

It's time for Texas to pass a booster seat law.

Texas has one of the weakest laws in the country, requiring children under 5

years

As of January 2009, Texas was one of only 6 states that did not have a booster seat law.

old **and** less than 36 inches tall to use a child safety seat.

An average 3-year old will outgrow the current law before their 4th birthday



Resources

Safe Kids USA: www.usa.safekids.org

The American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nhtsa.gov

Partners for Child Passenger Safety: www.chop.edu/carseat

Texas Department of Public Safety, DPS Committee Report on Child Passenger Safety: http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director_staff/public_information/CPSreport.pdf

Texas Department of State Health Services, Safe Riders Traffic Safety Program: www.dshs.state.tx.us/saferiders

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Many of my constituents have limited incomes. Will they be able to afford booster seats?

A: Booster seats are actually very affordable. Parents can purchase booster seats at major retailers in the price range of \$15-\$40. Assistance is also available from the Texas Department of State Health Services' Safe Riders Program and Safe Kids Coalitions across the state.

Q: Booster seats have to be used with a lap and shoulder belt, but some of my constituents have older cars with lap belts only. Would they be penalized for not using a booster seat?

A: No. The proposed legislation explicitly states that the booster seat be used "according to the manufacturer's instructions." When only lap belts are present, manufacturer's instructions state that a booster seat cannot be used. So, in this case, the parent would not be in violation of the law.

Q: What do police officers think about this law?

A: Some of the biggest supporters of a booster seat law are police officers and their professional organizations. They have seen first hand how booster seats save lives and are ready to help Texas kids by enforcing the proposed legislation.

Q: More than half of my constituents don't speak English. How can I expect them to follow a law they can't even read?

A: All Texans are already expected to follow the transportation code.

Safe Riders and Safe Kids, the two primary child passenger safety organizations in Texas, provide educational information in both languages. Educators and advocates will work with Spanish and English language media to ensure all Texans know about the new law.

Q: Not all booster seats look the same - what's the difference?

A: There are two types of booster seats: "high-back" and "backless" (also referred to as "no-back" or "low-back"). Both booster seats pass Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, and serve the same purpose: adding artificial height to the child so that the adult seat belt fits across the strongest part of the child's body, significantly reducing the risk of injury. Backless booster seats can be used when the vehicle seat has a headrest. When the vehicle seat does not have a headrest, a highback booster should be used.



Booster Seats. Good for Children. Good for Texas.



Support a Booster Seat Law in the 81st Legislative Session.

What is a booster seat?

A booster seat is used for children who have outgrown their “car seats” but are too small for adult seat belts.



The booster seat is a device that adds artificial height to the child so the seat belt rests on the strongest part of the child's body.

Booster Seat Facts

One booster seat saves^[1]:

- \$494 in personal injury costs
- \$245 in public medical spending
- \$433 in work losses

- Booster seat laws raise booster seat use by 40%^[2]

- Car accidents are the leading cause of death for booster seat age children in the US. The number of child deaths from car crashes is higher than the next 9 leading causes of death combined.^[3]

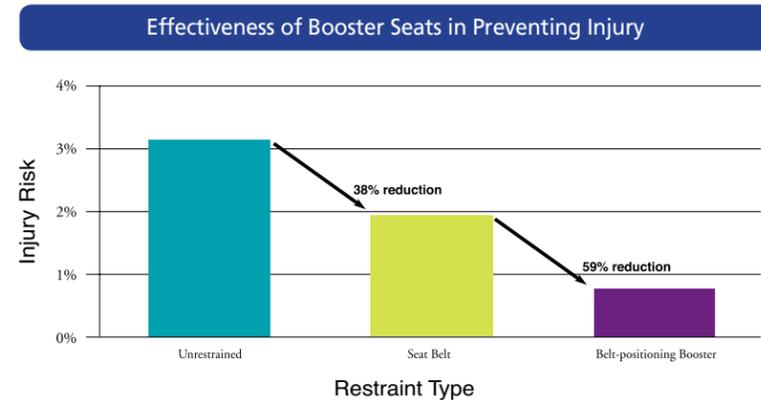
Sources:

- [1] *Pediatrics*. 2006; 118.
- [2] *Pediatrics*. 2006; 118.
- [3] CDC 2004

Why are booster seats important?

In car crashes, 4-7 year old children secured by adult seat belts are likely to suffer serious head, spinal cord, and internal organ injuries.

Booster seats reduce the risk of these injuries by 59%



What will the new law mean for Texans?

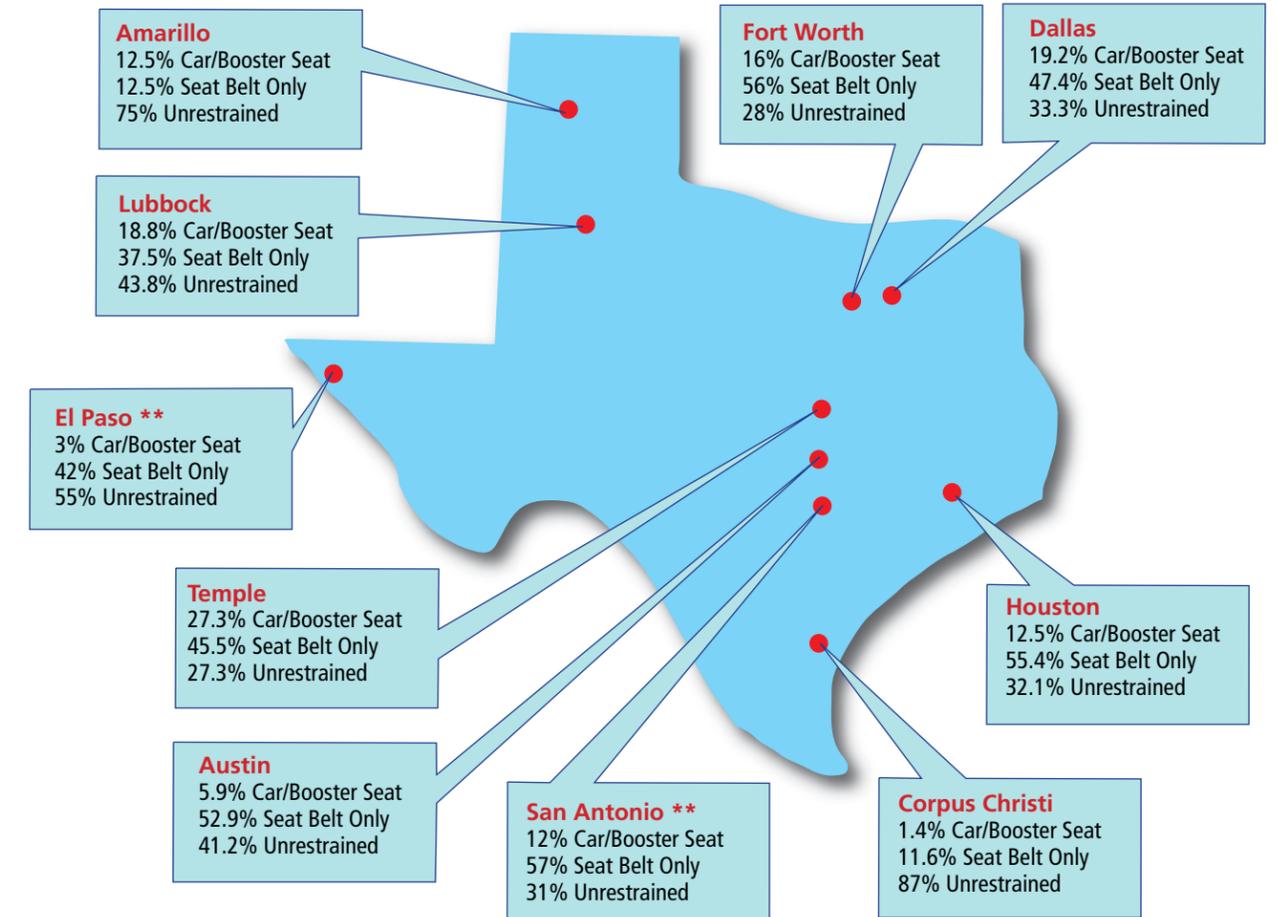
Safety experts, including the Texas Department of Public Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, recommend children use booster seats until they can fit safely into an adult seat belt. Proper seat belt fit usually occurs at a height of 4 feet, 9 inches.

The proposed legislation for this 81st session includes the following key points:

- A violation occurs when someone transports a child under the age of 8 unless they are 4'9" tall and does not secure the child in an appropriate car or booster seat.
- The fine for violations is \$25.
- When citations are issued, the funds will be designated to TX DOT for child safety seat programs.
- There is a grace period (July 2010) to allow families time to meet the new requirements.



Think Texas kids are riding safely? Don't bet the ranch on it.



Data from hospital registries of admitted trauma patients ages 4 through 7 years, from January-December 2007
 •• Data from TX EMS and Trauma Registry, admitted trauma patients, ages 4 through 7 years, 2005-06

Correct Restraint—This simulation below shows how a 6-year-old child properly restrained in a belt-positioning booster seat barely moves during a 35 m.p.h. crash.



Incorrect Restraint—The same child, improperly restrained in an adult seat belt with the shoulder belt behind the back*, is thrown forward dramatically in the same crash. The inappropriate fit of the seat belt and lack of upper body restraint puts the child at risk for severe head, spine and abdominal injury.



* Placing the shoulder belt behind the back is a common and dangerous mistake children make when the shoulder belt doesn't fit properly.
 Chart and simulation courtesy of Partners for Child Passenger Safety