

## Louisiana Highway Safety Commission

Changing Behaviors, Saving Lives



### New Louisiana child safety seat law called "best in the country"

June 27, 2019 - State safety, transportation and health officials joined child safety advocates on Thursday to praise a new Louisiana child safety seat law as a model for everyone to follow in the mission to keep children safe in motor vehicle crashes.

According to national safety experts, Louisiana's new law is the best in the country, as it's based on national best practice and mirrors the American Academy of Pediatrics' newly released child seat recommendations.

In a Baton Rouge news conference, [Louisiana Highway Safety Commission](#) Executive Director Lisa Freeman announced that the new law, which Governor John Bel Edwards signed on June 1, will go into effect on August 1.

Generally, it keeps children from prematurely graduating to the next level of restraint, which would make them less protected. The new law requires children to remain in the most protected category of child restraint. Children are required to remain in car seats or boosters or the back seat of vehicles for as long as is appropriate for a child's age, and according to the car seat manufacturer's instructions and height and weight limitations. The new law also requires that all children under the age of 13 ride in the back seat of vehicles with lap and shoulder belts.



Freeman was joined by Sergeant Melissa Matey of [Louisiana State Police](#), Assistant [DOTD](#) Secretary Dan Magri, [Louisiana Department of Health](#) Assistant State Health Officer Dr. Joe Kanter, Registered Nurse Bridget Gardner of [University Medical Center](#) and child passenger safety expert Joe Colella of the [Juvenile Product Manufacturers Association](#).

"We can celebrate that Louisiana now has the best child restraint law in the country, but to make a true impact on Louisiana's fatality and injury rate on our highways, we have to adopt a safety culture in Louisiana," Freeman said. "I believe parents and caregivers will embrace the new guidelines, since they are designed to keep their children safe."

Dr. Kanter agreed, saying the new guidelines will help prevent deaths, recognizing "what saves lives is the behavior change we hope will ensue." Medical professionals agree, with

Gardner, who leads the Louisiana Passenger Safety Task Force, recognizing that the law reflects a movement to "keep children in the more protected stages as long as possible" before taking them out of car seats or booster seats.

Colella, who is a national advocate for better child safety seat laws, said he was impressed with the way Louisiana's lawmakers and Governor Edwards came together to pass a child restraint law that now is "the best in the country." The legislation was championed by State Senator Troy Carter and later gained 24 co-authors in the legislature, where it passed the House and Senate unanimously.

Sergeant Matey said the new law "will help prevent the tragedies troopers see when children are not properly restrained." Magri, who was the long-time head of the highway safety section at DOTD, reiterated that the agency's "top priority is the safety of all road users on all Louisiana's public roads."

The new law's guidelines are reflected in the graphic below:

## Louisiana Child Passenger Safety Law

Age/Size	Restraint Use
Birth to at least 2 years old	Ride rear facing in an infant or convertible child safety seat
At least 2 years old and has outgrown the rear facing seat by height or weight	Ride in a forward-facing child safety seat with an internal harness
4 years old and has outgrown the forward-facing seat with internal harness by height or weight	Ride restrained in a belt positioning child booster seat using a lap shoulder seat belt
9 years old or has outgrown the booster seat and can pass the 5 Step Test	Ride restrained with a lap shoulder seat belt secured correctly on the vehicle seat
Younger than 13 years old	Ride in the rear seat of a vehicle, when available and properly restrained

A child who can be placed in more than one category shall use the more protective category.  
Child safety seats must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

*5 Step Test: The seat belt fits correctly when the child sits all the way back against the vehicle seat, the child's knees bend over the edge of the vehicle seat, the belt fits snugly across the child's thighs and lower hips and not the child's abdomen, and when the shoulder strap snugly crosses the center of the child's chest and not the child's neck.*


Effective 8/1/2019

Louisiana State Police has produced a video outlining how the new law works. The video can be viewed on the Facebook pages of [State Police](#) and the [LHSC](#). The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission also maintains [a list of fitting stations](#) where parents,

grandparents and caregivers can get a free child seat installation from a qualified technician.

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