

## Colorado's Child Passenger Traffic Fatalities Under Age 16 (1995 - 2002)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Under Age Four</u>	<u>Ages Four through 15</u>	<u>Total Fatalities</u>	<u>Percent Unrestrained</u>
2002	7 (3)*	26 (17)	33	61%
2001	7 (4)	31 (22)	38	68%
2000	9 (2)	23 (15)	32	53%
1999	7 (3)	23 (14)	30	56%
1998	10 (4)	18 (8)	28	43%
1997	4 (1)	31 (26)	35	77%
1996	7 (6)	30 (22)	37	76%
1995	11 (8)	38 (34)	49	86%

**\*Figures in parentheses are the number of children killed while riding unrestrained.**

During January through December 2002, occupant deaths for children under age 16 occurred in the following counties: Adams, Archuleta, Boulder, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Elbert, Huerfano, Jefferson, Kit Carson, La Plata Las Animas, Lake, Larimer, Lincoln, Mesa, Morgan, Montezuma, Park, Pueblo, Rio Blanco, Washington and Weld.

### ***Colorado's Child Seat and Seat Belt Law***

Colorado's current child restraint law requires children under age four and 40 pounds to ride in child car seats. Children ages 4 through 15 must be restrained in car seats or seat belts in both the front and back seats. The law is primary enforcement, meaning an officer can stop and ticket a driver if there are unbuckled children in the vehicle. The minimum fine is \$57. In 1999, the Legislature repealed the exemption in the law that allowed a child to ride unbuckled when all seating positions were occupied. All children under age 16 must be buckled up in the front and back seats.

**Starting August 1, 2003, changes to Colorado's child restraint law will take effect. The new law includes the following requirements:**

#### Rear and Forward Facing Child Restraint Systems

- Children less than 1 year old and weighing less than 20 pounds must be properly restrained in a rear-facing child restraint system that meets current federal safety standards. Children ages 1 through 3, weighing more than 20 pounds but less than 40 pounds, must be properly restrained in a forward-facing child restraint system that meets current federal safety standards. This updates Colorado's original child safety seat law passed in 1984.

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### \*Booster Seats

- If a child is between the ages of 4 through 6 and less than 55 inches tall, the child must be restrained in a booster seat or child safety belt-positioning device.
- If a child is between 6 years and 16 years old but less than 55 inches tall, they must be restrained in a booster seat or child safety belt-positioning device.

### Safety Belts

- If a child is between 6 years and 16 years old and 55 inches or taller, they must be properly restrained in a safety belt.
- The law applies to children being transported in a privately owned noncommercial vehicle or in a vehicle operated by a childcare center.
- Children must be buckled up in the front and back seats on every trip.
- The booster seat portion of the law is secondary enforcement, meaning a driver must be stopped and ticketed for another driving offense before they can be ticketed for a violation of the booster seat provision. The other provisions of the law are primary enforcement, meaning the driver can be stopped and ticketed if an officer sees an unrestrained child in the vehicle.
- The minimum fine is \$57 and the driver can be fined for each unrestrained child in the vehicle.

\*The booster seat provision of the law takes effect with the schedule below:

August 1, 2003 – Enforcement of the booster seat provision of the law begins with warnings only.

August 1, 2004 – Enforcement of the booster seat provision includes citations and warnings.

### EXEMPTIONS

Children are exempt from the law when:

- A child is being transported in a medical emergency.
- Children are being transported in a motor vehicle built to commercial standards such as a school bus.

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- If a child is at least 4 years of age and is less than 55 inches tall and if the child is being transported in a vehicle equipped with ONLY a two-point-lap-belt only system available for the child, the child shall be properly restrained with a lap belt.

NOTE: To ensure children are properly restrained as required in the law, follow the recommendations below:

- To determine proper installation refer to both the owner's manual of the child restraint system and the owner's manual of the vehicle.
- All child restraint systems must be installed according to manufacturers instructions.

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