



Laws You Should Know

2005 Occupant Protection Laws in Texas

SECTION 545.412: CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY SEAT SYSTEMS

OFFENSE:

1. A person commits an offense if the person operates a passenger vehicle and transports a child younger than five years of age and less than 36 inches in height and does not keep the child secured during the operation of the vehicle in a child passenger safety seat system according to the instructions of the manufacturer of the safety seat system.

SECTION 545.413: SAFETY BELTS

OFFENSE:

1. (A) A person commits an offense if the person:
(1) is at least 15 years of age;(2) is riding in the front seat of a passenger vehicle while the vehicle is being operated;(3) is occupying a seat that is equipped with a safety belt; and (4) is not secured by a safety belt.

OFFENSE:

2. (A) A person commits an offense if the person:
(1) operates a passenger vehicle that is equipped with safety belts; and (2) allows a child who is younger than 17 years of age and who is not required to be secured in a child passenger safety seat system under Section 545.412 to ride in the vehicle without requiring the child to be secured by a safety belt, provided the child is occupying a seat that is equipped with a safety belt.

SECTION 545.414: RIDING IN OPEN BEDS

OFFENSE:

1. A person commits an offense if the person operates an open-bed pickup truck or an open flatbed truck or draws an open flatbed trailer when a child younger than 18 years of age is occupying the bed of the truck or trailer.

2005 OCCUPANT RESTRAINT LAWS				
AGE	SYSTEM REQUIRED	FRONT SEAT	BACK SEAT	CITATION GIVEN TO
Birth - under 5 years and under 36" tall	Child Safety Seat System	YES	YES	DRIVER
5 years - 14 years or over 36" tall	Safety Belt	YES	YES	DRIVER
15 -16 years	Safety Belt	YES	YES	DRIVER and VIOLATOR (if front seat)
17+ years	Safety Belt	YES	NO	DRIVER and VIOLATOR (if front seat)

Best Practice

All children should ride properly restrained.

- Infants should be in a rear-facing child safety seat until at least 1 year **AND** at least 20 pounds.
- Children should remain in a 5-point harness system until they reach the upper weight limit of their seat (usually 40 pounds).
- Children over 40 pounds and under 4'9" tall should be in booster seats.
- Kids over 4'9" tall will usually fit safely in vehicle lap/shoulder belts.
- **Kids 12 and Under Ride in Back!**

How Effective Are Safety Belts?

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:



Correctly used child restraint systems are **71%** effective in preventing infant fatalities, **54%** effective in preventing fatalities for 1-4 year olds, and **69%** effective in reducing the need for hospitalization.



Booster seats are **59%** effective in preventing serious injury.



Lap/shoulder belts are **50-65%** effective in preventing serious injury.