

# Children & Air Bags

## What's the Problem?

- Most new vehicles have air bags for front-seat passengers. When used with lap/shoulder belts, air bags work very well to protect older children and adults who ride in the front seat of the vehicle.
- **Air bags do not work with rear-facing child safety seats** (those used with infants).
- Air bags may seriously injure or kill an **unbuckled child or adult** who is sitting too close to the air bag or who is thrown toward the dash during emergency braking or in a collision.
- In a crash, the air bag inflates very quickly. It may hit anything close to the dashboard with enough force to cause severe injuries or even death. The back of a rear-facing child safety seat is secured very close to the dashboard. During deployment, the air bag may strike the child safety seat with enough force to cause serious, or even fatal injuries to a baby.
- Even children over 12 are at risk from a deploying air bag if they are not **properly** restrained with a lap/shoulder belt and the vehicle seat is not positioned as far away as possible from the dash.

## What Should I Do?

- The **rear seat** is the safest place for children 12 and under to ride. Best practice, all children ride in the back seat.
- An infant in a **rear-facing** child seat must ride in the back seat if your vehicle has a passenger side air bag (babies under 1 year **and** 20 pounds should always ride in a rear-facing seat).
- Make sure that everyone in the front seat is properly **buckled up** and seated as far back from the air bags as is reasonably possible.

## Where Can I Get More Information?

- Make sure that all young children are properly secured in a child safety seat/booster and older children by a lap/shoulder belt. Know how to properly install your child safety seat in the vehicle. Read both the owner's manual for the vehicle and the instructions for your child safety seat. Call NHTSA's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline at 1.800.424.9393.
- Written information and "tip sheets" are available by contacting:  

<b>Passenger Safety Education</b> Texas AgriLife Extension Service 2251 TAMU College Station, TX 77843-2251	or	<b>Child Safety Seats</b> National Highway Traffic Safety Admin. 400 7th Street S.W. NTS-13 Washington, DC 20590
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