

Booster Seat Law Passes

A [recent study](#) of five states found that the number of children using car seats and booster seats increased nearly three times after the age requirement for car seat/booster seat use was raised to seven or eight years of age.

Florida law currently requires every motor vehicle operator to properly use a crash-tested, federally approved Child Restraint Device (CRD) when transporting a child five years of age or younger. For children three years of age or younger, the CRD must be a separate carrier or a vehicle manufacturer's integrated child seat. For children aged four through five years, a separate carrier, an integrated child seat, or a seat belt may be used.

The requirements do not apply to a:

- school bus;
- bus used to transport persons for compensation;
- farm tractor;
- truck of net weight of more than 26,000 pounds;
- motorcycle, moped, or bicycle;
- chauffeur-driven taxi;
- limousine;
- sedan;
- van, bus, motor coach; or
- passenger vehicle if the operator and the motor vehicle are hired and used for the transportation of persons for compensation.

[CS/HB 225](#), which was passed by the 2014 Florida Legislature, amends current law to require that an operator of a motor vehicle who is transporting a child who is 7 years of age or younger when that child is less than 4 feet 9 inches tall, must provide for protection of the child by properly using a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device.

The bill also requires children who are aged 4 through 7 years, and who are less than 4 feet 9 inches tall, be transported only in a separate carrier or integrated child seat. The bill removes the provision allowing motorists to transport children aged 4 to 7 years with only a safety belt used as protection.

The requirement to use a child restraint device would not apply under the bill when a safety belt is used and the child:

- is being transported gratuitously by an operator who is not a member of the child's immediate family;
- is being transported in a medical emergency situation involving the child; or
- has a medical condition which necessitates an exception as evidenced by appropriate documentation from a health professional.

Infractions are a moving violation punishable by a fine of \$60 plus court costs and add-ons, and by assessment of three points against the driver license.