck
- ✓ Lap belt lies on the upper thighs, not stomach
- ✓ Typically between 8-12 years of age. Kids should also be able to pass the 5-step test
- ✓ Kids should ride in the back seat until they are at least 13 years old



Ultimate Carseat Guide

THE 5-STEP TEST

The 5-Step Test is a way to know when a child can ride without a booster seat. A child can safely ride on the vehicle seat with the lap and shoulder belt when the child can do ALL 5 steps.



1

The child sits all the way back against the vehicle seat



2

Their knees bend over the edge of the vehicle seat



3

The lap belt fits snugly across the hips near the top of the thighs, NOT THE ABDOMEN



4

The shoulder belt snugly crosses the center of the chest & shoulder, NOT THE NECK



5

The child sits correctly, without slouching, for the entire ride